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**Meaning and Narrative:
a Phenomenological Enquiry, with reference
to Psychotherapy.**

by

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

to City University

School of Social Science, Department of Sociology,
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Declaration

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Abstract

The thesis is grounded in Heideggerian phenomenology. It examines the existentials of meaning in Heidegger's ontology of Dasein of the 1920s and proposes that the concept of narrative can clarify our understanding of meaning in human life. Narrative theory in turn is critically examined and the importance of the difference between the spoken and written word is elucidated. It is demonstrated that the theoretical understanding of narrative has been distorted by the acceptance of literary narrative as paradigmatic. The primordial form of narrative is shown to be oral.

A commentary on Heidegger's analysis of boredom is undertaken and it is shown that the essential structure of narrative is given by the ecstatic temporality of Dasein that is not bored. The event of non-boring oral storytelling is analysed in detail and shown to be a particular existential modification of Dasein as being-with. In this event Dasein is called to its own authenticity and transposed into the Da of the story.

In the final chapter links are made to the theory and practice of psychotherapy and of performance. The existential transformation of Dasein in a well-told oral storytelling event is shown to be the therapeutic essence of psychotherapeutic dialogue. Insight on its own is not curative; psychotherapeutic change is dependent on the *way* in which a patient is able to tell their story. Only by taking up authentic possibilities is the client's authentic future freed. Similarly in public performances of theatre or storytelling the mysterious phenomena of audiences being transported, uplifted and unified are revealed to be instances of the same existential transformation. We conclude by indicating the significance of our findings for philosophy and narrative theory and highlighting the importance of the untranscribable meaning of oral discourse.

Abbreviations

References to texts are by author and year, full details of publication are in the References and Bibliography.

Frequently referenced texts are abbreviated as below:

Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*,
Tr. Macquarrie and Robinson, Basil
Blackwell, Oxford, 1962 BT

Heidegger, Martin, *The Basic Problems
of Phenomenology*, Indiana University
Press, Bloomington, 1982 BP

Heidegger, Martin, *The Fundamental
Concepts of Metaphysics, World,
Finitude, Solitude*, Tr. William McNeill
and Nicholas Walker, Indiana University
Press, Bloomington 1995 FC

Caputo, John D. *Radical Hermeneutics*,
Indiana University Press, Bloomington. 1987 RH

MacIntyre, Alasdair, *After Virtue - a study
in moral theory* Duckworth, London 1981 AV

The term "well-told oral storytelling event" is abbreviated to WOSE in Chapters Five and Six.

Introduction

1 MAN AND STORY

This thesis proposes that Heidegger's ontology of Dasein can be clarified by understanding Dasein to have a story-like structure. The nature of story is in turn clarified by two means, firstly by reference to Dasein's temporal structure and secondly by the revelation that the primordial form of story is *the well-told oral storytelling event*. Narrative theory has been dominated by the idea that the essential form of narrative is a text. Indeed, philosophy as a whole has been dominated by a manner of thinking that was made possible by literacy and has for the most part occluded orality-based thinking. Plato tells us that when Thoth invented writing he took it to Thamus, king of Egypt, to distribute to his subjects. Thamus said to Thoth,

"Those who acquire [writing skills] will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will rely on writing to bring things to their remembrance by external signs instead of on their own internal resources. What you have discovered is a receipt for recollection, not for memory. And as for wisdom, your pupils will have the reputation for it without the reality: they will receive a quantity of information without proper instruction, and in consequence be thought very knowledgeable when they are for the most part quite ignorant. And because they are filled with the conceit of wisdom instead of real wisdom they will be a burden to society." (*Phaedrus* #274-5)

We live in a society that has been affected by literacy for approximately two and a half thousand years, and in the last fifty years Western Europe and North America have moved to almost universal literacy. This move is generally applauded; it is not however entirely unproblematic.¹ Pedagogy has been overwhelmed by literacy.² It is frequently assumed that

¹ Fifty years ago, Shewring ("Literacy" 1944, collected in Shewring 1959) adverted to what is lost by the imposition of universal literacy. Modern scholars (Montenyohl 1993, Sobol 1992 and Hymes 1975 and others) have pointed to the semantic and social significances of oral tradition and modes of communication which are occluded by textual practices.

² In two senses. Firstly text is the most common medium of transmission of information and secondly in higher education there is a relentless pressure to write, and amongst teachers in tertiary education, to publish. See Grayling 1997

whatever can be spoken can be written down, although in fact no system of writing can capture all the subtlety of the spoken word. Writing has also become the means by which knowledge is tested. In the mediaeval universities the M.A. was an *oral* examination and during instruction reading from notes and taking them was frowned upon.³ Many (though certainly not all) of the consequences of the move from orality to literacy are explored in this thesis. An irony which is not lost on the author, and should not be lost on the reader, is that in *writing* a thesis I am hampered by the limitations of literary communication and cannot use the resources of verbal communication to which I allude. Furthermore limitations of time and space as well as text preclude the full exploration of most of the ramifications of this thesis.

I propose that there is a hugely important variable in oral communication, and above all in oral storytelling, that is of existential significance: that variable is boredom. I draw on Heidegger's analysis of boredom to demonstrate that boredom is an existentiell modification of Dasein's being and hence being bored is not a mere colouring of experience but a transformation of one's way of being.⁴ It follows that the significance of this thesis is not confined to philosophy. It has a bearing on our everyday life and on social organization as a whole. It is not possible to address all the areas wherein these findings may be significant; nevertheless in the examples throughout the text and in the last chapter links are made between the philosophical concepts developed and two practical areas of storytelling: psychotherapy and performance.

The thesis is a centripetal work in a milieu of centrifugal forces and I draw on scholarship from a wide variety of academic disciplines.⁵ It is not a work of slavish Heideggerian orthodoxy but it does owe a huge debt to Heidegger. As Wood has remarked, "Heidegger's thinking about time and temporality in the twenties opened up paths not taken, and ... we might

³ "University legislation over the centuries had had to repeat injunctions against young masters' "lecturing" by dictating to their classes from notes. Masters were supposed to be individually enterprising and the legislation had occasionally even gone so far as to forbid students to use pen and ink in the classroom, so that such dictation would be impossible." Ong 1958 p.22

⁴ "Existentiell" refers to the ontic manifestation of the ontological. See BP 279, BT 12 and BT 352ff.

⁵ These disciplines are in part maintained in their separation by the textualization of academic discourse. One cannot help but overheard a conversation within earshot but it is extremely easy to leave books unread. A man may write a thesis which is never read, but he cannot have a conversation without an interlocutor. As Phillipotts remarks "Printing so obviously makes knowledge accessible to all that we are inclined to forget that it also makes knowledge very easy to avoid." Quoted in Goody and Watt 1968, p.60

come to find these paths compelling."⁶ I have followed one of these paths, but I also hope I have followed Gadamer's advice; "do not imitate Heidegger, but let yourself be inspired by him!"⁷

2 OUTLINE

The thesis is grounded in phenomenology. There is a logical progression in the development of ideas in the text but the thesis cannot be reduced to logical argument. As Heidegger said of a later work, "the point is not to listen to a series of propositions, but rather to follow the movement of showing."⁸ Much more is revealed by the juxtaposition and development of ideas and scholarship than could be followed up in detail here, but it all allows one to think more clearly the nature of the well-told oral storytelling event. The latter cannot be summed up in words so I must refer the reader beyond what is captured on the page to their own experience of engagement in oral storytelling. As a phenomenological treatise this work starts not from axioms but from observation and as it proceeds it invites readers to recognize in their own experience what has been covered over by the theoretical consideration of meaning, narrative and human being.⁹

In Chapter One I lay out a reading of *Being and Time*. The two main source texts for the thesis are *Being and Time* and *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. Both date from the 1920s, and the ontology of Dasein laid out in the former still underpins Heidegger's thinking in the latter. The exposition of being-in-the-world, the existentialia and temporality of Dasein establish the understanding of Dasein that is the basis of the ensuing research. The emphasis in my reading is not to pursue all the possibilities of critically challenging Heidegger but to explicate the fundamental structures upon which this research is grounded.

In Chapter Two I turn to the specific issue of meaning in *Being and Time*. It was the fact that Heidegger ascribed to meaning an ontological

⁶ Wood 1993, p.137

⁷ Gadamer quoted in Grieder 1995 p.122

⁸ Heidegger 1972, p.2

⁹ In this thesis, as Caputo says of *Being and Time*, "everything comes down to our capacity to recognize ourselves in the finished account, in the 'story' of human existence which is recounted there." Caputo 1987, (hereafter RH) p.80

significance that first drew my attention to the importance of his ontology of Dasein for my research. Three main results emerge from this close analysis of the existentials of meaning. Firstly it is not entirely clear exactly what Heidegger means by meaning. It certainly overlaps with worldhood as both are equated to "*das Woraufhin*"¹⁰ and with significance which is called an "existential state of Dasein".¹¹ Ultimately his exposition is not entirely explicable. Either he establishes an unnecessary distinction between meaning and worldhood and significance, or his use of the term is not entirely consistent. Secondly Heidegger draws attention to the sort of meaning that entities within-the-world have when they are "discovered along with the Being of Dasein".¹² This ontic event involves an existentiell modification of Dasein, which in revealing its Being reveals also to some extent its meaning. The third result to emerge is that Heidegger abandons the term meaning as he presses the temporal analysis of Dasein and he seems to do so because meaning is supplanted by the concept of the unity of the temporal horizons of Dasein.¹³ On the basis of the development of meaning into a temporal phenomenon it is proposed that we can understand Dasein's existential meaning in terms of *narrative*, and at the same time understand the essence of narrative by reference to Dasein's temporality. Therefore in Chapter Three we turn to Heidegger's concept of historizing (*Geschehen*) under which name he considers the connectedness which holds together Dasein's life (and, it will transpire, any narrative).¹⁴ Next we review major theories of narrative; in particular Ricoeur as the most influential thinker in the field in the last thirty years, and MacIntyre whose characterisation of humanity as shaped by stories has been widely influential.¹⁵ We review other thinkers on narrative and Kerby's overview which links the notions of self and narrative and note that in all these thinkers the idea of narrative is dominated by *textual* narrative. Telling a story is thus held to be a process of conscious creation of a plot

¹⁰ BT 119 and BT 193

¹¹ BT 121

¹² BT 192

¹³ BT 416

¹⁴ BT 425

¹⁵ Especially amongst psychotherapists: "MacIntyre ... [is] generally regarded as the philosopher who has provided the most compelling account of the narrative nature of human reality." McLeod 1996 p.178

which is delivered to the reader, normally through words.¹⁶ There is widespread agreement that narrative is essentially a textual phenomenon but there is little agreement on much else.¹⁷ This thesis proposes, contrary to this widespread though unspoken agreement, that narrative is primarily a form of *oral* discourse and that its structure is given by Dasein's way of being. It is proposed that a textual narrative is a derivative form, ultimately dependent on Dasein's lived engagement to be actualized as narrative.

In Chapter Four we turn to the orality/literacy debate to elucidate the nature of orality and substantiate this understanding of narrative. It becomes clear that a society characterised by primary orality¹⁸ has a different way of being from a literate society.¹⁹ Having established the significance of orality we turn to the oralists' views on narrative. It is clear that narrative is significant in a primary oral culture as a means of preservation and transmission of knowledge, but the oralists do not, any more than the philosophers, pin down the essence of narrative. It is clear however that the *telling* of a tale in an oral culture is an event in which there is greater communication and participation than occurs in the reading of a text in a literary culture. I focus on the eventhood of storytelling and in particular one variable in that event - the degree to which the story is well-told or boring. To elucidate the existential dimension of boredom I turn to Heidegger's analysis in *The Fundamental Concepts*. Boredom, like meaning, is interpreted in terms of Dasein's temporality. Profound boredom is shown to be the uttermost reduction of Dasein's meaning. As the thesis shows that we can understand the existentials of meaning by means of narrative and the nature of narrative by reference to Dasein's temporal structure it is clear that boredom is not just a contingent variable but strikes at the very essence of Dasein.

In Chapter Five it is demonstrated that the primordial form of story is non-boring and is grounded in Dasein's authentic temporality. The essential elements of the primordial form of story are spelled out in detail

¹⁶ "narration can be conceived as the telling (in whatever medium, though especially in language) of a series of temporal events so that a meaningful sequence is portrayed - the story or plot of the narrative." Kerby 1991, p.39

¹⁷ "There is no single theory of [narrative] ... acceptable to a majority of those who have addressed it, and the unresolved differences among the critics cannot be either easily adjudicated or cavalierly dismissed." Martin 1986 p.30

¹⁸ The term is Walter Ong's: "I style the orality of a culture totally untouched by any knowledge of writing or print, 'primary orality'." Ong 1982, p.11

¹⁹ See Goody and Watt 1968

in relation to the equiprimordial existentialia of Dasein and the event of telling of a story shown to be an existentiell modification of the being of Dasein. The analysis of the well-told oral storytelling event emphasises that it is an interpersonal event, a meeting. In this sense it illuminates the temporal existential structure of moments of revelation and engagement which Heidegger in more mystical language later approached in his writing on poetry.²⁰

In the final chapter some of the most important implications of this analysis of Dasein and narrative are considered in general and with special reference to psychotherapy and performance. Throughout the thesis examples are drawn from these two fields, and this thesis provides a phenomenological grounding for practical work in psychotherapy and performance. The phenomenology of the primordial event of storytelling reveals an event of being which cannot be tidily analysed under the auspices of a single academic discipline.²¹ In fact, the revelation of the hegemony of textualized thinking raises questions about the effect of the accepted boundaries of discourse in academia as a whole and boundaries between disciplines and topics within academia. In the light of the definition offered of the well-told oral storytelling event the distinctions between drama and narrative, between poetry and prose, and between fact and fiction can be seen to be trivial and peripheral to the true distinction between the event in which the being of Dasein is revealed and the dessicated language of boring texts or recitations.²²

3 AIMS

In the field of philosophy this thesis aims to contribute to post-Heideggerian scholarship on human being, to develop further our understanding of the nature of human being. It also brings into focus the importance of *orality*. It is *not* a meditation in the orthodox Heideggerian

²⁰ For a succinct summary of Heidegger's later thinking on poetry see introduction to Heidegger 1971 (a) by Hofstadter.

²¹ Indeed it cannot be fully understood in terms of mere intellectual discourse at all. "[a] philosophy [of culture] attains merely the *setting-out* (Dar-stellung) of man, but never his *Dasein*." FC 76

²² Cf. Buber: "the real boundary, albeit one that floats and fluctuates, runs not between experience and non-experience, nor between the given and the not-given, nor between the world of being and the world of value, but across all the regions between You and It: between presence and object." Buber 1970, p.63

manner on Language in general, nor on the concept of language.²³ It is rather a phenomenology of a specific mode of telling which reveals. This mode of telling is of considerable importance in teaching, thinking and expressing truths of human existence. If philosophy, or any other field, confines itself to language which is theoretical and avoids the significance of the primordial form of storytelling it will always be cut off from an essential experience and knowledge of humanity.

The thesis also contributes to narrative studies. The essence of narrative is not plot, sequence or characterisation but the temporality of Dasein. A story is a way of showing Dasein's being, and we recognise a story without necessarily hearing the beginning of it, and without following it all the way to its conclusion. We know what a story is because it is a particular way of telling which offers a particular way of engagement to the listener. It is clear that in modern times the particular way of being of Dasein which is participating fully in a well-told oral storytelling event is rare. This rarity is both a reflection and a cause of huge social change. The community that was created by listening together to a story now scarcely exists, and the resulting social atomisation is an unprecedented phenomenon.²⁴

This thesis brings to psychotherapy an understanding of human being grounded in phenomenology. Three problems have bedevilled psychotherapy since its beginning. Firstly the question of the sort of being that a human being is has not been settled. Secondly practitioners and theorists have generated theories and models of psychotherapy at an exponential rate as the field and practice have expanded. This proliferation of descriptions causes confusion and tends to divert attention from the phenomena themselves. Thirdly its discourse is incoherent, divided between theory and practice and as one practitioner has observed, "I have not found the findings of academic research of much help in my work as a clinician."²⁵ Theory is not necessarily of practical help, especially if it is mere hypothesis.²⁶ Historically, psychotherapy is built on

²³ Neither in *Poetry Language and Thought*, nor in *On the Way to Language* does Heidegger explicitly confront the effect of writing on language and thinking. Perhaps the difference was hidden from him because he himself was such a prolific writer. The as yet unfinished publication of the *Gesamtausgabe* already runs to sixty nine volumes. He does remark (in 1935) that "There is a difference between the spoken and the written word" Heidegger 1959 p.xi, but does not expand on his observation.

²⁴ See Putnam 1996.

²⁵ Polkinghorne 1988 p.ix

²⁶ "The essential way of thinking of the specialist in literate culture is fundamentally at odds with that of daily life and common experience" Goody and Watt 1968, p.60

foundations of sand. Freud simply posited hypothetical intra-psychic entities with no ontological argument, and ever since his successors and detractors have tended to do the same.²⁷

Boss persuaded Heidegger to give seminars to psychotherapists and began a psychotherapy based on a serious investigation of human ontology.²⁸ This thesis continues that tradition of bringing to psychotherapy the fruits of phenomenological research. In particular it addresses the issue of meaning which is raised again and again in psychotherapy. It is proposed that the fundamental structure of what is meaningful in psychotherapy is narrative.²⁹ It is further proposed that the most important element in the myriad stories told in psychotherapy is not their content but the *manner of their telling* including the nature of the involvement of the listener. This is why every nuance of communication in the psychotherapeutic hour is significant.

In the field of performance the analysis of the well-told oral storytelling event is offered as the paradigm for involvement in 'artistic' events such as theatre, dance, mime, storytelling and so on. All these now separate fields of performance are variations which have sprung from pre-literate man's telling of stories. The designation 'artistic' and its separation from mere entertainment and from religion is a result of literate modernity. The well-told oral storytelling event is the historical and ontological source of these modern variations and derivative forms. In the event of oral storytelling can be seen a fundamental mode of engagement with the experience of the other. The sensational distractions of sophisticated, modern, narrative art forms often simply cover over the fact that we are not gripped by the story. By analysing the well-told oral storytelling event we see Dasein's essential involvement in narrative. The analysis shows why, at bottom, personal authenticity is essential for successful storytelling. Equally, successful storytelling is a route to personal authenticity.

²⁷ Freud's writing contains both admissions of his hypothesizing, (e.g. "What follows is speculation, often far-fetched speculation" Freud 1922 p.27) and dogmatic assertions ("the thoughts contained in [*The Ego and the Id*] are synthetic rather than speculative in character" Freud 1927 p.7). He appears to convert speculation to dogma mainly by dint of sheer repetition although he claims his results justify his assumptions (Freud 1964 p.144). See also Freud 1962, pp.103-116.

²⁸ See Boss 1988 and 1994

²⁹ "narrative [is] the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful" Polkinghorne 1988, p.1

Chapter One

Heidegger's Ontology of Dasein

1 INTRODUCTION

Some preliminary remarks about the methodology and structure of *Being and Time* are required. *Being and Time* is a notoriously difficult text in which Heidegger raises the question of Being. He begins to answer the question by investigating the being of human beings, or to use the term he preferred, Dasein. *Being and Time* was published in 1927 because the German Government requested published evidence of Heidegger's scholarship before they would agree to his appointment to the Chair of Philosophy at Freiburg. The treatment of the question of Being sketched out in the introduction is not completed in the book as published.¹ So in *Being and Time* we have an incomplete text, published in haste.² The difficulties of the text are compounded because his project questioned the fundamental assumptions of Western metaphysics.

"this task [is] one in which ... we are to *destroy* the traditional content of ancient ontology until we arrive at those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being." (BT 44)

Heidegger's way of phenomenological thinking is unlike a traditional philosophical progression by means of logical arguments.³ In order not to entangle himself in the very thinking he was questioning he eschewed traditional philosophical terms and created new terms to express his innovative ideas. Heidegger took over the famous maxim of his teacher, Edmund Husserl, quoting him directly: "the term 'phenomenology' expresses a maxim which can be formulated as 'To the things

¹ In the preface to the seventh edition, published in 1953, Heidegger writes, "After a quarter of a century, the second half could no longer be added unless the first were to be presented anew." BT 17

² As Heidegger himself said later, "The fundamental flaw of the book *Being and Time* is perhaps that I ventured forth too far too early." Heidegger 1971 (b) p.7

³ "Heidegger is not interested in giving the necessary and sufficient conditions for existing in his sense. He is only interested in the de facto structure of this way of being." Dreyfus 1991, p.15

themselves!"⁴ Phenomenology in other words, turns away from the traditional engagement with theories and consequential arguments and attempts to look afresh at what presents itself to us most immediately in life; what is, as it were, right under our noses.

However although he acknowledged his debt to his teacher,⁵ and dedicated the book to him, in two fundamentally important ways Heidegger disagreed with him. Husserl wished to 'bracket' prejudices, to start afresh and take nothing for granted, but Heidegger's understanding of the being of Dasein precluded the possibility of such radical Husserlian 'bracketing'. As Merleau-Ponty put it in the Preface to *The Phenomenology of Perception*,

"The most important lesson which the [phenomenological] reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction. This is why Husserl is constantly re-examining the possibility of the reduction. If we were absolutely mind, the reduction would present no problem. But since ... we are in the world ... there is no thought which embraces all our thought."⁶

Secondly, fundamental to Heidegger's thinking is a rejection of the residual Cartesianism of his teacher's position. He does not carry over the dualistic structure of intentional objects and transcendental consciousness;

"When Dasein directs itself towards something and grasps it, it does not somehow first get out of an inner sphere in which it has been proximally encapsulated, but its primary kind of Being is such that it is always 'outside' alongside entities which it encounters and which belong to a world already discovered." (BT 89)⁷

Heidegger's way of thinking in *Being and Time* is an ever deeper questioning and a penetrating of the Being of entities. Heidegger draws attention to our most immediate experience and then asks what must be the case such that our immediate experience is as it is.⁸ Rather than pressing forward, his investigation turns around to question the pre-understanding which originally made possible its formulation. In

⁴ BT 50

⁵ "The following investigation would [not] have been possible if the ground had not been prepared by Edmund Husserl" BT 62

⁶ Merleau-Ponty 1962 p.xiv

⁷ See also the 1927 lectures: "I cannot and must not ask how the inner intentional experience arrives at an outside." BP 63

⁸ In John Caputo's words, "[In *Being and Time*] there is no formal deductive movement from premise to conclusion but a regressive hermeneutic movement bent on explication, *aus-legen*, on unpacking the implicit components of an everyday functioning pre-understanding." RH 67

traditional terms this is most akin to a recursive laying bare of the conditions for the possibility of the conditions for the possibility of our experience. Heidegger calls this method "phenomenology". It is he says, "the 'how' with which "phenomena are treated."⁹ Phenomenology is thus our way of access to phenomena and is concerned with "the Being of entities, its meaning, its modifications and derivatives."¹⁰ The Being of entities is precisely what is not immediately obvious. We come across things, not what *makes* them things. Yet Being is what makes it possible for us to come across things, or conversely for things to show themselves to us. So phenomenon means,

"something that proximally and for the most part does *not* show itself ... but at the same time ... something that belongs to what thus shows itself, and ... belongs to it so essentially as to constitute its meaning and its ground."(BT 59)

To engage in the philosophical activity of phenomenology is to describe the structures of Being that pertain to entities we meet.¹¹ Precisely because phenomenology is descriptive Heidegger warns us in the introduction that his investigation will show that the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in *interpretation* and states, "The phenomenology of Dasein is a *hermeneutic* [which term] ... designates this business of interpreting."¹² In his analysis of interpretation he shows that all comprehension relies on pre-conception.¹³ Every question has some direction, something which is enquired about, however minimally understood. That direction or thing is inherent in the question itself, and without it we would have no question, i.e. every question must ask a certain something of a certain something. Thus Heidegger shows we must already have some understanding of something as something in order to question it. Of course our understanding can be erroneous, nonetheless we have already, however inaccurately, partially understood whatever we question. Therefore there is no investigative process, least of all that of *Being and Time*, which can take nothing for granted, as a Husserlian phenomenologist would wish. *Being and Time* proceeds by uncovering and then questioning what we have taken for granted in order to question

⁹ BT 59

¹⁰ BT 60

¹¹ Hence Heidegger says, "The expression 'descriptive phenomenology' ... is at bottom tautological." BT59

¹² BT 62

¹³ Section 32, BT 188ff.

at all. This turning round and studying the conditions of questioning is called hermeneutic by Heidegger.¹⁴

2 BEING IN THE WORLD

Being is all around us, in the form of everything that is, and yet it is never presented simply all by itself. It is always presented in the form of one thing or another. How therefore, Heidegger asks, can we get access to Being as such? It seems the most universal concept, and yet it remains always hidden by the particular manifestation of being of any given thing. Traditionally, metaphysics considered Being under two headings, *essentia*, essence, and *existentia*, existence. Essence was *what* an entity was, existence was *that* an entity was. The being of a tree can be discussed in terms of its existence. Does it owe its existence to the all seeing eye of God, or does it exist simply as the latest in a complex series of arrangements of energies that started *ex nihilo* with the Big Bang? On the other hand the being of a tree can be considered by asking what makes it a tree, as opposed to a table, a matchstick, or a broom-handle. What, in other words, is its essence?

The being of human beings has been particularly studied in philosophy. Heidegger takes up the traditional distinction between essence and existence and proposes that in the case of Dasein the distinction cannot be made, in fact the identity of essence and existence is definitive for Dasein. He claims that,

"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;[¹⁵] they are in each case possible ways for it to be, and no more than that." (BT 67)

The 'what-it-is' of a human being is its 'that-it-is'. What is fixed for us is 'that-we-are' and yet we are always faced with having to choose, or avoid choosing, exactly how to be. We have to choose for ourselves how to live

¹⁴ Hence Dreyfus writes, "Heidegger developed his *hermeneutic* phenomenology in opposition to Husserl's *transcendental* phenomenology." Dreyfus, 1991, p.2. It is useful to use his phrase 'hermeneutic phenomenology' to describe Heidegger's methodology to differentiate it from the Husserlian phenomenology, as the former pupil subverted and redefined his mentor's term.

¹⁵ See below for discussion of 'present-at-hand'.

out what we are presented with, that is to say we are always partly and yet never completely determined. To give a partial but graphic example, as long as we live we have a body but the condition of our bodies depends greatly on our actions, diet and stress levels about which we choose either actively or by default, as well as on our age and genetic inheritance. Having a body is a given, but its condition is radically affected by our choices. What is fixed for us is that we always are, or "take a stand" as Dreyfus puts it, in one manner or another and yet that manner is never fixed once and for all.¹⁶ Heidegger claims that we are *always* choosing, whether explicitly or not, how to be, and this fact is definitive for human beings. At any and every moment *how* I am is a matter for me to decide. *That I am* is constantly raising the question "*How shall I be?*" And this question does not cease to be asked until I am no more.

Dasein is that being for whom its own Being is an issue. Being, we noted above, is never presented to us or made available purely as Being-as-such. It is always the being of some entity. But here, in Dasein, we come across an unusual way in which being is presented to us - our own being is presented to us as an issue, a matter about which we must decide. For this reason Heidegger decides that in the investigation of Being, Dasein has a priority, a special access to Being, not available to other entities. The being of Dasein is caught up with Being itself because our way of being is always to have access to Being by virtue of having to decide how to be ourselves. In the same process in which he establishes the ontological priority of Dasein Heidegger has started to unfold the existential constitution of Dasein. He has pointed out that at any moment we are choosing our 'how-to-be'. This choosing is, necessarily, a choosing of one *possibility* amongst many. A way-to-be is not an entity separate from Dasein that one might pick up and put on like a coat, nor is it merely an abstract logical possibility. It is an inherent part of Dasein *as a possibility*. Possibility is not an added extra to an actual life. Possibility is constitutive of Dasein.¹⁷ At this stage it is necessary to introduce a distinction of which Heidegger makes great use, between the *ontological* and the *ontic*. *Ontological* refers

¹⁶ "Cultures and cultural institutions have existence as their way of being, and so does each of us. To exist is to take a stand on what is essential about one's being and to be defined by that stand. Thus Dasein is what, in its social activity, it interprets itself to be." Dreyfus, 1991 p.23

¹⁷ "In determining itself as an entity, Dasein always does so in the light of a possibility which it is itself and which, in its very Being, it somehow understands." BT 69 See also Gelven, "I do not simply have a possible life as well as an actual life; rather, I have one life in which both the actual and the possible are significant." Gelven 1970 p.74

to the definitive level of being - that which is ontological is necessarily the case for the entity in question to be the sort of being that it is. The *Ontic* is analogous to Kant's *categorical* distinctions. It refers to the contingent qualities of a being - for example the particular way-to-be chosen by a Dasein is an ontic matter, the fact that I must chose one way or another is ontological. Dasein is itself as being-possible. This being-possible is the ontological ground for any ontic possible-way-to-be that is taken up at any one time.

Heidegger points out that the choice of possibility that I make is necessarily mine.¹⁸ I cannot choose for another in this matter of how to be, nor can another choose for me. The fact that I am is continually an issue I have to deal with myself. The choice remains mine, even if I choose to treat myself as just like somebody else or just another thing. In Heideggerian parlance Dasein's being is characterised by "mineness". (*Jemeinigkeit*). This "mineness" is highly significant, because as we will see later, it is because every choice is in each case mine that the possibility of authentic choice arises. Mineness is an existientiale. An existientiale is a fundamental, inevitable, irreducible element of the being of Dasein. Heidegger defines the term in the following passage:

"All *explicata* to which the analytic of Dasein gives rise are obtained by considering Dasein's existence-structure. Because Dasein's characters of Being are defined in terms of existentiality, we call them "*existentialia*". These are to be sharply distinguished from what we call "*categories*" - characteristics of Being for entities whose character is not that of Dasein." (BT 70)

Heidegger reserves the term "existence" for the being of Dasein, and introduces other terms, which we will consider below, for the being of other sorts of entities. As well as pointing out that each one of us has to choose our way-to-be, Heidegger asserts that Dasein has also always made some sort of decision as to the way in which it is in each case mine.¹⁹ As Dreyfus puts it, "Human being is essentially simply self-interpreting."²⁰ Existence then, in each case *has already chosen* a way to be. Hence the 'that-I-am-ness' is always mine in some way or another. Dasein is always actualising some possibility that it has, and decides, or fails to decide, to continue to align itself with that possibility or take up some other. Thus

¹⁸ BT 68

¹⁹ BT 68

²⁰ Dreyfus 1991, p.23 Charles Taylor also interprets Heidegger in this way. See Taylor 1989

Dasein is ontologically determined as always having chosen, always being as being possible, always characterised by mineness, but Dasein remains undetermined with regard to particular ontic possibilities. These three assertions that Dasein's way of being is being-possible, that in each case it is mine, and that it always has taken up its possibilities in some particular way or other are the foundations of Heidegger's subsequent enquiries developed in *Being and Time*.

Now if each of us considers our own everyday situations we are aware that we *can* choose to behave in this way or that, and we *can* think of ourselves as having certain characteristics. Indeed we can even look back on our judgements of ourselves and in turn judge them to have been more or less accurate, but actually, most of the time, we do no such thing. We get on with life. We wake up, have breakfast and go to work without making a big deal about the various choices that a philosophical analysis of our actions might deem us to have made. There is no immediate evidence that our actions follow from deliberate choices based on internal beliefs. If we are honest we cannot say we are choosing a specific, definite way of acting or existing, nor can we be said to be interpreting ourselves in any deliberate or particular way. We are just, to use a telling colloquialism, "getting on with things". According to Heidegger the very casual, ordinary unthinkingness of this way of being has lead philosophers to overlook its importance.

"Because this average everydayness makes up what is ontically proximal for this entity, it has again and again been *passed over* in explicating Dasein. That which is ontically closest and well known, is ontologically the farthest and not known at all; and its ontological signification is constantly overlooked." (BT 69)

However far from being destructive of his analysis, everydayness is crucial to Heidegger's exegesis:

"This undifferentiated character of Dasein's everydayness is *not nothing*, but a positive phenomenal characteristic of this entity. ... We call this everyday undifferentiated character of Dasein 'averageness' (*Durchschnittlichkeit*)." (BT 69)

Heidegger calls this average, everyday way of being inauthenticity. In his lecture course of 1927 he describes it as follows,

"Firstly and mostly, we take ourselves much as daily life prompts; we do not dissect and rack our brains about some soul-life. We understand ourselves in an everyday way or, as we can formulate

it terminologically, *not authentically* in the strict sense of the word, not with constancy from the most proper and most extreme possibilities of our existence, but *inauthentically*, our self indeed but as we are *not our own*, as we have lost our self in things and humans while we exist in the everyday. 'Not authentically' means: not as we at bottom are *able* to be own to ourselves." (BP 160)

In our mundane dealings with the world we do as 'one' does. In German one would say, "man es macht." So Heidegger coins the term "Das Man". "The 'they' [*das Man*], which is nothing definite, and which all are, though not as the sum, prescribes the kind of Being of everydayness."²¹ So although we *can* deliberately choose how to be, that is we can consider and choose our way of behaving on the basis of a clear-sighted consideration of our own, unique situation, mostly we do things and act in the usual, ordinary way. The ordinariness, this average way of behaviour, belongs to no one in particular, it is just the way things are done. Mostly therefore our choice is a default choice to do and be as people in general are. It is not just something that happens from time to time, nor a mere characteristic, it is a way of being, an existential possibility.²²

Authentic being is choosing a way to be on the basis of our own, unique existence. On reflection it is clear that it is in fact a modification of inauthentic being, for we are born and educated in the milieu of social and communicative norms. These norms make possible our self understanding and offer possibilities which we can take over and make our own. Human society comprises a tessellation of meaningful acts, possibilities and significations within which we have the (ontological) possibility of discovering and acting on our own unique (ontic) possibilities.

Heidegger states that both authenticity and inauthenticity are grounded "upon that state of Being which we have called 'Being-in-the-world'",²³ and further that "the compound expression 'Being-in-the-world' indicates in the very way we have coined it, that it stands for a unitary phenomenon."²⁴ Although the phenomenon is unitary he analyses its elements one at a time. Nevertheless he insists that each part of being-in-

²¹ BT 164

²² "Dasein's average everydayness, however is not to be taken as a mere 'aspect'. Here too, and even in the mode of inauthenticity, the structure of existentiality lies *a priori*." BT 69

²³ BT 78

²⁴ BT 78

the-world is equally primary, fundamental and irreducible; for which characteristic he coins the term "equiprimordial".²⁵

The first element he considers is Being-in. By Being-in he does not mean 'in' in the way a flower is in a garden or a chair is in a room. Heidegger means rather to evoke a sense of being-familiar-with as implicit in the notion of dwelling within. He is striving to shed light on how any such thing as 'touching' or 'questioning' is possible.

"As an existentiale, 'Being alongside' the world never means anything like the Being-present-at-hand-together of Things that occur. There is not such thing as the 'side-by-sideness' of an entity called 'Dasein' with another entity called 'world'. Of course when two things are present-at-hand-together alongside one another, we are accustomed to express this occasionally by something like 'The table stands "by" the door,' or 'The chair "touches" the wall'. Taken strictly, 'touching' is never what we are talking about in such cases, not because accurate re-examination will always eventually establish that there is a space between the chair and the wall, but because in principle the chair can never touch the wall, even if the space between them should be equal to zero. If the chair could touch the wall, this would presuppose that the wall is the sort of thing 'for' which a chair would be *encounterable*. An entity present-at-hand within the world can be touched by another entity only if by its very nature the latter entity has Being-in as its own kind of Being - only if, with its Being-there something like the world is already revealed to it, so that from out of that world another entity can manifest itself in touching, and thus become accessible in its Being-present-at-hand." (BT 81)

The toucher must be not just co-present but also be understandingly available *in* a world disclosed such that he is amidst other entities. Dasein can touch things because it does not have to 'come out of' the 'inner world of the soul' to relate to entities in the world, it always already relates to entities in the world. As Dasein we are already existentially involved in the world. Dasein is a sort of openness. In the passage quoted above Heidegger in fact hyphenates Dasein as Da-sein in order to bring out its etymology, literally 'being-there', to emphasise this interpretation of existence.²⁶

In fact for Heidegger the fact that we are already 'out-there' means that world is part of our Being. For Heidegger 'world' is an existentiale of

²⁵ BT 170

²⁶ See also BT 398 and BT 401

Dasein. He differentiates four ways in which the term 'world' can be used and defines his own primary usage of the term as,

"not ... those entities which Dasein essentially is not and which can be encountered within-the-world, but rather ... that '*wherein*' a factual Dasein as such can be said to 'live'." (BT 93)

Along with human beings and the world, the being of ordinary things that we come across in the world like hammers, windows, and footpaths is considered afresh in *Being and Time*. The Western metaphysical tradition takes substantiality as the primary manifestation of being, so a description of an entity in its Being would, in the first instance, describe it in terms of its physical constitution, extension in space and duration in time. In this tradition, and because of the far-reaching influence of Descartes' exercise in doubt, our relationship to entities has been treated as almost exclusively the problem of *knowledge* of the world. In other words it was assumed that one received sense-data and interpreted them, and thus was enabled to perceive entities and 'know' the world.²⁷ However Heidegger observes that we do not generally have the experience of receiving sense data and then interpreting them. Actually our most common, most primary and most intimate meeting with entities is as 'for something'.

"The Being of those entities which we encounter as closest to us can be exhibited phenomenologically if we take as our clue our everyday Being-in-the-world, which we also call our '*dealings*' in the world ... The kind of dealing which is closest to us is ... not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use" (BT 95)

In making a drink of tea, I do not, upon opening the kitchen door *firstly* perceive a rigid horizontal surface extended in space below and in front of my feet and *subsequently* interpret it as 'the floor'; I simply walk across it. The floor to me is 'for walking on'. Similarly the kettle is 'for boiling water' and the mug 'for holding tea'. It is only when things go wrong that I contemplate the properties of things as such. When I trip on a loose plank in the floor the looseness of the plank makes me aware of a smoothness and ease of use of the floor that is missing. When the floor is horizontal and firm I simply use it without contemplating it. When the kettle is broken or the mug is cracked I see them differently - as objects that fail, that are not available for my use. They are still present, spatially

²⁷ See Mulhall 1990 for a comprehensive demolition of the latest incarnation of this attitude as held by Davidson.

situated, but as mugs and kettles they are deficient. Their utility to me is absent or flawed and their being is therefore modified.

Heidegger's analysis refutes the traditional ontological priority given to substance.²⁸ In the scientific rational tradition the purpose of a kettle would be considered contingent, albeit determinative of its design, but certainly not ontologically constitutive of its being. But this scientific theoretical apprehension does not describe how the kettle is for me as I normally meet it. We gain access to beings through our possibilities of being with them, primarily by way of using them. Scientific or theoretical description is a *modification* of our primary way of being with things. It is popularly supposed to describe the 'true' or 'objective' nature of things, but in fact, reading Heidegger, we see that theory describes a theoretical world, not the one that we actually live in.

The way of being of things that we meet most immediately, as we go about our daily life, is called by Heidegger "*Zuhandenheit*", translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as "readiness-to-hand". Readiness-to-hand has a correlative mode of being of Dasein, "*Besorgen*", translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as "concern". The way of being of things that obtrude because they are unserviceable or that we deliberately take a step back to consider, to describe or to stare at as 'pure objects' he calls "*Vorhandenheit*", translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as "presence-at-hand".

"Heidegger is arguing ... that to see the world as present-at-hand is merely one mode of Dasein's relating to its world. For the scientific attitude of objectivity is still only an *attitude*." (Gelven, p.57)

Heidegger's ontology implies that the being of entities we encounter is relational. For Heidegger the Being of beings in the world of Dasein is determined by the way Dasein takes up its own possibilities of being. Traditional ontology is relegated by Heidegger to an analysis of the present-at-hand which is designated as a modification of the primordial way of being of things in the world, readiness-to-hand. Metaphysical theories, in other words, far from providing a superior, more insightful, view, are a derivative way of 'knowing' the world, because we modify the being of entities by apprehending them theoretically.

²⁸ Heidegger's refutation is not of course without precedent. Nietzsche, most famously, precedes him. See *The Will to Power* 1968, esp. p.268, "The concept of substance is a consequence of the concept of the subject: not the reverse! If we relinquish the soul, 'the subject', the precondition for 'substance' in general disappears."

3 SIGNIFICANCE AND WORLDHOOD

If our primary meeting with things is as 'for something' and their way of being is 'ready-to-hand', then that way of being is given by our purposes, our 'in-order-to's', which we project onto them. Each thing we use, each piece of equipment, has its context. The kettle, for example, is in the kitchen. It sits on the work-surface which is 'for putting things on', 'for chopping on' and so forth. The whole kitchen is an equipmental whole for preparing food and drink. It, in turn, is part of the house which is 'for sheltering' and 'for living in'. In other words everything, every piece of equipment, has a context and is part of a network of interlocking and overlapping purposes and contexts.

"What we encounter as closest to us (though not as something taken as a theme) is the room; and we encounter it not as something 'between four walls' in a geometrical spatial sense, but as equipment for residing. Out of this the 'arrangement' emerges, and it is in this that any 'individual' item of equipment shows itself. *Before* it does so, a totality of equipment has already been discovered." (BT 98)

All items of equipment eventually point back to Dasein - they are all 'for-the-sake-of' Dasein, and in each individual case, 'for-the-sake-of-me'. Heidegger designates this interlocking network of relationships "Significance" (*Bedeutsamkeit*) and it is what makes world - that wherein Dasein finds itself.²⁹ World is constituted by a network of relationships that point back to Dasein. When Heidegger writes that worldhood is an existentiale of Dasein he is not suggesting that there would be nothing if there were no human beings, or that all being is reducible to human being, but that worldhood makes possible the encountering of entities as such.³⁰ A world without Dasein is not just our everyday world from which all human beings have been removed. The conception of such a human-free world is still based in concepts and proportions grounded in Dasein. Indeed to distinguish our own material planet as such relies on a point of view created by the particular factual characteristics of human beings. From the point of view of an entity smaller than a neutron our material world is as empty as the space of our solar system is to ourselves. Equally

²⁹ See BT 120

³⁰ BT 64

to an entity as large, or indeed small, as the constellation Orion our world is inaccessibly microscopic. Similarly, just as the spatiality of our concepts is determined by the particular characteristics of human beings, so too are our notions of time and duration. This is not to assert a reductionist relativism but to point out that not only does the concept of things as such depend upon Dasein but so too does their *revelation* as things as such. It is ultimately Dasein that distinguishes one thing from another such that it has a world with inner-worldly entities.

We have to go back to Platonic metaphysics to find the genesis of scientific rationalism. Protagoras stated that "Man is the measure of all things." In the Theaetetus Plato makes Socrates present Protagoras' doctrine in the most ridiculous light possible, viz., "a thing is for any individual what it seems to him to be,"³¹ the better to refute him, and this facile reading has been held up and Protagoras mocked through it ever since. But as Michel Haar writes:

"We are too quick and indeed wrong to understand the human measure in terms of the modern Cartesian or Kantian primacy of subjectivity that claim that the human subject is the condition for every object." (Haar 1993 p.155)³²

It is Plato's reading that is extra-ordinary, indeed in the modern sense of the word, sophistry.³³ Plato's refutation of Protagoras rests precisely on the mis-representation of the nature of knowledge of entities in the world that Heidegger rejects. Compare Plato's schoolboy argument;

"are we going to agree that when we perceive things by seeing or hearing them, we always at the same time *know* them? Take, for example, the case of hearing people speaking a foreign language which we have not yet learned. Are we going to say that we do not hear the sound of their voices when they speak? Or that we both hear it and know what they are saying? Again, supposing we do not know our letters, are we going to insist that we do not see

³¹ Theaetetus 161c

³² According to Haar, 1993 p.154ff., Heidegger attempted in *Neitzsche II* and *Holzwege* to show than man according to Protagoras is *essentially* the same as the man of the tragedians and Heraclitus - that is man before the division arose between being and *aletheia*, "as a presence that unfolds of its own accord." (ibid p.148) Indeed, "Heidegger acknowledges that *aletheia* is not thought as such by the Greeks, it is not thematized." (ibid 148)

³³ "[pre-Socratic] Greek man does not compare the entities before him; above all he does not relate them back to himself in the first instance. Entities as a whole understood as *phusis* - that is, as that which freely spreads out and opens itself of its own accord - address themselves to man. Man does not inquire about his 'I', his subjectivity, to seek the conditions of possibility of entities as such. The form of *reflection* is not predominant for the Greeks." Haar 1993 p.149

them when we look at them? Or shall we maintain that, if we see them, we know them?" (Theaetetus 163b)

with Heidegger's insight in *Being and Time*:

"What we 'first' hear is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking waggon, the motor-cycle. ... It requires a very artificial and complicated frame of mind to 'hear' a 'pure noise'. The fact that motor-cycles and waggons are what we proximally hear is the phenomenal evidence that in every case Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, already dwells *alongside* what is ready-to-hand within-the-world; if certainly does not dwell proximally alongside 'sensations'; nor would it first have to give shape to the swirl of sensations to provide the springboard from which the subject leaps off and finally arrives at a 'world'. Dasein, as essentially understanding, is proximally alongside what is understood. ... Even in cases where the speech is indistinct or in a foreign language, what we proximally hear is *unintelligible* words, and not a multiplicity of tone-data." (BT 207)³⁴

The depth of Heidegger's thought reveals the pusillanimity of the dichotomies that Plato presents.³⁵ Plato's arguments are sophistic constructions of his theoretical, objectifying discourse and do not accord with our immediate experience.³⁶ Without man there is no measure, and without measure there are no 'things'. Without such an entity there is only immeasurable and indefinable time or space. Equally there is no absolute scale, nor any constant measure. Indeed the very words time and space become problematic, and the distinction between one thing and another, between object and ground cannot be discovered.

In his discussion of substance in *A Grammar of Motives*, Kenneth Burke's observations have an extraordinary resonance with Heidegger, and his etymological analysis makes a very Heideggerian point. Burke points out that the literal meaning of "substance" is "standing under".

³⁴ Heidegger makes the same point in "The Origin of the Work of Art": "We never really first perceive a throng of sensations, e.g., tones and noises, in the appearance of things - as this thing-concept alleges; rather we hear the storm whistling in the chimney, we hear the three-motored plane, we hear the Mercedes in immediate distinction from the Volkswagen. Much closer to us than all sensations are the things themselves. We hear the door shut in the house and never hear acoustical sensations or even mere sounds. In order to hear a bare sound we have to listen away from things, divert our ear from them, i.e., listen abstractly." Krell 1993, p.151-2

³⁵ In Chapter Four we consider a possible cause of Plato's attitude.

³⁶ Havelock, 1983 p.63, points out that the noun 'things' is not present in the original of Protagoras' aphorism. He suggests that substituting 'events' for things we could read Protagoras as suggesting that "man makes his own history, an assertion which could be read as part of his anthropological theory." Reading *onta* substantially gives Plato the excuse to attack the saying as relativistic.

"the word 'substance,' used to designate what a thing is, derives from a word designating something that a thing is *not*." (Burke, 1945, p.23)

And further:

"the word in its etymological origins would refer to an attribute of the thing's *context*, since that which supports or underlies a thing would be a part of the thing's context. And a thing's context, being outside or beyond the thing, would be something that the thing is *not*." (Burke, 1945, p.23)

Burke finds in 'substance' a meaning Heidegger would have treasured, for even in 'substantiality' itself lurks the 'not' and a hint that Heidegger's notion that the being of entities in the world is precisely given by the worldhood of the world.³⁷ Burke thus undermines the substantiality of substance itself in exactly the way that Heidegger would wish. Just as 'substance', used to describe the being of things in traditional metaphysics refers, according to Burke, to the thing's context, so Heidegger's 'world' is not 'things' but 'what lets beings be'. World in fact, is that which is 'beneath' (sub) that which 'stands', in that it is the 'context' of things - and yet of course it is no 'other thing', no 'container' of things, but rather the condition of their possibility of being.³⁸ Heidegger defines worldhood in the following passage (*italics are in the original*):

"Dasein always assigns itself from a 'for-the-sake-of-which' to the 'with-which' of an involvement; that is to say, to the extent that it is, it always lets entities be encountered as ready-to-hand. *That wherein* [Worin] Dasein understands itself beforehand in the mode of assigning itself is *that for which* [das Woraufhin] it has let entities be encountered beforehand. *The 'wherein' of an act of understanding which assigns or refers itself, is that for which one lets entities be encountered in the kind of Being that belongs to involvements; and this 'wherein' is the phenomenon of the world.* And the structure of that to which [woraufhin] Dasein assigns itself is what makes up the *worldhood* of the world." (BT 119)

³⁷ The resonance with the topic of "What is Metaphysics ?" (1929) collected in Heidegger 1946, is even more striking. There is no evidence that Burke had read Heidegger before 1945. See Southwell 1987.

³⁸ *En passant* we can note that Burke also remarks, "There is a set of words comprising what we might call the Stance family, for they all derive from a concept of place, or placement. In the Indo-Germanic language the root for this family is *sta*, to stand (Sanskrit, *stha*). ... In German, an important member of the Stance family is *stellen*, to place ... Surely, one could build a whole philosophic universe by tracking down the ramifications of this one root." Burke, 1945. p.21 A prescient observation indeed, for even as Burke was writing Heidegger was engaged in just such an activity.

Worldhood is part of the being of Dasein whereby beings can become manifest. World is structured by significance. Thus for Heidegger the Being of what we encounter primarily is not separable from our encounter with it. We will return to this point in the analysis of meaning in the next chapter.

Along with being-in-the-world Dasein is equally characterised by being-with.³⁹ In coming across things in the world the Dasein that uses them is implied; our whole environment is shaped and understood by virtue of being lived in by people in general, by Dasein.⁴⁰

"Being-with is an existential characteristic of Dasein even when factually no Other is present-at-hand or perceived. Even Dasein's Being-alone is Being-with in the world. The Other can *be missing* only *in* and *for* a Being-with." (BT 156-7)

Every piece of equipment is "indicative of Others."⁴¹ The others indicated are not particular others, but just Dasein in general, which I understand normally in terms of the Dasein I am, which is often precisely not individuated but just one of the 'they'. The Dasein that I am always already with as being-in-the-world is one from whom I do not differentiate myself. I take other Dasein to be as I am, and I am always already involved in them.⁴² I understand any particular other person as Dasein, rather than as a physical object which may or may not turn out to be sentient. I meet another as "thou" on the basis of our being-with-as-being-in-the-world.⁴³ Because Dasein's being is being-with "its understanding of Being already implies the understanding of Others."⁴⁴ But Being-with is *not* just a phenomenon of inauthenticity. Authenticity is a modification of inauthentic being and being-with as existentials cannot be left behind.⁴⁵ Heidegger sometimes makes a distinction between being-with and Dasein-with (*Mit-sein* and *Mit-Dasein*) but he does not always sustain it.⁴⁶ Throughout this thesis I use the term being-with to include both being-with and Dasein-with. Dasein's being is characterised by always already being open to the being of the other,

³⁹ BT 149, BP 160-1

⁴⁰ BT 153

⁴¹ BT 154

⁴² And indeed I shared to a greater or lesser extent my mood as well as my understanding with those I am with. See BT 205

⁴³ BP 278

⁴⁴ BT 161

⁴⁵ "Authentic Being-one's-Self ... is ... an existentiell modification of the 'they'" BT 168

⁴⁶ Cf. BT 149 and BT 206

although it may of course disguise that open-ness or cover it over with the average, indifferent going-along with the other which is characteristic of the 'they'. One can know another intimately on the basis of being-with, but the extent and depth of such knowing "depends ... upon how far one's essential Being with Others has made itself transparent and has not disguised itself."⁴⁷ In authentic being-with Dasein takes up its ownmost possibilities including its own engagement with the being of another.⁴⁸ We will consider a particular case of this in Chapter Five.

4 THE EXISTENTIALIA AND FALLING OF DASEIN

At the next level of his analysis Heidegger looks again at the being of Dasein. Dasein is being-in-the-world. It has been established that there is no 'inside' from out of which we peer to perceive the world; it follows that Dasein is already 'out there'. Dasein is not a thing with added consciousness, it is disclosedness, its being is to be there such that entities within the world can be encountered.⁴⁹ He characterises Dasein by existentialia, his term for that which is ontologically necessary and definitive for the being of Dasein. Three existentialia in particular he defines as equi-primordial, that is equally primary, and constitutive of Dasein; discourse (*Rede*), understanding (*Verstehen*) and attunement (*Befindlichkeit*).⁵⁰ Macquarrie and Robinson translate the latter with the awkward and potentially misleading phrase "state-of-mind". Dreyfus offers, "without great enthusiasm ... affectedness."⁵¹ I am following King in using "attunement" to avoid the mentalistic and cognitive overtones of the use of the word "mind" in Macquarrie and Robinson's composite term.⁵²

Of attunement (*Befindlichkeit*) Heidegger writes:

⁴⁷ BT 162

⁴⁸ BP 287-8

⁴⁹ "The entity which is essentially constituted by Being-in-the-world is itself in every case its 'there'. ... *Dasein is its disclosedness.*" BT 171

⁵⁰ "The fundamental *existentialia* which constitute the Being of the 'there', the disclosedness of Being-in-the-world, are states-of-mind and understanding. ... *Discourse is existentially equi-primordial with state-of-mind and understanding.*" BT 203

⁵¹ Dreyfus, 1991, p.x

⁵² King 1964

"What we indicate ontologically by the term "attunement" is ontically the most familiar and everyday sort of thing; our mood, our Being-attuned." (BT 172)

He points out that even dullness and equanimity are moods and he goes on to assert that Dasein is always in some mood or other.⁵³ This is difficult to contest, although at first sight it does not appear to be a comment of much philosophical import. Yet the omnipresence of mood marks it out as an inescapable part of our everyday being. The mood itself, whatever it is, "makes manifest 'how one is, and how one is faring'".⁵⁴ In having a mood Dasein meets the fact that it is, and must be. Heidegger coins the term "facticity" to refer to that which is the case for any particular Dasein, whose way of being is *existence*, in contrast to the factual nature of contingent circumstances of entities other than Dasein whose way of being is present-at-hand or ready-to-hand. Attunement reveals to us that we exist, and that our being is our own concern and burden. The particular characteristics of how we exist in any given case is our facticity. Furthermore it is because of attunement, because we can like and dislike, that things can matter to us. Mood is disclosed at the same time as world and the way world is disclosed depends on the mood we are in. It is by way of our attunement that things can affect or be of concern to us. Only because what we encounter can matter to us can the relational network subsist such that we can encounter an entity at all. The fact that we are in the world, undeniably revealed by our continually having a mood, Heidegger calls thrownness (*Geworfenheit*).⁵⁵ We are always already entangled in the possibilities and activities of the world; and the world and inauthenticity, the way of being of the 'they', are always already there ahead of us.

Existentially equiprimordial with attunement is understanding (*Verstehen*).⁵⁶ Heidegger uses the term here ontologically. Any particular act of understanding is ontic and derived, and therefore to be distinguished from this fundamental existentials which is the condition of the possibility of any particular act of understanding. Every attunement has its understanding, and vice versa. As understanding we see what we can do. This 'see' and this 'can' here are the keys to understanding. That which I see I can do is my possibility. When I see I can do something I am

⁵³ "in every case Dasein always has some mood" BT 173

⁵⁴ BT 173

⁵⁵ BT 174

⁵⁶ BT 182

projecting a potential, primarily my own potential, upon the future. And always I understand myself in the light of some future possibility, however minimal, towards which I am moving. Such projection is not merely one possible way of being amongst others.⁵⁷ As long as we are in the world, as long as we live, we project understandingly. This project structures at the same time our selves and our world. We don't exist and then understand, we exist understandingly.

"understanding has in itself the existential structure which we call '*projection*'. ... As projecting, understanding is the kind of Being of Dasein in which it *is* its possibilities as possibilities." (BT 184-5)

Projecting our possibilities we reveal the world and entities within it to us. But this revelation is not an action on the part of Dasein, it is not a decided or achieved act - it is ontological. As long as we exist we understand. We may in fact do so erroneously, but even that is made possible by the existentials of understanding. We can grasp Heidegger's notion of understanding more completely if we realise that it has been prepared for and is implicit since the very earliest chapters of *Being and Time*. Heidegger has claimed that the primordial way in which we meet entities in the world is *for* something, that is *for some possible use*. The understanding of the thing as a thing is the projecting of a possibility of Dasein's involvement with it.⁵⁸ Equally Dasein's being as being-an-issue-for-itself means that Dasein's *self-understanding* is in question. Dasein must continually decide to be in a certain way, in other words to live out one of its *possibilities*. Dasein must in fact always have already projected possibilities such that its being *can* be an issue for it - if there was only a single definiteness and no possibilities there would not be an issue of how to be for Dasein. Furthermore we can recall that these possibilities are always mine, so Dasein is, in each case, my possibilities. So to understand myself is to see myself as the one who can and may do such and such a thing in such and such a way, in other words to project possibilities.⁵⁹ The ontological structures of understanding and attunement sustain in every Dasein a certain ontic mood and understanding. Such moods and

⁵⁷ "The kind of Being which Dasein has, as potentiality-for-Being, lies existentially in understanding. Dasein is not something present-at-hand which possesses its competence for something by way of an extra; it is primarily Being-possible." BT 183

⁵⁸ "Any mere pre-predicative seeing of the ready-to-hand is, in itself, something which already understands and interprets." BT 189 See the whole passage for the complete discussion.

⁵⁹ As the specific issue of meaning is of course tied in with the discussion of understanding we will look at it again in the next chapter.

understanding are structured by a third equiprimordial existentiale: *Rede*, translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as "discourse".⁶⁰ Discourse is the articulation of understanding and attunement, the articulation which makes possible any ontic understanding or attunement as such. Heidegger writes:

"Discoursing or talking is the way in which we articulate 'significantly' the intelligibility of Being-in-the-world." (BT 204)

Articulate here does not mean 'put into language'. Rather Heidegger is talking about the fundamental classifying, discriminating and comprehending (in the sense of "holding together") of our moods and understanding. In many cases the latter may not be expressible in language, and yet they are not indefinite. They are quite specific. For example it is common, upon joining a group of people to become aware of a certain atmosphere, that is an emotional tenor to the group, and one's awareness leads one to act and react in finely judged ways. We can say that in this situation one has a precise feel for the situation, an understanding in fact, and yet one might not be able to capture it satisfactorily in words. Another everyday example would be when, if questioned in the middle of some complex activities, one is quite sure of what one is doing and yet not capable of giving a verbal description of the totality and significance of one's actions.⁶¹ Discourse qua existentiale is that structuring of understanding and attunement which makes this non-linguistic exactitude possible.

As we speak and express ourselves, whether on the most mundane matters or complex issues, we are faced with a choice between striving towards expressing precisely the understanding we have or making do with the less accurate, less precise, stock phrases that come readily to us. The experiences of, respectively, struggling to make clear what one thinks, and realising one has failed to express oneself accurately, bear witness to the ubiquity of this choice, and the degree to which language so often falls short of our articulated understanding.

On those occasions when we use stock phrases in our thinking or our speech we fall into idle talk (*Gerede*).⁶² Stock phrases, accepted opinions, and the usual way of expressing things are all of course articulated, but that articulation is impersonal and never individual. Idle talk is the

⁶⁰ BT 203

⁶¹ Gendlin 1988 gives several good examples of precise non-verbal understanding.

⁶² BT 211

inauthentic co-relate of discourse, that is it is the mode of discourse of Dasein that constitutes itself as having the possibilities of the 'they' whilst overlooking those possibilities which are uniquely its own. Idle talk is clearly unavoidable, indeed integral to socialised Dasein.⁶³ We become linguistically competent by hearing and learning what 'they' say, so that in due course we may have the possibility of expressing ourselves.

"This everyday way in which things have been interpreted is one into which Dasein has grown in the first instance, with never a possibility of extrication. In it, out of it, and against it, all genuine understanding, interpreting, and communicating, all re-discovering and appropriating anew are performed. In no case is a Dasein untouched and unseduced by this way in which things have been interpreted, set before the open country of a 'world-in-itself', so that it just beholds what it encounters." (BT 213)

Not only do we meet language primarily as constituted by the 'they', it is also clear that the significations that make up the worldhood of the everyday world are always already dominated by the 'they'. Thus just as in idle talk we talk without actually expressing the true uniqueness of our own revelation of being, so we can even treat our world, our own environment, as if it was just a collection of things merely present for our amusement or delectation with nothing personal about it at all. But of course it follows from Heidegger's analysis of world that our immediate world is, fundamentally, nothing other than our ownmost revelation of being. Although we inherit from the Dasein that has gone before us the means by which we articulate the significance of world,⁶⁴ each Dasein has ontologically its own way of revealing being. In so far as we do not grasp that in revealing the world we reveal also our own being, we see the world as made up of things which could have nothing to do with us. In that case our involvement with it is simply to use it to satisfy our whims or desires. We pay attention to what amuses or gratifies us. Heidegger calls this way of being curiosity.⁶⁵

⁶³ It must be remembered that neither *Rede* nor *Gerede* are merely verbal, nor even linguistic. They characterise articulated being with. Even the casual, non-verbal greeting of the wave of a hand can be given, and understood to have, a personal and direct, or impersonal and inauthentic character.

⁶⁴ The means by which we articulate world will turn out to be, in fact, "that wherein the intelligibility of something maintains itself" BT 193 viz. meaning.

⁶⁵ In his later work, when the emphasis has moved from Dasein to Being, the same issue of the mis-taking of being is approached in the discussion of entities as *Bestand* ('standing-reserve') See "The Question Concerning Technology" in Krell, 1978.

Because of the nature of idle talk and curiosity there arises an ambiguity as to what exactly is discussed in everyday talk and the grounds for everyday action. Is what I am saying what 'they' think or value? Or is it my ownmost unique understanding? Are my views conventional or essential? There is no immediate test for this difference, nor any guarantee that what can be taken to be authentic genuinely is so. By virtue of the ontological structure of my being I am Dasein-with-others, in my mood and understanding I am already existentially involved with others, yet in idle talk and curiosity I treat an other as a separate being whose being is hidden from me. This mis-taking of my situation gives rise to ambiguity, which is the result of falling in so far as it denies our co-attunement (*Mitbefindlichkeit*).⁶⁶ A most common everyday example of this is the way that we can sense somebody's mood when we meet them. They need not tell us, they may even wish to conceal their mood, but nonetheless we can sense it. In so far as we deny to ourselves that we sense anything, or collude with their denial that they are, in their being, showing their mood we deny our ownmost being-with. And yet we cannot help sensing the denial, hence arises ambiguity. A common response is to flee into ever more definite characterisations of self or other but this does not do away with the problem.

Our being is to be an issue for ourselves and we cannot settle the matter however definitive our characterisations.⁶⁷ We discover ourselves continually forced to repeat and reiterate them. Even if we try to ignore the matter we cannot completely avoid it. Somehow we always recognise that we have choice. We are, as it were, "called back" to our authentic possibilities by the silent recognition of the possibility that things could be otherwise with us. Heidegger names this calling "the call of conscience".⁶⁸ But the ease and hence attractiveness of idle talk is tempting and comfortable by comparison with the demands of authentic speech, so there is a natural tendency to pass over the authenticity of one's own being in favour of the public interpretation. Heidegger sums up the consequences.

"In the ambiguity of the way things have been publicly interpreted, talking about things ahead of the game and making surmises about them curiously, get passed off as what is really happening, while taking action and carrying something through get stamped

⁶⁶ Re co-attunement see BT 205; re the phenomenon of ambiguity see BT 219

⁶⁷ Sartre's example of the waiter (Sartre 1969 p.59) illustrates this point perfectly.

⁶⁸ BT 316ff.

as something merely subsequent and unimportant. Thus Dasein's understanding in the 'they' is constantly *going wrong* in its projects, as regards the genuine possibilities of Being." (BT 218)

This ambiguity, he claims, extends even to Dasein's being towards itself. As a result in Being-with-others, we constantly are ourselves as one is and interact with the other as 'they' see him. Our being with the other is constantly invaded by the sight of the 'they'. At the same time as curiosity and idle talk run ahead of, and away from, any genuine encounter with entities in the world their chatter and fleeting interest passes for what is really happening. Thrown into this way of being-with-one-another-in-the-world Dasein loses itself, and yet, as the being whose being is an issue for itself it continually seeks itself. The ambiguity in which it loses itself does not arise from intentional disguise or distortion, it arises from the conditions of the existentiality of Dasein.

"Idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity characterise the way in which, in an everyday manner, Dasein is its 'there' ... In these ... there is revealed a basic kind of Being which belongs to everydayness; we call this the 'falling' [*verfallen*] of Dasein. This term does not express any negative evaluation, but is used to signify that Dasein is proximally and for the most part alongside the 'world' of its concern. This 'absorption in ... [*aufgehen bei...*]' has mostly the character of Being-lost in the publicness of the 'they'. Dasein has, in the first instance, fallen away [*abgefallen*] from itself as an authentic potentiality for Being its Self, and has fallen into the 'world'. 'Fallenness' into the 'world' means an absorption in Being-with-one-another, in so far as the latter is guided by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity." (BT 219-20)

This fallenness is a strange sort of falling. Dasein can apparently fall away from itself! How can we make sense of falling as thus described? Fallenness is the drifting movement of groundlessness, a sort of ignoring or overlooking of the possibilities of choosing for oneself. Because of the 'seduction' of idle talk, Being-in-the-world is tempting in so far as there is always already available the public interpretation of things and of self.⁶⁹ The certainty and decidedness of the 'they' seem to imply there is no need for authenticity or authentic understanding. This "seduction" obscures from Dasein its ownmost potential, and Dasein becomes alienated from itself, leading it to consider itself to have the same sort of being as other entities present-at-hand which it encounters in the world. Never quite

⁶⁹ BT 213

able to completely define human being, Dasein strives ever harder to get more scientific knowledge that will enable it to do so, unaware that the striving is in vain because it has turned away from considering the true nature of its own being.⁷⁰ In idle talk Dasein falls away from its ownmost possibilities and aligns itself with or takes up possible ways of being-itself which are available in the world to anyone. Such Dasein has the way of being of the 'they'.

5 DREAD, CARE AND TEMPORALITY

Having analysed being-in-the-world and teased out its constituents, Heidegger recapitulates and then reunites the existentialia he has examined separately. Dasein is being-in-the-world. Dasein is not only a thrown potentiality for being in the world, but it is also always absorbed in the world of its concern, it is always falling. This is Dasein's everyday existence, absorbed in the world or in being-with other Dasein.⁷¹ But why exactly does Dasein fall, why does it turn away from its ownmost possibilities? Falling comes about because of the nature of Dasein's existence as the being whose being is an issue for it. Dasein has no certain self to hang on to, no identifiable thing it can point to and say, "That is my essence." On the contrary it is beset with negativity. It is thrown into choice, and yet can never choose not to choose, nor can it choose the basis of its choice.⁷² As projection it always takes up certain possibilities, and thereby does *not* take up others, which it potentially is.⁷³ Dasein is something which is not.⁷⁴ Substance, certainty and the personal self are

⁷⁰ "this alienation drives [Dasein] ... into a kind of Being which borders on the most exaggerated 'self-dissection', tempting itself with all possibilities of explanation, so that the very 'characterologies' and 'typologies' which it has brought about are themselves already becoming something that cannot be surveyed at a glance." BT 222

⁷¹ "Dasein's 'average everydayness' can be defined as 'Being-in-the-world which is falling and disclosed, thrown and projecting, and for which its ownmost potentiality-for-Being is an issue, both in its Being alongside the 'world' and in its Being-with Others". BT 225

⁷² "'Being-a-basis' means *never* to have power over one's ownmost Being from the ground up. This 'not' belongs to the existential meaning of 'thrownness'" BT 330

⁷³ [Dasein] always stands in one possibility or another: it constantly is *not* other possibilities, ... *as projection* it is itself essentially null." BT 331

⁷⁴ This exposition of nothing at the heart of being inspired Sartre who took it over and developed it in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre 1969.

all threatened by the notion that at the centre of Dasein's being is an essential nothing.⁷⁵

In accordance with the dictates of his phenomenological approach the Heideggerian threat of nullity is not merely theoretical. He sees it as arising from, and evident in, dread (*Angst*).⁷⁶ For Heidegger dread is that phenomenon of being afraid, not of anything encountered in the world, but just afraid of being - that is one's *own* being, being-in-the-world.⁷⁷ In dread the world is disclosed as world, and yet nothing in it is fearsome. The fear that dread evokes is fear in the face of one's own possibilities. Certain particular, ontic possibilities can be chosen or evaded, some come upon us unbidden. But whatever happens, whatever we do, whatever we choose, what cannot be evaded is the continual possibility of choosing to do or attempt to do otherwise than one does. This possibility is continually present, and yet it is impossible to obtain external, 'objective' knowledge as to the best course of action to choose or of the authenticity of our choices. This impossibility is grounded in two facts. Firstly an unactualized possibility cannot be fully known until it is actualized, secondly, my own choice of possibilities as uniquely mine is necessarily *unique*, and hence incomparable. I can have no comforting public guarantee that my own personal specific choices are authentic.

"Anxiety thus takes away from Dasein the possibility of understanding itself, as it falls, in terms of the 'world' and the way things have been publicly interpreted. Anxiety throws Dasein back upon that which it is anxious about - its authentic potentiality-for-Being-in-the-world." (BT 232)

Dread is a fundamental disposition of Dasein. This dread is our very own, and it is because we experience it as an inescapable threat from 'nowhere' that we turn away from it to the reassuring 'somewhere' of absorption in the world, and hence away from ourselves as our ownmost possibilities of

⁷⁵ Dasein's own self is the revelation of Being as such. But that which lets things be seen is necessarily nothing, an emptiness or openness in which things become accessible. To utilise a commonplace it is because 'nothing is in the way' that we see things. In *What is Metaphysics ?* in 1929 the connection between 'nothing' and the openness of Dasein is brought out more clearly: "Only in the clear night of dread's Nothingness is what-is as such revealed in all its original overtness (*Offenheit*): that it 'is' and is not Nothing." Heidegger 1946, p.369. In *Being and Time* this is foreshadowed in the talk of 'clearing' in the analysis of temporality; "Ecstatical temporality clears the 'there' primordially." BT 402

⁷⁶ *Angst* is translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as Anxiety - I follow King's translation 'Dread'.

⁷⁷ BT 235

being. In dread we confront our own finitude and the lack of an objective self. In recognising that we have to choose ourselves, to take a stand on ourselves, we see also that our choice is always limited by our own particular situation. The ultimate, inescapable personal limitation is the inevitability of our own death.⁷⁸ For each Dasein worldhood ceases upon our death. We are then no more. Dread reveals to us the finitude of being-in-the-world; its thrownness, its irreversible movement towards death and the lack of any certainty or guarantee of our criteria for such choice as we do exercise. Thus the 'not' at the heart of Dasein's being, has two aspects, the 'not' of our own inevitable death, and the 'not' of all those possibilities which are our own and yet which we do not take up because whenever a choice is made other choices are negated.⁷⁹

This 'no more', death, is in a strange way the completion of Dasein. It is our ultimate possibility to be nothing. In the light of the knowledge of our own death we can look over our life and see it for what it is: in death Heidegger finds something firm and ultimate. It is the sole guarantee of our life. It is precisely the nothing which is available to us upon which firmly to ground our choice of being. And as dread reveals our death it also individualises us, for every death is the death of a particular, individual Dasein. This is why Heidegger sees dread as positive, revelatory possibility for Dasein.⁸⁰

"This individualisation brings Dasein back from its falling, and makes manifest to it that authenticity and inauthenticity are possibilities of its Being." (BT 235)

Equally dread reveals to the phenomenological enquirer the unity of the being of Dasein.

⁷⁸ "The pre-eminent revealing power of dread lies in bringing man before the finite freedom of his being-in-the-world, as the same being into which he is already thrown and delivered." King 1964, p.133

⁷⁹ There is another level of 'not' here which I have not gone into which pertains to thrownness. Michel Haar examines this aspect in detail, i.e. "The 'not' does not reveal a lack situated in any subsistent being or on the side of the existence of other, but one situated at the very heart of one's own Dasein. The original lack in Dasein is one that results from its being thrown. Dasein must take over the role of cause, principle and ground, though it cannot give itself and has not given itself the ground. It is not ground, but 'only' the being of the ground; that is, the one who takes over being the ground. "The self that has to lay the ground of itself as such can never master this ground and yet has to take on being a ground by existing". (McNeill's translation) SZ284/BT330." Haar 93 p.20

⁸⁰ In the interests of clarity and brevity I have not considered Heidegger's notion of 'guilt' nor considered in depth the notion of 'the call of conscience' which arises from the 'uncanniness' revealed by dread.

"Anxiousness as a state-of-mind is a way of Being-in-the-world; that in the face of which we have anxiety is thrown Being-in-the-world; that which we have anxiety about is our potentiality-for-Being-in-the-world. Thus the entire phenomenon of anxiety shows Dasein as factically existing Being-in-the-world. The fundamental ontological characteristics of this entity are existentiality, facticity, and Being-fallen." (BT 235)

In other words in dread we are confronted with the predicament of our ontological situation.

Heidegger goes on after the passage quoted above to draw out the temporal nature of existentiality, facticity, and Being-fallen. Existentiality refers to Dasein's being-possible. Dasein's possibilities are clearly futural.⁸¹ It is of the nature of possibilities that they are not actual, and yet they may be. In everyday talk we would say possibilities are in the future. It is also conversely true that when we speak of the future we necessarily speak of possibilities (or impossibilities). Both future and possibilities point to that which is not yet but may be.⁸² But we must note carefully that 'future' and 'possibilities' are not equivalent. Some possibilities in fact will not come to pass *as fact*, and yet they are present *as possible*. So possibilities are the presence of future-ness, independent of what will actually happen. But of course this projection of possibilities is none other than the being of Dasein itself, Dasein as understanding. We understand our world primarily as equipment which is equipment for doing something, i.e. in terms of the possible action, what can in the future be done with it. In other words Dasein itself is futural. *Futurity in this sense is therefore existentially constitutive of the being of Dasein.* In the first instance Heidegger labels this futurity Dasein's "*Being-ahead-of-itself*".⁸³ Later he draws attention to its character of standing-out beyond what we factically are in projecting possibilities. Then he uses the term "ecstasis" to refer to this standing out.⁸⁴ The futural existential element of Dasein is the ecstasy of the future.

Just as existentiality relates to understanding, facticity relates to attunement. Our mood, whose ontological foundation is attunement, reveals to us that we find ourselves already thrown into the world. Always already we are situated and have a mood (*Stimmung*). The

⁸¹ "The primary meaning of existentiality is the future." BT 376

⁸² "Understanding, as existing in the potentiality-for-Being, however it may have been projected, is primarily futural." BT 387

⁸³ BT 236

⁸⁴ BT 388

German, *Befindlichkeit*, "how I find myself" points more obviously to this phenomenon - if I find myself, I must already be there, and that I am there already is evidenced by the fact that I am there with a certain mood. In the American or English idiom one might say that mood reveals "where I am coming from". This colloquial expression points to the essentially historical nature of Dasein, which shows itself even in the most casual situations. I always am myself as the one who has been in such and such a place, manner or way and who is thereby disposed in a certain mood. I always already have been. I am always therefore involved in and carrying over my past. The involvement with the past implicit in attunement, that is to say *my* past, whether I have lived it authentically or not, is my "having been". My past thus obtrudes into the present so again Heidegger will use the term *ecstasis*.⁸⁵ Now it is clear that the possibilities that are present to me are determined in part by how I find myself, so existentiality is determined by facticity, and Dasein's being is not just "*ahead of itself*" but "*ahead of itself in already being in a world*".⁸⁶

Finally Dasein's existence always has the possibility of being absorbed in the world, so its falling is ontological, an essential part of its being. We are always fallen into the world insofar as we are bound up with the affairs of our fellow Dasein and those things within-the-world with which we concern ourselves. We cannot have nothing to do with things in the world because our being is to be open to them - not only can we touch them, we cannot get out of touch. This Heidegger characterises as *Being-alongside*.⁸⁷ As alongside we are present, and the present is the third temporal *ecstasis*.⁸⁸ The present is ecstatic precisely because for something to be present touchable and accessible it cannot be present only in an infinitely small "now". If "now" was like a mathematical point with no extension nothing could be accessible through it. "Now" must have some "spannedness."⁸⁹ We will return to this point shortly. Combining these three new descriptions he produces a new formulation of the Being of Dasein and a new name for that formulation.

"The Being of Dasein means ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world).

⁸⁵ e.g. BT 396

⁸⁶ BT 236

⁸⁷ BT 80

⁸⁸ BT 376

⁸⁹ See BT 472-6. A complementary and somewhat clearer exposition of the span of the now is in BP 268-70

This Being fills in the signification of the term "*care*" [*Sorge*]." (BT 237)

"Care" here is a Heideggerian technical term.⁹⁰ Care names this three-fold structure, it is not something Dasein has or does. It is what Dasein is. That is, whether we know it or not, whether we exist authentically or inauthentically, our Being is grounded in Care.⁹¹

This definition of Care is the basis for the next level of Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, which draws out the temporal nature of the ecstases. In *Being and Time* Heidegger propounds a view of time as radical as his view of being. Time, as it is commonly thought of nowadays is a sequence of "nows."⁹² The past is no longer, the future is yet to come and the present is like a mathematical point with no internal dimensions, precisely demarcated and infinitely small. Heidegger claims this is a derivative notion of time.⁹³ His analytic reverses the traditional philosophical priorities so that rather than understand man as existing in time, he claims that time as we usually understand it is derived from the primordial temporality of Dasein. He starts by pointing out that however time is measured, and before it is ever measured, Dasein has a way of "reckoning with its time".⁹⁴

"When we say 'now', we always understand a 'now *that* so and so...' though we do not say all this. Why? Because the 'now' interprets a *making-present* of entities." (BT 460-1)

This reckoning, this interpreting of the now, he says comes before any measuring of time, indeed it is what makes measuring possible. But nowadays the everyday view of time is 'what a clock measures'. This defines time not as it is, but in terms of an apparatus made possible *by*

⁹⁰ Dreyfus reports that in conversation Heidegger said that with the term "care" he wanted to name the very general fact that "*Sein geht mich an*" roughly, that being gets to me. Dreyfus 1991, p.239

⁹¹ "Care, as a primordial structural totality, lies before every factual 'attitude' and 'situation' of Dasein, and it does so existentially *a priori*; this means that it always lies in them." BT 238

⁹² Kocklemans has a good, basic discussion of the ordinary view of time. E.g. "For the man in the street, time is an obscure power which continuously makes short moments of 'now' reach the present from the future, thereby making them real, and then driving them at once into the past by constantly bringing forward new moments of 'now'." Kockelmans 1965, p.86

⁹³ And Walter Ong considers it artificial, for reasons we shall come across later. "Time is seemingly tamed if we treat it spatially on a calendar or the face of a clock, where we can make it appear as divided into separate units next to each other. But this also falsifies time. Real time has no divisions at all, but is uninterruptedly continuous". Ong 1982 p.76

⁹⁴ BT 456

time. Mumford traces out the history of the development of the common understanding of time and is well aware of its significance.⁹⁵

"The categories of time and space underwent an extraordinary change, and no aspect of life was left untouched by this transformation. The application of quantitative methods of thought to the study of nature had its first manifestation in the regular measurement of time; and the new mechanical conception of time arose in part out of the routine of the monastery" (Mumford 1934, p.12)

"The bells of the clock tower almost defined urban existence. Time-keeping passed into time-serving and time-accounting and time-rationing. As this took place, Eternity ceased gradually to serve as the measure and focus of human actions." (Mumford 1934, p.14)

Mumford's historical analysis, unhindered by the demands of rigorous philosophical thoroughness, races ahead and makes in a few pages the connections between nature, technology, time and being that Heidegger was to concern himself with in philosophical profundity for the next forty years.⁹⁶ Mumford (like Heidegger) had read Bergson, and his interpretation of Bergson's "Duration", which Mumford calls "organic time," bears similarities to Heidegger's thinking: in organic time, "the past that is already dead remains present in the future that has still to be born,"⁹⁷ though Mumford, like Bergson, does not break through to an

⁹⁵ Mumford was writing in the United States and *Technics and Civilisation* was published just a few years after *Sein und Zeit* in 1934. There is no evidence that he knew of Heidegger's work.

⁹⁶ It is illuminating to quote Mumford once more, at length, to show how similar was his understanding of the relationships between these topics: "The clock ... is a piece of power-machinery whose 'product' is seconds and minutes: by its essential nature it dissociated time from human events and helped create the belief in an independent world of mathematically measurable sequences: the special world of science. There is relatively little foundation for this belief in common human experience; throughout the year the days are of uneven duration, ... In terms of the human organism itself, mechanical time is even more foreign while human life has regularities of its own, the beat of the pulse, the breathing of the lungs, these change from hour to hour with mood and action, and in the longer span of days, time is measured not by the calendar but by the events that occupy it. The shepherd measures from the time the ewes lambed; the farmer measures back to the day of sowing or forward to the harvest: ... And while mechanical time is strung out in a succession of mathematically isolated instants, organic time - what Bergson calls duration - is cumulative in its effects. Though mechanical time can, in a sense, be speeded up or run backward, like the hands of a clock or the images of a moving picture, organic time moves only in one direction - through the cycle of birth, growth, development, decay, and death - and the past that is already dead remains present in the future that has still to be born." Mumford 1934 p.15-16

⁹⁷ Mumford, 1934, p.16

ecstatic view of temporality and remains caught up in Aristotelian ways of speaking about time.⁹⁸

Heidegger unfolds primordial temporality by unfolding the "now that...".⁹⁹ In the now beings show themselves in their everydayness. The everyday conceptions of past, present and future all ultimately hang on this now. The past is that which is no longer now, the future is not yet now and the present is here and now alongside what is manifest in this manner.¹⁰⁰ Now is where we find ourselves, in some mood or other, and where, as concern, we can fall into absorption with what is made present to us.

However, according to Heidegger's analysis in order to understand we must reach forward to possibilities, in fact we are stretched into the future of possibilities and also bring futural possibilities into the present. Equally our being, those possibilities and the manner in which entities around us are present, are all conditioned by how we find ourselves. We are thrown and must carry over ourselves as we have been. It is not the past as past events which makes up Dasein's historicity. Rather it is the past as *my* "having-been" and Heidegger coins a new word, *Gewesenheit*, to emphasise this distinction.¹⁰¹ And the present where I am, far from being an immeasurably small moment, is the openness in which beings and my dispositions, facticity and possibilities are made present. So Dasein's now is made of the futurity of possibilities, the historicity of attunement and the openness of being-alongside or being-fallen. Dasein is the openness to Being which lets beings be and the temporal ecstases are what hold open its openness. It is clear from any moment of self-reflection that we do not experience the present as a series of infinitesimal small passing moments. On the contrary we experience a sense of enduring continuity.¹⁰² In authenticity Dasein is stretched alongside this sequence of nows such that it retains its own having-been and reaches forward into

⁹⁸ See BT 382 and especially Heidegger's note xxx (to the discussion on pp.483-4) on BT 500

⁹⁹ BT 459

¹⁰⁰ BT 458-464

¹⁰¹ "Heidegger expressly distinguishes between 'having-beenhood' (*Gewesenheit*) and 'past' (*Vergangenheit*). The last term indicates the past in the usual sense of the word, in which time is considered to be a pure sequence of moments, and the past is the sum total of the 'nows' that are no more. If, however, time is nothing outside Dasein, in other words, if Dasein itself temporalizes, itself is time, then there must also be a past that is distinct from the past in the accepted sense of the word. This past of which Dasein can claim that it is its own is the 'having been'. This 'having been' is not something distinct from me; it is what I have been and what I still am in some way; it is that ... which is present as having been." Kockelmans 1965, p.87

¹⁰² BT 461-3

its future. Heidegger's claim is that this ecstatic openness which lets being be manifest is the authentic being of Dasein, and he calls it "temporality".¹⁰³

"Temporality temporalizes, and indeed it temporalizes possible ways of itself. These make possible the multiplicity of Dasein's modes of Being, and especially the basic possibility of authentic or inauthentic existence. ... *Temporality is the primordial 'outside-of-itself' in and for itself.*" (BT 377)

For the most part Dasein understands itself, and hence time, inauthentically. Inauthentic time is not at all ecstatic, in fact in inauthenticity time is clock time, measured time, it is *public* time.¹⁰⁴ The true nature of time is as hidden from the 'they' as the true nature of being. Inauthentic Dasein deals with itself, and the past and future, as though clocks and calendars entirely explained the phenomenon of time and were all one needed to deal with it. But such measuring devices neither give rise to time nor explain it, they arise from our inauthentic dealings with it, and then dominate the public discourse on time. As a result the ecstatic nature of Dasein's being is overlooked and Dasein erroneously considers itself to be "the sum of the momentary actualities of Experiences which come along and successively disappear."¹⁰⁵ This view gives rise to the pseudo-problem of how the Self maintains its selfsameness throughout this string of changing experiences. As Heidegger remarks dryly, "opinions diverge" on how this selfsameness persists,¹⁰⁶ and in his view such opinions go astray in so far as they do not realise that ordinary time arises from, and is made possible by, the ecstatic temporality of Dasein. Original temporality arises in Dasein and has a span *during which* the events of manifestation, calendrical dating, and measuring can take place.¹⁰⁷ Authentic Dasein does not interpret itself in terms of the timetable of the 'they'. In authenticity Dasein temporalises itself as the authentic present which Heidegger calls the moment of vision

¹⁰³ BT 374. In *The Basic Problems* he writes, "Temporality is stretch itself" BP 270

¹⁰⁴ "Publicly, time is something which everyone takes and can take. In the everyday way in which we are with one another, the levelled-off sequence of 'nows' remains completely unrecognizable as regards its origin in the temporality of the individual Dasein. ... The only time one knows is the public time which ... belongs to everyone - and that means, to nobody." BT 477

¹⁰⁵ BT 426

¹⁰⁶ BT 425

¹⁰⁷ BT 461-4

(*Augenblick*).¹⁰⁸ This does not require that Dasein reads and understands Heideggerian ontology, but rather that it takes up its possibilities in the light of its own ontological situation. The disclosure of the inevitability and individualness of our own death allows the possibility of taking our ownmost disclosure of being seriously.

Heidegger calls the attitude which recognises and actualises the possibilities of authentic existence "anticipatory resoluteness."¹⁰⁹ In so far as Dasein lives in anticipatory resoluteness its present is the *Augenblick* - the spacious revelation of the being of beings and of Dasein. In authenticity Dasein takes up its own possibilities in a manner which is made possible by its ecstatic being. In inauthenticity Dasein mistakes its own being and takes up its possibilities as though it was an entity "within time"¹¹⁰ and must take over its own way of being from what is made available by the 'they'. The way of being of the 'they' in which we inevitably participate, turns away from the significance that Heidegger attributes to death. In inauthenticity we even tend to avoid the realisation of the inevitable finitude of every particular Dasein. These two basic modes of being are two fundamentally different ways in which Dasein temporalises itself.

This exposition of primordial temporality is brief, although the subject is interminable and complex.¹¹¹ With this exposition of Heidegger's ontology as our basis, in the next chapter we will look at the existentials of meaning. We will take up the issue of temporality again when we examine the relationship of meaning to narrative, and the temporality of Dasein that makes stories possible.

¹⁰⁸ "When resolute, Dasein has brought itself back from falling, and has done so precisely in order to be more authentically 'there' in the 'moment of vision' as regards the Situation which has been disclosed." BT 376

¹⁰⁹ See Section 62, BT 352ff. esp. "The phenomenon of resoluteness has brought us before the primordial *truth* of existence. As resolute, Dasein is revealed to itself in its current factual potentiality-for-Being, and in such a way that Dasein itself is this revealing and Being revealed." BT 355

¹¹⁰ "The ordinary way of characterizing time as an endless, irreversible sequence of 'nows' which passes away, arises from the temporality of falling Dasein. ... proximally and for the most part, even *history* gets understood *publically* as happening *within-time*." BT 478

¹¹¹ The exposition of temporality in *Sein und Zeit* is neither complete nor pellucid. Blattner in Dreyfus and Hall 1992 probes Heidegger's exposition of existential temporality, but acknowledges that he lays bare more questions than he answers. King 1964, Kockelmans 1965, Guignon 1983, Dreyfus 1991 and Steiner 1992 all offer useful overviews.

Chapter Two

The Existential of Meaning

1 INTRODUCTION

The object of a psychotherapist's attention is a human being, and it therefore behoves him to understand the being of the object of his attention. On the whole psychotherapists have not confronted the issue of the essential nature of human being.¹ Freud and many who have followed him simply posited intra-psychic entities, not on the basis of phenomenological ontological argument but as a hypothetical account of what they believe themselves to have observed.² It is proposed that Heidegger's ontology of Dasein offers a preferable and more useful understanding of human being than such hypothesizing. Heidegger's ontology of Dasein is particularly pertinent for psychotherapists because he claims that meaning is existentially constitutive of human being. Many psychotherapists claim meaning is a significant issue in therapy and many clients complain of a lack of meaning.³ An understanding of the exact

¹ This is not to say *no* psychotherapists have done so, merely that it is rare. Many take over an evolutionary notion of man, some follow Freud. Boss, see Boss 1994, is an exception who took over Heidegger's ontology of Dasein. Jung also was curious about the essence of human being and in many ways arrived at conclusions similar to Heidegger: "neither psyche nor Dasein should be confused with the ego-boundaries of the individual person who is seen situated bodily at a particular place. Both psyche and Dasein describe pre-personal existence, that fundamental matrix that precedes and is the condition for personal identity formation. For both Jung and Heidegger, the establishment of personal identity is a process of appropriating as one's own what is found to be already lived, however dissociatively or primitively. Moreover, both Jung and Heidegger regard that process of differentiation as essential to human fulfillment - individuation for Jung, and authenticity for Heidegger." Brooke 1991, p.88 See entire work for a detailed comparison of ontologies. Mindell (1985 (a) and (b)) builds on Jung's notions although with less concern for ontological matters.

² As previously noted Freud's writing contains both admissions of his hypothesizing, (e.g. "What follows is speculation, often far-fetched speculation" Freud 1922 p.27) and dogmatic assertions ("the thoughts contained in [*The Ego and the Id*] are synthetic rather than speculative in character" Freud 1927 p.7). He converts speculation to dogma mainly by dint of sheer repetition although he claims his results justify his assumptions (Freud 1964 p.144). See also Freud 1962, pp.103-116. According to Boss, Heidegger "did not want to have to accept that such a highly intelligent and gifted man as Freud could produce such artificial, inhuman, indeed absurd and purely fictitious constructions about homo sapiens." Boss 1988, p.9

nature of existential meaning and its part in human being would clearly help in the practice and teaching of psychotherapy. We will return to the psychotherapeutic view of meaning in Chapter Six, but here we will seek to elucidate Heidegger's view.

Heidegger grants to meaning an existential status, i.e. it is constitutive of the being of Dasein.⁴ In this chapter we take a close look at this claim. In fact we will see that his exposition is confused and that the existentialia are not as separable as is implied by their names as distinct elements. We will uncover what phenomena can be understood from Heidegger's exposition and propose that these phenomena can be understood from the point of view of the individual Dasein in terms of narrative. For Heidegger the meaning of being is time, and the meaning of Dasein's being is temporality,⁵ specifically the unity of the temporal horizons.⁶ That unity of temporal horizons is what is necessarily articulated in a primordial narrative. It may be that Heidegger abandoned the terminology of existentialia after *Being and Time* because he discovered that it did not easily describe the phenomena. However, our analysis of the existentiale of meaning will lay bare that which can be better understood in terms of primordial narrative which we will lay out in Chapter Five.

There are two words in German that can be translated into English by 'meaning' - "*Bedeutung*", and "*Sinn*". They are respectively translated, for the most part, by Macquarrie and Robinson as "signification" and "meaning". In colloquial usage one comes across the "bedeut-" stem most commonly in the form, "*Was soll das bedeuten?*" "What does that mean?" *Bedeutung* has overtones of referring ("*deuten*" means "to interpret") and is used by Heidegger to refer to the relations of the in-order-tos with-whichs and the for-the-sake-ofs which constitute the worldhood of the world.⁷ *Sinn* is both related to, and often elsewhere translated by, "Sense". In German, as in English, the same word is used for the senses (*die Sinne*), and *Sinn* is used in many of the various ways that "sense" is used in English. *Sinne*, (plural) can mean one's

³ E.g. Yalom 1980, p.447; Eagle 1984, p.73; Spinelli 1994, p.294; Bettelheim 1991, p.3; van Deurzen Smith, 1988, p.3; Polkinghorne 1988, p.154; May 1983, p.60; and many others.

⁴ "Meaning is an *existentiale* of Dasein" BT 193

⁵ "Temporality has manifested itself ... as the meaning of the Being of care." BT486

⁶ BT 416

⁷ "The 'for-the-sake-of-which' signifies an '-in-order-to'; this in turn, a 'towards-this'; the latter, an 'in-which' of letting something be involved; and that in turn, the 'with-which' of an involvement. These relationships are bound up with one another as a primordial totality; ... the relational totality of this signifying we call 'significance'." BT 120

consciousness. In "*etwas in Sinn haben*" *Sinn* means one's mind - as in to have something in mind; in "*Sinn für Kunst*" *Sinn* means a feeling for art; in "*das ist nicht der Sinn der Sache*", *Sinn* means the point as in "that is not the point", or "the point (object) of the exercise". Just as in English one can talk of making sense of things, in German one can say "*Der Satz gibt Sinn*", "The sentence makes (literally gives) sense". *Sinn* means all this as well as meaning. We cannot simply carry across a definition from a German dictionary to interpret *Being and Time*; rather in examining meaning in *Being and Time* we must ask what is Heidegger getting at, what is the "sense" of meaning he intends.

As well as inheriting and writing within the colloquial German understanding of *Sinn* above Heidegger uses *Sinn* to denote an existentiale of Dasein. Furthermore he uses the word '*Sinn*' in his formulation of the question with which he starts the book "*der Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein*"⁸. Thus there are three important uses of what can be translated as "meaning" in *Being and Time*: (1) "the meaning of Being", (2) *Bedeutung*, translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as "signification" or "significance", and (3) meaning as Heidegger defines it: "Meaning is an *existentiale* of Dasein."⁹ We will look briefly at aspects of the first two uses and then turn to the third. Using commentaries and a close reading we will try to discover what Heidegger intends by his use of 'meaning' [*Sinn*], whether indeed there is a single coherent, comprehensible usage, and what we can understand from his designation of meaning as an existentiale.

2 THE MEANING OF BEING

Let us examine the first of these uses of 'meaning'. Heidegger claims that it is because we no longer know what is meant by the word 'being' that "it is fitting that we should raise anew *the question of the meaning (Sinn) of Being*."¹⁰ This quotation from the first numbered page of the German edition of *Sein und Zeit* does not present the actual question itself in a

⁸ Title of Introduction SZ 2, BT 21

⁹ BT 193

¹⁰ BT 19

specific formulation. He describes the question,¹¹ and he describes what is entailed in asking the question,¹² but the question itself is not given a single, specific, verbal formulation. As Heidegger is aware, any specific formulation of the question of Being gives rise to problems. He does not simply write, "What does this word, 'being', mean?" because to do so would be essentially to ask about a word - "being" - not Being itself. That would perpetuate exactly the overlooking that he is seeking to make evident, and then dismantle. For this reason, he cannot simply take over the question implicit in the quotation from the Sophistes - "What do you mean by Being?" It is not clear who, if anyone (and the best candidate in fact turns out to be the "anyone" [*das Man*]!), could stand in for the long gone "you" - those philosophers, whom the Visitor from Elea is hypothetically interrogating.¹³ Heidegger's claim is that in our time no one knows what being is. He himself is always on the way to Being - he does not proclaim that he knows the answer to his question. Furthermore he is not the one questioned, he is taking, on our behalf, the role of questioner. He does not wish to engage in a dialogue with the 'they', or any generally accepted view of being, because, as is clear from his analysis of inauthenticity, any such view would be levelled down, a concealing of the truth of the matter. Nor is he asking "What is?" but rather what is the situation such that there is some whatever of which to ask that. But the situation is neither one of total ignorance nor a simple matter of clarification;

"Even if we ask, "What is 'Being'?", we keep within an understanding of the 'is', though we are unable to fix conceptionally what that 'is' signifies. We do not even know the horizon in terms of which that meaning is to be grasped and fixed." (BT 25)

Heidegger is not asking "What do we *really* mean by Being?" because he claims that in fact, for the most part, "We do not *know* what "Being" means."¹⁴ The question certainly can be read as 'What is it that we mean, but do not know we mean, by being?' To read it thus is to take it as

¹¹ "In the question which we are to work out, what is asked about is Being - that which determines entities as entities, that on the basis of which [woraufhin] entities are already understood" BT 25-6

¹² "the hardened tradition [of Western Philosophy] must be loosened up, and the concealments which it has brought about must be dissolved." BT 44

¹³ "[those philosophers] who say that all things are just some two things, hot or cold or some such pair" (Sophistes 243d)

¹⁴ BT 25

essentially *Heidegger's* question. He wishes, in spite of our ignorance, that it might become our question too. He needs to dismantle the tradition of Western Metaphysics, to carry out the "destruction of the history of ontology"¹⁵, in order to re-gain access to Being in such a manner that we can question it without begging the question.¹⁶ In exposing the vagueness of his first formulation of his question we unpack the major issues that he will tackle in the book. He cannot specify the meaning of "meaning of Being" (or anything else) at this stage, given the radical and fundamental nature of his enquiry. Yet somehow we already understand his question in a vague, and provisional fashion. The hermeneutic of *Being and Time* explores this 'somehow' and in doing so the question of the place of meaning in the inquiry, and in the ontology of Dasein, is raised.

3 SIGNS AND SIGNIFICATION

We have already looked at significance in the previous chapter. We will look briefly now at signs and Heidegger's rejection of the notion that signs give us meaning. Certain items of equipment, signs, present themselves as meaningful and it is tempting to fall into interpreting them as the quintessence of meaning from which all other meaning is derived. In order to see why Heidegger does not do so, we will look briefly at Section 17 of *Being and Time*. We shall do so using Okrent's *Heidegger's Pragmatism*, enabling us at the same time to consider an example of the pragmatist view Heidegger. Okrent does not appear to make any distinction between *Bedeutung* and *Sinn* but nevertheless gives a succinct exposition of the sign in his discussion of interpretation, meaning and assertion;

"someone has understood the meaning of the sign when he knows what to do relative to the sign." (Okrent 1988 p.60)

Signs are equipment, they are ready to hand, for example, "Stop signs are equipment for travelling."¹⁷ But Okrent does not step beyond the

¹⁵ BT 44

¹⁶ As Charles Guignon puts it, "In the background of *Being and Time* is the assumption that the whole history of Western thought has been set on the wrong track by the Greek interpretation of Being as *ousia* or *parousia*." (Guignon 1983 p.15) See the translator's footnote (1) on BT 47 for an overview of Heidegger's thinking on *ousia* and *parousia*. See also *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 1959 p.61

¹⁷ Okrent 1988, p.60

prejudices of his pragmatic background and later writes that "meaning ... achieves a certain objectivity"¹⁸ and later still misses the existential significance of worldhood and significance.¹⁹ He similarly takes meaning (*Sinn*) as related to the meaning of equipment "but ... somewhat simpler"²⁰ and suggests the relationship between the meaning of *x* and possible uses of *x*, "supplies one element of the objectivity of the "meaning of *x*."²¹ In sticking to the analytic language of pragmatism and his aspiration to discover conditions for the possibility of objective meaning he overlooks the importance of the existential involvement of Dasein in meaning and the phenomenological significance of signs. For Heidegger the sort of referring a sign does is not identical to the referring inherent in the in-order-to's of the being of the ready-to-hand outlined in Chapter One above.²² Rather, the Being of Dasein, as concernfully engaged in travelling, for example, makes the stop sign accessible as a sign.²³ To one who does not travel and knows not what travel might be, the sign is not a sign. So along with the signhood of the sign goes a certain concern of Dasein. In Heidegger's words,

"A sign is not a Thing which stands to another Thing in the relationship of indicating; it is rather an item of equipment which explicitly raises a totality of equipment into our circumspection so that together with it the worldly character of the ready-to-hand announces itself." (BT 110)

That is,

"Signs always indicate primarily 'wherein' one lives, where one's concern dwells, what sort of involvement there is with something." (BT 111)

¹⁸ Okrent 1988, p.60

¹⁹ Although he writes "the practical context of activity 'grounds' and supplies the conditions that must be met if a being is to be a definite sort of thing," moments later he reintroduces a transcendental assumption of some 'more real' being by continuing, "my practical understanding in no way determines whether the thing is a hammer" Okrent, 1988 p.167

²⁰ Okrent 1988, p.60

²¹ Okrent 1988, p.61

²² "Signs ... are ... items of equipment whose specific character as equipment consists in showing or indicating." BT 108

"This indicating which the sign performs can be taken as a kind of 'referring'. But ... this referring as indicating is not the ontological structure of the sign as equipment." BT 109

²³ "the sign .. is related in a peculiar and even distinctive way to the kind of Being which belongs to whatever equipmental totality may be ready-to-hand in the environment, and to its worldly character." BT 109

Signs are therefore a *special* case of significations and "significations, as what has been Articulated from that which can be Articulated, always carry meaning."²⁴ The signification (*Bedeutung*) of the sign is the assertion, directive, hortatory, cautionary or whatever, which it instantiates. The meaning (*Sinn*) of a sign is that Dasein has a concerned involvement with entities in the world as engaged in that for which the sign is significant. Thus even where meaning (*Sinn*) is not referred to, but as signification entities are experienced as referring, the existential presence of meaning subsists in Dasein. That which is revealed by an explicit discussion of meaning as an existentiale is *what sort of involvement there is with something*, in other words Dasein's Being itself as attuned and understanding.²⁵ Any particular signification is an ontic phenomenon. The totality of significations (*Bedeutsamkeit*) makes up the structure of the world,²⁶ and the meaning which subsists beneath any signification is a function of the being of Dasein. We do not get meaning from signs, neither immediately nor originally, but rather as Dasein we give meaning to signs. Ontologically the meaning of signs originates in Dasein, so to find the origin of meaning we cannot look to signs but must investigate further the being of Dasein.

4 SINN: TWO CONTEMPORARY VIEWS

We turn now to considering the understanding of *Sinn* of two contemporary philosophers, each influential and both representative of different current approaches to Heidegger. Hubert Dreyfus is chosen because he has concentrated his study on *Being and Time*, (and mainly the first division thereof) which is the primary source of the ontological basis of this thesis, and John Caputo is chosen as representative of those with a more deconstructionist bent who comment on both the earlier and the later Heidegger.²⁷ Caputo's reading is not merely an exegetical commentary but an interpretative appropriation.

²⁴ BT 204

²⁵ Nicolson concurs: "Sinn, in the general structure of existence, is the foundation of *Bedeutung*." Nicolson 1992, p.102

²⁶ See BT 120

²⁷ Caputo has written widely on Heidegger. I am considering here his position in *Radical Hermeneutics* wherein he addresses the issue of meaning in *Being and Time* most directly. Caputo's deconstructionism is also typical of many modern commentators but I will not address it at this stage, as the entire deconstructionist project is based on a prioritization of

In his commentary on *Being and Time* Hubert Dreyfus draws two points out of Heidegger's formal definition of meaning.²⁸ His fundamental view is that *Sinn*, (which he translates as "sense") is part of the structure of understanding the world. In his words,

"Sense ... is that on the basis of which we can make sense of something. It is a name for our background familiarity with each domain of being - a familiarity that enables us to cope with beings in that domain." (Dreyfus 1991 p.222)

This is a very Diltheyan reading of Heidegger,²⁹ indeed Dreyfus could almost be simply updating Dilthey, rather than overcoming the "ontological indefiniteness"³⁰ that Heidegger claims to identify and to move beyond.³¹ Dreyfus also identifies a second usage:

"It [meaning] is also the name for the general structure of that background, *in terms of which* the ontologist makes sense of being." (Dreyfus 1991 p.223)

Dreyfus here introduces a distinction between the technical term to be utilised by the ontologist and the background familiarity.³² Dreyfus' reading seems to be weak on two counts. Firstly his distinction does not stand up. "The general structure ... in terms of which the ontologist makes sense of being" is a particular case of "The background familiarity with each domain of being ... that enables us to cope with beings in that domain". The formality of the structure corresponds to the formality of the being of the Dasein constituting himself for the moment as "the ontologist". Dreyfus is seeing the same phenomenon from two different points of view and misunderstanding it to be two ontologically distinct phenomena. Even if we concede that "meaning" is a "background familiarity", which I argue below is inadequate, to say it is *that in terms of*

text with which I will take issue later. I believe that Caputo mis-reads Heidegger, to the extent that he tends towards deconstructionism. From a deconstructionist point of view, however my belief could be seen to reflect my entrapment in a totalizing authoritarian view of truth, and Caputo's reading might be neither justified nor un-justified but a representation of the flux of thinking.

²⁸ Dreyfus, 1991

²⁹ Compare this passage with Dilthey: "Meaning is the comprehensive category through which life can be understood." Dilthey 1976 p.235 But note hearing 'meaning' is used to translate *Bedeutung* from Dilthey's original (*Gesammelte Schriften Bd. VII, p.232*)

³⁰ BT 253

³¹ See BT 252ff. and BT 455

³² Heidegger does not make this distinction, in fact I argue below that he conflates the reader, a fellow ontologist, and the layman who has a 'background familiarity' in the 'wir sagen', BT 192

which an ontologist makes sense of being is to add nothing more. To describe its structure is simply to describe *the same* ontological phenomenon in the greater detail of a particular ontic example.

Secondly, and more importantly, it is difficult to differentiate this definition of meaning from that of the worldhood of the world - that network of significations that make up the equipmental context in terms of which we make sense of entities-within-the-world. Indeed, given the use of his coining "*das Woraufhin*", we can say that Heidegger himself has encouraged this confusion in his definition of worldhood and its overlap with his attempt at a definition of meaning. This reading of meaning by Dreyfus harks back to worldhood;

"That wherein [Worin] Dasein understands itself beforehand in the mode of assigning itself is that for which [das Woraufhin] it has let entities be encountered beforehand. The 'wherein' of an act of understanding which assigns or refers itself, is that for which one lets entities be encountered in the kind of Being that belongs to involvements; and this 'wherein' is the phenomenon of the world. And the structure of that to which [woraufin] Dasein assigns itself is what makes up the worldhood of the world." (BT 119, underlining is mine.)

There is no significant difference between this definition of worldhood and Dreyfus' reading of meaning. Dreyfus is certainly justified in his reading, because of the crucial place of "*das Woraufhin*" on both BT 119 and BT 193. However if meaning is equivalent to worldhood, why did Heidegger use two different terms? The question to bear in mind is "Does the confusion and conflation of meaning with other terms arise from the fact that Heidegger is developing his thought through the hermeneutic of *Being and Time*, or does it reflect an essential redundancy of the latter term?" We will read BT 192-4 closely to see if Heidegger means by "meaning" something more than worldhood. We may read Heidegger as himself thinking alongside this interpretation, and pausing at the interpretation that is picked up by Dreyfus, not as a final point in his thinking, but a staging post. He may be digging beneath the statement to find a better expression, to elucidate what has not yet been brought out in this partial, ongoing explanation. If so in this passage we must be as ready to read sentences as standing in anti-thesis as standing in apposition, because Heidegger is *in the process* of thinking the difference between meaning and worldhood, of exploring that for which he has coined the term "*Woraufhin*".

Caputo in *Radical Hermeneutics*, claims "Meaning is not ... what is understood ... but ... the organising component in what is understood",³³ which given that meaning is an existentiale is clearly an unexceptionable reading. But then he posits,

"an implicit distinction between primary and secondary phases of the work of projection. The being is projected first in a preliminary way upon its 'Being' and then in a second and determinative way upon the 'meaning' of that Being." (RH 84)

He explains this distinction and the two phases as follows.

"The organising principle or centre of reference in the understandability is called the 'upon-which' of the 'primary' or first phase of projection. We are thus to distinguish in the projective understanding of any being the initial projection - of the being in its Being - from that upon which the projection was carried out (that upon which it maintains itself, that which organises and structures the projection). When we have determined the meaning (the 'upon-which', the second determining element) of the Being (the primary projection, the initial or provisional determination) of a being we will understand that which makes that being possible as a being." (RH 84-5)

This distinction seems to serve Caputo's intention more than it honours Heidegger's. Where Heidegger does talk of a "primary projection" the primacy is clearly that of the ontological over the ontic, not the first part of a two phase ontological structure.³⁴ Furthermore Caputo's commentary has the weakness of introducing a significant distinction that is not made by the author, which had it been intended would surely have been made given its importance. A more obvious objection to Caputo's reading is that his distinction raises a problem far more serious than the one it purports to solve. In spite of the apparently explicatory paraphrases, "the first phase", "initial or provisional" and the "second determining", he does not state in what realm or dimension his first projection has priority over the second. The most obvious possibility is the most ludicrous: the implicit temporal priority of the "initial or provisional" phase over the "second determining" phase of the project re-introduces at the ontological level a sequential linear time in the middle of an analysis which is on the way to showing precisely that such time is not primordial but is derivative

³³ RH 84

³⁴ BT 371

from originary ecstatic temporality. Nothing inherent in an existentiale can have such temporal priority. Nor, given Heidegger's explicit emphasis on the equiprimordiality of the constituent existentialia of Dasein, could it have ontological priority. We may understand meaning by seeing a two-foldness in the nature of the projection of understanding - that which is projected, and that 'upon which' it is projected - but any talk of primary and secondary at the ontological level is absurd.³⁵ Further we must be alert to the possibility that this two-foldness is inherent not in the phenomenon but in the word or metaphor "projection" used to describe it. This two-foldness may illustrate that we are straining the limits of usefulness of 'projection' as a descriptive term for the phenomenon.³⁶

The division into that which is projected and the upon-which inherent in this terminology may have encouraged Caputo to develop in his *Radical Hermeneutics* the notion of a drive to get "beyond Being".³⁷ It is worth diverting briefly to consider this notion of Caputo's because it is both typical of, and influential upon, a significant sector of contemporary Heideggerian scholarship, although it seems to me to be a misreading to consider Heidegger to have been concerned to get beyond Being, either in *Being and Time* or in his later thought. The notion itself is made possible by the pride of place given to text in modern philosophy. The fixity of a text obscures the ambiguity which arises from its decontextualization. Whilst lecturing Heidegger, by tone and emphasis, and if necessary by question and answer could, and I believe would, have made it quite clear that his quest was always to answer the question of being, not to move beyond it. We will return to the significance of orality later. Certainly the later Heidegger writes "~~Being~~" and then "Ereignis", but in so doing he is not necessarily moving beyond Being. When he talks of "*Es gibt*" and the "*Gegend*", "*Wohnen*" and "*das Geviert*" the different words do not signify that he is going beyond Being but that he is thinking Being more deeply. To read Heidegger otherwise is to mistake "what the talk is about" and to listen "only to what-is-said-in-the-talk as such".³⁸ It makes of Being an

³⁵ Certainly five years later Heidegger explicitly refuses to countenance any sequentiality to projection: "'Projection' does not refer to some sequence of actions or to some process we might piece together rather ... it refers to .. the unity of an action .. of an originary and properly unique kind" FC 363

³⁶ Grieder 1996 (a) spells out in detail the incoherence of Heidegger's description of understanding. Nonetheless, as Grieder notes, the discrepancies of Heidegger's account have not prevented his fundamental ideas from being "a great inspiration to many", including this author.

³⁷ RH 85

³⁸ Cf. BT 206 & 212

entity that one could get beyond; and although, "Being is always the Being of an entity"³⁹ "The Being of entities 'is' not itself an entity."⁴⁰ Otto Pöggeler knew Heidegger well over many years and offers a more accurate description of Heidegger's thought.

"Heidegger's thought must be understood as a way. It is not a way of many thoughts but one that restricts itself to a single, solitary thought. ... Heidegger has always understood his thinking as travelling along a way ... into the neighbourhood of Being." (Pöggeler, 1987, p.2)

Caputo would disagree with this view. In *Radical Hermeneutics* he refers twice to a passage from *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* to support his reading.⁴¹ The passage he cites is this.

"If being is to become objectified - if the understanding of being is to be possible as a science in the sense of ontology - if there is to be philosophy at all, then that upon which the understanding of being, qua understanding, has already pre-conceptually projected being must become unveiled in an explicit projection. We confront the task not only of going forth and back from a being to its being, but, if we are inquiring into the condition of possibility of the understanding of being as such, *of inquiring even beyond being as to that upon which being, itself, as being is projected.*" (Heidegger 1982, p.282)

Heidegger pursues his questioning of being throughout his work but he abandons many of the terms he uses in this formulation from this course he gave in the summer of 1927. He rejects the notion of doing philosophy and begin to talk of thinking, equally he later becomes suspicious of the name ontology, a name already corrupted by its part in the architectonic of Western metaphysics. The use of "objectified", let alone the reification one could read into it, would be anathema to the later Heidegger, and reflects simply his entanglement in the vocabulary and concepts of the metaphysical tradition from which he is struggling to extricate himself. But during the 1920s he is *in the process of doing so*, and we misunderstand his thought and his purpose if we take him to task for using the terminology which is to hand and not that which he is in the process of creating and at which he has not yet arrived. Further the passage continues, after the sentences cited by Caputo,

³⁹ BT 29

⁴⁰ BT 26

⁴¹ R H pp. 85 and 174

"This seems to be a curious enterprise, to inquire beyond being; perhaps it has arisen from the fatal embarrassment that philosophy has run out of problems; it is apparently merely the despairing attempt of philosophy to assert itself as over against the so-called facts. ... the more fundamentally the simplest problems of philosophy are posed, without the host of secondary questions arbitrarily snatched up by the mania for criticism, the more immediately will we stand by ourselves in direct communication with actual philosophising." (Heidegger 1982, p.282⁴²)

The passage can be read as a harbinger of Heidegger's abandonment of philosophy in favour of thinking precisely because philosophy in the Western Metaphysical tradition cannot think being as such. Heidegger will leave it to go beyond the confines of *philosophy's* thinking of being. Caputo is surely heading in the wrong direction.⁴³ "Beyond" in this quotation from *The Basic Problems* does not mean further away either conceptually or ontologically, but it means deeper beneath the traditional ways of understanding, which in fact means deeper into the primordial ontological structure of Dasein. Twenty two years later, Heidegger explicitly refers to the definitive passage in *Being and Time*, and there is no talk of primary or secondary phases, nor of going beyond Being:

"Understanding is a project thrust forth and ecstatic, which means that it stands in the sphere of the open. The sphere which opens up as we project, in order that something (Being in this case) may prove itself as something (in this case, Being as itself in its unconcealedness), is called the sense. (Cf. BT p.151) "The sense of Being" and "the truth of Being" mean the same." (Kaufman 1957⁴⁴)

In this passage from 1949 Heidegger explicitly states what is yet to be fully worked out in *Being and Time*, and yet already is implicit, "The sense of Being" and "the truth of Being" mean the same. Unfortunately this quotation cannot be taken without reservation to be the final word on the meaning of meaning in *Being and Time* because Heidegger was not above

⁴² Translation corrected with the help of William McNiell's reading.

⁴³ Sadler would agree: "The ongoing publication of ... [the] Gesamtausgabe has provided us with ... nothing to change the judgement that his abiding and overriding preoccupation always remained the 'question of being'. On the other hand, Heidegger's unyielding pursuit of this one question is often lost sight of in contemporary commentary." Sadler 1996, p.1

⁴⁴ Heidegger, *The Way Back Into the Ground of Metaphysics*, written in 1949 as an introduction to his earlier *What is Metaphysics?* in Kaufman 1957 p.217 (Kaufmann translates 'Sinn' as "sense").

revising his opinions about his own earlier writing.⁴⁵ Nevertheless it is not only more coherent and plausible, but it is also more illuminating, to see in *Being and Time* the seeds of his later thought than to read *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* as definitive of the meaning of the terms used either in *Being and Time* or his later projects.

Early in *Radical Hermeneutics* Caputo seems to read meaning as existential,⁴⁶ but later, still trying to press "beyond Being", his explanation introduces, and mixes together, more distinctions and "meanings". He writes,

"meaning ... has the ... sense of the "Woraufhin," the meaning maker or producer which organises meanings or horizons and shapes them up. It is not *itself* a meaning in the conventional sense, (a *quod*) but a kind of meta-meaning which sets up meaning (a *quo*) in the straightforward sense. And to the extent that Heidegger was concerned with 'meaning' in this sense, he was well on the way beyond the 'meaning' of Being in the metaphysical sense." (RH 174)

The meaning as *Woraufhin* must be the existentielle and the meanings it organises must be ontic meanings but the horizons are surely ontological. In fact, I argue later that the horizons are not organized *by* meaning but rather that the unity of the horizons of the temporal ecstases is Heidegger's eventual formulation of what he is approaching with meaning. Caputo here is several steps *behind* Heidegger, not, as he seems to think, ahead of him. The being of Dasein, which is itself a *quo* not a *quod*, is the meaning maker. The point of Heidegger's hermeneutic is to demonstrate this. Indeed he explicitly refrains from reading Sinn as "meaning in the conventional sense (a *quod*)" or the "metaphysical sense".⁴⁷ Caputo seems to insist on separating meaning and the being of Dasein but Heidegger himself was not offering anything on the level of the metaphysical debates of his predecessors. It is highly inappropriate to describe his interpretation of the meaning of being as "a meta-thesis about

⁴⁵ As Kaufmann wrote (in 1957), "Most of his [Heidegger's] old pupils who felt close to him in the period of *Being and Time* insist, though for the most part not in print, that he did not mean what he now explains he meant." Kaufmann 1957 p.36

⁴⁶ "Meaning is supplied by Dasein when Dasein projects a horizon which gets filled by entities" RH 71

⁴⁷ "We make no advance restriction upon the concept of 'meaning' which would confine it to signifying the 'content of judgement', but we understand it as the existential phenomenon ... in which the formal framework of what can be disclosed in understanding and Articulated in interpretation becomes visible." BT 199

how metaphysical theories take shape."⁴⁸ Heidegger invites us to think with him what we have already grasped and lived by in a vague and unthought way. His analysis is not 'meta' in any sense but rather *prior* to metaphysics.

5 MEANING: SAYING, HAVING, BEING.

I turn now to my own reading of meaning in *Being and Time*. Within section 32 Heidegger offers his first definitions of meaning, and writes at greatest length about it.⁴⁹ He then discusses meaning again for two pages in Section 65.⁵⁰ This adds up to a very brief treatment for an existentiale, which is by definition of fundamental importance. Heidegger's writing on meaning is confusing and not entirely consistent. We have already noted his definition of worldhood is sufficiently close to that of meaning for Dreyfus effectively to conflate the two, with some justification as Heidegger uses his own coining "*das Woraufhin*" in important places in both definitions.⁵¹ Even more puzzling, he writes that "Meaning is an existentiale",⁵² and a few lines later "Dasein can be ... meaningless."⁵³ Yet by definition Dasein cannot be without an existentiale. As Heidegger himself is inconsistent it will be impossible to find a reading that is totally consistent, rather we must look for an explanation for the inconsistencies. Heidegger introduces meaning and defines it in the middle of his exegesis of understanding and interpretation.⁵⁴ In spite of its apparent definitional intent, the passage is bafflingly dense.⁵⁵ In considering why Heidegger

⁴⁸ RH 175 Caputo's description of Heidegger's thinking earlier in the book is more accurate: "'Thinking' is never 'taken in' by any one of the epochs or by any fusing or combination of them. It does not allow itself to think that there is any master name, or fusing of master names, or ongoing renaming with a series of 'finite' names for the 'infinity' of Being itself." RH 114

⁴⁹ BT 192-5

⁵⁰ BT 370-2

⁵¹ BT 119 & 193

⁵² BT 193

⁵³ BT 193

⁵⁴ BT 192

⁵⁵ It is worthy of note that in this short space Heidegger writes meaning in three different ways: meaning, "meaning", and the concept of meaning. By "meaning" (BT 193, l.3) he seems to refer to everyday usage, and by 'concept of meaning' (BT 193, l.3-4) the existential framework within which everyday meaning is possible - viz. the existentiale. However at the beginning of the following paragraph Heidegger writes "This Interpretation of the concept of 'meaning'..." (BT 193, l.19) In the final analysis the passage is too dense and too

introduces meaning and treats it in this way we must bear in mind the context in which he was writing and the influences on his work. In contrast to his relationship to Kierkegaard, Heidegger is almost fulsome in his references to the work of Dilthey.⁵⁶ As Guignon points out, in Heidegger's writing in the early 20's he took over many concepts from Dilthey, including meaning.

"In his accounts of 'factual life' or 'Leben-in-der-Welt' during ... [the early 1920's], Heidegger employs Dilthey's holistic conception of 'meaning' as the basic category for characterising life." (Guignon 1983 p.59)

But for what is translated here as 'meaning' Dilthey mainly uses the term '*Bedeutung*' not '*Sinn*' and he mainly considers the latter to be a subset of the former.⁵⁷ Heidegger's usage would seem therefore to be a reversal of Dilthey's although there is definitely a hangover of Diltheyan terminology in the text.⁵⁸ According to Guignon, it is actually Dilthey's term 'life' which most closely approaches what Heidegger wishes to call meaning.

"In ... [Dilthey's *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in der Geisteswissenschaften*,] 'life' plays the role of a medium in which the other is made accessible to the knowing subject by virtue of their shared forms of life in the historical culture in which they find themselves. This notion of life as the medium of shared intelligibility bears interesting similarities to Heidegger's conception of 'meaning' [*Sinn*] and 'historicity'." (Guignon 1983 p.49)

It seems that although he was using *Sinn* and not *Bedeutung* Heidegger was thinking along Diltheyan lines and carried over his concepts. In

ambiguous to assign specific, differentiated meanings to each different expression. His use of inverted commas is not consistent.

⁵⁶ In *Being and Time* Kierkegaard is mentioned only in three footnotes. Dilthey is discussed at length over BT449-455 and mentioned in ten other places. Heidegger acknowledges his debt to Kierkegaard more openly in *The Fundamental Concepts*.

⁵⁷ See Dilthey, Wilhelm, *Gesammelte Schriften VII. Band: Der Aufbau geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*, Verlag von B. G. Teubner, Leipzig, 1927 p.232 The discussion is of '*Bedeutung*' (translated by Rickman and others as 'meaning') and *Sinn* is used to denote the meaning of a specific expression or sentence or a part of life to the whole of which pertains *Bedeutung*. However as Rickman notes Dilthey "was, as even his closest disciples complained, notoriously careless in his terminology." Rickman 1979, p.110

⁵⁸ Heidegger puts 'generation' in inverted commas at BT 436 (German edition p.385), as he does 'meaning' on BT 193, and in a footnote he writes, "On the concept of the 'generation' cf. Wilhelm Dilthey, 'Über das Studium...'" (BT 498) Both the inverted commas and the expansion with the phrase 'the concept of' are paralleled in the writing on 'meaning' at BT 192-4.

section 76 Heidegger writes that his existential Interpretation of the *historicality* of Dasein, "is the constant goal to which the researches of Wilhelm Dilthey seek to bring us closer".⁵⁹ In other words, at least in part, Heidegger sees *Being and Time* carrying on and completing the task attempted by Dilthey, but although he attempts to clarify with 'Sinn' that which he finds lacking in Dilthey he fails to do so and he will eventually abandon the term. It maybe that carrying over the concepts from Dilthey and yet reversing the terminology contributed to the complications of Heidegger's usage of the term 'Sinn'. Heidegger's writing becomes opaque when 'Bedeutung' and 'Sinn' are used in close proximity to convey both meaning in its existential aspect and meaning as that which is conveyed by an expression. Hence in spite of identifying meaning as an existentiale of Dasein, the concept is not well developed in *Being and Time*. In his later writings the concept or phenomenon labelled 'meaning' in *Being and Time* is increasingly considered in his analysis of truth, language and Being howsoever variously he names it.⁶⁰ Meaning as such is left behind, because it was not Heidegger's main concern. His thinking was focused, and remained focused, on Being. In fact, I believe Heidegger was *already* leaving meaning behind even as he wrote *Being and Time*. That which he identifies as meaning in sections 32 and 65 is subsumed into the exposition of temporality by section 69.

The way in which Heidegger writes about meaning becomes more understandable if we remember that he wishes to emphasize what it does *not* mean. Heidegger does not want us to understand meaning as propositional meaning nor as an entity at a metaphysical level that corresponds to the item. To a modern Heideggerian scholar this may seem scarcely worth repeating, but in 1927 the point needed to be made. He is rejecting the traditional notion of meaning as the relation of a symbol to an object, and the concept of the knowing subject that that implies. To Heidegger this epistemology is inadequate, and is based on an ontological misapprehension. The meaning of an entity is fundamentally its relation to Dasein, so meaning pertains, if it can be said to pertain to any entity at all, to Dasein.⁶¹

Having acknowledged the inconsistencies in the exposition of meaning, and mentioned some possible causes for those inconsistencies, let us now

⁵⁹ BT 449

⁶⁰ See RH 176-7

⁶¹ "Meaning is an existentiale of Dasein, not a property attaching to entities, lying 'behind' them, or floating somewhere as an 'intermediate domain'." BT 193

examine the key passages to see what positive points are being made about meaning. We can usefully start our examination in Section 32.

"When entities within-the-world are discovered along with the Being of Dasein - that is, when they have come to be understood - we say that they have *meaning*." (BT 192)

Who are the "we" who say "entities-within-the-world ... have *meaning*"? At one level "we" are simply those of us who say such things, who talk of the meaning of entities. This "we" could be and mostly would be, although is not necessarily, inauthentic. The German is *wir sagen*, not *Man sagt*. Heidegger's most common use of "we" is in the convention whereby the author assumes the reader concurs in his intentions; we - myself as author and you as reader - are travelling this (hermeneutic) path together.⁶² We can best read this passage if we take *Wir sagen* here to cover a double reference to the reader as the author's hermeneutic travelling companion and to colloquial usage. The double reference occurs because he is thinking aloud with his reader, that is thinking and developing his thought as he writes this passage.⁶³ Further, his thinking aloud is almost in the form of a dialogue,⁶⁴ for Heidegger himself is about to correct what "we" say.⁶⁵ But why did "we" say it in the first place? Perhaps because it is a colloquialism that rolls off the tongue. But this colloquial definition he has just given of the situation in which we say entities have meaning is crucial to his exegesis. This everyday expression shows an important aspect of the phenomenon of things "having meaning." He claims that we say that entities have meaning when they are "discovered along with the Being of Dasein". In this everyday event of saying something "has meaning" we are equally saying something about

⁶² Another example, of many, is "What we are seeking is an authentic potentiality-for-Being of Dasein." BT 312 I also follow this convention.

⁶³ See the discussion on orality on the next page, also the comments of own of his former students on his lectures upon which *Being and Time* was based: "When he turned to his lecture notes, he did not actually read from the text; in his speaking, he created anew what he presented - sometimes deviating from his notes, sometimes adding to them. For those who listened carefully, even the most difficult train of thought became simple and intelligible." Petzet, 1993, p.10

⁶⁴ The tradition of philosophy as oral dialogue did not die with the Greeks. Walter Ong, points out that Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* proceeds in "a roundabout, residually disputatious form, a kind of inside-out debate." He believes that in the Middle Ages "the art of structuring thought was take to be dialectic, an art of discourse, rather than pure logic". Ong, 1967, pp.59-60 Heidegger is close to the Ancients in this sense in his way of philosophizing, as well as in his philosophical concerns.

⁶⁵ "But that which is understood, taken strictly is not the meaning but the entity, or alternatively, Being." BT 192-3

ourselves, and whether we notice or not that we are disclosing our own Being.

To reveal the full import of this paragraph (BT192-3) we must pause for a moment to consider the genesis of *Being and Time*. Heidegger's reputation was built on his lecturing. We remember that *Being and Time* was rushed into print because the authorities were not prepared to confirm his appointment to the Chair of Philosophy at Freiburg solely on the basis of his reputation for teaching. They wanted to see a book. However George Steiner identifies "a central *orality* in Heidegger's teaching."⁶⁶ For Gadamer "When Heidegger lectured, one saw things as if they had taken on bodily form." His praxis was "a meeting with live language."⁶⁷ The text of *Being and Time* originates in Heidegger's teaching and hence essentially in his speaking.⁶⁸ Steiner observes that,

"passages in Heidegger which are opaque to the reading eye ... come to more intelligible life, take on a logic of an almost musical kind when they are read aloud" (Steiner 1978 p.xv)⁶⁹

I will have more to say on the issue of orality in Chapter Four. Here we will simply use what can be made to show itself by reading aloud the written passage under consideration. We will utilise the orality that Steiner and Gadamer emphasise.⁷⁰ If we follow Steiner's praxis and read the following two sentences aloud with a minor emphasis on "generally" and the major emphasis on "world" in the first sentence, and the stress on

⁶⁶ " [the] prodigality and textual strength [of Heidegger's written corpus] are themselves, paradoxical. They tend to obscure a central orality in Heidegger's teaching and concept of the enterprise of serious thought." Steiner 1978 p.xiii

⁶⁷ Gadamer 1985 p.47 Gadamer also has remarked in the context of discussing the difficulty of Heidegger's texts that "as a speaker Heidegger was quite understandable." Gadamer quoted in Grieder 1995

⁶⁸ Heidegger himself remarks in his prefatory note to the 1953 edition of *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, "There is a difference between the spoken and the written word." Sadly, he does not elaborate there upon that difference.

⁶⁹ Gadamer, whilst agreeing on the power of Heidegger's language is less complementary about his style, "Heidegger's language and style had a certain plastic power, boorish, barbarian, admittedly - like an elephant going through the primeval forest." Quoted in Grieder 1995 p.120

⁷⁰ This search for meaning at an oral level is not an fanciful device, indeed I will later argue that speech as being-with is always more meaningful than the written word. Psychologists found "22 times more variance is accounted for by the tone of one's voice than by the content of the utterance when people are asked to interpret utterances." Argyle et al. 1970. Nevertheless the text as written is, at best ambiguous. To make it unambiguously mean what I have read into it Heidegger could have inserted *Aber* (But) at the beginning of the second sentence, before "Wenn innerweltliches Seiendes..." ("When entities within-the-world...") That he did not do so underlines the fact that my reading of *Being and Time* (like any other in fact) remains an interpretation not a definitive commentary.

'Being of Dasein' in second, they sound like a rhetorical antithesis: generally one finds *that*, but in this *special* case *this*.

"Entities within-the-world generally are projected upon the world - that is upon a whole of significance, to whose reference-relations concern, as Being-in-the-world, has been tied in advance. When entities within-the-world are discovered along with the Being of Dasein - that is, when they have come to be understood - we say that they have *meaning* [Sinn]." (BT 192 my underlining)⁷¹

That is, the ordinary way that we come across things is by using them, and we come across them in terms of their utility.⁷² In such cases the Being of Dasein is concern. Dasein is engaged in the world and with tasks in the world. It is neither considering itself nor transparent to itself. Being as such is not revealed because it is covered over by concern. When an entity comes to have meaning something special happens: *the Being of Dasein* is discovered along with the inner-worldly-entity. "Along with the Being of Dasein [*mit dem Sein des Daseins*]" here means not just that the thing is disclosed but that *Dasein* is *co-revealed*. What is the relationship of this co-revelation to the colloquial "saying" that an entity has meaning?

In the scientific, objective world view objects do not have meanings except in the special case of signs.⁷³ In that world view meanings pertain to language. One colloquial usage however stands out: if I say a[n inner-worldly] thing has meaning I indicate that it has some significance *for me*, which typically has an *emotional* component, and is related in some way to what I care about. Let us consider, for example, the chair from my old school library that is now in my home. The chair has meaning for me because it can evoke feelings, moods, hopes or memories. I have some history with the chair. Of course I may overlook it on some days entirely, or I may simply use it. If so it has no meaning and its way of being is ready-to-hand, as a more or less noticeable part of the whole equipmental context of the world. If I bump into it, it may become present-at-hand. But when it has meaning in so far as its presence reveals itself as having meaning for me it simultaneously reveals my being, as affected, and

⁷¹ Though illustrated here in the English translation these emphases also make sense in a similar way of the original German text: "Das innerweltlich Seiende überhaupt ist auf Welt hin entworfen, das heißt auf ein Ganzes von Bedeutsamkeit, in deren Verweisungsbezügen das Besorgen als In-der-Welt-sein sich im vorhinein festgemacht hat. Wenn innerweltliches Seiendes mit dem Sein des Daseins entdeckt, das heißt zu Verständnis gekommen ist, sagen wir, es hat Sinn," *Sein und Zeit*, p.151

⁷² BT 95

⁷³ See section 3 above.

understanding, alongside it. *What I care about and my emotional state are revealed in my recognition that the chair has meaning for me.* I am no longer lost, absorbed in the world of my concern, nor am I detached, unheeding of my own being and contemplating the world as a collection of entities with objective properties. Rather, *I am recalled to myself* - the very one who worked and talked and sat wistfully daydreaming in the library on this very chair. It is not at all necessary that I am able to articulate exactly what the chair evokes. The being that is disclosed, my being, understands and is attuned and articulated without necessarily being verbalised. The chair has meaning because my relatedness to the chair is what I am, as disclosing, understanding, articulated attunement. There is confirmation of the validity of this reading later in the same passage if we read the whole of this sentence in apposition to its italicised predecessor:

"That is to say, its [Dasein's] own Being and the entities disclosed with its Being can be appropriated in understanding, or can remain relegated to non-understanding." (BT 193⁷⁴)

In other words we *come across* the phenomenon meaning, that is we say that entities have meaning, when the Being of Dasein is revealed along with entities in the world.⁷⁵ Entities "have meaning" only when Dasein's being is disclosed.⁷⁶ Dasein's being is disclosed as care.

Stack, in his analysis of meaning and existence, also differentiates two concepts of meaning which correspond to this distinction between meaning qua existentiale and the special case of meaning wherein Dasein's being is also revealed.

⁷⁴ Nicolson translates the same sentence, "The exister's own being can be made accessible in an understanding, along with whatever entities have also been disclosed by the exister's being, or, on the other hand, that being and those entities may be lost to our understanding." Nicolson 1992 p.103

⁷⁵ Dasein's being, and the being of other beings, is of course always understood, that is revealed to some extent, mostly in an unthematic, implicit manner. It is when the Being of Dasein and the being of other entities are both explicit in some way that we come across meaning.

⁷⁶ In Section 65 we can find confirmation of the thesis that when entities are understood, that is to say we can say they have meaning, the being of Dasein, (Being-in-the-world) is revealed (disclosed) as well: "When Being-in-the-world has been disclosed to itself and understands the Being of that entity which it itself is, it understands equiprimordially the Being of entities discovered within-the-world, even if such Being had not been made a theme, and has not yet even been differentiated into its primary modes of existence and Reality." BT 371 (my underlining) Here Heidegger approaches what he has said in Section 32, but from the other direction, that is from a discussion of Being-in-the-world rather than of the meaning of entities.

"The first concept of meaning includes the apprehension of meaning in experiences in terms of the interpretive, projective appropriation in understanding of the intelligibility of man and non-human beings. (*Seiendes*). The second formulation of meaning refers to meaning in existence, to the existential encounter with the meaningful in terms of the spiritual movement towards authentic existence. This is ... an encounter with meaning in the lived-experience of purposive self-existence or the 'constancy of the self'." (Stack 1978, p.91)

Heidegger approaches meaning as the unity of the temporal horizons through the ontic event of Dasein's saying an entity in the world has meaning. This causes great confusion. The meaning actually pertains to Dasein, but everyday Dasein typically says something like, "The chair means a lot to me". Of course Dasein could not have such meaning without the chair or some other entity but meaning is nonetheless grounded in Dasein. We must remember however that when we say something has meaning we meet an ontic phenomenon (a disposition of comprehending Dasein in relationship to an entity) which is founded in, and shows to the phenomenological enquirer, an ontological phenomenon.

Because understanding and meaning are both existentialia, Dasein always understands and has meaning and Being is *always* understood and revealed to some extent but mostly in an unthematic, implicit manner. In the special case when we say entities have meaning the being of Dasein and the entities disclosed along with it are "appropriated in understanding".⁷⁷ This reading of meaning therefore necessarily involves taking "appropriated in understanding" as some event which is not simply the ongoing of the existentials of understanding. We may read it in non-Heideggerian parlance as "brought to awareness." This need not be, and indeed most often would not be theoretical, conceptual or even thematic. Indeed, as I will argue later, it could, and most often would, happen in the event of understanding or telling a story about something. If the meaning of an entity, for example the meaning of my old school library chair, entails the co-disclosure of my being, my involvement with it is not concern such that it is ready-to-hand nor is it present-at-hand to my disinterested gaze. I am not fascinated, absorbed or fallen into the world,⁷⁸ nor am I modifying myself to look at the world as an objective

⁷⁷ BT 193

⁷⁸ Cf. BT 149

observer;⁷⁹ rather *my being as there and attuned is disclosed*. In understanding the meaning of my old school library chair I am disclosing to myself how it matters to me. This that-it-matters is founded in the *story* of my relationship to the chair. As we shall see later, if I tell that story, and tell it well, then I, and my listeners *feel* precisely *how* it matters to me. Being, in so far as it enters into my intelligibility, is shown to me for my being is relatedness across the opening of the there to entities which reveal themselves, hence Being is understood because my Being is laid bare in an encounter with a entity which I say has meaning. This reading brings out the ontological structure which lies beneath what could be referred to as the emotional component of meaning. The colloquial usage in the example given exemplifies the affect which is the ontic corollary of the existentiale of attunement.

If meaning is an existentiale it subsists beneath any understanding, even if in the normal course of events it is not articulated as such. In the way of being of the 'they' it is covered over in the same way that our own Being is covered over by fallenness and idle talk. In his reading of this passage in Section 32⁸⁰ Guignon draws attention with italics (as Steiner suggests one can do by reading aloud) to this distinction;

"with the concept of 'meaning' Heidegger is trying to identify a source of intelligibility that lies at a level even deeper than that of the totalities of significance we appropriate in our interpretations. Whereas 'significance' refers to what as a matter of fact *has been* articulated in explicit interpretations, 'meaning' embraces what *'can be* articulated in a disclosure by which we understand'" (Guignon p.111)⁸¹

Meaning underlies all and any signification and all discourse. Meaning is that on the basis of which Dasein can make interpretations. It is that which is articulated in discourse in an interpretation, but qua existentiale it is the involvedness, the sphere opened by projection of the understanding, which is the nourishment and sustenance of the Da of Dasein.⁸² As long as Dasein exists meaning supports the network of significations which constitute the worldhood of the world. In this sense

⁷⁹ Cf. BT 88

⁸⁰ BT 193

⁸¹ See also BT 204 "That which can be articulated in interpretation, and thus even more primordially in discourse, is what we have called 'meaning'. That which gets articulated as such in discursive Articulation, we call the 'totality-of-significations'. ... Significations, as what has been Articulated from that which can be Articulated, always carry meaning." (my underlining.)

⁸² BT 371

meaning nourishes Dasein, Dasein is disclosed to itself by its relations with entities within the world or other Dasein, whether or not Dasein ever says or raises such meaning to the level of interpretation - which for the most part, absorbed by its concern for entities within the world it does not.⁸³

We can therefore delineate three levels of Dasein's engagement with world. Firstly, the existentiale of understanding as the project of possibilities makes the world available to me as a network of significations such that I can go about the business of living. Secondly, understanding can be raised to the level of interpretation.⁸⁴ At this level understanding makes an entity available to me as an entity. I can contemplate entities within the world as such, I can name them, and further consider them as present at hand, which amongst other things makes possible an 'objective scientific point of view'. Thirdly, if I understand such an entity such that I can say it has meaning my own being as meaningful has been disclosed along with the thing and my Being is disclosed as involved with this entity within the world. My being is always involved in this manner with entities within the world but in the first two modalities of understanding the involvement is covered over, and meaning, though it exists, "remains relegated to non-understanding."⁸⁵

In Section 65 Heidegger expands on what it is to say of entities that they "have meaning":

"If we say that entities 'have meaning' this signifies that they have become accessible *in their Being*; and this Being, as projected upon its "upon-which", is what 'really' 'has meaning' first of all. Entities 'have' meaning only because, as Being which has been disclosed beforehand, they become intelligible in the projection of that Being - that is to say, in terms of the 'upon-which' of that projection. The primary projection of the understanding of Being 'gives' the meaning. The question about the meaning of the Being of an entity takes as its theme the 'upon-which' of that understanding of Being which underlies all *Being** of entities."
(BT 371-2)

Macquarrie and Robinson point out in a footnote (marked here by the asterisk) that in the earlier editions this line read not "underlies all *Being*

⁸³ A significant and important occasion on which it does do so, as we shall see, is in the event of storytelling.

⁸⁴ "In interpretation, understanding does not become something different. It becomes itself." BT 188

⁸⁵ BT 193

(*Sein*) of entities" but "underlies all *Being towards (Sein zu)* entities." The original formulation is significant. It brings out the relationship of Being and Dasein: the Being of entities is projected by Dasein, hence all Being of entities is *Being-towards* those entities from Dasein, and equally *Being-towards* Dasein from those entities.⁸⁶ However although it brings out this relationship, which is implicit throughout *Being and Time*, it can be read as giving existential priority to Dasein above entities. Worse it can be read as prioritising Dasein above Being, that is appearing to present Being as a product, as well as a project of Dasein. This is an interpretation that, as he continued his work after the first editions of *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger wished to avoid. He emphasised later that Dasein exists by virtue of its relation to Being in general.⁸⁷ For Heidegger the question of the meaning of Being raises the question of the understanding of Being, which pertains to Dasein.⁸⁸ And Being enters into the intelligibility of Dasein as meaning.⁸⁹ Greenier spells out the implications of this:

"Meaning is the formal structure of projective (or decisive) understanding itself and being as well as beings are not understood properly speaking through or in terms of an extra medium called "meaning"; but what is 'understood' is exactly that which is projected in understanding insofar as it is projected and this is nothing else but being. What then is the difference between being

⁸⁶ Heidegger approaches this characteristic of the relationship between Dasein and entities again in *The Fundamental Concepts*. There he writes of the 'binding' character of things (*Verbindlichkeit*) as a moment of world-formation (FC 348-9). He defines Dasein as world-forming (FC 352) but insists that the projection of Dasein and the binding character of things form a unity, (FC 361-2) thus avoiding the ontological confusion that threatens to arise from his analysis in *Being and Time*.

⁸⁷ "being-there is allotted to me in order that my self should be being-there. But being-there signifies: care of the ecstatically manifested being of the essent as such, not only of human being. Being-there is 'in every case mine'; this means neither 'posited through me' nor 'apportioned to an individual ego'. Being there is itself by virtue of its essential relation to being in general. That is the meaning of the sentence that occurs frequently in *Sein und Zeit*: Being-there implies awareness of being." Heidegger 1959 p. 28-9

⁸⁸ Greenier glosses this passage as follows: "Here Heidegger says that the understanding of the meaning of a being is the understanding of the being of a being - a being has being because it is understood in its meaning; and a being has meaning because it is understood in its being. But furthermore because the question of the meaning of the being of beings is also a question about the *understanding* of the being of all beings in their various modes of being; the question of being as such is a question which has as its object of investigation that in terms of which all categories of being are understood - namely in the understanding or projection of being itself in Dasein's understanding of being." Greenier 1975, p.136

⁸⁹ See BT 193-4 "if we are inquiring about the meaning of Being our investigation ... asks about Being itself in so far as Being enters into the intelligibility of Dasein. The meaning of Being can never be contrasted with entities, or with Being as the 'ground' which gives entities support; for a 'ground' becomes accessible only as meaning - even if it is itself the abyss of meaninglessness."

and meaning - or between being and its meaning?" (Greenier p.131)

Heidegger states that all experience of entities is based on the projection of their being and it is Dasein which projects.⁹⁰ So meaning lies beneath any encounter with beings, just as does Being. Furthermore Being only becomes accessible as meaning.⁹¹ To ask about the meaning of anything is to ask about it "in so far as it enters into the intelligibility of Dasein".⁹² But we cannot however simply *equate* meaning and being, because meaning is an existentiale - a necessary constituent of the Being of Dasein. The being of an entity in the world is not a necessary constituent of Dasein's being.

Ultimately the indistinguishability of being and the meaning of being arises from Heidegger's rejection of any transcendental basis of being. The being of Dasein, which is our access to Being as such, is relational. There is neither meaning nor being floating out there to be arrived at or encountered by Dasein. Rather being is always already accessible because entities are always already present. Equally meaning is always there because Dasein always projects itself understandingly and discloses entities as it does so. So the answer to Greenier's question quoted above is that meaning qua existentiale and being are different but are not separable *for Dasein* because meaning is that structure of Dasein which is Dasein's access to Being. Dasein may of course overlook meaning, as it overlooks Being as such, and in that case it overlooks its own structure. That is the meaning of inauthenticity. But meaning is Dasein's access to Being,⁹³ whether or not that access is acknowledged. Meaning will be revealed as the unity of the temporal horizons, which in turn are the foundation of the equiprimordial existentialia. It is the ecstases of temporality which constitute Dasein's being which is itself access to Being, and the being of

⁹⁰ "All ontical experience of entities ... is based upon projections of the Being of the corresponding entities" BT 371

⁹¹ Cf. Richardson: "what Heidegger means by the 'sense' (Sinn) of a being ... is the comprehensibility (*Verstehbarkeit*) of this being, not as grasped by an explicit concept and thematically understood, but as illumined by There-being, which in its fundamental project comprehends this being as that which it is, sc. in the Being-structure which makes the being to be what it is. Briefly: the sense of any being is its Being, insofar as this is comprehended by There-being." Richardson 1963, p.85

⁹² BT 193

⁹³ "The meaning of Being can never be contrasted with entities, or with Being as the 'ground' which gives entities support; for a 'ground' becomes accessible only as meaning, even if it itself the abyss of meaninglessness." BT 193-4

other entities. Thus meaning, qua existentielle, is the unity of futurity, present and having-been.

It is argued later that a narrative obtains its unity from this temporal unity of Dasein. Because having-been, futurity and present are essentially bound together in Dasein when any Dasein considers its own existence it tends to do so in terms of a story.⁹⁴ To stand back and consider one's life objectively is to *modify* one's primary sense of self. The existential dimension of meaning is pre-ontologically understood as the narrative quality of human existence. We will return to this point in Chapter Five.

6 THE STRUCTURE OF MEANING AND ITS TEMPORALITY

Heidegger paints a picture of meaning as the unity of the temporal horizons through his spatial metaphors. When commenting on the ecstatic temporal unity of the spatiality that is characteristic of Dasein, he remarks that "Dasein's interpretation of itself ... [is] dominated through and through by 'spatial representations'."⁹⁵ His own use of the word 'structure' [*Struktur*] is a case in point. Walter Ong traces this trend in thinking back to the influence of chirography and printing and cites Pierre de la Ramée as the progenitor of the modern organization of thinking by analogy to visual structure.⁹⁶ Heidegger is his heir, and in turning against the orthodoxy of Western Metaphysics rejects his inheritance. In Chapter Four we will look further at the significance of this point. Here we will examine what can be gleaned from Heidegger's structural similes. The fact that ultimately he abandons them is not entirely unconnected with the limitations that Ong notes are imposed on thinking by such representation.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Hence Kerby's remark; "In the same way that a story traditionally demands followability and closure, we tend to expect unity and continuity in other people's lives and in our own." Kerby 1991 p.56

⁹⁵ BT 421

⁹⁶ "Ramism ... is at root a cluster of mental habits evolving within a centuries-old educational tradition and specializing in certain kinds of concepts, based on simple spatial models, for conceiving of the mental and communicational processes and, by implication, of the extramental world." Ong 1958 p.8

⁹⁷ See Ong 1958

Heidegger writes frequently of the structure of Dasein and of the existentialia of Dasein, including meaning.⁹⁸ But when one asks about the particular form of the structure of meaning the plethora of descriptions, all metaphorically spatial, plunges the enquiry into chaos. We will consider the sundry descriptions of the structure of meaning and attempt to discover if their complexity amounts to contradiction, complementarity or incoherence. Four distinct characterisations of the structure of meaning, of differing degrees of spatio-metaphoric sophistication, are given in *Being and Time*. Meaning is variously described as 'the upon-which', as having a fore-structure, as circular, and as being related to horizons. I shall consider these four descriptions in that order.

Firstly meaning is portrayed as the 'upon-which' - as in some way beneath, or supporting, or receiving a projection.⁹⁹ As understanding Dasein, we project possibilities. Meaning is that upon-which the projection is made. It is that which bears our projection and from which in some manner, as projection, we return to ourselves. The projection of the understanding does not, as it were, carry on forever further and further away from its point of origin.¹⁰⁰ Rather it is a projection that continually is rooted in its origin. Nicolson is typical of those who take the 'upon-which' rather too literally:

"Generically, [*Sinn*] ... is the 'whereupon of a projection' and therefore one of the conditions of the possibility for projection, since *Dasein* does not have the option of just projecting into the blue - something has to play the role of a screen upon which the beam of a projection is cast." (Nicolson 1992, p.104)¹⁰¹

This dubious extension of the metaphor (e.g. the 'beam' of projection) has little explanatory effect and introduces new entities of undefined ontological status. Such explanation as he does offer seems to be wide of the mark:

⁹⁸ BT 65, 149, 189 etc.

⁹⁹ For example "Taken strictly, "meaning" signifies the "upon-which" of the primary projection of the understanding of Being." BT 371

¹⁰⁰ "Factual Dasein, understanding itself and its world ecstatically in the unity of the 'there', comes back from these horizons to the entities encountered within them." BT 417

¹⁰¹ He goes on to say that the screen is "no blank screen", it has acquired its articulation from the three elements of the fore-structure.

"Where they have yielded that preliminary articulation, there exists a *Sinn* upon which we can cast the beam of our projection; that is what enables us to accomplish an interpretation. That 'screen' is what permits the 'as'- structure - it now permits something to be taken as something, and when that is accomplished, we understand the subject." Nicolson 1992, p.104

"To understand *Sinn* as an 'existentiale' is to say that it has to supplement the projections of the exister, that the exister cannot be what it is - projective - without that domain *into* which the projections are aimed. That *Sinn* inhabits that domain means, as well, that no exister can project without being led to make interpretations." (Nicholson 1992, p.104)

Nicolson seems to have added to the existence of Dasein a domain inhabited by meaning.¹⁰² But this addition of more terms to the multiplicity of definitions of *Sinn* does not clarify our comprehension, and throws up a further question as to the ontological status of such a domain. Instead of adding this domain to our list of problems let us remember that upon which Dasein projects itself is in the first instance *itself* as Being-possible. The upon-which is not the thing (an entity in the world such as cup or a book) nor a distinct domain or screen but my own - or one's - putative use of the cup, or reading of the book, so the upon-which is a possible action or more broadly my own potentiality for being.¹⁰³ It is the futurity of my own being. In understanding I project upon myself. The upon-which of meaning is constitutive of the Being of Dasein.

Heidegger says meaning is an existentiale, precisely because it is not separate from Dasein but is constitutive of its ecstatic nature.¹⁰⁴ I am outside myself such that I can project myself upon myself. Meaning is myself as outside, as that possibility towards which I project myself such that in the opening of my projection beings are revealed. The upon-which is not a separate entity such as a screen. We can perhaps make sense of the upon-which as the outside of Dasein by proposing an analogy with the peculiar case of the Moebius strip. A Moebius strip opens, and encloses, an opening, and yet its other side is always its one and only side. The upon-which is like the other side of a Moebius strip. The other side is other in the sense that when I hold a Moebius strip at any given point my two fingers can hold two different sides that seem opposed and separate from each other and yet it is the same in that I can trace my finger along it and find that this other side is one and the same as that to which it is other.

¹⁰² Sallis ascribes a domain to the understanding, and suggests that "meaning is a medium or space" which he appears to ascribe to understanding: in other words for Sallis *Sinn* does not inhabit a domain, but is the domain pertaining to the understanding. Sallis 1990, p.99

¹⁰³ "The meaning of this Being - that is, of care - is what makes care possible in its Constitution; and it is what makes up promordially the Being of this potentiality-for-Being." BT 372

¹⁰⁴ "The meaning of Dasein's Being is not something free-floating which is other than and 'outside of' itself, but is the self-understanding Dasein itself." BT 372

Projection and upon-which are, in the same way, so ontologically involved with each other as to be mutually interdependent, inseparable and yet not reducible to each other. The benefit of this proposal is that it offers an understanding of the upon-which. The drawback is that it subverts the distinction between understanding and meaning.

We turn now to the second spatial metaphor for the structure of meaning.

"Meaning is the upon-which of a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something; it gets its structure from a fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception." (BT 193)

Is the structure that meaning gets a fore-structure? Or does it get some other kind of structure from the fore-structure? In fact the translation "gets" here gives a false impression of sequentiality. I read the following sentence as in apposition to the previous one, quoted above,

"The concept of meaning embraces the formal existential framework of what necessarily belongs to that which an understanding interpretation Articulates" (BT 193)

Reading it in apposition implies that "the formal existential framework" is the threefold fore-structure not that one is subsequent to the other. The fore-structure itself however clearly has a temporal as well as a spatial aspect. Indeed the former explicitly predominates in the passage just two pages earlier in which Heidegger introduces "fore-" structures, where he is describing interpretation.¹⁰⁵ But what existentiale of Dasein could be in advance of the projection of the understanding which is itself Dasein as ahead of itself? Surely Heidegger cannot wish to say that the fore-structure of Meaning is further in advance of the projection of the understanding? To read him thus is indeed to begin to create a "baroque metaphysical structure" such as is ascribed to him by Stephen Mulhall in his thoroughly analytic approach to *Being and Time*.¹⁰⁶ Let us rather presume, as

¹⁰⁵ BT 191

¹⁰⁶ "for Heidegger, to say that Dasein exists in the world is to say that the act of understanding through which Dasein grasps its own Being and potentiality-for-Being must always encompass the world in which it is, i.e. must always relate to the environment which the equipmental totality constitutes, and which alone furnishes the equipmental domain within which human purposes can be achieved.

Needless to say, Wittgenstein produces no such baroque metaphysical structures ... For him, part of what is meant by saying that we directly perceive things as kinds of object rather than as pieces of world-stuff which must then be interpreted is that our verbal and non-verbal behaviour in relation to such entities takes a distinctive form, one in which their status as a particular kind of object is taken for granted." Mulhall, 1990 p.143 It is of course how the status of such objects is taken for granted that Heidegger is investigating, a point

proposed earlier, that Heidegger is in the throws of comprehending the phenomenon and that he approaches it, now through understanding, now through meaning. This is why the two existentialia are so entangled. Indeed, two pages later he comments that, "the structure of meaning ... is rooted in ... the understanding which interprets."¹⁰⁷ This is more support for the "Moebius" interpretation of the upon-which.

The projection of the understanding is projection upon meaning, and yet meaning is rooted in the understanding which interprets. There is a sort of boot-strap circularity to this description. Understanding projects upon meaning which is rooted in understanding which projects upon meaning - and so on. The search for the foundation of this sequence is not unlike searching for the other side of the Moebius strip. The other side is apparently present at any one point at which one picks it up, but when we set out to define its limits or separate one side from the other it disappears. The course of Heidegger's analysis separates meaning and understanding but they are no more separable than the two sides of a Moebius strip.

There is a further anomaly. We recall that interpretation is the "development of the understanding".¹⁰⁸ It seems that we must extend the status of equiprimordial existentialia ascribed to understanding, attunement and discourse, not just to meaning, but also to interpretation. Heidegger does not do this explicitly but he comes very close to doing so, in so far as it is logically implicit in the discussion on the first three pages of Section 32. He writes,

"The 'as' makes up the structure of the explicitness of something that is understood. It constitutes the interpretation." (BT 189)

and

"If the 'as' is ontically unexpressed, this must not seduce us into overlooking it as a constitutive state for understanding, existential and *a priori*." (BT 190)

Interpretation is the taking of something 'as' something and it is grounded in a fore-having, a fore-sight and a fore-conception,¹⁰⁹ which is "the fore-structure of understanding".¹¹⁰ The fore-structure is that of

to which Mulhall is magnificently indifferent. He atones for this oversight in his commentary on *Being and Time* published five years later.

¹⁰⁷ BT 195

¹⁰⁸ BT 188

¹⁰⁹ BT 191

¹¹⁰ BT 192

understanding, but is it not also that of meaning? Is it the very same structure, or a separate but identical structure? Or, in fact, different altogether? Heidegger's text, in offering and defining separate terms, seems to suggest the latter, but in the end it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the unitary quality of the phenomena defeats his enterprise. Meaning, understanding and interpretation are so bound up with one another as to defy cogent, discrete definition.

The interpenetration of the characteristics of meaning, understanding and interpretation is clear in the third way in which Heidegger characterises meaning: as circular. The understanding of anything, including understanding, entails a circular process.¹¹¹

"The 'circle' in understanding belongs to the structure of meaning" (BT 195)

This circle he says "is the expression of the existential *fore-structure* of Dasein itself."¹¹² In other words the second spatio-metaphorical characterisation of meaning, the fore-structures, is not yet the whole of the story, it is also expressed as a circle. Heidegger introduces the idea of the circle initially in his consideration of "derivative ways of understanding and interpretation, such as philological Interpretation."¹¹³ He emphasises the inevitability of the circle in "*the act of understanding*".¹¹⁴ We note here that Heidegger is considering understanding as an ontic event (an act), but he next asserts that, "this circle ... is an expression of the existential fore-structure of Dasein itself."¹¹⁵ Heidegger is discussing both the ontic and the ontological here.¹¹⁶ Considering only the ontological for our

¹¹¹ This passage is the origin of the concept of the hermeneutic circle in Heidegger's thought, which has been followed up by a host of philosophers, most notably perhaps by Gadamer 1979. In view of the ample discussion of the hermeneutic circle elsewhere I will limit my discussion of it here to its part in the spatio-metaphorical structure of meaning.

¹¹² BT 195

¹¹³ BT 194

¹¹⁴ BT 194, my underlining.

¹¹⁵ BT 195, my underlining.

¹¹⁶ It is not my purpose here to challenge or defend the legitimacy of this move, which is typical of the entire hermeneutic of *Being and Time*, for we can, in the end, only decide the legitimacy of the path of thinking of *Being and Time* by following it and deciding for ourselves. Any 'objective' verification is by definition ruled out. Rather I draw attention to the move from ontic to ontological, as Heidegger often fails to, in order to point out that this circularity is not argued or deduced at an ontological level but introduced by a generalization of a phenomenological observation, and to note that the reader must be careful to establish whether the term 'understanding' is used at an ontic or ontological level. In Section 32 he oscillates between discussing the enquiry of *Being and Time*, an ontic enquiry into a situation characterised by the ontological involvement of one element of what is enquired into, and the ontological constitution of Dasein as such. Furthermore

purposes let us now pay attention to Heidegger's italicised emphasis. The circle of understanding (which belongs to the structure of meaning) is also the expression of the existential *fore-structure* of Dasein. Unambiguously he re-iterates the point,

"An entity for which ... its Being is itself an issue, [i.e. Dasein] has, ontologically, a circular structure." (BT 195)

In other words *the structure of meaning is the structure of Dasein*. It is circular and it is also a *fore-structure*. Such confirmation that we have that the fore-structures constitute the structure of meaning also confirms that to this same structure belongs a circle. So why does Heidegger use two different terms? Is the differentiation made above between the fore-structures and the circle vacuous? Not entirely, because the fore-structures of themselves contain no indication of *return*, no coming back, as is clearly entailed in the hermeneutic circle. The fore-structures highlight the nature of the 'out-bound' half of the projection of understanding. With the fore-structures Heidegger is emphasising the conditions for the possibility of interpretation and the thrown nature of Dasein, even as understanding. Because Dasein is thrown and ecstatic meaning is always already there as Dasein's relatedness, albeit inarticulate, before being articulated by an understanding interpretation.¹¹⁷ The ontological circle in understanding means that ontically any particular meaning is provisional, but this is not in itself problematic for Heidegger. The circular characterisation of meaning is intended to show the continuous out and back nature of meaning. Meaning is not a thing which would entail it having a location, its circularity is the structure of the movement of Dasein's Being.

Heidegger is still trying to establish the bona fides of his hermeneutic phenomenology in the face of the dominant transcendental-categorical philosophy of the time. Circular thinking offends the objectivity of rationalism so Heidegger needs to assert, "we see this circle as a vicious one and look out for ways of avoiding it, even if we just 'sense' it as an inevitable imperfection, then the act of understanding has been misunderstood from the ground up. The assimilation of understanding and interpretation to a definite ideal of knowledge is not the issue here." (BT 194) His argument thus moves not only between ontic and ontological but also between his own exposition and the rejection of antecedent Idealism. Because of this double level of movement of the argument of *Being and Time*, confusion is perhaps inevitable. It is exacerbated because for the purposes of his enquiry he is 'pulling apart' that which he wishes equally to define as a unity with manifold aspects and potentialities.

¹¹⁷ "when something within-the-world is encountered as such, the thing in question already has an involvement ... and this involvement is one which gets laid out by the interpretation." BT 190-1

Further complexity arises from the fact that circularity also describes the hermeneutic of *Being and Time*.¹¹⁸ We must be aware throughout the text that there are three circles referred to; first that of the hermeneutic of the text, which is a particular case of the hermeneutic circle of interpretation in general; second that of the existentiale of meaning; and third that of Dasein as a whole. In fact the second and third circles are *not* clearly separated. Even as we work through these spatio-metaphorical descriptions we find that what describes meaning also describes understanding or interpretation. Indeed recurrently, as being-in-the-world, as care, and finally as temporality Heidegger re-unites those elements or existentialia that he has for expository purposes separated.

Completing our review of the spatial metaphors of the structure of meaning, fourthly and finally, we must consider the idea of the horizon. Although Heidegger never actually characterises it explicitly as equivalent, as Nicolson puts it, "Heidegger often links the notion of *Sinn* to that of 'horizon'."¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, like Caputo, Nicolson seems to be thinking in terms of a two-stage projection, first, *Sinn* at work, then the projection which aims at what it structures.¹²⁰ This is not helpful, as it promotes the illusion that one can break meaning down into a sequence of quasi-mechanical components. When Heidegger writes that Dasein is ecstatic and projects itself upon its potentiality-for-Being, there is a sense of simultaneity rather than sequence.¹²¹ Hence we posited above that the upon-which is Dasein as its ecstatic self. Unfortunately Heidegger does not explicitly equate the upon-which with the horizontal schema. He does say that to each ecstasis there belongs a 'whither' [*Wohin*]:

"Ecstases are not simply raptures in which one gets carried away. Rather, there belongs to each ecstasis a 'whither' [*Wohin*] to which

¹¹⁸ BT 362-3

¹¹⁹ Nicolson 1992 p. 103

¹²⁰ Nicolson's reading of the link, like his postulation of a 'screen' above, is concrete and yet in the end tells us nothing new. He continues, "Where a projection is made, and is made articulate, a *Sinn* has been at work already, structuring that single domain or that single horizon into which the projection was aimed and from which the articulating interpretation will draw its information." Nicolson, p.103-4 There is much more that is unhelpful in this short quotation, but it is not worthwhile to go into all the problems raised by the postulation of "a *Sinn*", "a single domain" and "single horizon", the "aim" of the projection and so forth. We can simply note that it is not unreasonable to suggest that Heidegger failed to elucidate *Sinn* with sufficient clarity to prevent the proliferation of bewildering extensions of the possibilities of the descriptions and metaphors he utilised.

¹²¹ "We call ... the phenomena of the future, the character of having been, and the Present, the 'ecstases' of temporality. Temporality is not, prior to this, an entity which first emerges from itself; its essence is a process of temporalizing in the unity of the ecstases." BT 377

one is carried away. This 'whither' of the ecstasis we call the 'horizontal schema'." (BT 416)

The key question is whether this 'whither' (*Wohin*) of the exstasis of the future is equivalent to the 'upon-which' (*das Woraufhin*) of the projection of understanding. Heidegger says that "The schema in which Dasein comes towards itself *futurally* ... is the '*for-the-sake-of-itself*'."¹²² The for-the-sake-of-itself is ultimately the foundation of the network of the in-order-to's which constitute world and make possible the encounter of the ready-to-hand.¹²³ The in-order-to is what defines the "horizontal schema for the *Present*".¹²⁴ In other words the Present arises from the Future, as Heidegger maintains throughout his analysis.¹²⁵ In view of his overall project he is more concerned to explain his understanding of the temporality of Dasein than he is with meaning. Hence what goes missing in the analysis is meaning. In explaining the whither of the ecstases Heidegger comes up with "horizontal schema".¹²⁶ The schema are not more elements or existentialia in the ontology of Dasein, but rather the arrangement of the elements already under consideration, in this case the arrangement of the horizons. The significance of the passage is that the horizontal structure is introduced where before there was the term meaning. We can posit therefore that Heidegger does not state that meaning has an horizontal character because the horizons *replace* meaning in his analysis.¹²⁷ He moves explicitly from the earlier exhibition of the relationships of the in-order-to, the towards-which and the for-the-sake-of as significance to the horizontal schema.¹²⁸ It seems that less explicitly *he has moved from meaning to horizons*. He does not simply identify the upon-which of meaning with the *Wohin* of the ecstasis of the future. In

¹²² BT 416

¹²³ BT 116-118

¹²⁴ BT 416

¹²⁵ The priority of the future is emphasised over and over again: "Ecstatico-horizontal temporality temporalizes itself primarily in terms of the future." BT 479; "the future has a priority in the ecstatical unity of primordial and authentic temporality." BT 378; "Temporality temporalizes itself primordially out of the future." BT 380 "Self-projection upon the '*for-the-sake-of-oneself*' is grounded in the future and is an essential characteristic of existentiality. The primary meaning of existentiality is the future." BT 375-6

¹²⁶ BT 416

¹²⁷ The hypothesis is that in the development of the hermeneutic of Being and Time the horizontal structure takes over the naming and description that was done by the term 'meaning'. The equation of meaning and horizon is commonplace in the secondary literature. See, for example, Sallis 1990, p.97 para. 1 where meaning is placed without comment in apposition to horizon.

¹²⁸ BT 415-6

so far as he identifies the upon-which with any horizons it is with the *unity* of the horizons.

"The horizon of temporality as a whole (which) determines that *whereupon* [*woraufhin*] factically existing entities are essentially *disclosed*." (BT 416)

Still the situation is not entirely clear. The horizon "determines" that whereupon entities are disclosed. The horizon is not explicitly equated with the upon-which; and we note that *woraufhin* here is written without inverted commas and the term is used in the dative not the accusative. The point Heidegger is making is that on the basis of temporality "something like a world ... has been disclosed"¹²⁹ to Dasein, he simply does not appear to be concerned to achieve consistency in his use of the term "meaning" or those terms by which he defines it.

This is the same point that was made earlier, before the exposition of the temporality of Dasein. We recall from Section 18 that "the structure of that to which [*woraufhin*] Dasein assigns itself is what makes up the *worldhood* of the world."¹³⁰ In other words meaning is either worldhood itself or that which structures worldhood. In spite of diluting the distinction Heidegger seems to be making between significance and meaning we must read meaning as constituting the worldhood of the world. This was certainly his thinking two years before the publication of *Being and Time*. In his 1925 lecture course he said,

"When we say that the basic structure of worldhood, the being of the entity which we call world, lies in meaningfulness, this amounts to saying that the structure as we have characterized it thus far, the references and the referential contexts, are basically *correlations of meaning, meaningful contexts*." (Heidegger 1985 p.203)

In *The Basic Problems*, his lectures from the year *Being and Time* was published Heidegger wrote that "shoe-equipment ... is intelligible ... only by way of the particular world that belongs to the existential constitution of Dasein"¹³¹ and we remember that in *Being and Time* "Meaning is that wherein the intelligibility of something maintains itself."¹³² That which renders something intelligible is called in the one text "world" and in the

¹²⁹ BT 417

¹³⁰ BT 119

¹³¹ BP 171

¹³² BT 193

other "meaning". In the *Basic Problems* Heidegger does not use the terminology of the existentialia of Dasein, but he is still analysing "the essential structures of Dasein's existence."¹³³ And he asserts,

"in order to understand in the contexture of their functionality the beings that are closest to us and all the things we encounter and their equipmental contexture, we need an antecedent understanding of functionality-whole, significance-contexture, that is world in general." (BP 171)

This "world in general" can surely be understood as worldhood, and *also* meaning. This is not to say that in *Being and Time* meaning is always equivalent to worldhood, but that within a year of publication the term "meaning" had been left behind and world was used, in the context of equipment, to do the same job. The horizon of temporality determines the whereupon, [*Woraufhin*] of disclosure of entities, which we can read as meaning either that the horizon is the meaning or *determines* the meaning. However we can, and I submit we should, read it as meaning that any *particular*, that is ontic event of, meaning is determined by the *manner* in which Dasein temporalizes itself; but *ontologically* meaning is the inescapable determination of Dasein's relation to itself and that which is disclosed in its 'there' by temporality. This is consonant with the quotation from the earlier discussion of meaning in section 32 cited above,

"'meaning' must be conceived as the formal-existential framework of the disclosedness which belongs to understanding."
(BT 193)

Meaning is a unitary framework constituted by the three temporal horizons. The four spatial characterisations of meaning in the ontology of Dasein each highlight a different aspect of the existentialia, but they simultaneously demonstrate that meaning appears more and more to be a temporary, expedient, explanatory term that Heidegger uses on his way to explaining the ecstatic nature of temporality. It is of course the intent of the whole book to, "point to *temporality* as the meaning of the Being of that entity which we call 'Dasein'."¹³⁴ Heidegger starts with this formulation, and intends to work via temporality to Being itself. Equally, just as meaning in *Being and Time* is incompletely defined, and eventually superseded by the horizontal schema, the horizontal schema

¹³³ BP 171

¹³⁴ BT 38 In *The Basic Problems* Heidegger repeats that "temporality constitutes the meaning of the being of the human Dasein" BP 16

will also be variously defined and redefined over the next few years.¹³⁵ The structural metaphors for meaning amount to forerunners of the exposition of temporality as ecstatic.

7 SUMMARY

The fruits of this intensive examination of meaning in *Being and Time* are meagre indeed. Heidegger's own definitions of meaning are unclear yet the phenomenon itself, either as the worldhood of the world or as the unity of the temporal horizons, is integral to his exposition of Dasein. Ontic meanings arise from Dasein's (temporal) structure which is either identical, or at the very least closely related, to the existential meaning. The structure of meaning would thus be the structure of Dasein.¹³⁶ If so Heidegger has not in the end added very much to his ontology by using the term "meaning." I will propose in the following chapters that we can understand that structure in Dasein, and meaning as an existentiale, in terms of *narrative*. Heidegger himself does not use this concept. He does however describe Dasein in terms of historicity after he has turned to the temporal analysis of Dasein.¹³⁷ But Heidegger is more concerned with the resonance between *Geschehen* ('happening' translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as 'historicity') and *Geschichte* (history) than with the happening of meaning as narrative. Nevertheless we will look at historicity in the next chapter. What is clear from the analysis of temporality and historicity is that Dasein is an event, and so too is meaning. Other commentators agree. Writing on the application of Heideggerian thinking to psychotherapy, Scott locates meaning in the eventhood of Dasein. He writes, "the *meaning* of human being is to be found in how man's worldly presence occurs."¹³⁸ Sheehan also sees meaning as an event.

¹³⁵ In *The Basic Problems* the term meaning is soon elided but the analysis is nonetheless directed towards showing that "temporality constitutes the meaning of the being of the human Dasein." BP 16 See Sallis 1990, p.80ff for a succinct review of the evolution and mutations in Heidegger's presentation of the horizontal schemata from *Being and Time*, through *The Basic Problems* to *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*.

¹³⁶ See p.31 above.

¹³⁷ "The proposition 'Dasein is historical' is confirmed as a fundamental existential ontological assertion" BT 381

¹³⁸ Scott 1984, p.153

"Heidegger's topic is the event of sense, the movement of *aletheia* where the *lethe*-dimension functions as the withdrawn but present power for the meaningful appearance of things." (Sheehan 1977, p.313)

Heidegger does not abandon his interest in the topic, but in his later work he approaches it differently, perhaps because in *Being and Time* he threw up too many different types of meaning. As Stack puts it in one of the few commentaries to focus on meaning, "clearly ... Heidegger has more than one conception of meaning."¹³⁹ In spite of the resultant confusion it is possible to interpret it in such a way as to clarify the nature of meaning as an existential, and separate out a special usage of the term "meaning" in the particular case wherein we say that entities-within-the-world have meaning. The existential phenomenon that Heidegger refers to as "meaning" before Division Two, Section IV, he thereafter refers to as "the unity of the temporal horizons" or "the horizon of temporality as a whole".¹⁴⁰ Meaning is the unity of the temporal horizons, that is to say the temporal horizons as a whole, in their entirety.¹⁴¹ This unity or as-a-wholeness is what gives unity, that is worldhood, to the world. Worldhood and meaning are both existentialia of Dasein, and they are different facets of the same phenomenon viewed from different interpretative approaches.¹⁴² The unity of the phenomenon of world is grounded in worldhood which is given by Dasein. Similarly the intelligibility of entities within-the-world is grounded in meaning which is given by Dasein. In this sense meaning is a deeper version of worldhood. The existentialia of Dasein are brought together in care and temporality arrived at as the meaning of the Being of care.¹⁴³ It is the ecstatic horizontal structure of Dasein's temporality onto which the understanding is projected, against which the facticity of our thrownness

¹³⁹ Stack 1978, p.91

¹⁴⁰ "The horizon of temporality as a whole determines that whereupon [woraufhin] factically existing entities are essentially disclosed." BT 416

¹⁴¹ "The temporal unity of life is to be understood under the irreducible category of 'meaning' (Sinn). Experience, as a 'relation' or 'comportment' (Verhalten) toward entities that 'exist-for-me' (für mich Da-sein), is possible only in the field of a unified whole of life which is bound together by meaning." Guignon 1983, p.50

¹⁴² Later Heidegger moves away from Dasein as the centre of his thinking about Being, but retains, and rephrases, the relationship of Dasein to world: the view of Dasein, that is Dasein's understanding articulation of world as such, constitutes the worldhood of the world, "World view, properly understood, therefore means, not a view of the world, but the world understood as view." See Heidegger 1951, p.279

¹⁴³ "Temporality has manifested itself as th[e] basis [of the primordial whole of ... Dasein] and accordingly as the meaning of the Being of care." BT 486

is revealed and within which the intelligibility of entities maintains itself. Hence meaning pervades and sustains Dasein's being, whether or not it is ever raised to understanding or awareness. Dasein cannot escape meaning, although it may often turn away from it. In the special case in which we say entities have meaning, the being of Dasein is revealed along with the entities. The being of Dasein is what is constituted by the existentialia, that is attunement, understanding and discourse. So when an entity has meaning for us Dasein's attunement (or better its "being-attuned"), its understanding and its articulation of both understanding and attunement is revealed too.

I will demonstrate in the following chapters that the primordial articulation of the revelation of Dasein's being alongside an entity which has meaning is a certain, primordial form of narrative.¹⁴⁴ In this primordial narrative Dasein always reveals its own being, alongside that which the narrative is about. In such narrative is shown the meaningfulness of Dasein's life which it cannot escape, although it can turn away from it. This meaningfulness, *which is a function of the structure of Dasein's temporally ecstatic being*, is not necessarily verbally articulated or expressed. In the hypothetical case of the library chair discussed earlier the meaning of the chair is constituted by my having-been with the chair, my possibilities with the chair, and my openness to the presence of the chair. The articulation of these three moments has the form which is the ontological condition for any ontic instance of narrative. We shall see that in any well-told oral storytelling event the being of Dasein is revealed. Thus such moments are special occasions on which Dasein is confronted with the meaning of its own being. To clarify what I mean by narrative and its relationship to temporality and meaning in Dasein, and to distinguish my usage from many other interpretations, I turn in the next chapter to a review of significant contemporary approaches to narrative.

¹⁴⁴ An instance of this form of narrative need not be a complete story. As we shall see, a moment of such narrative can occur within the telling of a story, but it does not depend on any fixed "plot" or sequence. The essential temporal elements are projected by Dasein.

Chapter Three

Approaches to Narrative

1 INTRODUCTION

Heidegger barely mentions narrative, and never uses the term to explain the ontology of Dasein.¹ However an understanding of the place of narrative in Dasein (and Dasein in narrative) elucidates Heidegger's ontology of Dasein as well as bringing a new depth to our understanding of narrative. The claim that human being and narrative are intimately related is not new.² The nature of the link, is not however clear. I propose my own explication of this link in the next chapter. In this chapter I review pertinent elements of contemporary views on narrative and highlight the common, but I contend erroneous, conflation of narrative and text. The closest that Heidegger gets to the issues I tackle under the heading of the storytelling event is his analysis of Historizing. We start therefore with a reading of Historizing in *Being and Time*, and then look at Paul Ricoeur as representative of modern text-based approaches to narrative and MacIntyre whose use of narrative is central to his ethics. We next turn to a brief review of literary and anthropological thinking on narrative. We finish with a look at Anthony Kerby's recent study which draws together the question of the self with narrative. His findings support the thesis that there is an ontological relationship between narrative and the human self.³ Even Kerby however, does not consider the existential significance of the distinction between oral and written discourse or narrative, as he draws his understanding of narrative mainly from Ricoeur. I review these thinkers in order to orient my own

¹ In *Being and Time* Heidegger mentions narration only once (BT 201) in a list of possible locutions which have their source in circumspective interpretation. He does not analyse narration further but significantly he does write of the many sorts of interpretation between the extremes of those "wholly wrapped up in concerned understanding" and "theoretical assertion about something present-at-hand" and concludes "We cannot trace back these 'sentences' to theoretical statements without essentially perverting their meaning." BT 201

² E.g. Bruner 1986 and 1990, Polkinghorne 1988, Sarbin 1986 (a), MacIntyre 1981

³ "in order to be we must be *as* something or someone, and this someone that we take ourselves to be is the character delineated in our personal narratives." Kerby, 1991, p.109

thesis within the field of scholarship on narrative and to highlight the points of agreement and disagreement. I do not attempt to review the whole field of narrative scholarship because it is a field with no boundaries. Narrative is investigated or used as an explanatory concept in and across almost the entire range of academic disciplines, and scholars are not shy of declaring the relevance of their work outside their own field.⁴ Equally, even within a single field the term narrative can be approached and understood in a multitude of ways. I add therefore that, in particular, I have little to say about narratology because, as will become clear, there is a profound difference between the thesis expounded here and the ontology implicit in narratology.⁵

2 DASEIN'S HISTORIZING

Heidegger does not turn his thinking in *Being and Time* to the place of narrative as such in the being of Dasein, although, as we will see later, he ascribes to poetry that which I wish to show also, and perhaps more properly, belongs to the well-told oral storytelling event.⁶ The closest he comes to thinking about the place of narrative in the being of Dasein is in his exposition of Historizing, *Geschehen*. An ordinary translation of this would simply be "happening," but Macquarrie and Robinson translate it as "Historizing" in order to bring out the etymological connection in the German with *Geschichte* - "History."⁷ By the beginning of chapter 5, Division II Heidegger has laid out his case that temporality is the meaning of the Being of Dasein. At that point he proceeds by probing into "the connectedness of life in which Dasein somehow maintains itself constantly."⁸ This connectedness is for Heidegger "the ontological

⁴ For example it is claimed on the back cover of *Narrative and Social Control, Critical Perspectives*, (Mumby, D. K. Ed. Sage, Newbury Park, 1993) that this collection of mostly post-modern sociological papers is relevant, indeed "essential reading" for students in "communication studies, organization studies, family studies, cultural studies, sociology, political science, peace studies, anthropology, philosophy and gender studies."

⁵ Narratology is a structuralist approach to narrative exemplified by the work of Seymour Chatman (e.g. *Story and Discourse*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1978) and Gerald Prince (e.g. *Narratology: The form and functioning of Narrative*, Mouton, Berlin, 1982)

⁶ "In poetical discourse, the communication of the existential possibilities of one's state-of-mind can become an aim in itself, and this amounts to a disclosing of existence." BT 205. See also BP 171-2 and Chapter Five below.

⁷ See Translator's footnote, BT 41

⁸ BT 425

problem of Dasein's historizing."⁹ Heidegger is probing here towards the notion of the self.¹⁰ If Dasein is not a thing but an openness, what constitutes the wholeness of Dasein, such that it is not merely the there of a series of inchoate experiences? His analysis of Historizing is intended to show that the unity of the temporal horizons is ontologically constitutive of experience. He believes that we only ask the question about the connectedness of our experience because in inauthenticity we understand time to be the succession of one thing after another and we do not see what it is that makes it possible for us to have this misapprehension. In authenticity however the connectedness of our actions is revealed in our stance of anticipatory resoluteness. This connectedness is the ground for our possibility of grasping any ontic meaning of our life, and it is revealed by the projection of our understanding upon the temporal horizons of our being as unified; that is the existentials of meaning. In inauthenticity we turn away from our own possibilities and all that is revealed when we take up our ownmost possibilities and instead try to understand ourselves in terms of the world of the 'they'.

Historizing is defined as "the specific movement in which Dasein is *stretched along and stretches itself along*".¹¹ Heidegger tells us that "Disclosing and interpreting belong essentially to Dasein's historizing."¹² This is the re-presentation to the reader of the fact that Dasein is ontologically understanding and disclosure, and in interpretation entities within the world are understood as such.¹³ However we know from the analysis of everyday Dasein that for the most part Dasein does not understand itself as temporally ecstatic,¹⁴ and in everyday life Dasein is fallen, not authentic. Therefore in Dasein's everyday understanding "the Being of the world-historical is experienced and interpreted in the sense of something present-at-hand which comes along, has presence, and then disappears."¹⁵ This world-historicity, arising from the ordinary understanding of Being as presence-at-hand, is shown to be the basis on which the question of the connectedness of Dasein's life arises. The problem, like so many others identified in *Being and Time*, is traced back

⁹ BT 427

¹⁰ See Zimmerman 1986, pp.113ff.

¹¹ BT 427

¹² BT 428

¹³ See BT 189

¹⁴ However Dasein understands itself it remains ecstatic. As fallen it is outside of itself in the they, as authentic it comes back to itself.

¹⁵ BT 441

to the mis-taking of the nature of Being. Dasein's primordial connectedness is obscured by its deficient understanding of Being. In contrast to the everyday understanding in which Dasein interprets itself in terms of the world-historical, authentic Dasein is resolute. This resoluteness is made possible by Dasein's being towards Death. Being towards death entails accepting one's finitude and one's individuality as the particular one who will die. In the light of this individuation one can see what one's ownmost possibilities factually are. These possibilities are projected out of one's own having-been which one has handed down to oneself.

"Once one has grasped the finitude of one's existence, it snatches one back from the endless multiplicity of possibilities which offer themselves as closest to one - those of comfortableness, shirking, and taking things lightly - and brings Dasein into the simplicity of its *fate* [*Schicksals*]. This is how we designate Dasein's primordial historizing, which lies in authentic resoluteness and in which Dasein *hands itself down* to itself, free for death, in a possibility which it has inherited and yet has chosen." (BT 435)

Authentic Dasein's historizing is "fate". But because Dasein also exists essentially in Being-with-others its historizing is also a co-historizing. Heidegger calls this co-historizing 'destiny' [*Geschick*] - the historizing of a community or people. This destiny is not just the sum total of the fates of many individuals but something that has "already been guided in advance"¹⁶ because the worldhood and the world-historicity of the 'they' is always already there before any individual Dasein. Nevertheless it bears within it possibilities that can be taken over authentically. Therefore Heidegger writes,

"Only in communicating and in struggling does the power of destiny become free. Dasein's fateful destiny in and with its 'generation' goes to make up the full authentic historizing of Dasein." (BT 436)

This amounts to an acknowledgement of the significance of phenomena such as the event of non-boring storytelling. To make sense of "communicating" we must read it as *authentic* communicating. It will be seen that the event of *excellent* non-boring storytelling is a pre-eminent case of this sort of communicating. Heidegger's main concern is neither the relation of the individual Dasein to the past and his having been, nor

¹⁶ BT 436

the means by which individual Dasein may sustain his authentic being. Rather, for him "the ... aim of this exposition is to lead us face to face with the ontological enigma of the movement of historizing in general."¹⁷ His whole analysis is oriented towards establishing the priority of Dasein's temporality over the understanding of time of the orthodox metaphysics of his day, and demonstrating how it has been hidden by the inauthenticity of our everyday mode of being. He returns again and again to make this same point, which he italicises in the first section of the chapter.

"In analysing the historicity of Dasein we shall try to show that this entity is not 'temporal' because it 'stands in history', but that, on the contrary, it exists historically and can so exist only because it is temporal in the very basis of its Being." (BT 428)

Heidegger's purpose in establishing the temporality of Dasein is to secure his access to Being as such. My concern goes only as far as the being of Dasein. I will not adopt, adapt or interpret further his group of terms based on "*Schicken*" - [historiology, historizing, world-historical etc.]. I eschew such a continuity or critical commentary for five reasons. Firstly, to do so would be laborious and terminologically complex. Secondly, his terminology is not suited to *clarifying* the nature of the temporality of Dasein as such, but rather to *establishing* it in the face of the notions of time that prevailed at the time of writing. Thirdly, Macquarrie and Robinsons' translations have laid too great an emphasis on history and obscured somewhat the essential eventhood of Dasein. Fourthly, what I intend to show can not simply be unpacked from Heidegger's terminology and thinking. It is rather my own development based on his exposition of Dasein's temporality. In fact, we will find that the essentially narrative structure of Dasein can be explained in terms of the temporality implicit in Heidegger's initial characterisation of Dasein's being as care.¹⁸ My own proposal is a re-presentation of care but is essentially less complex than Heidegger's view of time as a whole approached through and by the destruction of Western metaphysics. I have considerable sympathy with Havelock's view, examined later, that Western metaphysics is built on the products of the orality-literacy shift. Without Havelock's historical insight, Heidegger struggles mightily to elucidate the deep structure

¹⁷ BT 441

¹⁸ "the Being of Dasein means ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world). This Being fills in the signification of the term "*care*" [*Sorge*]." (BT 237)

beneath the public use of the concept of time.¹⁹ Heidegger's elucidation of the temporality of Dasein however can be most fruitfully used to furnish the structure of narrative which is not made clear by Havelock. Fifthly and finally, the narrative structure of Dasein's being makes history possible both as world-historical and as authentic historizing but it is not confined at all to history, nor to the level of ontological analysis. It also makes possible meaning in everyday discourse and that telling and showing of the being of Dasein in well-told oral storytelling events.

To rephrase this, the claim is that the term "narrative" describes the structure of Dasein as that which lends unity to an observable event, the telling of a story. Our own experience of telling, or listening to a story will be shown to be a manifestation of the temporal structure that Heidegger approaches through his terminology of "historizing" and its associated terms. Guignon understands the goal of Heidegger's thinking about history and historicity to be a search for a "concealed meaning ... below the tumult and clamour of our commentaries"²⁰ and "a time of purity, spontaneity and belongingness to Being".²¹ He even characterises that which Heidegger seeks in terms of narrative.

"The unifying thread of meaning is found not in Platonic forms, consciousness in general, or transcendental subjectivity, but in the *Story* of history - the *logos* that weaves the *arche* of our heritage and the *telos* of our destiny into a coherent, meaningful narrative." (Guignon, 1983, p.236)

Guignon does not follow through what is implicit in this statement and refer it back to the being of Dasein as such. We will however take this further step. By means of phenomenological examination of storytelling we can free ourselves from the inadequacy of text-based hermeneutic phenomenology. We must remember that man expresses himself most fully in embodied discourse, and that in writing down speech something essential - that is something of the essence of man as existing - is lost. Words on paper cannot show the being of Dasein in the way that the spoken word can. Before we examine how this is so, we must outline briefly significant theories of narrative in contemporary philosophy.²²

¹⁹ What Heidegger explains in terms of epochs of Being, Havelock and Ong explain in terms of the shift, in classical times, from orality to literacy, and in modern times from literacy to secondary orality. See Havelock 1963 and 1986, and Ong 1977, 1982, and 1986.

²⁰ Guignon 1983, p.235

²¹ Guignon 1983, p.235

²² Again, as noted earlier, it must be baldly stated that a comprehensive, let alone authoritative, review of the use of the term narrative in philosophy is not possible. The

3 RICOEUR

Paul Ricoeur is perhaps foremost amongst modern theorists of narrative. His status in the academic community is illustrated by Hayden White's comment that "*Temps et récit* ... must be accounted the most important synthesis of literary and historical theory produced in our century."²³ That paean of praise however also includes the paraphrase 'literary ... theory' which indicates the factor that puts a limitation upon his work. Ricoeur's view of narrative is trammelled, complicated and compromised by his textualization of the phenomenon he examines. He conflates narrative and text. Like most of his peers, Ricoeur takes text, not speech, as the paradigm of narrative, and indeed discourse.²⁴ As a result, he struggles with phenomena which arise from the physical act of engagement with text and with phenomena which arise from rendering narrative into specific written and verbal form at the same time as dealing with narrative itself, and he mostly overlooks the important distinctions between these types of phenomena. Indeed the complexity of his analysis is in part a function of the fundamentally mistaken priority he gives to text. Nevertheless he reaches many insights in the course of his thinking, and at times he comes close to the view of the relationship between time and narrative that I propose.²⁵ However for the most part he approaches the phenomena in a manner diametrically opposed to Heidegger, in spite of drawing on the latter's analysis of time.²⁶ For example for Ricoeur,

"time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence" (Ricoeur, 1984 p.52)

current rate of publication outstrips the reading capacity of a single scholar. Of course much of what is published on narrative concerns issues far from the core topic of this thesis. This is often true even of publications which appear to concern identical topics, such as Champigny's *Ontology of Narrative* 1972. Champigny's thinking is guided, like Ricoeur's, by the prioritization of text, and further by a structuralist view of meaning. However his style, and his attempt to cover a huge range of issues render his text almost unusable.

²³ In Wood, Ed. 1991, p.141

²⁴ Indeed much French philosophy of the last thirty years has operated more or less entirely inside a belief that text is an adequate and illuminating metaphor for discourse, dialogue and even life itself, not, it must be admitted, entirely without some understanding of the baleful consequences. As Barthes remarks, "The mythologist is condemned to live in a theoretical sociality ... His connection with the world is of the order of sarcasm." Barthes, 1973, p.171

²⁵ He does so in particular in "Narrative Time" in Mitchell 1981.

²⁶ See Ricoeur 1984 Vol. 1, pp.60-64 for Ricoeur's reading of *Being and Time* and his appropriation of it.

For Heidegger time as it is ordinarily understood is a phenomenon derived from the temporality of Dasein. Its origin is in humanity so there is not a question of it *becoming* human. Mostly in fact, through the articulation of inauthentic discourse the human origin of time is covered over.²⁷ So, *pace* Ricoeur, time does not become different, rather Dasein, temporalizing itself authentically, takes up a different mode of being. In communicative discourse humans take up their temporality authentically to the extent that they express their existential meaningfulness, and the foremost manner in which this is done is in authentic, oral face to face storytelling. This is yet to come, and for reasons I will explain in due course, my claim requires that we take the event of non-boring, face to face oral storytelling as the primary paradigm, and primary form of narrative. Ricoeur does notice and acknowledge the radical nature of the change from the hegemony of the oral to the literary but he grasps neither its full significance nor the entirety of its consequences. Here is a passing reference to the oral in *From Text to Action*.

"at first sight ... mediation [by texts] seems to restrict the sphere of interpretation to writing and literature to the detriment of oral cultures. This is true. But what the definition loses in extension, it gains in intensity. Indeed, writing opens up new and original resources for discourse. Thanks to writing, discourse acquires a threefold semantic autonomy: in relation to the speaker's intention, to its reception by its original audience, and to the economic, social and cultural circumstances of its production. It is in this sense that writing tears itself free of the limits of face-to-face dialogue and becomes the condition for discourse itself *becoming-text* ." (Ricoeur, 1991 (a), p.17)

Ricoeur seems to believe that text brings to narrative more than it drives out. A number of objections can be raised against this belief. Firstly, the "intensity" gained by textual mediation is not defined, nor on reflection is it obvious. Certainly the text gains autonomy but the plethora of possible readings is likely to diminish and dilute a text or story rather than intensify it. Ambiguity is a strange intensity. What text undoubtedly lacks is the possibility of the intensity and richness of meaning endowed by gesture, and the timing, enunciation, accent and tone of the spoken word. What is intensified is the ranging of our interpretative activity, what is diminished is the depth and potential for precision of the emotional

²⁷ "The ordinary way of characterizing time ... arises from the temporality of falling Dasein." BT 478

nuance of vocal speech. Secondly, Ricoeur grounds in the autonomy of text the possibility of discourse itself "becoming-text." This is the crucial step of departure from any possibility of concordance with either Heideggerian ontology or hermeneutic phenomenology. Heidegger would agree with Ricoeur that "neither of the two subjectivities, neither that of the author nor that of the reader, is ... primary in the sense of an originary presence of the self to itself."²⁸ However whereas Ricoeur therefore takes *text* to be primary, Heidegger (and I submit, we) must take the being of Dasein as primary. Dasein is being-there and being-with and always is the possibility of revealing beings before interpreting and constituting itself as 'subject' or 'object' by means of the modern notion of the self.²⁹ Dasein is never a text and its discourse can never become text without a radical semantic reduction.

Ricoeur's analysis over and over again touches upon points that illuminate narrative, and come close to understanding the narrative nature of Dasein,³⁰ but equally, over and over again he mistakes his own analysis for the phenomenon he analyses. For example he writes:

"every narrative presupposes a familiarity with terms such as agent, goal, means, circumstance, help, hostility, cooperation, conflict, success, failure, etc., on the part of its narrator and any listener." (Ricoeur, 1984, p.55)

Surely this is an example of a thinker falling into the thrall of his theoretical terminology. There is no need for familiarity with such terms to listen to, or tell, or make up a story.³¹ Such abstract terms are only familiar to educated literates. Further it is arguable that a true understanding of such theoretical abstractions is only made possible by a *prior* acquaintance with narrative. From stories one can abstract such concepts, one does not need such abstract concepts to build stories. Ricoeur also claims that "following a story is a very complex operation."³² I suggest that Ricoeur's *analysis* of story and of following a story are

²⁸ Ricoeur, 1991 (a), p.17

²⁹ See BT 155 and BT 204

³⁰ He comes so near, and yet stays so far away from this understanding. In *Life in quest of narrative* he even speaks of "the pre-narrative quality of human experience." Ricoeur 1991 (b), p.29

³¹ Michael Bamberg shows that "children at an early age begin working on narrative characteristics using the linguistic means they have at their disposal" (Bamberg, 1987 p.4), and long before they have any familiarity with abstract concepts. "most people can use the important rudiments of story structure before finishing the third year." Mancuso 1986 p.104 See also Sutton-Smith, 1986

³² In Wood, 1991, p.21.

complex but the *activity* of following a story is actually a very simple operation that we do almost constantly and with no discernible effort. Only the contortions of certain modern novelists and cinematographers cause us any difficulty, and then only because either they have made deliberate efforts to do so, or they have not mastered their medium. Ricoeur is a prisoner of his theoretical approach. In *Text and Action* he writes,

"If ... narrativity is to mark, organize, and clarify temporal experience ... we must seek in language use a standard of measurement that satisfies this need for delimiting, ordering, and making explicit. ... the text is the linguistic unit we are looking for." (Ricoeur, 1991 (a) p.3)

His goals are the fundamental reasons why he mistakes the original situation, and as a consequence why his project as a whole does not help to explain the relationship between human being and the event of oral storytelling. The quotation implies that narrativity is a process or concept which requires some action or understanding from Ricoeur, and his fellow philosophical disciples and opponents, to achieve the marking, organizing and clarifying of the temporal character of human experience. But Ricoeur here is pursuing a theoretical goal. The event of oral storytelling *already does* mark, organize and clarify the temporal character of human experience and as philosophers we must ask why and how it does so, and indeed whether it does anything else as well. Ricoeur's project, as he himself states it, if it is to be meaningful at all, begs the question that there is some third entity, other than Dasein and its discourse, which makes storytelling possible. Further it assumes that such an entity has some standard structure, and his philosophical task is to discover it and break it down, and furthermore that this entity is the text: an entity which is essentially written. But his quest is redundant. The "organizing and clarifying of temporal experience" has always already been achieved when we understand a story and often precisely without a text.³³ Only a philosopher in the desolate wastes of descriptive analysis has a "need for delimiting, ordering and making explicit" to be satisfied. We must examine and explore what is already given to us in story, and the being of Dasein *before* there is any mention of text.

³³ Brockmeier, for example, identifies seven discrete temporal levels in telling a simple anecdote about a conference in Turin, which is readily understood with no effort at all by any ordinary speaker of English. The point is that we can already have clarity before any text and before any textual analysis. (Brockmeier 1994, p.14-5)

Ricoeur maintains that, within a text, the unity of a story is given by the plot.

A story ... must be more than just an enumeration of events in serial order; it must organize them into an intelligible whole, of a sort such that we can always ask what is the 'thought' of this story. In short, emplotment is the operation that draws a configuration out of a simple succession." (Ricoeur 1984, p.65)

Ricoeur defines emplotment as "a synthesis of heterogeneous elements"³⁴ but the elements and their discreteness arise from his analysis, not the phenomenon. Thus according to Ricoeur the plot "serves to make *one* story out of the multiple incidents."³⁵ But I argue that the interpolation of the term "plot" here is in defiance of Ockham's Razor. A plot does not give the wholeness to a story, rather it is an abstraction made possible by the *as-a-wholeness already present*, which is in fact *given to the story by Dasein*.

A story gets its coherence both of time and world from the Dasein of the teller and hearer. At an *ontic* level the unity of the story is manifest in its binding together the elements and incidents of the story, and any particular binding may be analysed as a plot - but its *bound-together-ness*, does not come from that plot, nor any other plot, but is that which makes any plot at all possible. The being of the story as a unity makes possible the abstraction of the plot. Plot is a *post hoc* abstract, theoretical term, a construct, not an ontological constituent of a story. Hence where Ricoeur holds that "the plots that we invent help us to shape our confused, formless, and in the last resort mute temporal experience"³⁶ it is clear that he has not read Heidegger as I do. Dasein always already understands its world,³⁷ and whenever Dasein hears a story it has always already given a wholeness, that is the story-hood of the story, such that it understands any particular word, sentence or gesture as part of the story. Ricoeur compares

³⁴ Wood, 1991, p.21

³⁵ Wood, 1991, p.21 See also Ricoeur 1984, e.g., "a plot ... exercises, within its own textual field, an integrating ... function," Ricoeur, 1984, p.65

³⁶ Wood, 1991, p.6

³⁷ "If being-in-the-world is a kind of Being which is essentially befitting to Dasein, then to understand Being-in-the-world belongs to the essential content of its understanding of Being. The previous disclosure of that to for which what we encounter within-the-world is subsequently freed, amounts to nothing else than understanding the world - that world to which Dasein as an entity always comports itself." BT 118

the act of emplotment with Kant's operation of judgement,³⁸ one part of which he calls the configurational act.³⁹

"This configurational act consists of 'grasping together' the detailed actions or what I have called the story's incidents. It draws from this manifold of events the unity of one temporal whole." (Ricoeur 1984, p.66)

What Ricoeur calls an act is what Heidegger has laboured throughout *Being and Time* to show is an ontological determination of Dasein.⁴⁰ It is on the basis of a whole, the worldhood of the world or the unity of the temporal horizons as the meaning of Dasein, that any acts or incidents are understood in the first place, whether in the world or in a story. All understanding of Dasein takes place within a context, from the grasping of the ready-to-hand within the context of equipmentality in the light of the task to be done,⁴¹ to the understanding of an abstract concept within the context of a philosophical enquiry.⁴² The wholeness of that context is an existentially of Dasein, the worldhood of the world in the first case, and the existentially of meaning in the second. This projection of the unity of Dasein's ecstatic temporal horizons is constitutive of Dasein's being. Dasein itself is an event wherein a certain "grasping together" is always already taking place; such a "grasping together" is not an act which it can choose to do, or not to do, because it is always already happening. In the moment of telling or understanding a narrative, primordially in the gripping speech of a storyteller, and in a potentially diminished form in the act of reading a text, Dasein transposes its own taking-as-a-whole into the Da of the story. There is no need, nor place, for a mediating third party such as a plot. What is essential for the event of storytelling is there as long as Dasein is there. The essence of a story is not constructed in the

³⁸ Ricoeur, 1984, p.66

³⁹ Ricoeur borrows this term from Louis O. Mink - see Mink, "Interpretation and Narrative Understanding" in *The Journal of Philosophy* 69, no.9, (1972): 735-7

⁴⁰ "in any involvement that has been discovered... what we have called the 'worldly character' of the ready-to-hand has been discovered beforehand. In this totality of involvements which has been discovered beforehand there lurks an ontological relationship to the world." BT 118 "on the basis of the horizontal constitution of the ecstatic unity of temporality, there belongs to that entity which is in each case its own 'there', something like a world that has been disclosed." BT 416-7 "the 'in-order-to', the 'for-the-sake-of', and the 'with-which' ... are relationships in which concerned circumspection as such already dwells. [They are] ... constitutive of worldhood." BT 122 See also Barash, 1988 on *Zusammenhang*, and FC Section 73 (d).

⁴¹ BT 105

⁴² BT 193-4

manner of a literary text, nor is it an artifice of literary criticism such as the abstraction "plot."

Ricoeur effectively takes the creation of literary fiction as paradigmatic for the world of human action with the result, as Arendt puts it that "the story resulting from action is misconstrued as a fictional story."⁴³ But in the lived, human world "the invisible actor behind the scenes [corresponding to the plot or the plot-creator] is an invention arising from a mental perplexity but corresponding to no real experience."⁴⁴ For Arendt, as for myself the notion of plot as *constitutive*, rather than as a *descriptive abstraction*, is supernumerary.

"The realm of human affairs, strictly speaking, consists of the web of human relationships which exists wherever men live together. ... It is because of this already existing web of human relationships ... that action ... 'produces' stories with or without intention as naturally as fabrication produces tangible things." (Arendt 1958, p.183-4)

Ricoeur sees narrative as the fundamental structure of the experience of time but he is remarkably reticent as to why human beings tell stories, venturing only the occasional, egregious, political remark.⁴⁵ For Ricoeur "narrative does not resolve aporias, it makes them productive",⁴⁶ hence, in the style of much recent French philosophy, at the end of *Time and Narrative* he throws doubt on the conclusions he has moved towards throughout the work. This is a further reason, on top of the far more problematic prioritization of text in his discussion, why, for all his ingenuity and erudition, I have not taken him as a primary guide in my own approach to narrative. Nevertheless I will refer to his essay "Narrative Time"⁴⁷ in the next chapter because although he continues to take written narratives as ontologically equivalent to oral narratives nonetheless he makes points that are in fact founded in the primary, *oral* form of narrative.

⁴³ Arendt, 1958, p.186

⁴⁴ Arendt, 1958, p.185

⁴⁵ "We tell stories because in the last analysis human lives need and merit being narrated. This remark takes on its full force when we refer to the necessity to save the history of the defeated and the lost. The whole history of suffering cries out for vengeance and calls for narrative." Ricoeur, 1984, p.75

⁴⁶ Wood, 1991, p.5

⁴⁷ In Mitchell 1981

4 MACINTYRE

I turn now to Alistair MacIntyre. Narrative plays an important part in his seminal work, *After Virtue*, even though he establishes neither the ontological status nor the structure of narrative. He defines man in terms of narrative, "man is in his actions and practice ... essentially a story-telling animal"⁴⁸ but he does not define narrative itself. He takes it as a term that needs no explanation, which in one sense is quite reasonable because we all do in fact know what stories are. Children and adults all understand what a story is, and both tell and listen to stories without ever needing a theoretical explanation of the nature of a story.⁴⁹ MacIntyre makes considerable use of our pre-existent understanding of narrative to explain what he sees as the fragmentation of moral consensus and the historical shift he identifies in man's understanding of moral terminology.

He starts by constructing an allegorical fable. Imagine, he suggests, that the natural sciences suffered a catastrophe. Laboratories and libraries were destroyed, scientists lynched and the teaching of science forbidden. Later an attempt is made to revive science but all that remains are fragments, the odd page or two of an article, instruments whose purpose has been forgotten and so on. Largely by guess-work these fragments are cobbled together and "science" is once again practised and taught. However "science" now lacks coherence and there are arguments arising from the differences between the ways that different "scientists" have attempted to reconstruct the knowledge they conveyed. The language of natural science in this scenario, he proposes, is analogous to the actual state today of the language of morality. Philosophers of ethics attempt to have discussions using terminology the meaning of which they have not agreed.⁵⁰

MacIntyre summarises and demolishes Moore's doctrine of Emotivism, but points out that in spite of its philosophical shortcomings it is the basis

⁴⁸ MacIntyre, 1981 (hereafter AV) p.201

⁴⁹ This point is examined in more detail in Chapter Five section 1

⁵⁰ As Ogden and Richards (1936) observed more than half a century ago, Moore and his successors even used 'meaning' without any coherent view of its meaning. They conclude, "A study of the utterances of Philosophers suggests that they are not to be trusted in their dealings with Meaning." (1936, p.185) Sadly the naivety of their own proposal to treat "knowledge as a causal affair open to ordinary scientific investigation" (1936, p.245) meant that their high hopes for "the Science of Symbolism" (1936 p.242) were not realised.

for the moral relativism he finds in contemporary society.⁵¹ Our society, he claims, has three types of person whose role in society is pivotal for the self-concept and structure of society as a whole: the Aesthete,⁵² the Bureaucrat,⁵³ and the Therapist.⁵⁴ None of these three are guided by moral absolutes. The modern self is democratised, and its judgements are criterionless and arbitrary.⁵⁵ It is not defined by the contingent state of affairs in which it finds itself, it is objective and this objectivity is taken to be the condition for the possibility of moral agency. MacIntyre draws

⁵¹ "Emotivism has become embodied in our culture" AV 21. In *Principia Ethica* Moore claimed to have discovered that good is a non-natural property, not derived from pleasure, and that to state 'X is good' is to state an 'intuition', an unprovable statement about an unverifiable perception. As MacIntyre remarks, "one of the things that we ought to have learned from the history of moral philosophy is that the introduction of the word 'intuition' by a moral philosopher is always a signal that something has gone badly wrong with an argument." AV 67 "Right" is, following this theme, that which produces the most Good. This reduces the 'right' and 'good' to terms in a private language, and is in MacIntyre's words, a "plainly false and badly argued position" AV 15. Nonetheless it was praised, and as a result, MacIntyre quotes Keynes to explain, "In practice, victory was with those who could speak with the greatest appearance of clear, undoubting conviction and could best use the accounts of infallibility" AV 16. However if this was the state into which moral debate had fallen Emotivism was a reasonable theory - not about moral debate but about the use of moral terminology at that time in the wake of Moore's reductionism.

⁵² For the aesthete he draws his archetype from Ralph Touchett in Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady*. Aesthetes are those "who see in the social world nothing but a meeting place for individual wills, each with its own set of attitudes and preferences and who understand that world solely as an arena for the achievement of their own satisfaction, who interpret reality as a series of opportunities for their enjoyment and for whom the last enemy is boredom." AV 24

⁵³ For bureaucrats, "bureaucratic rationality is the rationality of matching means to ends economically and efficiently." AV 24 "Questions of ends are questions of values, and on values reason is silent." AV 25 MacIntyre draws for his description of the bureaucrat on Weber who he claims is essentially emotivist. On this account justification is a rational procedure, and the choice of ends, or values, is essentially non-rational. Therefore, "no type of authority can appeal to rational criteria to vindicate itself except that type of bureaucratic authority which appeals precisely to its own effectiveness. And what this appeal reveals is that bureaucratic authority is nothing other than successful power". AV 25 The hegemony of rationality means the bureaucrat never enters moral debate as his watchword is simply efficiency.

⁵⁴ The Therapist "treats ends as given - outside his scope. His concern also is with technique, with effectiveness in transforming neurotic symptoms into directed energy, maladjusted individuals into well-adjusted ones." AV 29

⁵⁵ A rare comment by Heidegger on social roles within his own field, academia, alludes to a similar drift towards socially determined goals and relativism; "The decisive development of the modern business character of science therefore forms men of a different stamp. The scholar disappears. He is replaced by the research man who is engaged in research projects. This, rather than the pursuit of scholarship, gives his work its keen atmosphere. He contracts to work for commissions from publishers, who now help to determine what books must be written. ... The research worker forces himself automatically into the orbit of the technologist in the form essential to his work. Only in this way does he remain effective and thus, in the sense of his age, real." Heidegger, 1951, p.276

from Sartre and Goffman, two theorists who are ostensibly opposed in modern debate, the crucial point upon which he claims they agree. Whereas Sartre holds that the self is entirely distinct from its social role, Goffman claims that it is nothing more than its role.

"For Goffman, for whom the social world is everything the self is therefore nothing at all, it occupies no social space. For Sartre, whatever social space it occupies it does so only accidentally, and therefore he too sees the self as in no way an actuality." (AV 31)

The self itself, as it were, is nothing. MacIntyre contrasts this objectivised, anonymized self with "many traditional societies ... [wherein] individuals inherit a particular space within an interlocking set of social relationships."⁵⁶ In the world of the ancient Greeks in particular one's 'self' *was* one's place in society.⁵⁷ The modern self, by contrast, is presumed to be independent of its context, and hence the morality that guides it must be absolute, not relative to its social context. It was, MacIntyre suggests, as a result of the abrogation of contextual determination of the self that the Enlightenment set out a project of rational justification for morality. This was not just a quest of philosophers but pervaded culture in general. In his view it failed.⁵⁸ The difficulty facing the Enlightenment thinkers is summed up by MacIntyre as follows: since classical moral injunctions had as their point to correct, improve and educate human nature they are clearly not going to be such as to be deduced from true statements about human nature - so the Eighteenth Century project to find rational basis for moral belief in human nature was doomed to failure.⁵⁹

MacIntyre claims modern society lacks any teleological view of man, let alone a communal one. However he believes that classical societies did have such a view. In those cultures "every individual has a given role and status within a well-defined and highly determinate system of roles

⁵⁶ AV 32

⁵⁷ Guignon (1983) makes no reference to MacIntyre, but he also notes the contextual determination of the self in ancient Greece and relates it directly, as I do below by a different route, to Heidegger's notion of self: "The conception of the everyday self which unfolds in *Being and Time* may be seen as closer to that found among the ancient Greeks than it is to our modern picture. For the Greeks, to be human was to be a place-holder in the natural structure of the *oikos*, or later, the *polis*. The most unhappy of all men in the times Homer describes was not the slave, but the free man (*thes*) who had no place in the world."

⁵⁸ "A central thesis of this book is that the breakdown of this project provided the historical background against which the predicaments of our own culture can become intelligible." AV 38

⁵⁹ "once the notion of essential human purposes or functions disappears from morality, it begins to appear implausible to treat moral judgements as factual statements". AV57

and statuses."⁶⁰ Along with the roles went obligations and expectations. The virtues were those dispositions which sustained a man in his role, and the role itself.⁶¹ *For MacIntyre these roles arise from the narrative form of human life.*

"human life has a determinate form, the form of a certain kind of story. It is not just that poems and sagas narrate what happens to men and women, but that in their narrative form poems and sagas capture a form that was already present in the lives which they relate." (AV 117)

Hence narrative was the dominant mode of moral education. For MacIntyre, "Heroic social structure is enacted epic narrative."⁶² He believes that for Homer virtue assisted men in fulfilling their social roles, and so we need to know of these roles to determine the virtues. Moral understanding is made possible by narrative.⁶³ In Aristotle he sees a move of abstraction from roles to the *telos* of man in general.⁶⁴ The good life for man, his *telos*, determined the virtues so we need to know more of that *telos*. MacIntyre proposes that a core concept of virtue lies at the heart of the original, essential usage of virtue words and that in order to understand them we need amongst other things a notion of the narrative order of human life.⁶⁵ To understand virtue we must understand action and every characterisation of action or actor relies on a context, even the limit case of the hypothetical example used in philosophical discussion. To understand self, causes and descriptions we need a setting, a comprehensible here and now, which must arise from a before. Hence,

"Narrative history of a certain kind turns out to be the basic and essential genre for the characterisation of human actions." (AV 194)

It is in MacIntyre's understanding of action that we begin to see distinct resonances with Heidegger's understanding of the being of Dasein. Both

⁶⁰ AV 115

⁶¹ Hence MacIntyre claims "morality and social structure are in fact one and the same in heroic society. There is only one set of social bonds. Morality as something distinct does not yet exist. Evaluative questions are questions of social fact." AV 116

⁶² AV 121

⁶³ Hayden White believes that this connection is bivalent - that is understanding a narrative entails taking a moral stance: "Where, in any account of reality, narrativity is present, we can be sure that morality or a moralizing impulse is present too." Hayden White, 1987, p.24

⁶⁴ MacIntyre does not ask why Aristotle makes this move. We will see in the next chapter Havelock's explanation of its cause.

⁶⁵ AV 172-5

philosophers reject the atomistic reduction of phenomena, and for both human beings understand the world in terms of purpose before any theoretical grasp of abstract concepts. They even share similar views on Western history since Hellenic times.⁶⁶

MacIntyre posits an overtly narrative concept of selfhood: "I am the subject of a history that is my own and no one else's, that has its own peculiar meaning."⁶⁷ My own history is made up of actions which have a meaning for me. MacIntyre like Heidegger sees that a pure action is an abstraction from life which is always shot through with understanding.⁶⁸ Only from our own purposive doing, (and by means of it) can we abstract the notion of an action which is not necessarily intelligible. In so far as we act well, we do so in the light of an "adequate sense of tradition"⁶⁹ which has a sense of what is handed down from the past and what is opened up as a possibility of the future. MacIntyre's understanding of time and action sounds rather like an echo of Heidegger's exposition of the three-fold nature of Dasein's temporality.

"there is no present which is not informed by some image of some future and an image of the future which always presents itself in the form of a telos - or of a variety of ends or goals - towards which we are either moving or failing to move in the present. Unpredictability and teleology therefore coexist as part of our lives ... our lives have a certain form which projects itself towards our future" (AV 200-1)⁷⁰

The parallelism with Heidegger, albeit at a much more down to earth level, is continued in his insistence on the equality (in Heideggerian terms the equiprimordiality) of the key moments of his analysis.

"I am not arguing that the concepts of narrative or of intelligibility or of accountability are more fundamental than that of personal identity. The concepts of narrative, intelligibility and

⁶⁶ John Caputo also remarks on the similarities between the theses of the two thinkers. "Heidegger and ... MacIntyre ... agree in all the essentials: the great beginning in the Greeks, the terrible decline in modernity, the hope in a new beginning; nostalgia, antimodernism. They both look to antiquity for light and a time of original solidarity; they both point their finger at the theory of 'values', and specifically at Nietzsche, as the heart of the modern ethical malaise; and they both leave us dreaming of a new dawn (while the forces of oppression ravage the land)" RH 241

⁶⁷ AV 202

⁶⁸ "the concept of an intelligible action is a more fundamental concept than that of an action as such" AV 195

⁶⁹ "an adequate sense of tradition manifests itself in a grasp of those future possibilities which the past has made available to the present." AV 207

⁷⁰ See also description of action: "Action itself has a basically historical character." AV 197

accountability presuppose the applicability of the concept of personal identity, just as it presupposes their applicability and just as indeed each of these three presupposes the applicability of the two others. The relationship is one of mutual presupposition." (AV 203)

Although we must remain aware that MacIntyre's terms 'identity', 'narrative' and 'intelligibility' do not have direct parallels in Heidegger, and his entire philosophical orientation is far from phenomenological, we can note with interest that his very different path of thinking has thrown up findings that are remarkably harmonious with our reading of the latter. For MacIntyre, and on my reading of Heidegger, narrative and intelligibility are equally primary and constitutive of human being. In making this very approximate equation I do not mean to suggest that two such disparate philosophers are simply saying the same thing, so I must qualify it. Firstly MacIntyre's "intelligibility" refers I believe to the phenomenon that Heidegger claims is founded in the existential of meaning; that is Dasein always already makes some sense of itself and the world as long as it exists. Secondly, the equiprimordiality of narrative, which MacIntyre assumes more than he argues for, foreshadows my claim in the next chapter that the temporality of Dasein is manifest at the ontic level by the fact that Dasein understands itself always in terms of a narrative structure, howsoever deficient that may be. We must also note that the identity of the self is not a given in Heidegger's ontology of Dasein. In fact for the most part Dasein takes up inauthentic possibilities so its identity is not as individual as we commonly, wishfully, think it is.⁷¹

"The Self of everyday Dasein is the *they*-self, ... As they-self, the particular Dasein has been *dispersed* into the 'they', and must first find itself." (BT 167)

In other words Heidegger considers a deficient form of identity to be an ontological possibility of man, which does not form part of MacIntyre's ontology. It is not however incompatible with it. Heidegger sees, where MacIntyre is not concerned to look, that intelligibility and identity can have deficient forms, that is inauthentic modalities, wherein although Dasein still exists it is lost to itself. MacIntyre sees this lostness at the level of morality, but not at the ontological level. He maintains a simpler view

⁷¹ Ricoeur also suggests that narrative enables the construction of a narrative identity, but in the conclusions of *Time and Narrative* Vol 3 acknowledges that "it makes identity somewhat unstable, insofar as many stories can be woven from the same material". See Wood, 1991, p.4

of human being and sees a fragmentation and dissolution at the moral, rather than ontological level. More straightforwardly, he posits that the unity of an individual life is "the unity of a narrative embodied in a single life"⁷² which leads him to the culmination of his moral philosophy with the claim that "To ask, 'What is good for me?' is to ask how best I might live out that unity and bring it to completion."⁷³ The notion of narrative as constitutive for human being is essential to his thesis. It is therefore a problematic omission that he does not define it. However his analysis of its place in human life confirms that it is integral to human being.

Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self* is, like MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, a work of moral philosophy with a strong normative element and an equally exhortatory peroration. He has read both MacIntyre and Heidegger and synthesizes their influence in his own description of self-knowledge.

"To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand." (Taylor 1989, p.27)

He fuses MacIntyre's concern about morality with elements of Heidegger's ontology.⁷⁴ For Taylor the self is a moral self,⁷⁵ and it is this morality which drives us towards narrative as the modality in which we can answer the unavoidable questions thrown up by our moral being.

"making sense of one's life as a story is ... not an optional extra; ... our lives exist ... in this space of questions, which only a coherent narrative can answer." (Taylor 1989 p.47)

Taylor seems to approach an understanding of the ontological inevitability of meaning but he does not suggest that narrativity is essential to the being of the self, merely to our understanding of ourselves.⁷⁶ His talk of "horizons within which we take a stand" remains on the ontic level and

⁷² AV 203

⁷³ AV 203

⁷⁴ For further evidence of the Heideggerian influence see in particular pp. 34 (and footnote), 49, and 463ff., (Taylor 1989).

⁷⁵ "To know who you are is to be oriented in moral space." Taylor, 1989 p.28

⁷⁶ He comes very close to doing so but does not seem to understand projection as ontological: "making sense of my present action ... requires a narrative understanding of my life, a sense of what I have become which can only be given in a story. And as I project my life forward and endorse the existing direction or give it a new one, I project a future story." (Taylor 1989, p.48)

he does not penetrate to the ontological level at which Heidegger articulates the structure that MacIntyre simply asserts. Taylor is in the end more concerned with prescription than description. Taylor, like MacIntyre, believes that mankind is in a parlous situation. Although he makes no such connection, I believe his indication of what is needed can be understood to be exactly what I will unfold as the sort of language that I believe is constitutive of good storytelling.

"As our public traditions of family, ecology, even polis are undermined or swept away, we need new languages of personal resonance to make crucial human goods alive for us again."
(Taylor 1989, p.513)

Personal resonance refers to a quality of knowledge and engagement founded on internal criteria of feeling which are neither translatable nor reducible to an external expression of code and measurement. Taylor's book stops just before it might explain how this need will be fulfilled. The well-told oral storytelling event, defined in Chapter Five below, is a paradigmatic example of the type of discourse he seeks.

MacIntyre, equally frustratingly, finishes *After Virtue* "waiting for another St Benedict."⁷⁷ For all his moralizing MacIntyre offers little moral direction. His book amounts to an exposition of what he understands to be the disintegration of morality from Homeric to modern times. He catalogues as a social historian what Heidegger sees at the level of the history of metaphysics. Over the same period of time Heidegger believes that Western Metaphysics rigidified and buried ever more deeply the question of being. John Caputo has also read MacIntyre alongside Heidegger and he too sees a similarity, also at a different level.

"Modernity is for [Heidegger] too an *Abfall, decadere*, a decay, but one which had eaten into the very movement of the history of Being. So Heidegger's tale speeds along at a much higher altitude than does MacIntyre's. And his critique is much more radical ... He thinks all the trouble started when Plato and Aristotle launched the project of a philosophical ethics, for that led ... straight to modern subjectivism, value theory, and Nietzsche, i.e., the end of ethics. The trouble starts not with the Enlightenment but as soon as philosophy opens its door and begins unloading its conceptualizing tools. The decline, the *Abfall*, actually sets in with philosophy itself, so the primordial *ethos* can be preserved only by poetic thinking, not by a restoration of the classical notion of ethical rationality." (RH 244)

⁷⁷ AV 245

We will see when we turn to Eric Havelock's reading of Plato what he believes caused the fundamental shift in thinking that occurred when "philosophy opened its door." MacIntyre's assertion of the narrative nature of human being is meant to redress the excessively rational view of the Enlightenment on the one hand, and on the other the arbitrary relativism of the Emotivism that followed it. As he expounds his views, it is clear that, although he does not argue it, narrative must play some ontological part in human being. My thesis is that it does indeed do so, and is thus support for MacIntyre's argument. His utilisation of narrative is evidence for the validity of my thesis. If, after all, human being is fundamentally narrative we could reasonably expect MacIntyre to have noticed. When we turn to Ong and Havelock it will not escape the reader that the pre-Hellenic period from which MacIntyre draws his notion of narrative offering archetypes of social organisation was a primarily oral society. We will also see why ethical debate as such arose with Aristotle, and why it was doomed to decay.

5 NARRATIVE IN ANTHROPOLOGY AND LITERARY CRITICISM

There is little comfort in turning to other academic disciplines to find a definition of narrative free of the sorts of limitations we have encountered in philosophy. Narrative is being studied and discussed in more and more fields, generating an overwhelming amount of writing.⁷⁸ Narratives seem to occur in every field of human activity.⁷⁹ There is such a huge amount of writing on narrative in literary criticism and anthropology that an uncontraversial or comprehensive review of the topic in one field let alone two, is impossible for one writer.⁸⁰ Nonetheless it is clear from a broad reading that all theorists seem to agree on the importance of narrative, few agree on its structure and none seem

⁷⁸ As Deborah Tannen remarks, "There is a burgeoning and overwhelming literature on the structure and functions of narrative" (Tannen 1989, p.212).

⁷⁹ "Everywhere and on every occasion we make up stories and tell tales of many different kinds." Mair 1989 p.276; "the narrative is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; the history of narrative begins with the history of mankind; there does not exist, and never has existed, a people without narratives." Barthes, quoted in Polkinghorne 1988, p.14

⁸⁰ "There is no single theory of [narrative] ... acceptable to a majority of those who have addressed it, and the unresolved differences among the critics cannot be either easily adjudicated or cavalierly dismissed." Martin 1986, p.30

to venture to define its ontological basis. Here for example is Hayden White:

"To raise the question of the nature of narrative is to invite reflection on the very nature of culture and, possibly, even of the nature of humanity itself. So natural is the impulse to narrate, so inevitable is the form of narrative for any report on the way things really happened, that narrativity could appear problematical only in a culture in which it was absent - or, as in some domains of contemporary Western intellectual and artistic culture, programmatically refused. ... far from being one code among many that a culture may utilize for endowing experience with meaning, narrative is a meta-code, a human universal on the basis of which transcultural messages about the nature of a shared reality can be transmitted. ... the absence of narrative capacity or a refusal of narrative indicates an absence or refusal of meaning itself." (Hayden White 1987, p.1-2)

Hayden White's position seems so reasonable that it scarcely seems to need substantiation. But that is precisely the problem with narrative. We understand it so naturally that hardly anyone questions exactly how it is that we understand it and what exactly makes a narrative a narrative and not, for example, a list. Hayden White is right to realize that to question narrative is to invite reflection on "possibly ... the nature of humanity itself." He himself does not however reflect a great deal, although his observations are accurate. Victor Turner shares Hayden White's understanding of the ubiquity of narrative (he uses the term drama as he refers to the same phenomenon under a different aspect) but he too is silent regarding its ontological origins.⁸¹ Much theorising by anthropologists is based on borrowing from philosophy, be it structuralism, speech-act theory or deconstructionism, and attempts thereby to provide a theory in which to house discussion of their field work.⁸² The borrowings are on the whole unsuccessful as the philosophical theories of narrative promote more argument about theories than elucidation of the real world, and most theories introduce logical and categorial distinctions that native speakers inconveniently disregard. Robert Scholes in the company of anthropologists offers a more

⁸¹ "In many field situations in markedly different cultures, in my experience of Western social life, and in numerous historical documents, we can clearly discern a community's movement through time as taking a shape to which we can hardly deny the epithet "dramatic"." Turner 1981, p.39

⁸² See Mitchell 1981 and Turner and Bruner 1986

sparse definition of narrative than he did in his earlier work with Robert Kellogg (see below).

"Narrative is not just a sequencing, or the illusion of sequence ... narrative is a sequencing of something for somebody. ... One cannot narrate a picture, or a person, or a building, or a tree, or a philosophy. Narration is a word that implicates its object in its meaning. Only one kind of thing can be narrated: a time-thing, or to use our normal word for it, an 'event'." (Scholes in Mitchell, 1981 p.205)

However Scholes goes on to assert baldly that narrative is "symbolization."⁸³ Edward Bruner acknowledges the place of narrative and ascribes it a meaning giving function, but describes on the whole what narrative does rather than what it is. When he does venture an ontological statement it is insufficiently precise to merit close philosophical analysis.⁸⁴ Elizabeth Tonkin considers narratives throughout her study of oral history, but her work is aimed towards clarifying notions of the self and oral history. She wisely avoids attempting to define narrative.⁸⁵

Many literary theorists have claimed to consider narrative independent of text or specific medium. In their widely quoted book Scholes and Kellogg state that, in contrast to their predecessors,⁸⁶ they "hope to put the novel in its place."⁸⁷

"it will not be our intention to view the novel as the final product of an ameliorative evolution, ... we hope to view the nature of narrative and the Western narrative tradition whole, seeing the novel as only one of a number of narrative possibilities." (Scholes and Kellogg 1966, p.3)

Scholes and Kellogg provide a useful summary of previous approaches and attempt to move beyond the narrow confines of literary criticism.

⁸³ "A narrated event is the symbolization of a real event: a temporal icon." Scholes in Mitchell, 1981 p.205

⁸⁴ "My position is that the story is prior to, but not independent of, the discourse." Bruner in Turner and Bruner 1986 p.146. The terms here are not adequately defined. See also comments on the temporal structure of narrative in the same paper.

⁸⁵ Tonkin, like Polkinghorne (1988) and Kerby (1991), has an essentially narrative notion of the self. However, more alive to the mutability of oral narrative she understands the self to be "both variable and vulnerable" Tonkin 1992, p.136

⁸⁶ Representative of their predecessors are Northrop Frye *Anatomy of Criticism*, Princeton University Press, 1957, and Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis*, Princeton University Press, 1953. The latter, in particular, they take to task for his "single-minded devotion to realistic principles" Scholes & Kellogg 1966, p.5, See also pp. 6 and 203.

⁸⁷ Scholes and Kellogg, 1966, p.3

Nonetheless in spite of devoting a chapter to the Oral Heritage of Written Narrative their definition of narrative is as follows:

"By narrative we mean all those literary works which are distinguished by two characteristics: the presence of a story and a story-teller. A drama is a story without a story-teller; in it characters act out directly what Aristotle called an 'imitation' of such action as we find in life. A lyric, like a drama, is a direct presentation, in which a single actor, the poet or his surrogate, sings, or muses or speaks for us to hear or overhear. Add a second speaker ... and we move toward drama. Let the speaker begin to tell of an event ... and we move toward narrative. For writing to be narrative no more and no less than a teller and a tale are required." (Scholes and Kellogg 1966, p.4)

This definition of narrative, although not in thrall to the novel, still takes for granted a written format ("literary works ... writing") in spite of a liberal use of oral terminology ("sings ... speaks ... speaker ... overhear ... tell") the significance of which is not examined by the authors.⁸⁸ The key phrases in the first and last sentences of the quotation are ontologically ambiguous: the "presence" of story and story-teller and its synonymic repetition, the requirement of "a teller and a tale", are not explained. It soon becomes clear that for Scholes and Kellogg the requirement for presence can be fulfilled by the virtual presence of a teller in a written text. Any written text which includes a narrator character constitutes a narrative for Scholes and Kellogg, however a drama, such as *Hamlet*, does not.⁸⁹ Scholes and Kellogg, as we have seen, are by no means alone in their assumption that the essence of narrative is to be found in a text and we have already decided to bypass Ricoeur's work for this reason. The Scholes and Kellogg definition boils down to an attempt to distinguish the sort of texts which they do not wish to call narrative. Unfortunately if we strip out the references to text in their definition it is almost vacuous: "narrative requires a teller and a tale." Nearly twenty years later, in spite of huge amounts of research and writing literary critics are no nearer a

⁸⁸ Scholes and Kellogg are interested in the oral mainly in so far as it is the forerunner of written narrative. They are careful to note, and dissociate themselves from, the unfortunate pairings of oral with primitive and written with civilised, but they do not investigate the importance of the physical co-presence of teller and audience. They also take over Milman Parry's unfortunate oxymoron "oral literature." (see S & K, 1966, p.18)

⁸⁹ By contrast I maintain that of the types of 'narrative' mentioned in the quotation above only the physical performance of a drama could possibly be a primordial narrative. There may be no designated narrator but the Dasein of the players collectively presents the story.

definition of narrative.⁹⁰ Martin asks what it might be on the last page of his *Recent Theories of Narrative*.

"What then is narrative? Having reached the point at which a genuinely interesting book on narrative would begin, I can only say that I would never have undertaken a discussion of recent theories if I had known how to answer the question. An understanding of narrative is a project for the future" (Martin, 1986, p.190)

It is to Martin's credit that he recognises the failings of the theories of narrative he has reviewed. Perhaps he was unable to make good those failings because he did not have access to the ontology of Dasein that I contend is the ground for a sound explanation of narrative. This thesis proposes an answer to one reading of Martin's question.⁹¹ I suggest that the temporally ecstatic structure of Dasein gives the structure of the primordial form of narrative.

6 KERBY: NARRATIVE AND THE SELF

Anthony Kerby in his recent study makes a strong link between narrative and humanity. His main inspiration is Paul Ricoeur, but he draws also from MacIntyre and from many of the other scholars mentioned above. Kerby's hypothesis is that, "the self is given content, is delineated and embodied, primarily in narrative constructions or stories,"⁹² and he defines the self as, "the *implied subject* of self-referring utterances."⁹³ It is through telling stories of ourselves and to ourselves that we become and know ourselves. He takes over a Husserlian view of time, that is "the present transcends itself in a continual and unbroken anticipation of the

⁹⁰ As already noted, writing on narrative is so voluminous as to be beyond cataloguing. There are purveyors of grand theories from Booth (1961), Burke (1945), to Ricoeur (1984), and innumerable collections by editors and reviewers from Hillis Miller (1971) who has a deconstructionist slant, to Nystrand (1982) at the psychological end of the spectrum. Each has their own, more or less explicit, variation on an essentially text-based theory of narrative. See also Howard 1991. I cite Martin (1986) below as a summariser of literary theories. Further references are myriad.

⁹¹ I concentrate on oral narrative and do not attempt an explanation of the nature of narrative in its mediated forms such as text, film, pictorial representation and so on, which I take Martin to be including in his generic term 'narrative.' Nonetheless I maintain that the latter are founded in the former.

⁹² Kerby 1991, p.1

⁹³ Kerby 1991, p.4

future and retention of the past,"⁹⁴ and from Heidegger he takes the point that lived time "is always someone's."⁹⁵ As we speak about our lives we are the one who speaks, or the "speaking subject" and we bring into being the "subject of speech" (designated by personal pronouns and other deictical indications) and the "spoken subject."⁹⁶ These three parts form a whole, the self, which is created by the narration of our pre-narrative experience. Summing up this self Kerby quotes approvingly from Taylor who writes, "the self that is to be interpreted is essentially that of a being who self-interprets."⁹⁷ Thus for Kerby the self is the upshot of the use of language by a self-referring creature which knows and articulates its own experiences in and over time. I am broadly in agreement with his findings, which replicate my own position; however there are various lacunae in his argument and in his phenomenological ontology to which I will advert below. Firstly, however, on the positive side Kerby draws attention to the relationship between narrative and meaning.

"Prior to some degree of narration, the *meaning* of human events for us is obscure or simply absent." (Kerby 1991, p.48)

Kerby links meaning here with emotion, and he clearly means by meaning here the type of case of meaning wherein "we say an entity has meaning" illustrated in the previous chapter by the example of the old library chair.⁹⁸ He shows that what Taylor calls "higher" emotions are constellated by a narrative context. A wound for example tends to be painful, but it will give rise to say, anxiety, shame or pride depending on the context, the story, in which it was inflicted. In this sense the meaning of the wound is constituted by my relation with the wound which is articulated or understood in a narrative structure. If we label the wound 'prenarrative' we can agree with Kerby that "the narrative is the meaning of the prenarrative experience."⁹⁹ However Kerby uses the term prenarrative to indicate that narrative in some way is already present in

⁹⁴ Kerby 1991, p18

⁹⁵ Kerby 1991, p.15

⁹⁶ Kerby 1991, p.105

⁹⁷ Taylor, Charles, *Human Agency and Language, Philosophical Papers I*, C.U.P. Cambridge 1985, p.75; quoted in Kerby 1991, p.108

⁹⁸ Along with emotion which is the articulation of the manner in which we care, or do not care, for the events and *dramatis personae* narrated goes the possibility of judging and valuing. In fact, he suggests, in the process of telling stories "we seem ... to be immediately involved in generating the *value* of a certain state of affairs or course of action" Kerby 1991, p.54

⁹⁹ Kerby 1991, p.84

our lives. He proposes that our lives have an inherently "pre-narrative" or "quasi-narrative" structure.¹⁰⁰ "Prenarrative" does not mean before any narrativity at all but rather before any *articulation* of narrativity, it is "the drama we call our lives."¹⁰¹ Along with Heidegger and MacIntyre, Kerby agrees that human life always involves understanding, and human action is always understood in terms of a context that is effectively narrative. But Kerby, borrowing from Ricoeur, grounds his "prenarrative" ultimately in the notion of "emplotment."¹⁰² Like Ricoeur he has effectively removed the question of the organising structure of human experience by positing a construct "plot" to do the job for him. Ultimately although Kerby convincingly links the self to narrative he does not explain the latter, because he does not question the process of emplotment, nor the ontological status of the plot. Although he does link meaning to narrative, via emotion,¹⁰³ he does not turn his attention to the significance of the medium of narrative, nor the modalities of that medium. Thus although most of his examples seem to be taken from spoken discourse, his theory is mainly drawn from analysts of texts such as Ricoeur. In failing to examine the moment of telling of a story Kerby fails to catch sight of the ontological structure of Dasein which primordially lends narrative its structure. He simply stops with the unexplained concept, inherited from Ricoeur, of emplotment. Furthermore he also fails to see that the variables in the moment of telling determine the degree to which the narrative does give meaning to what he calls the pre-narrative.

Kerby cites two psychoanalysts, Schafer and Spence, both of whom talk of the construction of a narrative in analysis and notices that the psychoanalytic process can easily generate "a proliferation of narratives."¹⁰⁴ Kerby believes that the story co-constructed with the analyst is beneficial because it "facilitat[es] understanding and integration" even if it is not an exercise of "strict historical verisimilitude".¹⁰⁵ But most patients already have a narrative understanding of their lives. They walk in to the analyst's office with a story, and often a coherent, even integrated one. What exactly is it that characterizes the story co-constructed with the

¹⁰⁰ Kerby 1991, p.8

¹⁰¹ Kerby 1991, p.39

¹⁰² Kerby 1991, p.43

¹⁰³ Kerby 1991, p.43-47

¹⁰⁴ Kerby 1991 p.89

¹⁰⁵ Kerby 1991, pp.89-90

analyst such that it is therapeutic? Most psychotherapists and analysts have come across the sort of patient who knows his own story, knows all the facts, all the diagnostic labels and all the causative traumas of his life, and yet is still not cured. Equally coherence, which is one of Spence's aims in analysis, is not always necessary.¹⁰⁶ There are many satisfied ex-patients and not a few non-patients who do not have a neatly integrated life story. Kerby believes that,

"The final judgement of a narrative is its acceptance by the one whose experience it recounts and whose reflected life it becomes, even though this acceptance may not be easily won." (Kerby 1991, p.90)

The key question, not addressed by Kerby is *how* the acceptance is won. Apart from noting *en passant* that one's own acceptance of a narrative may be influenced by whether other people accept one's account, (although it is clearly neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition) Kerby does not look at other factors which influence the acceptance of a narrative.¹⁰⁷ I maintain that a highly significant factor in the acceptance of a personal narrative in psychotherapy is *the way the story is told*. The same variable, *how a story is told*, governs the degree to which a narrative is attended to in such non-psychotherapeutic contexts as informal conversations and in professional performance. Indeed the degree to which a story is accepted as a "good" story is essentially a function of how it is told. The manner of telling of a story can be analysed in countless ways. I want to home in on just one variable. Is the story boring or not boring? I will maintain, not so much against Kerby as beyond him, that this variable above all - is the story boring or not? - is what is important in stories.

As Heidegger demonstrates in *The Fundamental Concepts* boredom is not a trivial phenomenon, and yet it is often overlooked, *precisely because it trivialises*. When we are bored that which bores us does not seem to mean anything or matter much. However *that we are bored* may well matter greatly to us. A "good" story thoroughly engages our being, a poor story does not. In fact, we can suggest that what is essential to story is what makes it a good story; and a boring story is fundamentally deficient as a story. We listen to it only because we know pre-conceptually what it should be and are caught in a conventional response that is an imitation

¹⁰⁶ See Spence 1982 p.24

¹⁰⁷ Kerby 1991 p.90

of an authentic response to its true potential. If it does not engage us, move us, nor make present another world to us it is merely the recitation of a sequence of events, a boring imitation of a story. We will expand on this point in Chapter Five. In order to prepare to do so we must look more closely at how a story is told and the variables in that telling. I have indicated that story as a modality of discourse is founded in speech, not text. How a story is spoken affects its being-a-story. I will propose that the primordial form of story, whence it draws its essence, is the non-boring orally spoken story. It is by reference however hidden or automatic to this primordial form of story that we all understand stories to be stories in their derivative, diluted or mediated modes such as novels, films cartoons and so forth. Written words get their meaning from the spoken word, as the moon shines with the light it gets from the sun. In so far as a text tells a story, it reflects more or less successfully the lived being-with of oral storytelling.

To recap, Kerby establishes the relationship between narrative and self, but he does not extend it far enough. Although he offers a good argument for taking the ontological basis of the self to be narrative, he does not question the ontological basis of narrative. As a result he is not able to explore the significance for the self of the variable of boredom in the happening of narrative, nor can he discover in the oral event of Dasein's storytelling the structure and the moments of the story that he, along with Ricoeur ascribes to the plot. Because neither Kerby nor Ricoeur consider seriously the oral event of storytelling neither of them consider what it is that makes such a telling "good" or "bad." That variable, I contend, is crucial to the understanding of the primordial form of storytelling, and its relation to Dasein. That is the issue to which we turn in the next chapter. We will look at the different effects of orality and literacy on society and thinking. Havelock and Ong demonstrate the transformative effects of literacy, the consequences of which are unwittingly paraded by Ricoeur, and deconstructed by Derrida.¹⁰⁸ This is not the place to discuss Deconstructionism given the centrality of text to the entire movement. Nonetheless we must acknowledge, with Ong,¹⁰⁹ that Derrida does the oralists great service by undercutting the chirographic bias towards believing that there is a one to one correspondence between word and object, and by challenging the "medium" model of communication

¹⁰⁸ See Derrida's commentary on Rousseau in *Of Grammatology*, 1976.

¹⁰⁹ Ong 1982, p.166ff.

wherein texts are vessels carrying the meaning inserted by the author safely to the interior of the reader. However Derrida goes too far in asserting that because a text has autonomy and ambiguity it refers to nothing outside of itself, or that *différance* defers all meaning. Indeed when he writes, "Writing precedes and follows speech, it comprehends it"¹¹⁰ one can only conclude that his disregard for history arises because his thinking has been overwhelmed by theories of textuality to such an extent that, for him, not only is the truth of text undecideable, but truth itself is invaded by the undecideability of text.¹¹¹

Having established the significance of orality in general we will turn to the issue of the crucial variable in oral delivery: boredom. We turn to Heidegger's analysis of boredom in *The Fundamental Concepts* to elucidate the existentiell modification of Dasein which determines boredom, so that in Chapter Five we can draw together the significance of orality, the analysis of boredom and the idea of narrative to give a coherent account of the place of story in the being of Dasein, and the significance of particular variables in the telling of story for the modification of Dasein's way of being.

¹¹⁰ Derrida 1976 p.238

¹¹¹ For a broad but incisive critique of the excesses of Deconstructionism see Vickers 1995 and 1989.

Chapter Four

Orality, Narrative and Boredom

1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I draw on scholarship on orality make clear the significance of the differences between an oral and a textual narrative, and to establish the primacy of the former. I have suggested that Ricoeur and others have misunderstood a primordial dimension of narrative because they have taken the primary form of narrative to be a text. I will draw on the work of Eric Havelock and Walter Ong to show what facilitated Ricoeur's misapprehension and argue that there are significant differences in thinking, behaviour, and world view between oral cultures and those which have alphabetised writing and widespread literacy.¹ Havelock's work in the main concentrates on the classical world and re-reading classical texts in the light of the impact of alphabetised writing.² Ong's work considers the interplay of orality and literacy down to modern times, and into the era of electronically reproduced speech.³ Ong makes a useful distinction, which I shall follow where necessary, between primary orality, "the orality of cultures untouched by literacy,"⁴ and secondary orality, "the orality of telephones, radio and television, which depends on writing and print for its existence."⁵

Having established the significance of orality I then turn to the ubiquitous but under-researched variable in narrative which is boredom. Heidegger's temporal analysis of boredom in *The Fundamental Concepts* shows how

¹ The Greek alphabet, complete with vowels, was a significant improvement on previous scripts: "the initial advantage offered by alphabetic efficiency was to provide a script which could fluently and unambiguously transcribe the full gamut of orally preserved speech. ... Such complete visibility for language had not been developed in previous writing systems, and consequently difficulty of interpretation had limited their use." Havelock 1986 p.90-1 For a discussion of the superiority of alphabetised writing see Olson, 1994. Olson also summarizes (pp.33ff) the to and fro of academic debate since Parry first published and Havelock picked up his work. In spite of some disagreement and qualification, and notwithstanding the need for further research, I take the original theses to be essentially sound and well-supported.

² Havelock 1963, 1982, 1986

³ Ong 1967, 1977, 1982, 1986

⁴ Ong 1982, p.6

⁵ Ong 1982, p.3

Dasein is modified in boredom. Boredom is a modification of Dasein's temporality. As storytelling is a comportment of Dasein, stories too, are modified in boredom. Our engagement with story is founded in our ecstatic temporality. In so far as we turn away from our ownmost time and understand ourselves and our time in terms of public, objectively measured time, we do not engage in the story. We will see that the essential form of story must be non-boring, which prepares us for the exact description of what constitutes story in Chapter Five.

2 HAVELOCK, ONG AND ORALITY

In *Preface to Plato* Eric Havelock made the proposition that Plato's *Republic* was essentially an attempt to reform Greek education, and that the proposed reformation was made possible by concepts and ways of thinking which arose as a direct consequence of the introduction of alphabetic writing during the previous three hundred years.⁶ He later claimed that the inception of western metaphysical philosophy was a result of the introduction of alphabetic writing into Greek society.⁷ To do justice to Havelock's claims, and to place his comments on narrative in perspective, we will briefly outline the recent history of what Havelock calls the "orality-literacy" debate.⁸ Both Havelock and Ong were inspired and stimulated by the work of Milman Parry.⁹ Parry's hypothesis was not welcomed when he first advanced it in his M.A. thesis at the University of California,¹⁰ but has become widely accepted since, due to the work of his son, Adam Parry, and of his student, Albert Lord, as well as through Havelock and Ong. Parry hypothesised that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were

⁶ "the *Republic* sets itself a problem which is not philosophical in the specialised sense of that term, but rather social and cultural. It questions the Greek tradition as such and the foundations on which it has been built. Crucial to this tradition is the condition and quality of Greek education." Havelock 1963, p.12-3

⁷ Havelock 1986, p.110-11.

⁸ Havelock cites Milman Parry, Marcel Jousse and indeed Rousseau as forerunners of the modern academic concern with orality (For an overview of Jousse's work see Sienaert 1990). However in Havelock 1982 he offers 1963 as a starting date for modern consideration of the "Orality Problem", as that year saw the publication of his own *Preface to Plato*, McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, Mayr's *Animal Species and Evolution*, Lévi-Strauss's *La Pensée Sauvage*, and Goody and Watt's *The Consequences of Literacy*.

⁹ See Parry Milman, *L'Épithète traditionnelle dans Homère*, Société Editrice des Belles Lettres, Paris, 1928, translated and augmented by further studies in Parry 1971, both cited in Havelock 1963, and 1982, and also cited in Ong 1982. See also Lord 1960

¹⁰ See Havelock 1986, p.51

not created by a writer but were transcriptions of oral compositions. Furthermore the oral compositions were not single events of creation, which thereafter were repeated verbatim, but rather were ongoing recreations. Parry showed that the teller of the *Iliad* knew the story not as a script but as a series of scenes, one leading to another. He did not have a fixed text but he did have a fixed rhythmical metre in which to tell the story. A huge text of thousands of lines, each with a fixed form, represents a formidable challenge to the memory - and an unnecessary one. Parry demonstrated that instead of such a text the Homeric storyteller had a collection of formulae at his disposal, grouped around set themes such as "banquet", "receiving strangers," "setting sail", "preparing a horse for battle" and so on.¹¹ When telling each such event in a tale he would build a description from these formulae around the particular circumstances and characters involved. The characters of his epic would each have a set of epithets resulting in an appellation of different metrical lengths so that the person could be named in the appropriate one of many different ways in accordance with the available feet of the metre.¹²

"Parry's discovery might be put this way: virtually every distinctive feature of Homeric poetry is due to the economy enforced on it by oral methods of composition. These can be reconstructed by careful study of the verse itself, once one puts aside the assumptions about expression and thought processes engrained in the psyche by generations of literate culture." (Ong, 1982, p.21)

Together with Albert Lord, Parry tested the validity of his claims about poetic tale tellers in an oral culture with field work in Yugoslavia. The results, vindicating his hypothesis, were published in Lord's *The Singer of Tales*. In Yugoslavia Parry and Lord found non-literate bards whose performance was a formulaic composition, echoing that which Parry ascribed to Homer. Formulaic phrases, made to the ten-syllable Yugoslav meter, were used and re-used, but no two performances of the same story were the same. Nevertheless, the singer would insist that he had told exactly the same story, in exactly the same way. Lord observed that from the singer's point of view this is entirely reasonable.

¹¹ See Lord 1960, p.30

¹² For further details see Havelock 1963, and Parry M. "The traditional epithet in Homer" in Parry A., 1971. Lord 1960 gives a detailed analysis of the techniques of non-literate twentieth century oral epic singers.

"There is nothing in the poet's experience (or in ours if we listen to the same song from several singers and to the same singer telling the same song several times) to give him any idea that a theme can be expressed in only one set of words. Those singers whom he has heard have never reproduced a theme in exactly the same words, and he has no feeling that to do so is necessary or even normal practice. The theme, even though it be verbal, is not any fixed set of words, but a grouping of ideas. Some singers, of course, do not change their wording much from one singing to another, especially if the song is one that they sing often." (Lord 1960, p.69)

In fact, not only do the singers insist that they are telling the same story, but the grounds of the difference a literate auditor might hear are not readily available to singers in an oral culture. On enquiry, Lord discovered that the singers he interrogated did not have the notion of word as a discrete linguistic particle.¹³ So accustomed is the modern mind to the universality of concepts such as 'word' that it is difficult to grasp the significance of Lord's findings. Lord's notes indicate that sometimes singers expressed the same themes in different words. The singers themselves disagreed with him and insisted that they had said the exactly the same thing each time. *The phonemes and words did not have the same sort of being for the taker of notes and the singers of tales.* Our modern notion of word is sustained by the written word. Only when it is written does a word become an object, a thing out there, separate from the action of a speaker. *In the non-literate world a word is an event.*

"Sound only exists when it is going out of existence. It is not simply perishable but essentially evanescent, and it is sensed as evanescent. When I pronounce the word 'permanence', by the time I get to the '-nence' the 'perma-' is gone, and has to be gone. ... There is no way to stop sound and have sound. I can stop a moving picture camera and hold one frame fixed on the screen. If I stop the movement of sound, I have nothing - only silence, no sound at all. All sensation takes place in time, but no other sensory field totally resists a holding action, stabilization, in quite this way. Vision can register motion, but it can also register immobility. Indeed, it favours immobility, for to examine something closely by vision, we prefer to have it quiet. We often

¹³ "Man without writing thinks in terms of sound groups and not in words, and the two do not necessarily coincide. When asked what a word is, he will reply that he does not know, or he will give a sound group which may vary in length from what we call a word to an entire line of poetry, or even an entire song. The word for "word" means an "utterance". When a singer is pressed then to say what a line is, he, whose chief claim to fame is that he traffics in lines of poetry, will be entirely baffled by the question" Lord 1960, p.25

reduce motion to a series of still shots the better to see what motion is. There is no equivalent of a still shot for sound. An oscillogram is silent. It lies outside the sound world." (Ong 1982, p.32)

Havelock observes that "there is probably no attestable instance in Greek of the term *logos* as denoting a single 'word', though it is often translated as though it did. The first 'word for a word' in the early philosophers seems to have been *onoma* - a 'name'."¹⁴ The word "word" refers to a phenomenon that shows itself firstly in *written* language. Writing words down produces an illusion of permanence about the being of the word; it transforms the word from an event into a thing. Hence there arises also the illusion that what is talked about in words also has an equivalent permanence. This is the transformation that allowed narrative, a telling, an *event*, to be (mis)taken to be a thing.¹⁵ According to Havelock it was historically alphabetic writing which gave rise to the Presocratic concern with *being*, as opposed to becoming.¹⁶ When an oral society becomes a chirographic society the very business of talking is transformed.¹⁷ Even thinking changes: if a thought can be written down and contemplated as an object external to and independent of the mind of the thinker one can reflect upon it and consider it outside the time and place of its genesis. It achieves a status independent of its originator.

¹⁴ Havelock 1986, p.113

¹⁵ "it is only as a language is written down that it becomes possible to think about it. The acoustic medium, being incapable of visualization, did not achieve recognition as a phenomenon wholly separable from the person who used it. ... This [independent] existence [of documents] invited examination of itself. So emerged, in the speculations of the sophists and Plato, as they wrote about what they were writing, conceptions of how this written thing behaved ... The term *logos*, richly ambivalent, referring to discourse both as spoken and as written (argument versus treatise) and also to the mental operation (the reasoning power) required to produce it, came into its own, symbolizing the new prosaic and literate discourse. ... A distinction slowly formed which identified the uttered *epos* of orally preserved speech as something different from *logos* and (to philosophers) inferior to it." Havelock 1986, p.112-3

¹⁶ "as the new statements in documented form began to separate themselves as visible artifacts from the consciousness of the speaker, who now could write them down, they become objects seen and contemplated, and so the notion was encouraged that what was being described also existed as an object which became single and unique. This object now did not just happen or perform, but existed, under two guises: as the total description, and as the total 'fact', meaning the single physical fact which was being described. ... there would arise a felt need to replace the verbs of action and happening which crowded themselves into the oral mythos by a syntax which somehow stated a situation or set of situations which were permanent, so that an account could be given of the environment which treated it as a constant. The verb called upon to perform this new duty was *einai*, the verb to be." Havelock in Robb 1983, p.21

¹⁷ See Havelock in Robb 1983 esp. pp.20 - 31

To clarify this point we will digress briefly to consider the situation in modern academia. This shift in the modality of thinking has become pronounced in the academic field, and notably philosophy, with the proliferation of printed texts in the last thirty years. In an oral discussion there are two tendencies that generally guide argument. If positions are irreconcilable then either the fundamental axiomatic disagreement is revealed as the talking continues or, if there is the possibility of and willingness for agreement, thoughts are continually reformulated until a form is reached on which consensus can be agreed. A debate carried out via written papers is quite different. Each sentence, fixed and preserved on paper, is an opportunity for disagreement and qualification. A written text is not clarified by either the emphases of speech or the theme of a particular discussion. As a written debate continues it tends to develop into more and more detailed defences, refinements and attacks, all of which produce yet more grounds for disagreement and qualification. To put this aphoristically, the job of a philosopher is to disagree with his colleagues, but not too much. The livelihood of every academic depends on contributing to the extension of textualised debate and the preservation of its form, so his work consists of continuing to argue rather than rupturing the debate completely.¹⁸ The proliferation of detailed arguments in every academic field has forced academics into ever narrower specialisations as there is simply too much publishing to keep up with. It is estimated that 200,000 academic journals are published in the English language, and that the average number of readers per article is five.¹⁹ Given that a few articles by well-known authors are very widely read it is likely that the modal number of readers is less than one. Furthermore in some fields a small number of writers produce a disproportionate number of publications. Norcross et al. found that for British clinical psychologists the modal number of journal articles and conference papers is zero. Eight per cent produced half of all published

¹⁸ Hence there are very firm rules governing the *form* of academic debates. "It is very noticeable in our scientific story telling that there are fierce conventions as to how the stories have to look and sound. They have to be logical and make a convincing claim that A did lead on to B and then to C. It is still not so very widely recognized that most of this logic is put in after all the other work on the story has been done, and is part of the final rhetoric of the scientific story teller's art." Mair 1989, p.278

¹⁹ Malcolm, Noel "Sinking in a sea of words", *Independent on Sunday*, 21/7/96

work.²⁰ Textually based debate has effectively silenced the input of many practitioners.

To return to our central theme, it is uncontested that writing down thoughts changed the nature of thinking.²¹ Havelock points to the dissemination of the Greek alphabet as the genesis of the process that has culminated in the our modern text-saturated way of thinking.

"The linguistic symptoms of this radical shift away from oralism, which has ever since underlain all European consciousness, occurred in a proliferation of terms, for notions and thoughts and thinking, for knowledge, and knowing, for understanding, investigating, research, inquiry. The task set himself by Socrates was to bring this new kind of terminology into close connection with the self and with *psyche*. For him, the terminology symbolized the level of psychic energy required to realize thought of what was permanently 'true', as opposed to what fleetingly happened in the vivid oral panorama. ... The linguistic formula in which such intellection expressed itself was par excellence the 'is' statement, in preference to the 'doing' statement, the one literate, the other oralist, with a corresponding contrast between a 'true' mental act of knowing and an oral act of feeling and responding." (Havelock 1986, p.115)

Havelock's explanation is prosaic, in both literal and metaphorical senses, compared to the almost mystical obscurity of Heidegger's writings in his later years on the pre-Socratics, but there is common ground.²² There are certainly possibilities for fruitful research to ascertain to what extent the path of Heidegger's thinking runs towards or alongside those phenomena Havelock ascribes to the shifts in the ways of thinking of the world of primary orality as it incorporates alphabetised thinking.²³

²⁰ Norcross, J.C., Brust, A. M. and Dryden W., "British clinical psychologists: II Survey findings and American comparisons", *Clinical Psychology Forum*, 40, 25-29 1992

²¹ "Consciousness of words permits their distinction from the ideas that words express. Writing, therefore, gives rise to the idea of an idea and the mind becomes the storehouse of those ideas." Olson 1994, p.242. Against this view see Scribner S. and Cole M. *The Psychology of Literacy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1981. For a rebuttal of Scribner and Cole see Goody 1987. See Olson 1994 also for further substantiation of the Ong/Goody/Havelock position.

²² Walter Benjamin, had he lived longer, might have provided a firm bridge between literary and philosophical understandings of existence. In what he left we see hints of an understanding that could have read and related Havelock and Heidegger: "During long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence. The manner in which human sense perception is organized, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well." Benjamin ed. Arendt, 1970 p.216

²³ "The substitution of the 'timeless present', turning into the 'logical present', in place of the 'immediate present' or the past or future, became a preoccupation of the pre-Platonic philosophers, particularly Parmenides. His verse indeed vividly illustrates the dynamics

Whereas the theme of Heidegger's later work is a consideration of the ways in which Being comes to show itself differently, Havelock and Ong simply suggest that man thinks and sees his world differently having interiorised the technology of writing.²⁴ In a discussion in *The Fundamental Concepts* Heidegger does allude to a transformation of existence transpiring "along with" new language, but not in an indentifiable historical context, nor does he press the connection as far as the orality theorists.²⁵ Havelock himself noticed that philosophers of hermeneutics such as Heidegger, seeking deeper and deeper meanings in texts "have come near to suggesting that buried behind the text may be realities expressible in oral language rather than written even though the hidden reality is described as a being in metaphysical, not oral, terms."²⁶ However Havelock, a classicist, was kept busy dealing with the impact of his theories on classicists and did not know Heidegger's work well enough to realise how significant his observations on the pre-Socratics might be to a Heidegger scholar.²⁷

of the partnership between oral and written idiom as they existed in his day. This no place to examine his system, except to note his dramatization of the verb 'to be' in its present tense *esti* and its neuter generic present participle *eon* as embodying a linguistic usage which, as he saw it, must replace the Homeric language of action and event - of 'becoming' and 'perishing'. Discussion of the logical and epistemological and ontological dimensions of this verb has become a commonplace among historians of Greek thought, especially as such concerns come to the fore in Plato's dialogues, which, it must always be remembered, were written documents, the fruit of a writer's lifetime preoccupation. Sufficient here to say that the genesis of this Greek problem becomes uncovered once it is placed in the context supplied by ... [Havelock's] theory of Greek literacy." (Havelock, 1986 p.106)

²⁴ Havelock is not the last man to propose a contraversial theory to account for this change. Julian Jaynes considers the same change to have had a bio-mechanical origin. See Jaynes, Julian, *The Origin of Consciousness in the breakdown of the bicameral mind*, Allen Lane, London, 1976

²⁵ "we find ourselves forced to adopt another language because of a fundamental transformation of existence. Or to put it more precisely, this change transpires along with this new language." FC 203

²⁶ Havelock in Olson and Torrance, 1991, p.18-9

²⁷ Ong notes the connection, but seems to consider Heidegger a lost cause: "Words in an oral culture are used typically not to set up static definitions but to discourse actively on the way a thing acts or behaves or operates in the human lifeworld. Words in oral cultures paradigmatically go with action and with things that act. As writing is interiorized, verbalization migrates from a predominantly action frame to a predominantly 'being' frame: the verb *to be* becomes more urgent than it had ever been in an oral culture. The quest is on to find Aristotle's *to ti en einai*, that is, 'what it is to be' or 'what being is'. In these perspectives metaphysics is seen to be indebted to writing not only for the kinds of protracted analytic explanations with which it and all science works, but also for identifying its own special quarry, 'being' itself, which it has always pursued. Writing in the sense I have tried to explain here separates being from time and *a longe* sets up Heidegger's project of rejoining the two. But Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* is written in the alphabet in a far-gone print culture, and whether it has fully achieved what it set out to do is in the minds of many open to question." Ong 1986, p.44-5

It is not my purpose in this lightning sketch of Havelock's work to divert into a discussion of the impact of his work on a reading of Heidegger's concern with being as such, rather I note the possibility for more detailed research by others.²⁸ My concern is to approach an understanding of narrative, and to emphasize that as we do so we must bear in mind a realistic understanding of the extent to which our thinking is affected by literacy. Just as we take a concept of word for granted without realizing that is derived from the sight of the written word, so too the modern mind is so accustomed to the universality of the concept "concept" that it is difficult to conceive of a mind which cannot conceive of concepts. Such however is the mind that Havelock and Ong propose is the mind of pre-literate man.²⁹

"As long as oral discourse retains the need of visualization it could not properly be said to indulge in abstraction. As long as its content remained a series of doings or of events none of these could properly be regarded as universals, which emerge only through the effort of rearranging the panorama of events under topics, and of reinterpreting it as chains of relation and cause. The era of the abstract and the conceptual is yet to come." (Havelock 1963 p.188)

Some fascinating field work by A. R. Luria is cited in support of their theories. In the 1930s Luria spent many months with pre-literate and semi-literate peasants in Uzbekistan and Krighizia. Luria described his project as follows:

"We hoped to reject the Cartesian notion of the primacy of self-consciousness, with a secondary rank accorded to the perception of the external world and other people. We assumed the reverse: the perception of oneself results from the clear perception of others and the processes of self-perception are shaped through social activity, which presupposes collaboration with others and an analysis of their behavioural patterns. Thus the final aim of our investigation was the study of how self-consciousness is shaped in the course of human social activity." (Luria, ed. Cole, 1976, p.19)

²⁸ An excellent starting point for a deeper investigation of the process of alphabetization and the orality-literacy shift is Olson 1994. His refinement of the insights opened up by Havelock and others suggests among other points that "writing is not the transcription of speech, but rather provides a conceptual model for that speech. ... the history of scripts is ... the by-product of attempts to use a script for a language for which it is ill-suited. ... writing is in principle meta-linguistics. ... and ... the models provided by our script tend to blind us toward other features of language which are equally important human communication." Olson 1994, p.89 See also Denny in particular in Olson and Torrance, 1991, Robb (ed.) 1983 and Robb, 1994.

²⁹ See Ong, 1982 pp.42ff., and Havelock, 1963 pp.180-188

Luria's intention echoed the phenomenological challenge to traditional metaphysics and his findings mirrored Heidegger's claims, in particular his claim that, "the kind of dealing which is closest to us is ... not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use."³⁰ Luria tried, and failed, to get his subjects to utilise categories to classify objects,³¹ and to use syllogistic logic to reach conclusions about things of which they had no direct knowledge. They refused to do so.

"we had no luck in getting these [illiterate] subjects to perform the abstract act of classification. Even when they grasped some similarity among various objects, they attached no particular importance to the fact. As a rule, they operated on the basis of 'practical utility', grouping objects in practical schemes rather than categorizing them. When we referred to a generic term they could use to designate a distinct group of objects, they generally disregarded the information or considered it immaterial. Instead, they adhered to the idea that objects should be grouped in practical arrangements." (Luria, ed. Cole, 1976, p.59)

Heidegger would surely have been greatly interested to know of Luria's findings, for most certainly the way of relating to the objects in the world of these oral subjects is clearly primarily as equipment. They find it difficult to see things as acontextual objects. Indeed, when pressed they refused to make the sort of objective definition that literates tend to believe all competent users can make, and take for granted as necessarily constitutive of competent language use.³² Ong comments on Luria's findings,

³⁰ BT 95

³¹ One of the groups of objects offered included, amusingly in the light of Heidegger's discussion at BT98-100, a hammer, in the group *hammer - saw - log - hatchet*. Asked to pick the odd one out, the subject refused, "They're all alike. The saw will saw the log and the hatchet will chop it into small pieces. If one of these things has to go, I'd throw out the hatchet. It doesn't do as good a job as the saw." Another subject was asked, "If you had to put these in some kind of order, could you take the log out of the group?" and replied, "No, if you get rid of the log, what good would the others be?" Luria, ed Cole, 1976, p.60 -62

³² Luria transcribed his attempt to get Illi-Khodzh, a 22-year old illiterate, to make a definition. "Try to explain to me what a tree is." "Why should I? Everyone knows what a tree is, they don't need me telling them." "Still, try and explain it." "There are trees here everywhere; you won't find a place that doesn't have trees. So what's the point of my explaining?" "But some people have never seen trees, so you might have to explain." "Okay. You say there are no trees where these people come from. So I'll tell them how we plant beetroots by using seeds, how the root goes into the earth and the leaves come out on top. That's the way we plant a tree, the roots go down..." Luria notes that this is a description of how to plant a tree, not what a tree is, so he tries again, "How would you define a tree in two words?" "In two words? Apple tree, elm, poplar." Luria, ed. Cole, 1976, p.86-7

"an oral culture simply does not deal in such items as geometrical figures, abstract categorization, formally logical reasoning processes, definitions, or even comprehensive descriptions, or articulated self-analysis, all of which derive not simply from thought itself but from text-formed thought. Luria's questions are schoolroom questions associated with the use of texts, and indeed closely resemble or are identical with standard intelligence test questions got up by literates. They are legitimate, but they come from a world the oral respondent does not share." (Ong, 1982 p.55)

Havelock and Ong claim that literacy changes our way of thinking. It leads to the creation of a vocabulary of abstract concepts which are the basic tools of all theoretical thinking, including metaphysics. Luria's fieldwork supports their claims. In other words not only would Ricoeur's analysis of what is necessary for narrative fail to apply to the tale-tellers of such a culture, but his terminology and his very way of thinking would be inaccessible to them.

The studies of anthropologists and oralists show without exception that the dominant form of preserved knowledge in societies with primary orality is narrative.³³ It is indisputable that narrative precedes theory historically. The earliest discursive texts we have are stories, and each has a history of long existence as an oral epic before being written down.³⁴ Havelock proposes three main reasons why narrative plays such an important part in the discourse of primary orality. His discussion of narrative is closely interwoven throughout his work with his discussion of the significance and function of poetizing. The two are interwoven because in many cases formal narratives in societies with primary orality were told in a poetic form. One should bear in mind therefore that some of those effects ascribed to narrative may be brought about or enhanced by poetizing as well. Havelock claims for example that poetizing assists memory by virtue of its rhythmical structure and by virtue of the pleasure that rhythm engenders.³⁵ Here however I will restrict the discussion to

³³ See Ong 1982, Goody and Watt, 1968, Goody 1977 and 1986.

³⁴ This is true of *The Mahabharata* and *The Epic of Gilgamesh* as well as the Homeric verse. The vast body of traditional tales and mythology recorded by anthropologists over the last hundred years bears witness to the same pre-eminence of the oral and absence of the theoretical in primary orality societies.

³⁵ "The only possible verbal technology available to guarantee the preservation and fixity of transmission was that of the rhythmic word organised cunningly in verbal and metrical patterns which were unique enough to retain their shape. This is the historical genesis, the *fons et origo*, the moving cause of that phenomenon we still call 'poetry'." Havelock 1963, p.42-3. Also: "The various motor reflexes, despite the complexity of their interaction, were so organised that they operated without any need on the part of the subject to think about them. This meant that like similar reflexes of the sexual or digestive apparatus

those functions ascribed to narrative. Firstly he suggests the narrative form assists memory, and indeed he claims oral narrative is typically constructed to maximise such assistance, with both repetition and anticipation built into the performance. Future events are heralded by prophecies and the scene is prepared for each episode during the enactment of the previous one.³⁶ We will see that it is not mere coincidence that this involvement of the future in the present of the tale reflects at an ontic level the ontology of Dasein. Havelock supports his notion that memory is facilitated by narrative by citing one of Luria's later experiments with a professional mnemonist. "Luria found ... that disconnected names in a long list were memorized by being made to represent actors in a narrative context".³⁷ Secondly, Havelock claims the narrative form is more pleasurable to a hearer, or reader than theoretical discourse.³⁸ Thirdly he suggests that narrative is instructional. In a society lacking the conceptual thinking made possible by literacy there is no abstract notion of 'good' or 'bad'. One learns socially acceptable behaviour through the examples handed down through stories.

In Havelock's account of narrative one may hear loud and clear resonances with MacIntyre's analysis of the transmission of pre-Hellenic Greek notions of virtue. In 1986 Havelock asked rhetorically, "Can moral philosophy find any comfort in a historical formula which proposes that the language of ethics, of moral principle, of ideal standards of conduct, was a creation of Greek literacy?"³⁹ Five years earlier, in *After Virtue*, (1981) MacIntyre had addressed the problem of the nature of ethics before the dawn of philosophy. Furthermore MacIntyre realised, although he did not frame it in terms of the orality-literacy debate, that before Aristotle the concepts necessary for ethical debate were lacking. As a result there was no

they were highly sensual and were closely linked with the physical pleasures. Moreover, they could confer upon the human subject a specific type of pleasure. The regularity of the performance had a certain effect of hypnosis which relaxed the body's physical tensions and so also relaxed mental tensions, the fears, anxieties, and uncertainties which are the normal lot of our mortal existence." Havelock 1963, p.152

³⁶ Havelock 1982, p.141-3

³⁷ Havelock, 1986, p.40

³⁸ He observes "the average adult would prefer to take a novel to bed with him rather than a treatise, because a novel relates a story, not a series of factual statements. The narrative format invites attention because narrative is for most people the most pleasureable form that language, spoken or written, takes." Havelock 1986 p.75

³⁹ Havelock 1986, p.121

possibility of a purely ethical debate as such.⁴⁰ Evaluative questions were assimilated to questions about particular actions. Hence moral instruction was not theoretical or abstract but based in action. MacIntyre, like Havelock, saw that Homeric man understood what was good in the context of action, and what was good was excellence in any field that promoted the common weal. In lieu of moral instruction, the terminology for which was unavailable, man learned how to behave through the example of stories. So MacIntyre writes:

"In all those cultures, Greek, medieval or Renaissance, where moral thinking and action is structured according to some version of the scheme that I have called classical, the chief means of moral education is the telling of stories" (AV 114)

Havelock similarly points out the telling of stories was not merely for entertainment, nor simply an activity to while away the hours. The whole notion of artistic endeavour or enjoyment as a leisure activity separate from work or education is thoroughly modern. Poetry was not primarily an aesthetic activity in a primary oral culture, "but a political and social necessity."⁴¹ MacIntyre and Havelock agree that education, and perforce memorisation, was assisted by narrative (which was mainly poetized) and Havelock asserts, as we may verify from our own experience, that narrative is a pleasurable form of discourse and that narrative stories are more memorable than lists of facts. However Havelock (like MacIntyre) does not consider in depth *what* narrative is, *why* it assists memory, *why* it is a pleasurable form of discourse nor *why* is a paradigmatic form of instruction.

Walter Ong makes a number of perspicacious points about the nature of narrative, but he cannot quite pin down its essential nature. He recognises it is ubiquitous, and considers it "paramount among verbal art forms" because it lies beneath so many other forms of art.⁴² Ong comes as close as is possible, without the benefit of an ontology of Dasein, to pinpointing

⁴⁰ "morality and social structure are in fact one and the same in heroic society. There is only one set of social bonds. Morality as something distinct does not yet exist. Evaluative questions are questions of social fact." AV116

⁴¹ Havelock 1963, p.125. Heidegger, in his later writing on poetry and technology does not connect poetry and narrative but he does realise that poetry was not originally "aesthetic". He understood it to have been not merely a tool of education, social cohesion and morality but the *techne* of revealing, "At the outset of the destining of the West, in Greece, ... the arts were not derived from the artistic. Artworks were not enjoyed aesthetically. Art was not a sector of cultural activity. ... it was a revealing that brought forth and made present, and therefore belonged within *poiesis*." Heidegger 1978 p.339

⁴² Ong 1982, p.140

the essence of narrative in his belief that it reflects the shape of human experience, and for that reason helps us interpret the latter.⁴³ I will show, with the help of Heidegger's analysis of the temporal ecstases, how it does this in the next chapter. Although Ong asserts that narrative reflects the nature of life in its temporal flow, he is careful however not to accept Aristotle's notion of the plot one finds in drama as definitive of narrative.⁴⁴ He points out that oral epic poets do not construct the climatic linear plot that is taken as paradigmatic in literate and typographic cultures. He quotes Horace's comment in the *Ars Poetica* that the epic poet "hastens into the action and precipitates the hearer into the middle of things."⁴⁵ He believe the epic poet has no choice but to go straight to the action to grab the attention of the audience, with no great concern for chronology.⁴⁶

"Starting in 'the middle of things' is not a consciously contrived ploy but the original, natural, inevitable way to proceed for an oral poet approaching a lengthy narrative ... If we take the climactic linear plot as the paradigm of plot, the epic has no plot. Strict plot for lengthy narrative comes with writing." (Ong 1982, p.144)

For Ong plot, the very backbone of narrative in Ricoeur's analysis, does not necessarily exist. Ong agrees with Havelock that because primary oral cultures do not have scientific abstract categories, "they use stories of human action to store, organize, and communicate much of what they know."⁴⁷ But what they know is not facts, theories or data, nor is such knowledge abstracted from the story by the listeners after the event of its telling. The storyteller does not primarily impart information such that what he alone knew is now known to his audience.

"The singer [of an epic] is not conveying 'information' in our ordinary sense of 'a pipe-line transfer' of data from singer to listener. Basically, the singer is remembering in a curiously public

⁴³ "knowledge and discourse come out of human experience and ... the elemental way to process human experiences verbally is to give an account of it more or less as it really comes into being and exists, embedded in the flow of time. Developing a story line is a way of dealing with this flow." Ong 1982, p.140

⁴⁴ Significantly Greek drama, though orally performed, was the first verbal genre to be composed as a written text. See Ong 1982, p.142

⁴⁵ *Ars Poetica* lines 148-9, quoted in Ong 1982, p.142

⁴⁶ "Of course, narrative has to do with the temporal sequence of events, and thus in all narrative there is some kind of story line. As the result of a sequence of events, the situation at the end is subsequent to what it was at the beginning. Nevertheless memory, as it guides the oral poet, often has little to do with strict linear presentation of events in temporal sequence." Ong 1982, p.147

⁴⁷ Ong 1982, p.140

way - remembering not a memorized text, for there is no such thing, nor any verbatim succession of words, but the themes and formulas that he has heard other singers sing. ... The oral song (or other narrative) is the result of interaction between the singer, the present audience, and the singer's memories of songs sung. In working with this interaction, the bard is original and creative on rather different grounds from those of the writer." (Ong 1982, p.145-6)

In emphasising the *interaction* of audience and singer Ong is pointing out the effect of the interpersonal dynamic on the particular form that the narrative takes on each occasion of its performance. This is why the metaphor of a 'medium' of communication, like a pipeline, is unhelpful. He grounds this observation in a particularly Heideggerian comment on the nature of verbal communication in general.

"Human communication, verbal and other, differs from the 'medium' model most basically in that it demands anticipated feedback in order to take place at all. In the medium model, the message is moved from sender-position to receiver-position. In real human communication, the sender has to be not only in the sender position but also in the receiver position before he or she can send anything. ... To speak, I have to be somehow already in communication with the mind I am to address before I start speaking." (Ong 1982, p.176)

Ong understands oral communication to entail the communicator(s) being in both 'sender' and 'receiver' position. In the case of the oral event of narrative the being of the narrative is always affected by the dynamic of the relation between teller and listener. This relationship is founded in the existentials of being-with.⁴⁸ I wish to take up a strong version of Ong's position outlined above and assert in the next chapter that the essence of narrative is not plot, a concept which arises after the impact of writing on narrative, but *this relation between teller and audience which is open to human presence, having-been and possibility.*

⁴⁸ N.B. I assimilate Dasein-with to Being-with throughout this thesis.

3 THE ORALLY TOLD STORY

Every oral telling of a story is an event, and each such event takes place in a certain situation.⁴⁹ In pre-literate societies such telling-events might be formal, ritual occasions or simply fireside entertainment. In modern, Western society these traditional occasions of story-telling are very rare indeed. Traditional stories that were passed down in families and villages for thousands of years are no longer told, and have consequently been forgotten. Of course stories are still told informally in conversation in myriad forms from neighbourhood gossip to apocryphal anecdotes, but storytelling no longer has the social place it had in pre-literate societies because it no longer provides moral or tribal education; neither does it form nor inform the coherence of social, tribal or racial groups. The professional after-dinner speaker, the salesman and the pub raconteur are the impoverished heirs of the professional storytelling tradition.

Of course in spite of this social change, as Hardy has observed, the narrative form is ubiquitous in human society.⁵⁰ It is just the actual event of an orally-told story that has become rarer. However in modern Western societies there are three main situations in which storytelling as an overt, identifiable activity takes place, and I list them in diminishing order of occurrence. This is not necessarily an exhaustive list of situations in which stories are told. The first is informal discourse amid friends and acquaintances.⁵¹ Such stories are mostly true stories of the life of the speaker or his acquaintances.⁵² Such stories are ubiquitous and range from trivial, occasionally amusing everyday chatter to the telling of existentially significant, emotionally-laden life events. The second situation in which oral storytelling is common is psychotherapy.⁵³ A few psychotherapists use stories as a modality of treatment,⁵⁴ many more, including most psychoanalysts consider the patient telling their own

⁴⁹ See Bauman 1986 p.102ff for a detailed examination of an example of the effect of situation on content and style of storytelling.

⁵⁰ "we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, and love by narrative." Hardy 1968, p.5

⁵¹ "Almost any verbal utterance will be laced with more or less minimal narratives" Herrnstein Smith 1981, p.228

⁵² For an analysis of narrative in such informal occasions see Bauman 1986

⁵³ See Polkinghorne 1988, esp. pp.154-182.

⁵⁴ See for example, Rosen S Ed. *My voice will go with you - the teaching tales of Milton H. Erickson*, Norton, New York 1982, Gersie, A. and King, N, *Storymaking in Education and Therapy*, Jessica Kingsley, London, 1990, Franzke 1989, Gordon 1978, Peseschkian 1986 and White and Epston 1990

autobiographical stories to be an essential element of the therapeutic process.⁵⁵ We will consider this area in more detail in Chapter Six. The third situation in which oral storytelling occurs is in a demarcated context of entertainment. There is a revival in contemporary Western society of the practice of "traditional storytelling" by a number of professional storytellers. For the most part they have not inherited their tales from the telling of their elders, but they learned them from texts written by folklore scholars and collectors.⁵⁶ The modern storyteller often performs in schools, where there is a more or less overt educational agenda and the audience has not necessarily chosen to attend. Equally such a storyteller may be heard at a festival or in a theatre or Arts Centre by an audience who have paid in advance and bought a ticket to be entertained. I list these diverse situations in order to point out that in each case the situation of telling has a huge impact on mode of telling, the meaning of the telling and the way of listening. For example, the audience in a theatre of a modern professional storyteller is utterly different in its composition, motivation and understanding from the audiences that would have listened to traditional stories in a pre-literate, pre-industrial society. The former have expectations formed by a tradition of buying entertainment to be viewed passively in a building dedicated to the arts, which are understood to be separate from education, work or religion. The latter would not have, let alone make, such categorial distinctions, nor would they have buildings dedicated to "the arts." Similarly both the speaker and hearer of a story in psychotherapy bring to their apprehension of the story expectations which render the understanding, and the telling, of the story different in many ways from either the professional storytelling situation or neighbourhood chit-chat.

The situation in which a tale is told affects its telling and its meaning.⁵⁷ The 'same' story means different things in different contexts.⁵⁸ This is apparently not true of a text, which, qua text, is independent of context. Of course it is true of a narrative text if one insists that a text only becomes a

⁵⁵ See McLeod 1996 (a) and 1996 (b), Goncalves 1994, Efran 1994, Pennebaker 1988, Schafer 1981, and Spence 1982

⁵⁶ Sobol 1992, p.72

⁵⁷ See Montenyohl 1993 and Hymes 1975

⁵⁸ It is a telling irony that the term for interpretative situation, 'context', derives from a textualized understanding of the world. The meaning and usage of "Context" is a good illustration of how text-based metaphors have invaded and become sedimented in our language.

story *when it is read*, and that every reading of course has a context.⁵⁹ Even under these conditions however, the contextual meaning is diminished because in the act of reading, even sub-vocalising, one's attention is turned away from the immediate envioning world and one is separated from the rich meaning of immediate human contact.⁶⁰ The reader of a novel is alone. No kinesic meaning is given by a text. The meaning, albeit ambiguous, of a text is a function of the relationship between the reader and the text. Plato noted that as soon as the text is disseminated the author's control and influence is all but extinguished.⁶¹ But every story orally told has a particular delivery, it is told with particular tones, pauses, stresses and so on which suffuse it unavoidably with non-verbal (kinesic) meaning.⁶² Whereas a text is, as deconstructionists have not tired of telling us, unavoidably ambiguous, the spoken word is unavoidably laden with meta-verbal meaning.⁶³ All speech shows emotional disposition, even though that disposition may be simply indifference or equanimity. Thus the meaning of an orally-told story is affected not just by the words, not just by the disposition of the listener, but also by the way of telling of the teller. In short, unlike a text, the way an oral story is told is a function of the *relationship between teller and hearer*.⁶⁴ It is also clear when one listens to a story that the dictionary

⁵⁹ See Bruner, 1986 pp.24ff and Wolfgang Iser's *The Act of Reading*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1978. Bruner explores the importance of presuppositions that are brought to a narrative but he does not explore the oral/literacy divide. Indeed he refers to "the reader-hearer" (p.27) and "a reader (or a listener)" (p.28) explicitly conflating the oral and written narrative.

⁶⁰ There are degrees of separation of course but the apotheosis of text, the novel, is as Benjamin observed that text the reader of which is most isolated from his envioning world and fellow humans; "A man listening to a story is in the company of the storyteller; ... The reader of a novel, however, is isolated, more so than any other reader." Benjamin, ed. Arendt, 1970 p.99

⁶¹ "once a thing is committed to writing it circulates equally among those who understand the subject and those who have no business with it; a writing cannot distinguish between suitable and unsuitable readers. And if it is ill-treated or unfairly abused it always needs its parent to come to its rescue; it is quite incapable of defending or helping itself." Plato 1973 # 275. Cf. also Grieder 1996 (b).

⁶² See Birdwhistell 1970. Birdwhistell's attempt to codify non-verbal meaning seems to me a Sisyphean labour. However his identification of the significance and vastness of the field he attempts to map is of the utmost importance.

⁶³ Which is not to say that such meta-verbal meaning may not be deliberately or inadvertently ambiguous.

⁶⁴ "conversational discourse is characterized by linguistic, paralinguistic, and kinesic 'involvement strategies', designed to create interaction and integration between speaker and listener. Linguistic involvement strategies, such as repetition, constructed dialogue, and representational imagery, are common to oral and literary storytelling, though originating in speech. Paralinguistic and kinesic involvement strategies can include variation in pitch and tempo, gesture, physical and emotional mirroring, as well as the

and grammatical meanings of the words are not necessarily the most significant or important part of the story or the telling. The words may not even carry the most meaning.

"Sometimes a performance will seem halting, as the conversational teller gropes for new images, and new words to convey them - these hesitations would be damaging to the trust engendered by the performer-audience relationship, were it not for the fact that *words*, in the textual sense, are not the primary standard by which the oral performer builds that trust. He works instead by the standard of involvement and interaction - eye contact, solicitations of agreement, spontaneous remarks to and about the listeners, the feeling that each listener is being directly, excitedly, conversationally addressed, without the performer's attention being diverted by the superego-like intervention of a text. On the other hand, an oral story may become so smoothed by frequent repetition that hesitations and interjections disappear, and its performance assumes the character of a recitation. It may gain then in verbal fluency, and yet lose in communicative force." (Sobol 1992, p.75)

It is clear from these brief remarks that the variables affecting the performance and the meaning of an oral story are uncountable in number, immeasurable in subtlety and almost infinite in gradation. Birdwhistell's valiant attempts at "Kinesic Recording" demonstrate the enormity of the task of codifying the full gamut of non-verbal communication.⁶⁵ All such proposals demonstrate however that the written word is irredeemably semantically impoverished by comparison with the contextualized, spoken word.⁶⁶ However it is not my purpose here to pursue a microkinesic analysis of storytelling or to attempt to identify all the variables which affect the significance of oral storytelling. Many scholars of the oral tradition are aware of the limitations of text, and the richness of oral communication. As Edson Richmond put it, "folklore is everything that didn't get communicated when an oral performance is transcribed."⁶⁷

past register of implicit information that constitutes the *relationship* of conversational partners. None of these are available to the writer, except in a refracted and distanced form." Sobol 1992, p.70

⁶⁵ See Birdwhistell 1970; p.283-5 for example and pp.285ff for notation. See also Silverman 1993 and Edwards and Potter 1992 for similar approaches. Elizabeth Fine (*The Folklore Text, from Performance to Print*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1984) attempts to notate specifically the performance of traditional oral tales.

⁶⁶ Montenyohl (1993) discusses the limitations of such approaches, however detailed the notation, to oral storytelling. His suggested solution, 'personal experience narrative,' is essentially to propose that one should write the story of hearing the story.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Rosenberg 1987, p.86

4 ORAL STORYTELLING AND BOREDOM

Having opened up the alarmingly vast area of the huge number of influences on the meaning and being of a story, I want to explore just one variable which is always present in oral-storytelling, in relation to which every listener can always locate themselves and which is of primary importance to the event of storytelling. That variable is boredom.

Every story-telling event is either to some extent boring or it is non-boring. I use the term non-boring because all the available positive terms that are antonymic to boring are misleadingly partial. "Engaging" for example can have whimsical overtones, although a non-boring story definitely engages the listener. "Gripping" is better but there are two confusing factors. Firstly "grip" is the English equivalent of "*Griefen*" which Heidegger plays on throughout *The Fundamental Concepts*.⁶⁸ Secondly it tends to be applied to sensationalist novels, and so tends to designate an almost addicted and highly stimulated engagement by the listener. "Interesting" on the other hand can sound too dispassionate. There are similar problems with "exciting" (a non-boring story may not be exciting as such), "moving" (non-boring stories are moving in the sense that they touch one's emotional being, but they are not necessarily emotional or sentimental which is connotated by "moving") and so on. I will use the term "well-told" later when referring to an oral storytelling event specifically as a synonym for non-boring. The lack of an exact antonym for "boring" is perhaps not accidental, for as we shall see, whereas a boring story has an identifiable lack, the non-boring story has an authenticity which is a unique response to the particular situation of its telling. It is not surprising therefore that there is no single categorial description that can capture an essentially existential determination. We must also note at this stage that it is not entirely clear whether boring is an analogue or a digital distinction. We say a story can be quite boring or very boring. On the other hand, more trenchant critics may say, "Either it is good or it is boring." What is more although we can all have an opinion about whether or not a story is boring there is no obvious, commonly agreed cause of, nor cure for boredom.

⁶⁸ There is of course a relationship between the 'grip' of a story and the 'ergriffen' that Heidegger discusses (See FC 7 and translator's footnote) but it is not essential to explore it to press this thesis forward and it involves too great a detour to explore at present.

In all the thousands of books on narrative and performance there are a mere handful of references to boredom. An exemplary exception is the writing of Peter Brook.⁶⁹ *The Empty Space* explores his concern with the essence of theatre, and he identifies boredom as its greatest enemy.⁷⁰ Brook is the director of the *Centre International pour Recherche Theatrale* in Paris. He often refers to the company, one of the most celebrated and respected theatre companies in the world, as a "many headed storyteller."⁷¹ He speaks of the significance of boredom.

"Le plus grand guide que je connaisse dans le travail, celui que j'écoute tout le temps, c'est l'ennui. Au théâtre, l'ennui, tel le diable, peut surgir à chaque moment. Il suffit d'un rien et il vous saute dessus, il guette, il est vorace! Il cherche le moment pour se glisser de manière invisible à l'intérieur d'une action, d'un geste, d'une phrase. Lorsqu'on sait cela, il suffit d'avoir confiance en soi-même pour travailler. Il suffit de se donner comme critère principal de jugement cette faculté que l'on partage avec tous les êtres de la terre: l'ennui! Quelle merveille! Je peux regarder une répétition, un exercice et me dire: "Si je m'ennuie, c'est qu'il y a une raison." Alors, par désespoir, je cherche cette raison. Je donne une idée à l'autre personne, ou au contraire je la secoue, je me secoue moi-même ... Dès qu'apparaît en moi l'ennui, c'est un clignotant rouge." (Brook 1991, p.47)⁷²

It is Brook's business to prevent and pre-empt boredom. He is always searching to make each moment alive.⁷³ A good storyteller must do the same. But what exactly is boredom? It is a universal variable in storytelling (that is one can always have an opinion as to whether or not a story is boring) and yet it is clearly not objective. One member of an

⁶⁹ Brook 1972 and 1991

⁷⁰ Brook 1972, p.45

⁷¹ *An Interview with Peter Brook, Paris October 1989*, in the programme of the 1989 Storytelling Festival at the South Bank Centre, London; p.12.

⁷² "The best guide I know, to which I always listen is boredom. In theatre, boredom, like the devil, can strike anywhere. It's always lurking hungrily, - any excuse and it goes for you. It is looking for the moment to slide inside an action or a world. If you know that you just have to trust yourself to work. All you need to do is to use as your principal criterion the faculty you share with everyone else on the planet: boredom! It is marvellous. I can look at a rehearsal, or an exercise and say to myself, "If I'm bored there must be a reason." So I search desperately for that reason. I give an idea to someone, or I shake them, or I shake myself ... As soon as I feel bored, it's a red light." My translation: the text is a transcript of a seminar given for French Drama teachers.

⁷³ "Brook is concerned with the question: What is theatre? What is a play? What is an actor? What is the relationship between them all, and what conditions best serve this relationship? Again and again he stresses the transient nature of theatre - as opposed to the repertory principle of repetition. A play for Brook has no reality except *now*." Roose-Evans, 1984, p.175

audience may be bored whilst another is entranced. It is not simply volitional (one cannot simply choose not to be bored) and yet it is neither uncontrollable (one can choose to take an interest or to resist engagement in a story) nor automatic. Boredom is in some way a function of the relationship between the storyteller and the audience. It may also be affected by the relationship between different members of the audience. In Heideggerian terms boredom is a modality of *being-with*.⁷⁴ And it is to Heidegger that we turn as the source of an analysis of boredom.

I advance the claim that the essence of story is non-boring storytelling. In other words our understanding of the term "story" and our understanding of stories as such is founded on the experience or possibility of a non-boring story. We can draw a simple analogy with a motor-car. Our understanding of the term "motor-car" and our engagement with actual motor-cars is founded on their function of conveying people from A to B. This is a clear case of the priority of the ready-at-hand way of being.⁷⁵ As a matter of fact some motor-cars don't work. In so far as a given car does not work its being as a motor-car is modified, and indeed one might say, reduced. As a particular present-at-hand entity it remains a motor-car, albeit defective, but its being a motor-car remains founded in its erstwhile transporting capacity. A broken-down motor-car that is left in a field for twenty years and used to house chickens becomes, as ready-to-hand equipment, a chicken-house, although one could still comprehensibly call it a motor-car. But a world in which motor cars existed but no motor cars worked or had ever worked would be nonsensical. Nor could we truly understand what a motor-car was if we understood it merely as a potential chicken-house. The primary function of the motor-car is determinative of its being.⁷⁶ If an entity is identified as a motor-car and is not capable of transporting people it is understood to a greater or lesser extent to be deficient or defective. In the same way I maintain that the primordial essence of a story is that it is a particular non-boring form of discourse of the being-with of Dasein. We understand the term story, and any particular story, in terms of this non-boring discourse of being-with, although in fact many stories are actually experienced as boring. It must be conceded that to the extent that boring stories become, or have become, the norm, the way of being of Dasein changes, and so too does Dasein's

⁷⁴ N.B. As noted earlier I take this term to be inclusive of Dasein-with (*Mitdasein*).

⁷⁵ "Every machine is a piece of equipment" FC 214 See also BT 95-7

⁷⁶ "All equipment is what it is and the way it is only within a particular context." FC 215

understanding of the term "story". I will assume for the purpose of this thesis that the reader has had the experience of listening to a wonderfully non-boring story, although this may not be the case. It is safer to assume that the reader has had the experience of being bored. To ground that experience in existential phenomenology we turn now to Heidegger's analysis of boredom in *The Fundamental Concepts*.

5 BOREDOM IN THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF METAPHYSICS

The lectures that constitute *The Fundamental Concepts* were delivered just two years after the publication of *Being and Time* when Heidegger's approach to the question of Being was still vectored through the being of Dasein. Although the approaches, and the goals, of the two texts are different they are founded in the same ontology. We can therefore legitimately treat the two texts as complementary and in spite of certain differences use the one to illuminate the thinking in the other.⁷⁷ *The Fundamental Concepts*, like *Being and Time*, is not a pellucid text so the commentary below is necessary to clarify and extract the key points. At the time of writing there are no commentaries available in English on this text, so this reading goes into considerable detail in order to elucidate the the points Heidegger is making. As in *Being and Time*, Heidegger's own writing is a formidable obstacle to comprehension. In *The Fundamental Concepts* Heidegger addresses the question of boredom on his way to uncovering what he claims is the fundamental attunement that guides philosophy.⁷⁸ Heidegger tackles the subject of boredom for some hundred pages in which he identifies three forms of boredom: "being bored by...", "being bored with...", and "it is boring for one."

(i) Being bored by...

The first form, "being bored by...", is the most familiar and obvious form of boredom. We say of something, "a thing, a book, a play, a ceremony, yet

⁷⁷ Heidegger explicitly refers to both the parallelism and complementarity (FC151 & 177) and deviations (FC 305) of the paths of the two texts.

⁷⁸ "Conceptual philosophical comprehension is grounded in our being gripped, and this is grounded in a fundamental attunement." FC 7, "This *profound boredom* is the fundamental attunement." FC 80

also a person, a group of people, indeed even an environment or a place"⁷⁹ that it is boring. We speak of such a situation as if boringness were an attribute of the thing which bores us; the thing is boring. However although we call the thing boring it is we ourselves who are bored; in other words boredom is not an entirely objective property but necessarily involves us, the ones who are bored. "The characteristic of 'boring' ... belongs to the object and is at the same time related to the subject".⁸⁰ Boringness is, at least in part, some way in which the boring thing is relating to Dasein. But this involvement is not that the boring thing causes boredom in the one who is bored. The suggestion that such and such a phenomenon causes one to be bored raises the problem of finding a causal mechanism and a reason why such a mechanism is intermittent. Neither are evident, and Heidegger does not want to posit any hypothetical causative agents. In fact the idea that causation is an explanatory concept here provokes from him a positively sarcastic comment.⁸¹ The closer we look at boredom the more curious it seems.

"For what does it mean to say that certain things and people cause boredom in us? Why precisely these things and that person, this place and not another? Furthermore, why this thing now and not at another time, and why does what bored us earlier suddenly not do so at all?" (FC 83)

Neither the objective characteristic model nor the causation model is adequate to explain it, and introducing either model renders the issue more, rather than less, complicated. And it is already complicated enough. Heidegger mentions the curious fact that it is possible for us to read a book, for example, without feeling boredom welling up or increasing inside us and yet say afterwards that it was a boring book.

"it is certainly possible that in reading we have not been bored at all, that we did not 'have the feeling' that boredom was being induced in us. And yet we call the book boring, and this without saying anything untrue and without lying." (FC 86)

When I am bored by something it does not fulfil me, nor does it engage me. I am not lost in it, nor carried away by it, but rather I am left unfulfilled. However I do not simply turn away from it to something else

⁷⁹ FC 82

⁸⁰ FC 84

⁸¹ "What is this *causation*? Does it correspond to some process like the onset of cold which causes the column of mercury in a thermometer to sink? Cause - effect! Marvellous!" FC 83

as I would from an empty cigarette machine to a full one, or from a broken hand dryer to a serviceable one. When I am bored I am somehow held by that which is boring. This being held, but not being satisfied is characteristic of boredom. I am neither carried away by the story nor brought back to myself. I am "held in limbo."⁸² And by what exactly am I held? Not by any physical thing, nor any activity - indeed I would like to plunge into an activity to pass the time. In that phrase lies a clue: in boredom I am held by *time*, and specifically time as it drags.⁸³ I experience time as burdensome, I wish it would pass. Yet I cannot make it pass faster. I look at the clock, hoping it will show that time has passed and feeling trapped because it has not.⁸⁴

When I am bored I feel caught but not satisfied. Something about the boring situation or thing is lacking. This lack, writes Heidegger, is the ground for "being left empty."⁸⁵ "The inherent predicament of becoming bored is precisely that we cannot find anything in particular" to fulfil us or divert us.⁸⁶ Yet we know we lack something. We know something is missing, but we cannot see it, nor see what it is, nor find it anywhere. We wish our situation were different but there is a peculiar helplessness to our situation. This boring situation is not identical to the situation of frustration. One who is frustrated is not necessarily bored, nor vice versa, although frustration may lead to boredom. For example I may wish to attend a football match and find my wishes are frustrated so I do not go to the football match. I may then become bored. I am therefore both frustrated and bored. But although going to the football match might be what I think I lack, and indeed actually going to it might dissipate my boredom the boredom itself arises from a lack in the situation of not-going-to-the-match which is not simply the lack of being able to carry out my initial wish. Boredom does not arise invariably from a frustrated wish, nor is it always avoided by being able to indulge our every wish.

⁸² "We straightaway take 'boring' as meaning wearisome, tedious, which is not to say indifferent. For if something is wearisome and tedious then this entails that it has not left us completely indifferent, but on the contrary: we are present while reading, given over to it, but not taken by it. Wearisome means: it does not rivet us; we are given over to it, yet not taken by it, but merely held in limbo by it. Tedious means: it does not engross us, we are left empty ... that which bores, which is boring, is that which holds us in limbo and yet leaves us empty." FC 86-7, my underlining.

⁸³ FC 99

⁸⁴ See FC 97-8

⁸⁵ "being left empty is always possible only where there is some claim to being fulfilled, where the necessity of a fullness exists; it is not the indifference of emptiness." FC 139

⁸⁶ FC 99

When we are bored it is not a straightforward matter to improve our situation. There is a strange lack of clarity, and we act as though that which we lack is unattainable; we are reduced to passing the time. Heidegger offers a vivid example:

"We are sitting, for example, in the tasteless station of some lonely minor railway. It is four hours until the next train arrives. The district is uninspiring. We do have a book in our rucksack, though - shall we read? No. Or think through a problem, some question? We are unable to. We read the timetables or study the table giving the various distances from this station to other places we are not acquainted with at all. We look at the clock - only a quarter of an hour has gone by. Then we go out onto the local road. We walk up and down, just to have something to do. But it is no use. Then we count the trees along the road, look at our watch again - exactly five minutes since we last looked at it. Fed up with walking back and forth, we sit down on a stone, draw all kinds of figures in the sand, and in so doing catch ourselves looking at our watch yet again - half an hour - and so on." (FC 93)

It is only the peculiar time of boredom that prompts us to pass the time, and passing the time as such continually reminds us of the boredom that lurks beneath it. In other words it is not that we leave boredom behind when we are passing the time but rather we are fundamentally still bored, and cope by keeping ourselves occupied by something.⁸⁷ When we are passing the time we remain bored and if we become no longer bored we are no longer passing the time but doing something else. Just as the boring situation leaves us empty, so too the time-passing activities leave us empty. In spite of our endeavours we remain bored. Yet we try to pass the time; "to drive it on",⁸⁸ as Heidegger puts it. Why? Because it is dragging. It is the dragging of time that seems to be constitutive for boredom. After all, surely it is because time is dragging that we want it to pass. In fact we can't push it faster; this time is relentlessly even, second by second, minute by minute. Passing the time is rather a matter of doing something else so that time passes without us noticing, so that we could look up and all of a sudden find those four, long, empty hours have

⁸⁷ In this English idiom 'keeping ourselves occupied' is an implicit reference to the void of 'being left empty' which is, for the nonce, filled. It is the emptiness in us that is 'occupied' by the pastime. English has many of the linguistic hints as to the nature of the phenomena we are investigating which parallel, although they do not at all match, those etymological clues that Heidegger seizes on with such enthusiasm in German.

⁸⁸ FC 93

gone.⁸⁹ We cannot make time run faster, so we attempt to run away from it. But in so far as we know we are passing the time we are continually reminded of the dragging of time. We know that we are passing the time because we look again and again at the clock.

Clock watching is the clue to the time involved in this form of boredom. In so far as we measure our existence by clocktime we are held by the inauthentic time of the 'they'. For clocks do not measure my ownmost time, but rather the derivative, objective time of the everyday with-world.⁹⁰ In letting ourselves be held by the dragging of inauthentic clock time we are letting ourselves fall away from our ownmost ecstatic temporality. Inauthenticity is not necessarily boring, but when we are caught in a situation that occludes our authenticity but are not fully immersed in an activity or sensation or anything in particular, then we are "held in limbo".⁹¹ *The way we have our time is what is boring.*

If we relate this first form of boredom to our experience of listening to a story or watching a play we see it is the most familiar and obvious form of boredom. If we are bored listening to a story it does not have meaning for us in a personal and gripping way (as discussed in Chapter Two) and accordingly our ownmost being is not revealed. On the other hand in so far as the story is revealed as boring our being is revealed as empty, as held in limbo and held by time as it drags. In boredom Dasein's being is clearly not characterised by anticipatory resoluteness.⁹² The entire situation is characterised by a diminished actualisation of the potentiality of Dasein.⁹³ If the teller of a story has not engaged the emotions of the listeners, if the listener is not caught up in expectation of what is to come and if the listener is not brought into the Da of the story this first form of boredom is what characterises the Dasein of the listeners and indeed the teller. Time

⁸⁹ "Passing the time means an occupation that diverts our attention away from time as it drags and from its oppressing us." FC 99

⁹⁰ In *Being and Time* (BT 465-70) Heidegger is concerned to establish that even clock time is grounded in Dasein's temporality, but this grounding is hidden from us. Hence usually, and as he shows in *The Fundamental Concepts* particularly in boredom, we experience it as objective: "The ordinary conception of time owes its origin to a way in which primordial time has been levelled off." BT 457

⁹¹ FC 104-5

⁹² Cf. BT 344

⁹³ Telling, or listening to, a boring story is a going along with a fiction that one is engaged, or even merely entertained, when one is not. In so far as one is not admitting how one is one is not taking up what is revealed in one's ownmost possibilities. Sartre would call this bad faith, for Heidegger it amounts to denying one's Dasein: "man, if he is to become what he is, in each case has to throw Dasein upon his shoulders; ... he precisely is not when he merely lets himself set about things in the general fray, however 'spirited' this may be" FC 165

drags in the telling of a boring story and rather than being engaged in the time of the story we are waiting for it to end. As we wait our *own* time is given over to public, clock-measured time.

(ii) Being bored with...

In situations like that of the railway station we know ourselves to be bored. We can say that this thing, this book or this situation is boring, hence we are bored by this thing, book or situation, and we can know that our restless attempts to pass the time are our response to this boredom. However there are other instances of boredom wherein we cannot identify that which bores us. One of these is the second form of boredom which Heidegger examines which he names "being bored with..." Whereas in the first type of boredom (being bored by...) we are bored by a certain object, relationship or situation, in the second form of boredom that which bores is indeterminate. He gives an example:

"We have been invited out somewhere for the evening. We do not need to go along. Still, we have been tense all day, and we have time in the evening. So we go along. There we find the usual food and the usual table conversation, everything is not only very tasty, but tasteful as well. Afterward people sit together having a lively discussion, as they say, perhaps listening to music, having a chat, and things are witty and amusing. And already it is time to leave. The ladies assure us, not merely when leaving, but downstairs and outside too as we gather to leave, that it really was very nice, or that it was terribly charming. Indeed. There is nothing at all to be found that might have been boring about this evening, neither the conversation, nor the people, nor the rooms. Thus we come home quite satisfied. We cast a quick glance at the work we interrupted that evening, make a rough assessment of things and look ahead to the next day - and then it comes: I was bored after all this evening, on the occasion of this invitation." (FC 109)

At the party everyone was jolly and charming and amusing yet later we say, "I was bored." Yet we were not bored by any particular thing or person. We passed the time agreeably. Indeed we did just that, *we passed the time*. Once again, passing the time is the clue. In fact the entire evening is dedicated to passing the time agreeably.⁹⁴ We do not spend the

⁹⁴ "Just as we are on the verge of playing with our watchchain or a button, cigars are passed around again. We have already let them pass by once, but now we take a cigar. We are not getting sleepy, and yet - we smoke, not to become more sleepy, nor to be stimulated by the

evening waiting for it to end, as we waited at the railway station for the train to arrive. On the contrary we are at the dinner party deliberately and we have voluntarily taken the time to attend it, yet nonetheless we pass the time. Smoking cigars, chit-chat, a glass of port: all the pleasures on offer are agreeable ways to pass the time. But the whole business, we realize later was boring. What was boring was the passing the time itself which turns out to have been "our entire comportment and behaviour ... the whole evening of the invitation itself."⁹⁵ Looking back on the evening it is not possible to separate out the boredom from passing the time.⁹⁶ The time of *the whole event* was boring time. In a strange way we tacitly accepted it as such, so that our activities during the evening have no goal or end other than pleasant diversions to while away the time. But surely it is only boring time that needs whiling away? It is precisely because we do not on the whole recognize it as such that this inconspicuous yet commonplace boredom is more profound than the phenomenon of being bored as we wait at a railway station. It is a different sort of boredom in which it is difficult to point to one specific thing or element that is boring us.⁹⁷ But it is precisely the inconspicuous ubiquity of boring time that prompts us to arrange and attend such dinner parties. The boredom is all the more profound for being so ordinary as to be unnoticed. The very casualness with which we slip into the passing the time that whiles it away betokens its ubiquity, and our casualness conceals its profundity. For it is more hidden and more obscure - deeper in fact - than being bored by... something. Hence it is only on reflection that we see that the entire evening was shot through with boredom. As Heidegger puts it:

"It is not any particular being occupied within the situation, but the situation itself as a whole which functions as that which occupies us. With this *expansion* of passing time there is linked a further characteristic of it which we must now explicitly emphasise: the *inconspicuousness* of passing the time as such - not inconspicuousness merely or in the first instance for others, but insofar as passing the time does not specifically occupy us ourselves as such passing the time. We allow ourselves to slip

nicotine, but because smoking itself is a socially ideal way of passing the time. ... in this way ... an inconspicuous possibility of passing the time plays right into our hands. Passing the time is thus there in this situation too, though admittedly hard to find, and this precisely because it presents itself in such a public manner." FC 111-2

⁹⁵ FC 112

⁹⁶ "In this boring situation, boredom and passing the time become intertwined in a peculiar way." FC 113

⁹⁷ "In the first instance of boredom what is boring is evidently this or that, ... in the second instance we find nothing that is boring." FC 114

into it, just as though it were already lying in wait. For this reason, such passing the time also lacks that fluttering unease of searching for something with which to occupy ourselves. It is peculiarly casual and assured." (FC 116)

What has happened to time such that we while it away so casually? Is time the sort of thing that we must always while away? Not at all, for when we are occupied with making things or doing things we often wish for more time, and the last thing on our minds is whiling away the time. Nevertheless the sort of time we wish to while away is not unfamiliar to us; we are all too used to evenings such as the dinner party Heidegger describes. When we take time for such an evening we set it aside in advance. We allocate it as "for going out to dinner".⁹⁸ In this sense we turn our backs on the remorseless ticking of the clock.⁹⁹ We dedicate the evening to the dinner party so the way we have our time that evening is not as a string of nows like the clock-watching moments at the railway station but rather as one long now; the now of this dinner party. Tomorrow we may return to the concerns of our business and get on with things, but this evening is set aside. In taking this time we turn away from the concerns of our whole time, our whole life, and absorb ourselves in just whatever is present in our immediate situation.

"[In the second form of boredom] We make time *stand*. We let the time we have taken for the evening - our taking consists precisely in this - endure in such a way during the evening that in being there alongside and part of whatever is going on we take no note of its flow or its moments. The enduring of the 'during' swallows up, as it were, the flowing sequence of nows and becomes a *single stretched 'now'* which itself does not flow, but stands. The 'now' is stretched ... in such a way that we are *entirely present for* what is present." (FC 124)

This is the nub of the second form of boredom. It is certainly possible to go out to dinner, to chat, to smoke cigars and enjoy oneself without being bored. However if we only pay attention to what is put in front of us, if we

⁹⁸ "Let us consider this evening. Although we are entirely immersed in it, we have given ourselves this time only, not time as a whole. What whole? That to which we ourselves are entrusted, and which is apportioned to us. We take time for ourselves. Yet in doing so we have not cut a piece out of this whole like a piece of cake. Instead we take this time for ourselves. What happens here? How does our whole time become transformed through this taking time? We bring it to a stand - yet do not cause it to vanish." FC 121

⁹⁹ "We close ourselves off from this unsettling and paralysing sound of the sequence of nows ticking away which can be stretched to a greater or lesser extent. We take this time so as to leave it for ourselves, i.e., to give it up as flowing away." FC 123

attempt to divert ourselves with what is immediately present and turn away from our ownmost past, and future and openness to being, if we go along with each and everything that is happening around us then we are making ourselves "entirely present"¹⁰⁰ in a manner that invites boredom, and can be assessed, on reflection, as boring. Heidegger calls this being "entirely present."

"This entails that we do not turn to whatever, however, or wherever we have been, it entails that we have forgotten it. Entirely present, we have no time either for what we have perhaps planned for tomorrow or for some other time, for whatever we have resolved or not resolved to do, whatever task, we turn ourselves to, whatever stands before us, whatever we shirk. Entirely present for whatever is happening, we are cut off from our having-been and from our future." (FC 124)

Our having-been and our future do not get lost or cease to exist, "they become modified in the peculiar manner of becoming enchained within the mere present."¹⁰¹ Heidegger is striving to express a difficult thought here. We relate to our having-been and our future when we are "entirely present" in a removed and reduced fashion. We are not touched or personally concerned by our past, it is merely what happened. Our own having-been becomes just historical fact. Equally we are not concerned about or engaged in our future as our ownmost possibilities. The future is understood as indeterminate and inauthentic.¹⁰² What happens next in such "making present" feels more like more "now" than progress into the future because in this situation, which he calls "standing time", we are not concerned with our own future possibilities but merely with what is present to us now.¹⁰³ The now "stretches itself" so we are cut off from the futurity and having-been of our present.¹⁰⁴ We do not fear or long for a future possibility but just receive what happens such that we "go along with it at all times."¹⁰⁵ There is an inconsequentiality to our actions as

¹⁰⁰ "This chattering and letting oneself go with whatever is happening is possible only if, from the outset, we constantly let whatever is going on come toward us, come *up against us*, just as it is given. It is possible only if we *are entirely present* in the face of whatever is happening around us, or as we say, only if we simply *make present* [gegenwärtigen]" FC 124

¹⁰¹ FC 125

¹⁰² "Having-been and future do not become lost, it is not that they are not there at all, but they become modified in the peculiar manner of becoming enchained within the mere present, i.e. in a joining in that merely makes present." FC 125

¹⁰³ FC 125

¹⁰⁴ "Through the 'now' becoming compressed into being in the 'now', the 'now' stretches itself." FC 125

¹⁰⁵ FC 124

though the present has no bearing on our future. It can therefore be seen that as we are cut off from our own having-been and our ownmost future possibilities we are cut off from the meaning of our lives. We have proposed that meaning, qua existentielle, is the unity of the temporal horizons. If we modify our own time such that we are enchained in the "mere present" these horizons and the meaning of our lives is hidden from us.¹⁰⁶ We do not bring or keep with us the fullness of our having been, with its concomitant attunement but casually, though deliberately, let it fall and abandon ourselves to the sensations on offer in this moment. Our past is "sealed off"¹⁰⁷ precisely so we can abandon ourselves to the moment. We turn continually to the next thing, the next joke, the next cigar, the next glass of wine, not because one leads to another or for any overarching reason, but simply to be pleasurably occupied.

Earlier we saw that we can be bored by being bound to clock-time as it drags; in the second form of boredom we are bored by being held in one long now.¹⁰⁸ In neither case is the boringness of the forms determined by the speed or slowness of time, nor by the number of nows, but rather it stems from the fact that both are modalities of suppression of Dasein's authentic, ecstatic temporality. In neither case does Dasein take up its ownmost possibilities, but rather gives itself over to a determination of its time, and hence itself, which is foisted on it by external circumstances. Dasein's way of being is how it has its time.¹⁰⁹

In the analysis of boredom in *The Fundamental Concepts* Heidegger has approached, by a different route, the phenomenon he touched on in section 36 of *Being and Time*, in his discussion of curiosity:

"When we take a rest, care subsides into circumspection which has been set free. ... Care becomes concern with the possibilities of seeing the 'world' merely as it looks while one tarries and takes a rest. ... Dasein lets itself be carried along solely by the looks of the world; in this kind of Being, it concerns itself with becoming rid of itself as Being-in-the-world ... In not tarrying, curiosity is concerned with the constant possibility of distraction. ... This mode of Being-in-the-world reveals a new kind of Being of

¹⁰⁶ This suppression of ecstatic temporality in boredom may be what Heidegger was referring to in his contradictory remark in *Being and Time* that "only Dasein can be ... meaningless." BT 193

¹⁰⁷ FC 125

¹⁰⁸ "In accepting the invitation in the second case we have given ourselves time; we have time for it and leave ourselves time for it, whereas in the first case we do not wish to lose any time and are ill at ease due to time's passing too slowly." FC 115

¹⁰⁹ BT 462-3

everyday Dasein - a kind in which Dasein is constantly uprooting itself." (BT 216-7)

Dasein as being-in-the-world is existentially determined as temporally ecstatic. It can however take up its being in the way of denying the nature of its own being, and behave *as if* it were not temporally ecstatic. The Being-in-the-world of which Dasein wishes to rid itself in curiosity is the authentic mode of being-in-the-world as care: "ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)." ¹¹⁰ In curiosity it continually uproots itself from its own having been and turns away from its ownmost future to what is present to it. ¹¹¹ If it does so it precisely cannot rest in its own being for its having-been and futurity would again press upon it, so it seeks distraction in sensations, excitement and distractions which fill the now and drown out the call of conscience, the awareness of the ineradicable disquiet caused by our taking up our possibilities as though we were not the sort of being that can take up possibilities. This curiosity in *Being and Time* is the extreme towards which presses what is called in *The Fundamental Concepts* "passing the time." ¹¹²

Whereas *The Fundamental Concepts* tackles the modalities of temporality head on, *Being and Time* moves toward temporality through the phenomenological analysis of Dasein's being. Dasein, it will be remembered, is characterised in *Being and Time* by the two facts that its being is an issue for itself, and it has "in each case mineness". ¹¹³ In so far as Dasein takes up its ownmost possibilities of being its way of being is authentic and in so far as it does not do so its way of being is inauthentic. Both curiosity and idle talk are inauthentic modes of being of Dasein. The chit-chat of making conversation to pass the time is idle talk. ¹¹⁴ Idle talk of any sort is fundamentally, though not necessarily superficially, boring

¹¹⁰ BT 237

¹¹¹ In *The Fundamental Concepts* the phenomenon is described, although in an analysis proceeding from a different starting point, with the same metaphor: See p.276 "Our everyday comportment toward *all* beings does not move within those *fundamental relationships* that correspond to the peculiar character proper to the beings in question. It moves rather within a comportment which, from the perspective of those beings themselves, is uprooted and for that very reason is rampant and successful everywhere." (My underlining.)

¹¹² FC 93

¹¹³ BT 68

¹¹⁴ Compare FC 111-2 and BT 211ff. Idle talk is not necessarily the banter of cocktail parties, it could even be the logical confectionary of philosophy seminars.

because it is precisely not the taking-up of Dasein's ownmost possibilities, but those of the 'they'.

Reading *The Fundamental Concepts* we realize that boredom is a particular mode of inauthentic temporality, in which one's time is "cut off" and not entirely one's own. In boredom one can become lost not in the world but in one's temporal being-possible.¹¹⁵

"the time we take for ourselves is *our* time. This time in its standing ... is ... our whole time of our Dasein in a peculiar transformation. ... This standing time - this is *we* ourselves; it is *our self* as that which has been left behind with respect to its provenance and future." (FC 125; my underlining)

For Heidegger we are our time, so in taking time out of the whole like this we are altering our mode of being. By designating the evening of the supper party as set aside for the whiling away of our time we alter the way we have our time as a whole; in so doing we alter the way we *are ourselves*. In boredom we do not take up our ownmost possibilities as rooted in *our own* having-been, and *our ownmost* possibilities, but rather we *uproot* ourselves and turn away from such idiosyncrasy and go along with whatever is present here and now.¹¹⁶ The "letting ourselves go along with being there and part of things"¹¹⁷ characteristic of passing the time is founded in a mode of our temporality.

"*Boredom springs from the temporality of Dasein. Boredom ... arises from a quite determinate way and manner in which our own temporality temporalizes itself.*" (FC 127)

In the second form of boredom we simply give ourselves over to an activity which passes the time. When a story is told in this sort of concealed boredom nothing is taken personally, even if the story is being told in the consulting room of a psychotherapist. Teller and listener conspire to acknowledge and even, if appropriate, applaud feeling *without feeling it*. In modern times, much storytelling takes place in this second

¹¹⁵ Heidegger develops this point under his consideration of the third form of boredom, 'It is boring for one.' "This attunement in which Dasein is everywhere and yet may be nowhere has its own peculiar feature of entrancement. *What entrances* is nothing other than the *temporal horizon*. Time entrances [*bannt*] Dasein, not as the time which has remained standing as distinct from flowing, but rather the *time beyond such flowing and its standing*, the time which in each case *Dasein itself as a whole* is. This whole time entrances as a horizon." FC 147

¹¹⁶ "When, letting ourselves go along with being there and part of things, we are thus set in place by the standing 'now' that is our own, albeit relinquished and empty self, then we are bored." FC 126

¹¹⁷ FC 126

form of boredom. Rather than being caught up by the storytelling, transported, moved and engaged by it listeners pay attention to the story as one does and when their attention wanders they silently chastise themselves and try harder. Politeness prevails and attention is carefully, even pointedly, paid to the teller as all are acting within a social agreement of what is expected of storytelling. Peter Brook offers an example of this sort of occasion in which we tacitly accept being bored and go along with the situation in the manner of the 'they.' He points out how boredom (and he is effectively talking about Heidegger's second form of boredom here) is even accepted as meritorious.

"Almost every season in most theatre-loving towns, there is one great success ... one play that succeeds not despite but because of dullness. After all, one associates culture with a certain sense of duty, historical costumes and long speeches with the sensation of being bored; so, conversely, just the right degree of boringness is a reassuring guarantee of a worthwhile event. ... Audiences crave for something in the theatre that they can term 'better' than life and for this reason are open to confuse culture, or the trappings of culture, with something they do not know, but sense obscurely could exist - so, tragically, in elevating something bad into a success they are only cheating themselves." (Brook 1972, p.13)

(iii) It is boring for one.

Heidegger is intent on discovering the nature of profound boredom. In the two examples cited above boredom has different characteristics. In the first we are aware of boredom in the immediate situation, and it appears that the boredom arises from the situation. In the second we do not notice until we reflect upon the matter that it was boring, because we have, without remarking upon it, given ourselves over to activities that are founded in the passing the time of boredom. The second case is more profound, more hidden, than the first.

"in the first case [of the railway station] ... A particular situation with its circumstances transposes us into boredom. ... in the second case, what is boring does not come from outside: it arises from out of Dasein itself." (FC 128)

Heidegger considers the second form, the more widespread and unremarked boredom, to be more profound. Analytically he considers the move from the first form to the second to be a move deeper into boredom

and thus further towards the profound boredom of the fundamental attunement of boredom. He proposes as deeper still the boredom which he calls "it is boring for one."¹¹⁸ This boredom does not arise from a thing, nor a situation, nor from an event, but has no locus whatever. One is simply bored, utterly and without orientation. He gives a most pedestrian example:

"'it is boring for one' to walk through the streets of a large city on a Sunday afternoon." (FC 135)

In this 'it is boring for one' we are left empty not by waiting for a train, nor through any particular situation. Indeed it is even not clear from the example Heidegger gives what the situation is. Is 'one' actually walking through a city, or merely contemplating such a walk? The point is that *it doesn't make any difference*. In the case of 'it is boring for one' one's particular situation, and one's personal proclivities or predilections are irrelevant. In so far as I feel, of whatever activity, 'it is boring for one' I am left empty by it, even if I am doing it.

"With this 'it is boring for one' we are not merely relieved of our everyday personality, somehow distant and alien to it, but simultaneously also elevated beyond the particular situation in each case and beyond the specific beings surrounding us there. The whole situation and we ourselves as this individual subject are thereby indifferent, indeed this boredom does not even let it get to the point where such things are of any particular worth to us. Instead it makes everything of equally great and equally little worth. This boredom ... takes us back to the point where all and everything appears indifferent to us." (FC 137)

This characterisation of boredom seems to be quite opposite to the first form of boredom of which Heidegger says explicitly that 'boring' is not taken to mean indifferent.¹¹⁹ But in the situation of 'it is boring for one' we do not even engage in passing the time, we are overtaken by the boredom. We are left empty. Everything around us is boring, it leaves us indifferent and we are even indifferent to ourselves. This is apparently paradoxical, as Heidegger points out:

"can we then still speak of a *being left empty* when we ourselves after all belong to these things that have become indifferent? If we

¹¹⁸ FC 134

¹¹⁹ In his description of the first form of boredom he writes: "We ... take 'boring' as meaning wearisome, tedious, which is not to say indifferent. For if something is wearisome and tedious then this entails that it has not left us completely indifferent" FC 86

ourselves belong to these things that have become indifferent, then it is surely a matter of indifference whether we are satisfied or left empty. After all, being left empty is always possible only where there is some claim to being fulfilled, where the necessity of a fullness exists; it is not the indifference of emptiness. Yet if beings as a whole stand in an indifference, then *everything* indeed, even this being left empty, is indifferent, i.e., impossible. Certainly, and it is for precisely this reason that we say: it is boring *for one*; not for me as me, but for one, and that means for one as this particular Da-sein." (FC 139)

When it is boring for one my 'being-me' is itself a matter of indifference, effectively I am not me as such, but me as 'one.' As *being left empty* was used previously to indicate an *unsatisfactory* state it is not an appropriate description for this state of overall indifference. However indifference is precisely what Heidegger believes does characterise this form of boredom. It is able to do so because it has "*already transformed Dasein*."¹²⁰ In this boredom we are clearly not authentic, but neither are we inauthentic in the sense of being absorbed in the everyday world of work and everyday expectations.¹²¹ Even that world leaves us cold. The being of Dasein is transformed into one suspended between the 'they' and one's ownmost possibilities.¹²² This one is precisely not characterised by absorption in any particular situation, so the situation itself is transformed. As being-in-the-world I am existentially involved in world which is the network of *relata* which makes up my engagement with entities in the world.¹²³ If all such entities leave me cold, my relationship with them is diminished as far as is ontologically possible. If I am uninterested in entities around me I do not wish to project possibilities onto them and yet they do not disappear. What disappears is my interest in them. Yet I am still held, because ontologically I am always in relationship, I cannot cut myself off from the world, nor the world from me. In indifference I let possibilities of engagement, contemplation and utilisation lie unheeded, yet I am still

¹²⁰ FC 135-6

¹²¹ "With this 'it is boring for one' we are not merely *relieved* of our *everyday personality*, somehow distant and alien to it, but simultaneously also *elevated beyond* the particular situation in each case and beyond the *specific beings* surrounding us there." FC 137

¹²² "[The boredom of 'it is boring for one'] happens ... neither in such a way that we are merely blindly abandoned to this entrancement [by the temporal horizon], nor such that we can grasp the moment of vision, but in such a way that we are told of *both* ... this is *the one* unitary phenomenon in which we, or rather the Dasein in us, oscillates out into the expanse of the temporal horizon of its temporality and thus is able only to oscillate into the moment of vision pertaining to essential action. This oscillating in between such expanse and such extremity is our being attuned, this boredom as attunement." FC 151

¹²³ BT 120

burdened with those possibilities which I am rejecting. Hence as my being changes, so too does the being of the entities in the world, and Heidegger says it changes to "telling refusal" [*Versagen*].

"through this boredom Dasein finds itself set in place precisely before beings as a whole, to the extent that in this boredom the beings that surround us offer us no further possibility of action and no further possibility of our doing anything. There is a telling refusal on the part of beings as a whole with respect to these possibilities." (FC 139)

Dasein in its being "must comport itself toward"¹²⁴ beings. That is Dasein's nature. Equally entities cannot be revealed without some possibility of understanding.¹²⁵ In the situation of 'it is boring for one' both Dasein and entities are revealed in the most deficient form of their possibilities, that is the possibility of refusing possibilities. This amounts to an attempt to refuse one's Dasein and indeed what is refused is the meaning of the particular situation of one's Dasein.¹²⁶ I refuse 'being-me', hence Heidegger talks of 'it is boring for *one*.' Hence when this boredom strikes "the whole expanse of the entire time of Dasein is there and not at all specifically articulated or delimited according to past and future."¹²⁷ As Dasein's time is not articulated its meaning is not articulated either. I am precisely not touched, neither lacking nor fulfilled. In fact the situation is characterised by the telling absence of the possibility of being lacking or fulfilled.

This form of boredom precludes any meaningful engagement with a story, so much so that even if one tried to pay attention to the story, one would be more than likely to fail to follow it. In this form of boredom we may say that no story, in fact nothing, would have any meaning for us.¹²⁸ In this form of boredom one not only fails to take up one's ownmost possibilities, but one also fails to take up one's possibilities as the 'they.' Indeed the conventional possibilities of the 'they' can appear to be reprehensibly lacking in meaning or value. This lack of meaning may be taken up as cynicism, or in some cases as depression. In psychotherapy a

¹²⁴ FC 139

¹²⁵ Dasein's projective understanding is the condition for the revelation of all beings as such, primordially as "Equipment" (BT 96-7), and derivatively as things as such. "when something within-the-world is encountered as such, the thing in question already has an involvement which is disclosed in our understanding of the world" BT 190-1

¹²⁶ As he remarks earlier it is not accidental that we say "that we are *almost dying of boredom*." FC 96 (The phrase is a German cliché as it is in English.)

¹²⁷ FC 148

¹²⁸ See Ch. 2

client with this form of depression tends to complain that nothing matters. The complaint itself is framed with the same paradoxicality that Heidegger identifies; that is the client oscillates between complaining that nothing matters and claiming that it doesn't matter that nothing matters. The diagnostic manual of the American Psychiatric Association, DSM - IV, comments that in depression, "some individuals ... complain of ... having no feelings ... Loss of interest or pleasure is nearly always present, at least to some degree."¹²⁹ We will examine the significance of boredom in psychotherapy again in Chapter Six.

6 THE GROUND OF THE THREE FORMS OF BOREDOM

Heidegger's three forms of boredom do not exhaust possible varieties or descriptions of boredom. As he admits, "the forms of boredom are themselves fluid: there are manifold intermediate forms in accordance with the depth from which the boredom arises".¹³⁰ We may pass from one to another and back again. The second form is in fact a way of avoiding the first or third and may turn into either of them. Although Heidegger labours to establish that the second and third forms are progressively deeper than the first he states that the first form is not the origin of boredom. Profound boredom does not arise from an accumulation of boring incidents.

"The first form is neither the cause, nor the reason or point of departure for the development of boredom into the second and third forms, but vice-versa: the third form is the condition of the possibility of the first and thereby also of the second. *Only because this constant possibility - the 'it is boring for one' - lurks in the ground of Dasein can man be bored or become bored by things and people around him.*" (FC 156-7)

The third form of boredom, and the other forms, are a "constant possibility" because all three forms are possible modes in which Dasein, as temporality temporalizes itself.¹³¹ The utter disengagement of the third

¹²⁹ A.P.A. 1994, p.320-1 For extended commentary on the diagnosis of depression see Yapko 1988 Ch. 3

¹³⁰ FC 157

¹³¹ "What bores us in profound boredom, and thus ... what is solely and properly boring, is temporality in a particular way of its temporalizing. What is boring is neither beings nor things as such - whether individually or in a context - nor human beings as people we find before us and can ascertain, neither objects nor subjects, but *temporality as such.*" FC p.158

form of boredom is a way in which we lose sight of our ownmost possibilities and our own death reminding us of the uniqueness and finitude of our own time. This is the ground on the basis of which we can feel our time is being wasted away, take time for a dinner party or seek to pass the time.¹³²

Boredom as a whole is a way of giving ourselves over to the happening of time that takes us along with it and seems to remove our ownmost possibilities from consideration. We have lost something of our *own* in boredom, and wherever we look for it out in the world of things around us we do not find it. We have lost no *thing*. Nothing in the world has gone wrong. It is precisely the withdrawal of our ownmost *possibilities* that is so irksome in boredom. Boredom both *removes* our ownmost possibilities and *in doing so highlights their absence*. Boredom points beyond itself to Dasein's authentic possibilities.

Heidegger writes that boredom is specifically a problem for contemporary man.¹³³ The safety and comfort of modern life and the hegemony of scientific rationalism distances us from life and death threats. When all can be understood and we believe that science can in principle deal with everything, nothing troubles us and nothing is particularly special. Everything can be explained.¹³⁴ Nothing causes us to question our existence as a whole.¹³⁵

No thing can rescue us from boredom, only the courage to take up the possibilities of our ownmost situation and face what is opened up to us, including our own way of being in the world as entranced by the mere

¹³² It is also on the basis of this boredom that falling into the world is tempting because it is *tranquillizing*. See BT 221-4

¹³³ FC 163ff.

¹³⁴ Heidegger specifically identifies psychology as a culprit in this process: "We cannot ascertain that profound boredom in the Dasein of contemporary man. We can only ask whether contemporary man precisely in and through all his contemporary human traits does not suppress that profound boredom, and that means: whether he does not conceal his Dasein as such from himself - in spite of all his psychology and psychoanalysis, indeed precisely *through* psychology, which today even presents itself as depth psychology." FC 166

¹³⁵ "The absence of an essential oppressiveness in Dasein is the *emptiness as a whole*, so that no one stands with anyone else and no community stands with any other in the rooted unity of essential action. Each and every one of us are servants of slogans, adherents to a program, but none is the custodian of the inner greatness of Dasein and its necessities. This *being left empty* ultimately resonates in our Dasein, its emptiness is the absence of any essential oppressiveness. The *mystery* [Geheimnis] is lacking in our Dasein, and thereby the inner terror that every mystery carries with it and that gives Dasein its greatness remains absent. The absence of oppressiveness is what fundamentally oppresses and leaves us most profoundly empty, i.e., the *fundamental emptiness that bores us*." FC 163-4

present and passing the time.¹³⁶ In taking up our ownmost possibilities and having been, including our having been bored, we transform our own way of being. Heidegger writes of the necessity to "bring to word that which Dasein wishes to speak about in this fundamental attunement"¹³⁷ and to do so in a word that is not just idle talk but "addresses us and summons us to action and to being."¹³⁸ He is undoubtedly thinking of "word" here in terms of his own philosophy or thinking. In the next chapter I will present the case for the well-told oral storytelling event to be just such a "bringing to word" that brings Dasein back to its ownmost possibilities by "bring[ing] itself before itself."¹³⁹ Hereafter when I refer to boredom, unless specifically designated, it includes the possibility of all three forms and of intermediate forms.

7 BEING AND TIME AND THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF METAPHYSICS

We know from *Being and Time* that entities have their being in specific modes. The kind of being of entities to which we are closest in the home and in the artisanal world, which Heidegger illustrates by the cobbler's workshop, is readiness-to-hand.¹⁴⁰ In theoretical cognition and scientific enquiry the way of being of entities is present-at-hand.¹⁴¹ In the profound boredom of 'it is boring for one' the way of being of entities is *telling refusal*.¹⁴² In profound boredom "Beings as a whole have become indifferent."¹⁴³ Even Dasein behaves as if it were indifferent to itself, cutting itself off from its own having-been and own future. Yet beings precisely because they have become indifferent and *not* possibly something else, that is to say not freely themselves or objective but *essentially* indifferent, that is indifferent as their way of being, announce

¹³⁶ The word Heidegger uses, *Mut* (FC 167), loosely translated as courage here, is the very word that Benjamin uses to describe the beneficence of stories: "The wisest thing - so the fairy tale taught mankind in olden times, and teaches children to this day is to meet the forces of the mythical world with cunning (*Untermut*) and with high spirits (*Übermut*)."
Benjamin 1970, p.101

¹³⁷ FC 167

¹³⁸ FC 167

¹³⁹ FC 165

¹⁴⁰ BT 99

¹⁴¹ BT 105-6

¹⁴² FC 137

¹⁴³ FC 141

in their refusal what they are not, viz. possibly otherwise.¹⁴⁴ Possibility is constitutive of the understanding of things, so things as such cannot not have possibilities but can have instead the possibility of announcing that they refuse their possibilities.¹⁴⁵

Telling refusal is the announcement of the withdrawal of the possibilities of Dasein and things which are unexploited when one is gripped by boredom. Possibilities themselves are not announced in this telling refusal of beings but rather the ground of possibility itself which is *Dasein's* being possible: "Whatever is utmost and primary in making possible all possibilities of Dasein as possibilities, whatever it is that sustains Dasein's potentiality for being, its possibilities, is affected by this telling refusal of beings as a whole."¹⁴⁶ In the telling refusal [*Versagen*] of beings is an unavoidable reference to the possibilities left unexploited. This reference Heidegger calls a "telling announcement [*Ansagen*]."¹⁴⁷ Two pages later he says this announcement is "a calling [*Anrufen*] ... which properly makes possible the Dasein in me" (in the German "ein *Anrufen*, das eigentliche Ermöglichende des Daseins in mir)."¹⁴⁸ "Properly" (eigentliche) making possible here clearly denotes the same modality as "eigentliche" translated as "authentically" in *Being and Time*.¹⁴⁹ It seems therefore that this call is similar to the call of conscience in *Being and Time*.¹⁵⁰ For both the *Anrufen* referred to in *The Fundamental Concepts* and the *Ruf* of *Being and Time*, call Dasein back to itself as the ground of possibilities, that is to its authentic self in the moment of vision.¹⁵¹ Dasein's essential being is temporal, and in the moment of vision [*Augenblick*] it takes up its possibilities, that is to say it understands itself, as anticipatory resoluteness, *choosing its own future* on the basis of *its own having-been* alongside other entities, *understood as*

¹⁴⁴ This point is emphasised in the German with a play on *Versagen* - to deny, refuse, and *Sagen*, to say, announce.

¹⁴⁵ In his discussion of understanding and interpretation in *Being and Time* Heidegger has foreshadowed this point; "the mere seeing of the Things which are closest to us bears in itself the structure of interpretation, and in so primordial a manner that just to grasp something *free*, as it were, of the 'as', requires a certain adjustment. When we merely stare at something, our just-having-it-before-us lies before us *as a failure to understand it any more*." BT 190

¹⁴⁶ FC 143

¹⁴⁷ FC 141

¹⁴⁸ FC 143 - German text Gesamtausgabe Band 29/30 p.216

¹⁴⁹ See BT 24 footnote 3 and BT 68 footnote 3

¹⁵⁰ BT 319ff., esp, BT340-1

¹⁵¹ "The telling announcement that points toward that which properly makes Dasein possible in its possibility impls us toward the singular extremity of whatever originally makes possible." FC 144

such in their possibilities for Dasein. When Dasein is authentic it is not bored, rather it is open to its future and its having been, that is to say *its self*. When Dasein is bored it is not open to its ownmost temporality and yet it is not completely absorbed in the 'they' because it is haunted by its proper, ownmost possibilities, including the very possibility of withdrawal from beings which makes possible boredom in the first place. And in boredom, precisely because it has not fallen completely into the 'they,' it hears the call all too clearly and knows itself to be lacking.

In *Being and Time* Heidegger concentrates on the nature of Dasein's inauthentic self-interpretation. In *The Fundamental Concepts* he spells out a modification of Dasein's inauthentic interpretation of entities within the world. In both cases the interpretation of self and of entities-within-the-world is grounded in the modification of the upon-which of the projection of the interpretative understanding. As we saw in Chapter Two, in *Being and Time* this upon-which is called meaning, which we have held to be equivalent to, although not explicitly stated to be, the unity of the temporal horizons. In *The Fundamental Concepts* our reading is vindicated. Heidegger describes "all *doing and activity* of Dasein" as having "three perspectives of respect, retrospect and prospect."¹⁵² This is a re-presentation, in a different guise and context, of the three-fold sight of interpretation in *Being and Time*.¹⁵³ Interpretation is the "development of understanding."¹⁵⁴ Every understanding has its mood, and the existentialia of understanding and attunement are always articulated by discourse.¹⁵⁵ These existentialia are both Dasein's being and the grounds for the revelation of the being of beings other than Dasein. What can be articulated in interpretation is (in *Being and Time*) "what we have called 'meaning'."¹⁵⁶ This is precisely what is modified in profound boredom. In *The Fundamental Concepts* Heidegger claims that the three perspectives [*Sichten*] are originally united. The withdrawal of beings as a whole in boredom is the modification of the united temporal horizon as a whole such that the having-been, the possibilities and the open presence of beings withdraws all at once.

"There is a telling refusal of all beings simultaneously in 'what' and 'how' they are: as a whole, as we put it. This now means: in

¹⁵² FC 145

¹⁵³ BT 191

¹⁵⁴ BT 188

¹⁵⁵ BT 182 & BT 203-4

¹⁵⁶ BT 204

one originally unifying horizon of time. This 'as a whole' is evidently possible only insofar as beings are enveloped by the single yet simultaneously threefold horizon of time. This horizon of the whole of time which is fully disclosed in this way must be at work if it is to be possible for there to be a telling refusal of beings as a whole.'" (FC 145)

In the telling refusal of beings of profound boredom the horizon of time is modified. Entities thus become what we call colloquially 'meaningless.' Ontologically of course Dasein cannot exist without meaning hence the emphasis on the *announcement* of withdrawal of beings emphasised by the translators as *telling refusal* (*Versagen* means 'failure' in German. *Sich etwas versagen* means 'to deny oneself something'. The translation as 'telling refusal' is made to bring out the connection emphasised by Heidegger with *sagen* 'to say'.) *In boredom Dasein's meaning is nihilated.* Dasein's meaning is thus that it is meaningless. In such boredom Dasein itself is entranced, it "cannot bring itself to expect anything from beings as a whole in any respect, because there is not even anything enticing about beings any more."¹⁵⁷ The temporal horizon, that which holds beings as a whole open now "entrances Dasein ... as the time ... *beyond flowing and its standing*, the time which in each case *Dasein itself as a whole* is."¹⁵⁸ Thus in profound boredom Dasein "cannot find its way"¹⁵⁹ to the beings amongst which it finds itself and hence its relationship to them is closed down to the emptiest possibility of being merely set amidst beings.¹⁶⁰

8 BOREDOM, MEANING, ORALITY AND THE NARRATIVE EVENT

We are now in a position to begin to draw together the themes of the forgoing exposition. In Chapter One we outlined a reading of Heidegger's fundamental ontology of Dasein which is the ontological foundation of the thesis. In Chapter Two we investigated the existentials of meaning, and drew out of Heidegger's sketchy references and descriptions two conclusions. Firstly that, qua existentials, meaning is the unity of the temporal horizons, within which and against which understanding is

¹⁵⁷ FC 147

¹⁵⁸ FC 147

¹⁵⁹ FC 147

¹⁶⁰ This empty relationship is frequently a significant component of depression, Cf. Yapko 1988, pp.30-31 and Chapter Six below.

projected. Secondly, in the special case where we say that an entity has meaning for Dasein, the being of Dasein is revealed along with the entity. It was proposed that we can understand meaning as an existential structure in terms of narrative. In Chapter Three we examined the understanding of narrative in modern scholarship and found it to be almost inextricably entangled with, and trammelled by, textuality. Understanding narrative as a textual phenomenon hides what we consider to be its essential nature as an event, and hides also the most significant variable in the eventhood of narrative, that is to say the variable of boredom. The significance of boredom, like the question of being, has been overlooked and obscured in and by the practice and consequences of text-based thinking and scholarship. Therefore in this chapter we turned to the scholarly discussion of the significance of orality and to Heidegger's analysis of boredom. In our reading of *The Fundamental Concepts* we have seen that the modification of authentic temporality which is constitutive of boredom is the same modification that leaves entities with no meaning for Dasein.

However Heidegger's analysis of boredom turns out to be an analysis of the modification of the being of Dasein, and the question of the nature of boring or non-boring stories has not yet been addressed. In the next chapter we will therefore lay out a description of the nature of the non-boring storytelling event. As an event, telling a story is a comportment of Dasein. In the light of the foregoing exegesis I will maintain that the oral non-boring, or well-told, storytelling event is the primordial form of story, the mostly hidden form upon which all derivative forms ultimately depend or, in Heideggerian terms "nourish themselves."¹⁶¹ It is clear that the transience of the event of storytelling has made the phenomenon difficult to study in a text oriented milieu. The equally transient phenomenon of being not-bored or being bored, not to mention its highly personal, or subjective, quality has rendered boredom not only resistant to analysis, but almost completely overlooked not only in philosophy, but also in literature and even performance studies, although, as we have noted above, from an audience's, or a performer's, point of view boredom is the most immediately apprehensible phenomenon in performance, and

¹⁶¹ The storyhood of the story, its meaning such that it is understood as a story, depends on the particular possibility of engagement of Dasein which is listening to (or telling) an engaging story. Hence the 'being a story' of a story is nourished by this hidden understanding. This is a particular case of the meaning (or upon-which) of the projection of the being of an entity to which Heidegger refers on BT 371

not the least important. Boredom strikes at our whole being.¹⁶² Boredom strikes at Dasein as a modification of the existentials of meaning, in which the temporal horizons collapse into an "unarticulated unity."¹⁶³ By contrast, therefore, that which is non-boring is that wherein Dasein's existential meaning is articulated and, if it is utterly non-boring, Dasein's being will be authentic. If an entity has meaning for Dasein, through or in a story, then that which constitutes the meaning of Dasein's being, that is to say its being-attuned, being-alongside and being-possible will be revealed to Dasein along with the being of the entity. This revelation corresponds precisely to the state of being at the same time both transported and brought to oneself by a story which touches and moves one greatly. Non-boring story is a form of discourse in which Dasein, comporting itself towards Dasein lets entities have meaning and modifies its being. A non-boring story is therefore an instantiation of what Heidegger calls "historizing of ... resoluteness".¹⁶⁴ We turn in the next chapter to a detailed analysis of the primordial structure of narrative and its grounding in the temporal being of Dasein.

¹⁶² "boredom .. can take hold of us in an instant like a flash of lightning, and yet precisely in this instant the whole expanse of the entire time of Dasein is there and not at all specifically articulated or delimited according to past and future. Neither merely the present nor merely the past nor merely the future, not indeed all these reckoned together - but rather their *unarticulated unity* in the simplicity of this unity of their horizon all at once." FC 148

¹⁶³ FC 148

¹⁶⁴ See BT 442

Chapter Five

The Essence of Narrative and Dasein

1 INTRODUCTION

An understanding of the essence of narrative allows us an approach to the topic of meaning and the eventhood of our own being which is of specific value to areas concerned with the modalities of human communication such as psychotherapy. Boss and Scott, an astute contemporary commentator, both point to the importance of understanding man as world-openness.¹ We can now see that man's world-openness has a narrative structure. In this chapter I demonstrate that we can illuminate the ontological structure of Dasein and the primordial form of narrative by means of reference to each other. I propose that the primordial form of narrative is the well-told oral storytelling event. "Well-told" means non-boring. By well-told I mean that the audience caught up and is moved by the event. To understand the phenomenology of storytelling we must grasp the fact that the essence of the primordial form of narrative is not the recounting of a sequence of events but rather Dasein's involvement in the Dasein of the other in the unity of the oral storytelling event.² In this comportment of Dasein we have a lived, non-theoretical showing of being-with. This comportment is of fundamental importance, not just in performance but also in the practice of psychotherapy (which we shall examine in Chapter Six) as it is the existentiell experience of the special case of how entities have meaning for Dasein and the revelation of Dasein's being as meaningful (as discussed in Chapter Two).

¹ Boss 1994, Scott 1984.

² Even though he is writing about text, Bakhtin gropes towards this understanding: "before us are two events - the event that is narrated in the work and the event of narration itself (we ourselves participate in the latter, as listeners or readers); these events take place in different times (which are marked by different durations as well) and in different places, but at the same time these two events are indissolubly united in a single but complex event that we might call the work in the totality of all its events, including the external material givenness of the work, and its text, and the world represented in the text, and the author-creator and the listener or reader; thus we perceive the fullness of the work in all its wholeness and indivisibility, but at the same time we understand the diversity of the elements that constitute it." Mikhail Bakhtin quoted in Bauman 1986, p.112

Dasein's existential involvement with other Dasein in everyday life is characterised by an indifferent going alongside the other, as each of us believes him or herself to be an isolated individual.³ However in a successful, that is non-boring, moving and engaging, oral storytelling event we are brought back from our indifference into authentic being-with wherein we experience ourselves and each other in attuned, understanding, articulated being-with.⁴ A successful non-boring oral storytelling event involves an existentiell transformation, that is a transformation in Dasein's way of being from the everyday indifference of the 'they.' In such an event Dasein cares for the Dasein that is revealed. This ontic event of caring is founded in the ontological structure of care. I propose that the primordial event of narrative, which is most often hidden or unactualized in less successful storytelling events, lies in the existentiell revelation of Dasein's authentic temporality.⁵ The successful oral storytelling event is not necessarily the only event in which this may occur but it is that on which we concentrate in this thesis.⁶ We listen to stories and recognise them as such because of this often obscured and forgotten expectation or recognition that a story is not merely a present-at-hand spectacle for our amusement but a possibility of a different form of engagement with our fellow Dasein. In so far as this is forgotten this fundamental possibility of engagement is supplanted by sensational and spectacular stimuli which satisfy the inauthentic correlate of such understanding, attuned engagement, viz. curiosity.⁷

In fact in contemporary Western society well-told oral storytelling events are rare. Of the events of oral storytelling that do occur the vast majority are mostly not at all transformatory but rather everyday and often to a greater or lesser extent boring in the manner of the first of second types of

³ See BT 158 and FC 208. See also Buber 1970 pp. 80-81. See Taylor 1989 for a historical review of the concept of the self and Bruner 1990 for an overview of modern paradigm shifts.

⁴ As before, being-with here includes Dasein-with. Cf. "By reason of this *with-like* Being-in-the-world, the world is always the one that I share with Others. The world of Dasein is a *with-world*. Being-in is *Being-with* Others. Their Being-in-themselves within-the-world is *Dasein-with*." BT 155 See also BT 206

⁵ Champigny 1972 also approaches the question of narrative through time, and makes a link with meaning. However although his work is peppered with illuminating *aperçus* it is too incoherent overall to be a useful resource. His attempt to resolve questions of structure, temporality, genre and ontology in the same thesis overwhelms the exegetic capacity of the text.

⁶ Similar transformation may occur for example in the theatre, and, in the non-narrative context, in emotional relationships. I cite Peter Brook's theatre as an example of the former but further possibilities mostly lie beyond the remit of this thesis.

⁷ See BT 216-7

boredom. These are the narratives of everyday conversation which are so ubiquitous that we hardly ever advert to the fact that a story is being told. We notice stories as such more often not spoken face to face but when we come across them in books, films and other media. Narrative theorists have tended to believe that a story is a certain sort of entity or event which may be transmitted through various different media and yet remain the same sort of entity or event. I maintain however that there is a significant difference between orally-told stories and stories mediated through fixed forms such as texts or picture without the physical co-presence of teller and listener.⁸

Stories in such media are for three primary reasons mostly ontologically diminished simulacra of the lived event we will be examining. Firstly there is no feedback from audience to storyteller; secondly what is presented has no essential relationship to its context; and thirdly by virtue of being given a particular fixed form such stories are necessarily edited and hence diminished in potential and in terms of non-verbal communication. This is not to say such stories are not moving or exciting, but just that they lack the potential of a certain existentiell being-with. In so far as it is lacking Dasein may not take up a certain existential possibility. The reader should therefore constantly bear in mind whilst reading this chapter, that the successful oral storytelling event is *not* an everyday occurrence but a relatively rare (and notable) experience. My contention is that this experience is not a fluke event of nugatory expository value, nor an inexplicable epiphanic experience of the numinous, but an essential and explicable possibility of Dasein in which Dasein may understand its own being without recourse to philosophical concepts. It is not at all accidental that Heidegger cites an old *story*, the fable of Cura, to demonstrate pre-philosophical Dasein's pre-ontological understanding of its own being.⁹ The successful oral storytelling event is an experience wherein the phenomenologist may observe the temporally ecstatic nature of Dasein. Neither philosophy nor phenomenology can force Dasein to participate in, nor even acknowledge the significance of, such an event. As Heidegger puts it in *The Fundamental Concepts*:

⁸ "Communication is intersubjective. The media model is not. There is no adequate model in the physical universe for this operation of consciousness, which is distinctively human and which signals the capacity of human beings to form true communities wherein person shares with person interiorly, intersubjectively. Willingness to live with the 'media' model of communication shows chirographic conditioning." Ong 1982, p.177

⁹ BT 242

"questioning will bring us to the *brink* of possibility, the *possibility* of restoring to Dasein its *actuality*, that is, its *existence*. ... [But] Only individual action itself can dislodge us from this brink of possibility into actuality, and this is the *moment of vision*. Philosophizing, on the other hand, can only lead us to the brink and always remains something penultimate in this respect." (FC 173)

In other words this thesis, as philosophizing, remains writing about Dasein's existentiell transformation, which can be discussed and disputed as information and theoretical assertions present-at-hand; the existentiell understanding itself is grasped in the moment of participation in the well-told oral storytelling event.

2 WHAT IS A STORY?

From our review of the work of Havelock and Ong we may draw three points. Firstly, the thinking of a culture of primary orality differs from that of a literate culture.¹⁰ Secondly, historically a literate culture takes over and writes down what it has inherited from its oral precursor and in writing it down, changes its meaning.¹¹ Whereas the meaning of a spoken word cannot ultimately be divorced from its context, the meaning of a written word cannot, ultimately, be entirely determined by its context. The reader of a written word in a literate print-based culture can appeal to a dictionary as the source of definitive meanings. In an oral culture words cannot be extracted from their context, and their meaning may be determined by it.¹² Thirdly, narrative is identified as a primary form of discourse in oral cultures and the paradigmatic means by which knowledge and values are preserved.¹³ As we recognise stories existed before texts their existence cannot be determined by, nor dependent on textuality. If we attempt to understand narrative in terms of, or as a type

¹⁰ See Ong 1982, pp.37ff.

¹¹ "As speech written down becomes separated from him who has spoken it, so does the content of the statements made. These become objectified as thoughts, ideas, notions existing in their own right. Correspondingly, as separate entities, they seem to require a separate source, not a linguistic one associated with the speaker's tongue or mouth, but a mental one of a different order located in his consciousness." Havelock 1982, p.290

¹² "Whereas with written genres the setting in which one reads a text is often irrelevant to its interpretation, in oral genres the occasion of performance is clearly important and may be definitive of the audience's expectation." Tonkin, 1992, p.51

¹³ "the preferred format for verbal storage in an oral culture will be the narrative of persons in action, and the syntax of the narrative will predominate." Havelock 1982, p.137

of, text we surely mistake its nature. Although the vast majority of theorists have done just this it is clear that they all, for this very reason, have fallen into error. In fact as Ong points out even texts, however decontextualized and ambiguous, in the end can never free themselves entirely from the primacy of the sounded word.

"For a text to be intelligible, to deliver its message, it must be reconverted into sound, directly or indirectly, either really in the external world or in the auditory imagination. All verbal expression, whether put into writing, print, or the computer, is ineluctably bound to sound forever." (Ong in Baumann 1986 p.31)

My claim is that the event of oral storytelling is the primary form of narrative or story, and all other phenomena analysed as narratives or stories ontologically are modifications or derivations of this primary form. This does not mean that every identified narrative, such as a comic-strip, was once spoken or described verbally by one person to another, but that the narrative event of storytelling and the process of listening to a story is the primordial comportment of Dasein that is modulated in the comprehension of any narrative such as the reading of a comic strip. Although a great deal of what I have to say could also be applied to narratives mediated by text, film or other media my primary aim is to clarify the nature of the event of oral storytelling. Therefore although I may refer to other mediated narratives, and some of my remarks will be applicable to them, we must remember that the focus of this analysis is the event of oral storytelling. It will be a task for future research to apply the findings of this thesis to mediated narratives.

Heretofore I have used the word narrative both as noun and adjective, and without making a specific definition. As it is so broadly used I will not use it for my central definition, nor indeed will I use the word story. There is a particular problem with the word story. We may talk of the oral event of storytelling as "telling a story," and it seems as though we are describing an action (telling) done to, or with, an object (the story) as though "telling a story" was analogous to "driving a car." Theorists tend therefore to talk about "the story" as though it was something that exists when it is not being told, just as a car exists when it is not being driven. We may borrow from J. L. Austin's speech-act theory to demonstrate the fallaciousness of this analogy.¹⁴ If the event of oral storytelling involves a

¹⁴ Austin 1976 I am indebted to Herrnstein Smith's paper for a succinct reminder of the pertinence of speech act theory to narrative.

transformation of Dasein's way of being it is performative speech. It is more like promising than driving. If I make a promise the promise does not exist when I am not making it. This does not mean I have forgotten it, nor that I do not choose to be bound by it, but simply that it is an *action*, not the sort of thing that exists when I am not doing it. "Making a promise", or "promising" is an action. I can, of course write down "I promise to do x" - but this written sentence is not the promise as such, it is a record of the promise.¹⁵ Indeed I can write down "Bill promises to do x" but this is not a promise either unless Bill himself promises, that is, performs an illocutionary act.¹⁶ This, I submit, in spite of the libraries full of "stories" throughout the world, is the fundamental ontological state of affairs with stories. "Telling a story" is *not* primarily the verbal presentation of information but is a specific transformation of the mode of Being-with of Dasein, or in less Heideggerian terminology, of relating between human beings. When a story is well-told, that is non-boring, the listening Dasein is involved and affected in its being. Something is done, in Austin's terms, in "telling a story." Austin himself would perhaps not have wished his theory to be used in this way. He might have preferred to claim that telling a story is simply describing, reporting or saying that something is the case, albeit in certain cases falsely. After all, if telling a story is not a locutionary act, what is? Clearly on a Heideggerian view of language very little language use is purely locutionary. Our primary way of being in the world is concern, and in concern our language use is guided by the network of in-order-to's and for-the-sake-of which constitute the significance of the world in which we dwell.¹⁷ On this view the *primordial* form of language is illocutionary not locutionary.¹⁸ This philosophical view is supported at the socio-historical level by Ong's

¹⁵ The act of writing could constitute the action of promising - in a letter for example. The point remains however that promising is a performative verb.

¹⁶ "an 'illocutionary' act [is the] ... performance of an act *in* saying something" Austin 1976, p.99

¹⁷ See BT Sections 15 and 16. As Dreyfus comments, "The familiar movement from primordial to positive to privative, in which an 'assertion' is finally cut off from the context within which it refers, makes possible the move to the sort of assertion studied by traditional ontology." Dreyfus 1991, p.212

¹⁸ In his later writing Heidegger refers to the phenomena I associate with the well-told oral storytelling event in relation to poetry, which as Ong shows, was originally what I call an well-told oral story telling event; "Poetry proper is never merely a higher mode of everyday language. It is rather the reverse: everyday language is a forgotten and therefore used-up poem, from which there hardly resounds a call any longer." Heidegger 1971, p.208

remarks on the primacy of performative language in primary oral societies:

"chirographic cultures regard speech as more specifically informational than do oral cultures, where speech is more performance-oriented, more a way of doing something to someone" (Ong 1982 p.177)

Herrnstein Smith uses Austin's speech act theory in her cogent attack on the dualism in the narratology of Structuralists such as Chatman although she does not make the connection to orality that I think her essay makes possible.¹⁹ Structuralist theory argues that each narrative has a basic story and a narrative discourse wherein the basic story is realised as a version.²⁰ Herrnstein Smith points out that every articulation of the supposed basic story is itself another version.²¹ She draws attention to the unanswered question of the ontological realm in which such a basic story might exist, and suggests ironically that it is akin to that of the Platonic form.²² Equally problematic is the testimony of a book which Herrnstein Smith cites in which 345 variants of Cinderella are recorded.²³ The versions are so disparate that it is not possible even to construct a basic story let alone discover one. Indeed she goes on to note how many different stories can be interpreted as versions of the same story - to the extent that,

"[The author] intimated in the preface ... that if she had continued her labors long enough, all stories would have turned out to be versions of *Cinderella* - and [I had a] suspicion ... that *Cinderella* would turn out to be basically all stories." (Herrnstein Smith 1981, p.216)

The closer one examines the notion of the basic story the more elusive it is. If a basic story, as opposed to a particular event of telling is so elusive, might it not be because the supposed basic story is not an entity at all but rather a record of an event like the record of a promise? Herrnstein Smith seems to think so because she does go so far as to suggest that, "the very concept of 'the story of Cinderella' might be an artefact of folkloristic

¹⁹ Herrnstein Smith 1981. Chatman's attempt at rebuttal of her points (Mitchell 1981, pp. 258-265) is inadequate.

²⁰ See Chatman, Seymour *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, Ithaca, New York, 1978

²¹ Herrnstein Smith 1981, p.214

²² Herrnstein Smith 1981, p.212. This is surely a case of many a true word written in jest, in view of Havelock's notion of the genesis of Platonic philosophy. The 'basic story' is a concept (or as Chatman would rather have it a 'construct') that is made possible by text.

²³ Cox, M. R. *Cinderella*, British Folk-lore Society, London, 1893

assumptions and methodology."²⁴ In undercutting the dualism that she feels runs through structuralist narratology she undermines the same dualism and dubious ontology which I believe is easily read into the commonplace phrase "telling a story." Stories are *primarily events of telling*. Even reading a novel involves a telling or a virtual reconstruction of telling in the world of the reader.²⁵ The reader is involved in a process we know to be different from, say, reading a bus timetable.²⁶ The fact that in countless phrases of everyday English we refer to stories, and we may talk about "the story of Dr Zhivago" or "the film of the story" supports the illusion that stories exist independently of their telling. Indeed at the level of physical existence the readable marks on paper suggest they do. But as many a schoolboy has joked one cannot hear a story by holding a book to one's ear, nor understand a theory by eating the paper on which it is printed. Even in the physical sense the essence of the story is not in the book in the way that milk is in a bottle. Where is the essence of the story? The clue to the answer lies on the first page of Division One of *Being and Time*. The essence, the "what" of a story, lies in its existence, "that it is told." Like Dasein, its essence lies in its existence. Primordial story is essentially a comportment of Dasein. Dasein always comports itself towards something.²⁷ In storytelling Dasein comports itself towards itself as meaningful.²⁸ For a story to be as such (and not a record of a story), it is told and heard (though not necessarily in words and not necessarily out loud) by Dasein. The writing down of stories has misled the common understanding to think of stories as things and the whole field of narratology to look for the deep structure or basic story in exactly the same manner that Havelock claims that writing led Plato to posit eternal forms beyond the words transformed into concrete entities by writing.²⁹ This is why the notion of the continual becoming or

²⁴ Herrnstein Smith 1981, p.215

²⁵ Turner 1986, p.90, puts a case for regarding reading as a performance.

²⁶ It is of course possible to imagine a episode of life in which the information in a bus timetable is fraught with existential significance. We should note however that if we do imagine such an episode we are telling ourselves a story.

²⁷ See BT161-2 and Heidegger 1982, p.64

²⁸ Dasein is always meaningful of course and all discourse is based on this understanding but in story it is raised to the level of awareness, albeit not usually thematised.

²⁹ "all 'knowledge' in an oral culture is temporally conditioned, which is another way of saying that in such a culture 'knowledge' in our sense cannot exist. To this fundamental trait of the Homeric mind Plato and also the pre-Platonic philosophers address themselves, demanding that a discourse of 'becoming' that is of endless doings and events, be replaced by a discourse of 'being', that is of statements which are in modern jargon 'analytic', are free from time-conditioning. The opposition between becoming and being in Greek Philosophy

showing of a story was supplanted by the re-ification "plot". The extent to which writing has distorted our understanding of story can be illustrated by comparing story with dance. Dances, like stories, can be recorded on paper but because it is obvious that in dancing one moves one's body we do not mistake the record of the dance for the dance itself. Rather than positing a "basic dance" or "deep structure" of the dance we recognise that although we can remember the dance or record it, the dance is fully a dance in performance. A dance is a physical comportment of Dasein. Its essence is in its existence. Its existence is performance, and every performance is an event.

The non-boring oral storytelling event is the specific type of *event* upon which I wish to concentrate and which I will demonstrate is the primary event which gives rise to the re-ification "story" and its many variants. I therefore will clarify the particulars of this type of event of oral storytelling below and hereafter refer to it by the acronym WOSE, (Well-told Oral Storytelling Event.) The qualification "well-told" is both crucial and problematic, because the distinction between "well-told" and boring is not susceptible to external, objective proof, and yet it corresponds, as we have seen in the previous chapter, to a distinction between two different ways of being of Dasein. Just as the way of being of entities-within-the-world changes from ready-to-hand to present-at-hand if Dasein stops using them and contemplates them as 'objects' so the way-of-being of Dasein changes if it stops being bored and becomes engaged in a WOSE. When Dasein is bored it has own its time as standing or dragging. It takes its own self up in this temporally diminished form. Just as Dasein can be "lost in the they"³⁰ it can be "held in limbo by time as it drags."³¹ When Dasein is engaged in a WOSE it is not bored and it has its time as ecstatic, ahead-of-itself as having-been alongside what is presented in the WOSE.

I define the well-told oral storytelling event or WOSE as the non-boring event of telling by one or more people to one or more people of the doings of one or more people or anthropomorphised agents.³² The event occurs.

was not motivated in the first instance by those kinds of logical problems proper to a sophisticated speculation, still less was it prompted in the first instance by metaphysics or by mysticism. It was simply a crystallisation of the demand that the Greek language and the Greek mind break with the poetic [narrative] inheritance, the rhythmically memorised flow of imagery, and substitute the syntax of scientific discourse, whether the science be moral or physical." Havelock 1963 p.182

³⁰ Cf. BT Section 62

³¹ FC 100

³² This definition is broad, but not unusually so. See for comparison W.B. Gallie's definition of story in *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* as paraphrased by

It has a certain duration. That duration does not necessarily correspond to the length of "a story", primarily because of the stipulation that a WOSE is non-boring. If a particular storytelling event falls into boredom it ceases, for the nonce, to be a WOSE. Thus it is factually the case that for most people their experience of WOSEs is as intermittent phases in a larger discourse. The WOSE is neither the wherewithal nor the residue of telling, such as pictures, memories or text. Telling here means communicating from one to another where both parties are physically present to one another. The typical form of this telling includes spoken words, but non-verbal (kinesic) communication between teller and listener(s) is also integral to a WOSE. This communication is by means of gesture, sound, eye contact, words and touch. A WOSE may be told by one or more people to one or more people. A WOSE is not necessarily an uninterrupted monologue; the actions and sayings of the listener(s) may be included in the story, there may be conversation between teller and listener(s) that forms part of the WOSE. A WOSE may even be accompanied by the sound of musical instruments, or the use of props, but such accompaniment is not at all essential to being-a-WOSE although it might be integral to a certain type of performance.

This definition is intentionally as broad as possible. A WOSE could occur during a domestic conversation at supper-time wherein husband and wife tell each other what happened during the day, or during the recitation of an epic such as the *Mahabharata* which could take place during many evenings over several months. A WOSE can occur in any of the three situations of oral storytelling outlined in the previous chapter, that is in informal discourse, in a psychotherapeutic context or in overtly designated performance. In the case of the latter two situations, as we shall see, a WOSE is usually constitutive of a successful outcome of the whole

Ricoeur: "A story describes a sequence of actions and experiences done or undergone by a certain number of people, whether real or imaginary." (Ricoeur, 1984, p.150) The definition continues, "These people are presented either in situations that change or as reacting to such change. In turn, these changes reveal hidden aspects of the situation and the people involved, and engender a new predicament which calls for thought, action, or both. This response to the new situation leads the story towards its conclusion", (ibid.) and as Ricoeur notes, "this sketch of the notion of story is not far from what I have called *emplotment*." (ibid) I have already rejected Ricoeur's notion of *emplotment* as superfluous, and at this stage I am more cautious as to exactly what form is taken by the "changes" presented in a story, and indeed the form of their presentation. I am not alone in taking a broad view of what a story is. See also Herrnstein Smith's passing definition: "narrative discourse [consists of] verbal acts consisting of someone telling someone else that something happened." Herrnstein Smith in Mitchell 1981, p.228

situation. As a matter of fact, in all three situations the discourse typically oscillates ontologically between a WOSE and everyday discourse.

A WOSE could be a fleeting instant wherein a passer-by is transposed as attuned, alongside and futural just by overhearing a phrase such as "and just then..."³³ This is not to say it is *not* possible that a WOSE can be sustained as non-boring throughout a performance or telling, but simply that often it is not, and therefore it falls into another modality of being-with characterized to some degree by indifference. The qualification "of one or more people or anthropomorphised agents" is intended to differentiate the WOSE which tells of the doings of people, or things endowed by the teller with human-like qualities, from a report such as that of a mechanic inspecting a motor car. A technical report about the cause of an engine misfiring, for example, "The spark plugs are dirty and the timing is out" is not, on this definition, a WOSE. It could of course be presented as a WOSE or *part of* a WOSE if the mechanic was an eloquent and amusing storyteller. It is not totally impossible for a WOSE to be the speaking of a pre-written text, but it would be both unusual and difficult. The problem of rendering a text interesting in this sense of personal engagement is precisely what concerns Peter Brook and, sad to say, defeats very many modern theatrical directors. Finally I repeat by WOSE here I mean a *well-told* oral storytelling event. By well-told I mean told in such a manner that the audience understands the story,³⁴ cares about the characters,³⁵ and has a clear idea of the situation in which the events recounted unfold. The listeners enjoy the experience, they want to hear what happens next and they are touched or moved in some way.³⁶

Having made this definition as broad as possible in terms of genre and yet very narrow by restricting it to well-told oral storytelling events by one or more persons to one or more persons where all are physically present to each other we must underline three points made earlier. Firstly a

³³ A WOSE does not need even to reveal content as Dasein always projects a world (or storyworld) as a whole even without any specific details. See section on storyworld below.

³⁴ The phrase "understand the story" like "tell a story" appear to refer to an entity to which the audience responds by understanding. It is helpful to remember not only the comments made earlier about "telling a story" but also that for Heidegger one who understands does not stand over against what is understood projects its being upon possibilities (BT 188ff.)

³⁵ By care about here I do not mean care for. The term is intended to include being repelled by as well as being interested in.

³⁶ This need not be what is colloquially called 'moving' - an audience is moved if it is moved to laughter, just as much as if it is moved to tears. It is noteworthy in view of the discussion of transposition below that the word used for this is 'moving' - just as e-motion has its root in movement too.

moment of WOSE may occur in a telling, which then lapses into boring discourse. Thus the whole story in the sense of the account of events from designated beginning to designated end is neither all boring, nor totally non-boring. It had moments of both. Secondly by WOSE we mean a non-boring, successful oral storytelling event and "boring" is not a qualification the application of which is always unequivocally unanimous. Hence this definition does not consist of a list of objectively verifiable characteristics which one could perceive in every case of non-boring storytelling. It defines an intersubjective phenomenon. Thirdly, although I mean by WOSE only an oral storytelling event amongst persons physically present to each other a great deal of what is true of WOSEs thus defined is also true, in part or totally, of other, mediated, narrative events. This should not tempt us to read them into the discussion of WOSEs as though different types of narrative events are all ontologically equivalent. Nevertheless the primordial event in terms of which we understand all of what are commonly called stories or narratives is the WOSE.

What are the grounds for assert that the WOSE is the *primordial* form of narrative? Firstly, the historical argument cannot be lightly dismissed. Storytelling existed as a form of discourse, and stories were told and remembered, long before the invention of writing or other media of transcription or record. Secondly, as Ong points out, all text and verbal expression however stored must be reconverted into sound "directly or indirectly, either really in the external world or in the auditory imagination" to be understood.³⁷ If this is true of all text and verbal expression, it is necessarily true of verbal stories. A WOSE is an instance of speaking together, it is not at all the recitation of a monologue heedless of response. It is a dialogue, even if the audience remains factually silent.³⁸ Discussing poetry in 1936 Heidegger placed speaking with one another at the centre of man's being, and considered it the *essential* form of language.³⁹

"We - people - are a dialogue. Man's being is rooted in language; but language really occurs only in dialogue. This, however, is not only a way that language comes to pass, but it is solely as dialogue that language is essential. Any other meaning given to language, i.e. a store of words and of rules for the arrangement of words, is

³⁷ Ong in Baumann 1986, p.31

³⁸ "Keeping silent authentically is possible only in genuine discoursing." BT 208

³⁹ Heidegger ascribes to poetry some of the characteristics that I approach through the WOSE. See Heidegger 1971, also section 8 below.

only a foreground of language." (*Hölderlin and the Essential Character of Poetry*, quoted in Jakobson, ed. Pomorska, 1985 p.140)

Thirdly I argue below that what allows us to understand a story as a whole (even if we do not hear the whole story), to be moved by it, and to listen expecting more to come until it comes to an end is a temporal structure which it borrows from Dasein. That structure is the *non-boring* openness to future possibilities and to having-been. We are attuned as transposed into the story by our having-been, and understand the significance of what is made present in the story through our own possibilities as transposed. I examine transposition in detail below. In boredom this having been and these possibilities are closed off and what is present is *merely* present, without meaning for us.⁴⁰ We can of course (and do) come across boring stories, like broken-down motor-cars, but we understand them *as stories* by virtue of what they could be, however dimly we understand that, just as we understand motor-cars in terms of their ability to transport people.⁴¹ Therefore the essential form of story must be non-boring. The primary modality in which non-boringness is possible for Dasein as discourse is in the richest form of discourse which is the modality of being-with of physical co-presence. It is of course possible to be physically co-present with Dasein in a manner that denies our possibilities of being-open to one another, indeed Heidegger observes that this is our most common everyday comportment,⁴² but *only* in physical co-presence *can* we meet the fullness of Dasein's attuned understanding as articulated not just by words but by gesture, posture, and the full gamut of non-verbal communicative expression. We listen to stories and distinguish them ultimately from the exchange of information between persons indifferent to each other's being precisely because of this possibility, however hidden and rarely actualized, of being transposed, engaged and truly touched by the story.

The relationship between the primordial non-boring form of story and what stories are commonly taken to be is analogous (and indeed related to) the relationship between primordial temporality and the everyday notion of time. Believing a story is made of events held together by a plot is like believing time is made up of instants which pass from the future to the

⁴⁰ FC 124-5

⁴¹ I.e. our understanding is founded in possibilities even when they are not for the most part realized. Cf. BT 188ff.

⁴² FC 208

past. Primordial temporality is what gives us access to public time in the first place. Similarly the narrative-structure of Dasein's primordial temporality allows us to understand stories as such, even in their derivative, boring form. *The everyday understanding of story as an account of events which may or may not be boring and which may be presented in many different sorts of media is a misunderstanding derived from the miscomprehension of Dasein's temporal being.* The everyday understanding of story, and Dasein's access to such stories, are derived from the primordial possibility of listening to a story in authentic being-with.

"Listening to ... is Dasein's existential way of Being-open as Being-with for Others. Indeed, hearing constitutes the primary and authentic way in which Dasein is open for its ownmost potentiality-for-Being." (BT 206)

One is not truly *listening to* a boring story in the above sense because it does not open Dasein for authentic engagement.

This exposition points to what is primordial, what constitutes the original form of story on the basis of which so many other story-like events and mediated messages are understood. However it is significant that we all *already have* a fully functioning, non-thematic, non-conceptual understanding of story, so much so that MacIntyre could take it for granted.⁴³ The situation with stories is rather like the situation Heidegger observes in our relationship to Being.⁴⁴ Scholars are not at all in agreement as to the fundamental nature of narrative and each one makes his own ontological assumptions, yet in our everyday life we all operate with an understanding of what a story is.⁴⁵ We have no trouble at all in recognising and understanding stories. Stories and the understanding of stories come naturally to us. Like the visitor from Elea considering Being, only when we think about what a story is as such do we "become perplexed."⁴⁶ We understand when a story is being told, and what sort of discourse it is. We nearly always do so even if we have not heard the beginning of the story, and if we mistake the situation it is a simple matter to correct the mistake. Children understand stories and, although they may be confused as to whether the events recounted actually happened or

⁴³ See Chapter 3, Section 4.

⁴⁴ BT 21-4

⁴⁵ Howard (1991) in a footnote (p.187) cites a study by Stein and Policastro which revealed no less than 20 different definitions of story.

⁴⁶ BT 19

not, they do not have to be told what a story is.⁴⁷ Indeed they seem to have a natural drive to narrative.⁴⁸ By contrast there does not seem to be a natural drive to logical or conceptual thinking.⁴⁹ We appear to have privileged access to and understanding of storytelling. *We have this special access to stories because stories, like Being, play a part in our own being.* We are those beings whose being is an issue for themselves, and we are also those beings whose being is the temporality which provides the essential primordial structure of story. In the ensuing analysis of the WOSE this primordial structure is laid out in detail. Our understanding of what we are (our *essentia*) is illuminated through our phenomenological understanding of WOSE, and we understand how we are through particular stories. Equally we can understand better what stories are through our phenomenological understanding of ourselves because the primordial structure of story comes from the primordial temporal structure of Dasein. The "positive structure" that the "Being of consciousness"⁵⁰ has is primordial narrative.

3 BEING-WITH AND PRESENCE

In a WOSE something is presented. At any moment during the storytelling the listener(s) is/are told of an event or situation, from which he/she/they is/are pointed towards the "What next?" or "How come?"⁵¹ That situation is given in the WOSE. In a WOSE, which is itself an event *another* event is somehow made present. "Present" is a term laden with significance and burdened with much analysis in the Heideggerian oeuvre.⁵² Accordingly we will proceed cautiously in investigating the nature of this situation and the manner in which it is present. The term "present" is used here without assuming that it corresponds to

⁴⁷ See Mancuso in Sarbin 1986, also Bamberg 1987

⁴⁸ "as early as age two children are able to share narrative accounts of their lived or fantasized experiences" Goncalves 1994, p.111-2. See also Bruner 1990, Ch. 3

⁴⁹ Luria, ed. Cole 1976, p.133ff.

⁵⁰ BT 487

⁵¹ Hereafter I will, where possible, use the masculine third person singular in the inclusive sense, not just of the feminine third person singular, but also of the third persons plural in order to promote clarity and ease of reading. No sexual bias should be inferred from this usage.

⁵² For the difficulties of understanding and translating Heidegger's sundry terms to do with present and presence see MacQuarrie and Robinson's footnote 2 on BT 47; for an exemplary commentary on Heidegger's notions of presence see Caputo 1987, esp. Ch. 3.

Heidegger's usage. The distinctions of presence in *Being and Time* are not all relevant here. One instance in which it *does* seem to correspond is in fact in a later work where he is writing of Greek art as "a revealing that brought forth and made present, and therefore belonged within *poiesis*."⁵³ Such a revealing could also be an instance of a WOSE.

A WOSE tells of events which are not immediately present to us physically. It is obvious that if the teller of a WOSE mentions violins they do not become physically present in the room as he speaks. It is not however necessary that the entities referred to in the WOSE are not present. I could for example, pick up my violin and say, "This is my grandfather's fiddle - let me tell you how it made its way into my hands. Several years ago ..." But whether entities are present-at-hand or not, part of what makes the ensuing event a WOSE is the telling of events that are not manifest to the audience. A WOSE precisely brings us what is not given to us by the enviroing world around us or the entities that reveal themselves in it. In particular it seems definitive that it tells of events from a different time from that of the telling.⁵⁴

Compare for example a WOSE about a visit to a racecourse last week with the speech of a man looking at a racecourse through a hole in a fence and saying what he can see to a group of friends around him whose view is obstructed by the fence. Although much that he says could be similar to the content of the WOSE one could hear about the visit to the racecourse last week, we do not immediately understand it as a WOSE, nor any sort of story, because it is a contemporaneous report of what is happening in the world. In our everyday understanding of the term "story" the temporal displacement is significant. Speech describing contemporaneous events is not understood to be a story, even if what is described is as a matter of fact invisible to the hearers of the speech. Our natural usage of story *does* cover the tale of how the violin I'm holding in my hand came into my possession, but does *not* cover the words of the man describing what he can see as he peeps through a hole in the fence to watch a race. The latter is a commentary, a contemporaneous account of an event which, as it happens, his friends are at that moment unable to see with their own eyes.

⁵³ Heidegger 1978 p.339

⁵⁴ In the case of mediated stories - texts, films and so on - this can *appear* to be a function of the medium: the text or whatever which 'freezes' the narrative and makes it possible to deliver it to another time and place. The fact that it is also true of oral stories indicates that it is a function of the story as such, which is the event of a particular way of Dasein taking up its possibility of being-with.

A WOSE makes present events which are other than what is directly manifest to the audience, and even if a WOSE is 'about' an object present at hand it tells of events in relation to that object which are not manifest to the audience. It appears that essential to a WOSE is the telling of doings and dealings which are neither manifest nor contemporaneous with the telling. Immediately one can see a possible objection. What of the storyteller who starts as follows?

"Right now, as you are listening to me, in England there are professors reading academic theses, women driving buses and men digging holes in the road; and a long way away, in Turkestan, a little girl with dark brown eyes and coal black hair tied into two long plaits is opening a small, battered wooden box. As she lifts the lid her eyes shine with excitement because she can see ..."

We need not be distracted by the issue of whether this is a case of the use of the historic present and we do not need to consider the issue of truth versus fiction. The claim of the storyteller about the girl in Turkestan is a stylistic device which has to do with manner in which he seeks to engage our attention and sympathy, it is not a veridical claim of simultaneity.⁵⁵ If for example the speaker of the above passage was relaying to his audience a description of a girl in Turkestan whom he was observing via a video-link we would not describe him as telling a story. His "story" would in fact be understood to be a commentary. Furthermore it is clear that it would be a freak event, consciously and artificially created or simply accidental, if the telling of a story corresponded exactly to the elapsed time of the event recounted. If the girl in the story takes the little wooden box to her grandfather's house the telling of her walk to her grandfather's house does not take as long as any such actual walk. The fact that many stories *claim* to be contemporaneous accounts does not defeat the original claim. In fact it shows clearly that the time taken to tell stories precisely does not correspond to the elapsed time claimed, overtly or implicitly for the events of the stories to occur. This is not a matter of speed of description, but rather of *different sorts of ways in which Dasein has its time*.

As we have seen in the last chapter, when Dasein is bored it has its time as dragging. In the second form of boredom we are bored by "time in its

⁵⁵ This is not to say some commentaries cannot sound, or be described as, story-like. Indeed the fact that one can say of a commentator, "He is so good because he makes a story of it" is evidence of the *difference* between a story and a commentary, not their similarity. If all commentaries were automatically understood as stories the comment would be tautological.

standing."⁵⁶ In profound boredom, a "constant possibility [which] ... lurks in the ground of Dasein",⁵⁷ temporality temporalizes itself in the particular form of "unarticulated unity" which the possibility of refusing Dasein's possibilities as a whole.⁵⁸ Dasein is thus entranced by time which shows Dasein the possibility of the moment of vision along with its possibility of refusing it. In so far as Dasein refuses this most essential possibility it is bored, which precludes precisely the engagement that is constitutive of storytelling. Hence the importance of establishing that what we are investigating is the *well-told*, non-boring oral storytelling event.⁵⁹

The time of a WOSE is not boring time nor the public time by which the happenings of a day are measured.⁶⁰ The time is different in at least two significant ways. Firstly it is a different sort of time from everyday measured clock-time, the sort of time we usually unreflectively consider ourselves to be dealing with. In a WOSE the teller may talk of any time he wishes and there is no necessary connection between the duration claimed for an event and the duration of the narration of the event.⁶¹ There *are* constraints upon the teller as to what time he says it is, and they arise from his relationship with his listeners.⁶² If for example, in the middle of a well-told event of professional storytelling, when an audience is deeply engrossed in a moving description of a poignant moment of tender love

⁵⁶ FC 158

⁵⁷ FC 156-7

⁵⁸ FC 148

⁵⁹ I present here two comments about different ways that Dasein has its time, not because they even begin to exhaust these different ways, but because it is not possible to explore all the avenues opened up by these observations. Apart from *Being and Time* in Heidegger's oeuvre *The Fundamental Concepts* offers a relatively clear starting point for further exploration of the ways Dasein has its time. Guignon 1983 and Caputo 1987 offer good commentaries and Ricoeur 1981 considers specifically the way Dasein has its time in stories, though not specifically oral stories. For a description of the event of man's different perceptions of time in the field of psychology see M.H. Erickson and L.F. Cooper, "Time distortion in Hypnosis" in Rossi 1980 Vol II and in the historical field see Mumford 1934.

⁶⁰ For an introduction to the discussion amongst anthropologists of the temporality of stories in the oral tradition see Tonkin 1992, Ch. 4

⁶¹ See Goodman in Mitchell, 1981

⁶² "A narrator who is asked to narrate must consider the occasion, above all the perceived character, intentions and possible power of the audience - even when giving a monologue which bears all the marks of a familiar rendition. Strictly even then the narrative is a kind of dialogue - and one whose structure is not reducible to the separate component contributions of different speakers. On these formal grounds alone the structure also contributes to the meaning. ... the times in the narration are affected by times outside it; even the audience's interventions may direct and alter these times and the choice of representation through which they are effected." Tonkin 1992 p.67

recalled at the height of a great battle, the storyteller all of a sudden changes his style abruptly and says, "The hero died, the battle was lost, that's all," the audience would normally have a sense that the WOSE had not been finished properly and their relationship with the teller had been suddenly and prejudicially transformed. The event would in some sense be diminished, either as unfinished or as violated. The time of a WOSE, both its way of flowing and its ostensive chronology, is determined by the relationship between the storyteller and the audience. Similar constraints apply to WOSEs in domestic and psychotherapeutic contexts. We will look more closely at the latter in the next chapter. *That on the basis of which the chronology of story events is proposed and accepted or rejected is that reckoning with time opened up by the being-with of the storyteller and his listener(s).*

WOSEs also present a different time in the sense that the events of the story are discontinuous with the events of the surrounding environing world of teller and audience. We have already noted that WOSEs tell of events that are not contemporaneous with the telling. The teller does not alter the flow of time, but tells of happenings which are not dated in the public time with the same date as the public time of the telling itself. The Dasein of the audience is primarily involved neither in the elapsed time measured by the clock, nor primarily in the public dated time ascribed by the teller to the happenings of which he tells, but rather in the time of the telling and listening. For example, if the storyteller tells of a heroine hiding in a bush holding her breath whilst villains search for her in the campsite the audience is affected by the mood of suspense *for the duration of the telling* of the hiding, and breathes a sigh of relief when the teller says that the villainous searchers move on without finding her. Of course a man with a stop-watch could measure the duration of the elapsed time of this part of the telling, but in so far as he does so he is not *primarily* listening to, and involved in the story, but has taken up his own possibility of transforming his way of being into the objective contemplation of present-at-hand events. A WOSE, which we must remember is an *engaging* event, is not *primarily* such an occurrence present at hand, nor the apprehension thereof, but rather a different comportment of Dasein. *The listeners of a WOSE experience the time of the story as their own time.* In a WOSE the two different events, of telling and of what is told, are made one as Dasein is brought alongside them both. Hence a storyteller can, and frequently will, incorporate a remark

about the events in the environment of the telling into his storytelling. The temporary violation of the temporal separateness of happenings recounted in the WOSE is used to generate the comic or ironic effect.⁶³ It is made possible by the unity of the event of telling. What makes this unity? Where does it come from? How come we can experience the time of a WOSE as our *own* time?

4 TRANSPOSITION

We finished the last section with some pressing questions, and we have not yet solved the problem of the ontological nature of the *present* or *presence* of a WOSE. Let us for a moment therefore stop asking how or in what manner a WOSE presents things to us, and ask instead, is it possible that in a WOSE, rather than things being made present to us, we are *taken* to them? In a WOSE are we, the audience, in fact not *transposed* into the presence of that which is presented to us? We have already established that it is misleading to think of a story as present-at-hand within the world of Dasein if we think in terms of container and contained. A WOSE as we have defined it is not a collection of assertions written down such as might constitute a book but is rather an *event of telling*. Listening to a WOSE I may forget about the factual world around me. I become absorbed in the WOSE.⁶⁴ One might say that listening to a WOSE one was 'in another world'. In this colloquialism is a hint of the deeper ontological structure of the event of storytelling. One may be transposed into another world, and yet one does not leave the everyday world. Indeed it seems that Dasein, as teller or hearer, can be in many such worlds simultaneously. If a comic makes a running gag of tripping over the microphone at moments of bathos in his performance he holds open with this possibility *both* the world of the events recounted, and the bathetic moments, *and* his world as a performer making a comment, ironic or

⁶³ Equally a storyteller can start with an inconsequential, conversational remark and without obvious demarcation segue into a tale perhaps quite fantastic or incredible. Once again the storyteller is attempting to enhance the enjoyment of the WOSE by the effect of this gradual transition from everyday discourse to WOSE. But if in fact he does not, however slyly, lead to talking about something other than the present at hand he is not understood to be "telling a story," and cannot therefore be telling a well-told story.

⁶⁴ The echo of Heidegger's description of Dasein as "absorbed in the world" (BT 80) is intentional. Dasein continually gives itself away either falling into the world or going along with the being with of another. As we shall see later, only if the particular other of the storyteller is authentic is Dasein *returned* to itself.

slapstick, in apposition to them. What is the nature of a WOSE such that this is possible? We do not leave our own world by listening to a story. We still sit on the same chair during the WOSE as we sat on before it and sit on afterwards. Yet we somehow "enter" the story-world. How do we do so? If we are to transpose ourselves into a story-world our first question must concern not the story-world - whatever that may be - but the being of Dasein which is such that *Dasein is the sort of being that can "transpose" itself*.

Heidegger carries over into *The Fundamental Concepts* the ontology he developed in *Being and Time* wherein he has posited Being-with as an existentiale.⁶⁵ In the lecture course of 1927 he expresses this aspect of being-with as "transposition" and opposes it to the traditional philosophical notion of transcendence.⁶⁶ In *The Fundamental Concepts* Heidegger was not addressing the issue of stories nor the event of oral storytelling but was considering Dasein's relation to other Dasein and to animals:

"self-transposition does not mean the factual transference of one existing human being into the interior of another being. Nor does it mean the factual substitution of oneself for another being so as to take its place." (FC 202)

However it is a transposition - it is not an "*as if*, ... in which we *merely act as if* we were the other being."⁶⁷ The other being does not get out of the way such that we can get in, nor do we become other than ourselves to 'be' the other. The other must precisely "remain what it is and how it is"⁶⁸ such that we can genuinely transpose ourselves into it - and equally we must not forget ourselves but precisely be ourselves such that it is we ourselves who are transposed. "There can be no going-along-with if the one who wishes and is meant to go along with the other relinquishes himself in advance."⁶⁹ Transposing oneself into another being must mean precisely "going along with what it is and with how it is."⁷⁰

⁶⁵ See BT Section 26 and, in particular, "'with' is something of the character of Dasein ... 'With' ... [is] to be understood *existentially*, not categorially." BT 154-5 See also my Chapter One, section 3

⁶⁶ BP 161-2

⁶⁷ FC 202

⁶⁸ FC 202

⁶⁹ FC 203

⁷⁰ FC 202

"Such going-along-with means directly learning how it is with this being, discovering what it is like to be this being *with* which we are going along *in this way*." (FC 202)

If we remain fully ourselves and yet go along with the other as it is and how it is transposition cannot be an actual placing of oneself in the other nor can it be a "thought experiment."⁷¹ Nor can it be made possible by some process in which we must first "feel our way into the other" - for then we would be caught up in the process of "feeling into" or empathising and not simply transposed into the other and going-along with his processes.⁷² To feel one's way into the consciousness of the other implies that one is in the first place *outside*. But the idealist view of human being in "solipsistic isolation"⁷³ is precisely what Heidegger so powerfully attacked in *Being and Time*. Dasein is not an isolated being, rather Dasein is always Dasein-with. "Being-with belongs to the essence of man's existence, i.e., to the existence of every unique individual in each case."⁷⁴ For Heidegger therefore we do not *do* something to achieve the possibility of transposition, we are the sort of being for whom the possibility of transposition is constitutive.

"[the possibility of transposing ourselves into others] already and originally belongs to man's own essence. Insofar as human beings exist at all, they already find themselves transposed in their existence into other human beings, even if there are factually no other human beings in the vicinity. Consequently the Da-sein of man, the Da-sein in man, means, not exclusively but amongst other things, being transposed into other human beings." (FC 205)

The world in which we find ourselves is always already shaped by Dasein, and the tools, dwelling and footpaths of Dasein both structure the world and tell of the presence of Dasein that is other than us. Yet we understand the other Dasein that is shown in the world as *like us*. The other that is there too is as we are, thus we recognise the equipmentality of tools and the trodden-ness of paths and so on. "Thus in characterizing the encountering of *Others*, one is again still oriented by that Dasein which is in each case one's *own*."⁷⁵ I recognise these others because they are not

⁷¹ FC 203

⁷² FC 203

⁷³ FC 206

⁷⁴ FC 206

⁷⁵ BT 154

everyone else but me but rather because they are those "from whom one does *not* distinguish oneself - those among whom one is too."⁷⁶

"By reason of this *with-like* Being-in-the-world, the world is always the one that I share with Others. The world of Dasein is a *with-world*. Being-in is *Being-with* Others. Their Being-in-themselves within-the-world is *Dasein-with*." (BT 155)

The transposition of our Dasein by which we are "drawn into the world of a story" is an ontological characteristic of our being. In so far as another individual Dasein tells us of its being we are *already there with it*, in its situation.⁷⁷ Heidegger's claim is that in our most essential being we always already do understand the other. We all know what it is like to feel, to expect, to perceive, to become absorbed, to fall asleep and to awake. Although for each us our own particular situation is unique, our way of being is shared. We all have, and we all know we have, the same way of being, including the possibility of turning away from that knowledge of ourselves. A WOSE is a case of what Heidegger refers to as communication "grasped in principle existentially."⁷⁸

"In this more general kind of communication, the Articulation of Being with one another understandingly is constituted. Through it a co-state-of-mind [Mitbefindlichkeit] gets 'shared', and so does the understanding of Being-with. Communication is never anything like a conveying of experiences, such as opinions or wishes, from the interior of one subject into the interior of another. Dasein-with is already essentially manifest in a co-state-of-mind and a co-understanding. In discourse Being-with becomes 'explicitly' *shared*; that is to say, it is already, but it is unshared as something that has not been taken hold of and appropriated." (BT 205)

By "more general" he must mean that primordial communication which is not the transmission of facts.⁷⁹ Such communication is the authentic acknowledgement or raising to interpretation of being-with which he

⁷⁶ BT 154

⁷⁷ We will see that this being already there with it can be authentic or inauthentic. In the latter case it is so ordinary as to remain mostly un-noticed, only in the case of the former, when the story is in fact well told do we become aware of a difference in our way of being at the moment of telling which we can analyse as the taking up of the possibility of transposition.

⁷⁸ BT 205

⁷⁹ We also note that he seems uses discourse in this passage to refer to an ontic existentiell event of communication. An instance of such could be a WOSE.

differentiates from giving information.⁸⁰ Speech which is essentially giving information is delivering facts to listeners. WOSEs, by contrast are the delivering of listeners to events that are not the actions or movements of entities present-at, or ready-to, -hand. WOSEs, on this account, are in fact an ontological possibility inherent in the articulation of Dasein's being-in-the-world as being-with. Boss's description of a particular occasion of the modulation of his Being-in-the-world can be used to illustrate this possibility quite well.

"let us say I am relaxing in my garden, stretched out comfortably on a chaise lounge (sic) ... I am situated in the familiar confines of my own garden. At the same time I extend, as the open and perceptive realm I am, over the entire range of the world that is accessible to me. I permeate that world, existing as a world-spanning responsiveness. While I lie in my garden, engaged in visualizing the topic of contemporary medicine, my being-in-the-world extends through space at least as far as America and Indonesia, and through time ten years into my past. ... My reminiscence of things past ... is determined by a lecture I am to give this coming semester, in the future. ... But suddenly ... my old chaise lounge (sic) collapses under me ... and the ring finger of my right hand is jammed between the wooden slats of the chair. Gone in a flash is the wide expanse of my former, happy connection to the world ... The broad extension of my being-in-the-world into its past and future has suddenly shrunk, attuned as I am to a throbbing pain ... my future is limited to a plan for ending this awful pain as quickly as possible. ... What has been changed and reattuned is ... the perceptive openness of the being in space and time that is the essence of my Dasein." (Boss 1994, p.210)

If Boss were the teller now of a WOSE describing this incident in the garden chair, and we, that is you, the reader, and I were his audience, we would be with him in the garden in this existential sense; indeed we might even be aware of the evidence of our lived experience of being with him by wincing as he tells us of the agonizing pain as his finger is trapped by the collapsing chair. Furthermore as he tells us of what he was musing on as he lay on the chair we would again be with him as he tells of being

⁸⁰ Walter Benjamin was well aware of the transformative effects of story, and the fact that what a story tells is not information, and cannot be reduced to information, but has a certain power to touch us: "The value of information does not survive the moment in which it was new. It lives only at that moment; it has to surrender to it completely and explain itself to it without losing any time. A story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time." (Benjamin 1970, p.89-90)

in America and Indonesia.⁸¹ In the actual experience of the WOSE and feeling ourselves responding to that of which we are told we are with the Dasein of the teller - that is our Dasein is transposed into his, for we respond to what is there in his being-there. This is not simply a matter of freely imagining oneself in a different environment. *In a WOSE we are transposed primarily into the Dasein of the storyteller whose 'Da' extends towards the entities and events recounted.* It is through the Da of the storyteller as articulated, attuned possibility that we understand, and are moved and engaged by the story. Hence in listening to a WOSE one is not typically aware of undergoing an existential alienation, rather one has something of the opposite experience, one is brought to oneself. This explains why telling one's story is such an important part of psychotherapy, and also why mere grasping of the facts of some story is not therapeutically transformative. What matters in the psychotherapeutic dialogue is *how a story is told and understood.* We will return to this point in Chapter Six. This is also the reason that listening to a WOSE either in domestic or performance contexts is often experienced as relaxing and leaves the listener at one with himself, and with his fellow listeners. The transposition into the other of the storyteller is the existentiell revelation of an ontological condition which is for the most part covered over by the everyday way we have of "going apart from one another and ... going against one another"⁸² which characterises our everyday understanding of ourselves. The commonplace understanding of ourselves as separate, isolated individuals, supported by Cartesian philosophy is undercut by the experience of a WOSE. In a WOSE we are not transposed into another world as distinct other physical environment, but into the authentic being-in-the-world of another, and hence we are returned to our own authentic possibilities.

The Da of the storyteller is transposed into the WOSE *as well as* being alongside the listeners. Thus in a WOSE we are not in two separate worlds simultaneously but in two worlds that are *not* entirely separate.⁸³

⁸¹ There is an almost infinite possibility of stories within stories within stories. The inner story is in no way smaller than the frame story, for as we go in to the inner story, and perhaps from that into yet another, we do not squeeze into a yet smaller container but rather *go along with* the storyteller in the manner of sojourning along with him in his being-with the situation, or world, of each story. The 'in' of one story 'in' another is an illusion of narrative structure. The being-in of being *involved* in a story is founded on the being-in of being-in-the-world. See BT Sections 12 and 13.

⁸² FC 206

⁸³ To a Jungian this is made manifest by the synchronicities that occur during storytellings. See Mindell 1985 (a) p.58-9 and Mindell 1985 (b) p.42-45

It is also important to note that the Da of the WOSE into which one is transposed is not equivalent to identifying with a character in the story. Just as in the everyday world one is normally absorbed in the world as concern and not aware of one's self as such,⁸⁴ so in a WOSE one is primarily absorbed in *the concern of the story*. One is in the story-world not as a freelance observer but as one attuned by the concerns of that world. Hence one's engagement with the WOSE does not hop about from one character to another but is primarily in the openness, the Da, which lets the beings of the WOSE be revealed. Transposition is the existential phenomenon that lies beneath what literary theorists call *identification*. But whereas the theory of identification leads to perplexity as to how one can identify with several different characters in a story or drama simultaneously, in the transposition of a WOSE one's authentic being-with others is raised to awareness in the case of every character who is presented.

5 WORLD AND THE WOSE

What justification is there for using the term "story-world"? Whenever we listen to a WOSE we have a sense that there is a time and a place where the events narrated take place. This is explicitly denoted in the traditional beginning of an English wondertale; "Once upon a time there was ..." In fact we cannot conceive of events without already understanding them within a time and a place. Heidegger approaches this same point, though he does so in terms of poetry not story, in his later work. At this stage of his thinking has moved on from the ontology developed in the major texts under consideration in this thesis and he understands man to be called by Being, rather than man determining the being of things, nonetheless he is clearly referring to the same dynamic of discourse. Writing on Trackl's poem "A Winter Evening" in *Language* he states,

"The first stanza names not only things. It simultaneously names world." (Heidegger 1971, p.200)

As soon as we hear a story we presume a world of the occurrence of the events recounted. In this sense every WOSE, and every story, has a world. That world, however exiguously described, is presumed as a whole - we do

⁸⁴ BT 149-152

not have a sense of holes in it which need filling in. Instead we have a sense of a whole which has not yet been described in detail. Stories do not and cannot include exhaustive descriptions of every person or place named and yet we don't experience gaps in our apprehension of the story. We grasp it as a whole, however vague. In *The Fundamental Concepts* Heidegger argues that every individual assertion is spoken out of a whole - this is true *a fortiori* of every assertion in a WOSE.⁸⁵ We can call this as-a-whole the world of the story, but we must beware of presuming too much of this world. The world of a story is always already the with-world (*Mitwelt*) of Dasein. What is presented in a WOSE is never just a non-specific whole, but a human world, the with-world of Dasein. If a storyteller wishes to tell, for example, a science fiction story he or she must make a particular effort to denote an alien milieu, and even so the coherence of the events of the story is still based in Dasein's worldhood. The world of Dasein is constituted by the network of in-order-tos, which make up significance,⁸⁶ and which point in the end to the for-the-sake-of of Dasein.⁸⁷ The totality of involvements whereby we understand ourselves and each other is always automatically projected by a hearer of a WOSE and presumed by the teller. We always project worldhood even when what we understand is neither present- nor ready-to-hand, and we do so whether or not what is told is factually or historically true.⁸⁸ A story which does not have characters which are humans is nonetheless shot through with Dasein's being and worldhood. If a story is not about Dasein or an anthropomorphised agent we simply would not recognise it as a story.⁸⁹ Conversely we understand a WOSE in terms of the being of Dasein even if there are no humans mentioned. Heidegger seems to be

⁸⁵ "in every individual assertion, no matter how trivial or complicated, we always already speak out of beings that are manifest as a whole" (FC 345)

⁸⁶ BT 120

⁸⁷ BT 116-7

⁸⁸ The essence of a WOSE, or a story, has nothing to do with 'factual' or 'historical' truth, hence the attempts to clarify the ontological status of narrative by separating fictional narrative from 'truth' or from history have been doomed from the very start (See Scholes and Kellogg 1966, p.13-4, also Martin 1986, Mink in Mitchell 1981, and Hayden White, 1987, Ch. 2.).

⁸⁹ The complement holds true as well. We recognise Dasein because it is storylike, that is we understand character by virtue of someone's doings or behaviour in a story-like situation. We do not deduce being human from their behaviour, it is their behaviour.

acknowledging this point in *The Fundamental Concepts* when he remarks that "*usually*" we cannot transpose ourselves into a stone.⁹⁰ He carries on,

"I say emphatically that we *usually* answer in this way because in fact there are ways and means belonging to human Dasein in which man never simply regards purely material things, or indeed technical things, as such but rather 'animates' them, as we might somewhat misleadingly put it. There are two fundamental ways in which this can happen: first when human Dasein is determined in its existence by *myth*, and second in the case of *art*. But it would be a fundamental mistake to try to dismiss such animation as an exception or even as a purely metaphorical procedure which does not really correspond to the facts, as something phantastical based upon the imagination, or as mere illusion. What is at issue here is not the opposition between actual reality and illusory appearance, but the distinction between quite different *kinds* of possible *truth*." (FC 204)

The animation of a stone by *myth* or *art* is the transposition of Dasein into stone not as stone but as a stone-with-Dasein, in other words the story of an anthropomorphised stone. The mention of myth is not without significance because the phenomenon of the WOSE is constitutive of primordial, oral myth, itself a primordial art of truth-transmission, before "art" was differentiated as such.⁹¹ A WOSE tells of Dasein through Dasein in the Da of the teller, and its truth is the truth of the revelation of Dasein's being to itself, not the truth of correspondence of assertion to fact. It is the tragedy of modernity that it has turned away from this kind of truth.⁹² The story world is an existential modification of the with-world of "everyday, average Being-with-one-another."⁹³ It arises in a positive mode of solicitude wherein the teller and hearer of a WOSE "devote themselves to the same affair in common"⁹⁴, i.e. the WOSE. Hence teller and hearer are brought back to themselves and "become *authentically* bound together."⁹⁵ A badly-told story which does not engage the listener

⁹⁰ We cannot do so because "the stone as such does not admit of this possibility at all, offers no sphere intrinsically belonging to its being such that we could transpose ourselves into the stone." FC 204

⁹¹ "We grasp truth articulately only in events. Articulated truth has no permanence. Full truth is deeper than articulation. ... Primary oral culture ... keeps its thinking close to the human life world, personalizing things and issues, and storing knowledge in stories. Categories are unstable mnemonically. Stories you can remember." Ong in Baumann 1986, p.25 See Chapter Four and also Havelock 1963

⁹² "The art of storytelling is reaching its end because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out." Benjamin 1970, p.86

⁹³ BT 158

⁹⁴ BT 159

⁹⁵ BT 159

perpetuates the sort of indifferent mode of Being-with-one-another in which being-with is taken simply to mean the mere Being-present-at-hand of several subjects and the story a mere offering of information.

The world of Dasein is a with-world and yet it is not only a with-world. The network of in-order-tos and for-the-sake-ofs which constitute my world is founded in the with-world but is not limited to it. There are particular possibilities in my world which are unique to me, and in so far as I take them up, my world is unique to me. A story world is a possibility of the being-in-the-world of any Dasein that listens to a WOSE and the manner in which it takes up its understanding of that story will determine the extent to which the story world into which it is transposed is particular to itself. In so far as we have an average and vague understanding of the story the story world is vaguely and averagely similar for all listeners. In so far as I project my particular understanding I render the story world both more clear and more individual. Obviously each Dasein understands a story differently. If a client in psychotherapy describes a beautiful dark-haired woman it is unlikely that the listening therapist's imagined image of the woman would be identical to the image in the client's memory. But this sort of disparity is also true to a greater or lesser extent of the environing world.⁹⁶ Each of us sees and lives in the world slightly differently and hence understands it differently in so far as we take our *ownmost* possibilities seriously. However in taking over possibilities from the world of others and constituting ourselves as the 'they' we tend to overlook such differences. We thus live in both one and many worlds.⁹⁷ The same is true of WOSEs. The world of a WOSE is *both* a with-world and potentially an individual, or better an *authentic*, world. Although all authentic worlds, story worlds or environing worlds, are different in detail they are different on the basis of a fundamental sameness: that is they are all *worlds*. Worldhood is an existentiale of Dasein, and the world of Dasein is first and foremost a with-world.⁹⁸ Therefore in spite of interpretative differences the audience of a WOSE does normally understand, care about and become engaged together in the events recounted. When we talk of the story-world the as-a-whole-ness of the world of Dasein which Dasein understands non-thematically and pre-reflectively has been raised to interpretation via a particular instantiation.

⁹⁶ "The surrounding world is different in a certain way for each of us, and notwithstanding that we move about in a common world." BP 164

⁹⁷ See Heidegger's third definition of 'world,' BT 93

⁹⁸ BT 155

Because Dasein's world is primarily a with-world, as soon as a WOSE has begun we always already find ourselves thrown into the story-world which is constituted by the event of telling.

6 THE WOSE, FUTURICITY AND FINITUDE

The tone of voice in the very first phrase or word of a story, which may be a WOSE, or even simply the gesture of the teller constitutes a promise that we will be told of a happening.⁹⁹ The WOSE continues to promise more until it reaches the end. And with the end of the WOSE, once again shown in the tone of voice or by gesture as much as by actual words, the WOSE is no more. For as long as a WOSE is, it promises more. This promise is the promise of more to come. In other words it is a sort of *futuricity*. This futuricity is constitutive of a WOSE. When there is no more to come, the WOSE is at an end. The futuricity of a WOSE is not simply the fact that the event takes time and hence there is a future of a certain amount of telling that we will have to sit through before the WOSE is finished. It is the *presence of the future*, or the future present as a promise of more to come and the telling of more to come that is constitutive of the WOSE as such. A WOSE involves the future in the present. If, during the telling of a story the audience becomes bored and *disinterested* in what is to come, and is no longer involved in it, this involvement with the future ceases, the WOSE ceases to happen and derivative discourse of a lesser form of narrative continues. In such a situation, not at all unusual, the audience still expects something more to happen but they are not *involved* in the expectation. Rather they expect, because of prior experience, that more will be recounted. Their mode of being is a *distanced* contemplation of the unfolding of a present-at-hand description of a sequence of events. Such expectation is conventional not existential, but it is founded on the prior possibility, however much it is ignored and forgotten, which is existential. The future of a WOSE is not the future in the sense of that part of a sequence of events which is being recounted which the storyteller claims happened at a time subsequent to the events recounted earlier. It is entirely possible, for example, to tell a

⁹⁹ "[verbal] examples are in English 'once upon a time' and in Swahili '*zamani*'. ... When speakers of Syuwa, a Nepalese language, start a story, they begin it in 'the completive unwitnessed second-hand mode'" Tonkin 1992, p.79

story in which the first event to be recounted is chronologically posterior to the last event recounted.¹⁰⁰ The chronology of the events recounted need have no relation to the ontological futurity of a WOSE. Ricoeur, although not specifically talking about oral narrative, gives an account of the relationship between the time of the events recounted in a narrative and the time of a listener.¹⁰¹ He shows that the time of a story is founded in the reckoning with time of concern.¹⁰² It is as transposed into this concern that we become involved in the story, hence the futurity of a WOSE is founded in its telling.

The parallels between this account of a WOSE and the futurity of Dasein are immediately obvious. For Dasein, as for a WOSE, the future is constitutive for its being.¹⁰³ We must remember that Dasein, like a WOSE is an event. Dasein is not man in the sense of his corporeal extension in space but man in the sense of *living* man as opposed to a corpse. And living man is an event.

"There-being, rather than a mere synonym for man, is essentially a coming-to-pass that takes place *in* man." (Richardson 1963 p.45)

The parallel with the WOSE is exact. A WOSE is not equivalent to a concrete thing, a text or any other sort of record, just as a man is not equivalent to a corpse.¹⁰⁴ The eventhood of Dasein, its coming-to-pass means that Dasein is not a thing that can be frozen in a moment of time.

¹⁰⁰ For example see Jakobson: "narrative, especially poetic, time can be unilinear as well as multilinear, direct as well as reversed, continuous as well as discontinuous; it can even be a combination of rectilinearity and circularity" Jakobson Ed. Pomorska, 1985 p.22

¹⁰¹ "the heroes of stories reckon *with* time. They have or do not have time *for* this or that. The time of the story retains this reckoning at the threshold of measurement, at the point where it reveals our thrownness, by which we are abandoned to the changing of day into night. This time already includes the sort of reckoning used in dating events, but it is not yet the time in which the natural measure of 'days' is replaced by artificial measure, that is measure taken from physics and based on an instrumentation that follows the progress of the investigation of nature. In a narrative, the measuring of time is not yet released from time reckoning because this reckoning is still visibly rooted in preoccupation." Ricoeur 1981, p.171

¹⁰² Cf. BT456-464

¹⁰³ "The future makes ontologically possible an entity [Dasein] which is in such a way that it exists understandingly in its potentiality-for-Being." BT 385

¹⁰⁴ Richardson continues (1963, p.45-6) " ... There is an obscurity, then, ... concerning the relationship between There-being and man." Indeed there is, and as Heidegger did not elucidate the actual relationship between living Dasein and its body there is a large field of research awaiting investigation. Similarly there is detailed research to be done on the relationship between the WOSE and the experience of reading a novel, or watching a film. Nevertheless the obscurity of the being of such derivative forms must not be allowed to interfere with or obscure this seeking in the WOSE the essence of the primordial event from which other stories are derived.

Dasein's way of being, as we have seen in Chapter One has, indeed is, the sort of time that cannot be chopped up into instants. Dasein cannot be contained in such an instant for it is "essentially ahead of itself."¹⁰⁵ Any given WOSE entails of course an ontic instance of understanding, and hence is founded in the futurity of the existentials of understanding that makes it possible. A WOSE is an event, a comportment of Dasein.¹⁰⁶

Dasein exists as potentiality-for-being. If it ceases to do so it is no more and its corporeal residue has the present-at-hand way of being of a thing, a dead former-Dasein. A WOSE is always going on into the future, until it reaches its end and is no more. Even when a teller stops speaking in a moment of high tension in his telling, when his listeners are kept waiting for the revelation of a secret or the dénouement of a mystery, even then and precisely then above all, the event has not stopped but is pregnant, swollen with futurity. That which makes that moment a moment of an event, and that which constitutes the event from that moment, is precisely that projecting forward, that stretching into the future that lends the potentiality of manifold possibilities to the present. It is the future as already-present-as-possibility which characterises a WOSE. We must remember to bear in mind continually that we are considering only a good telling, a successful, interesting, moving and engaging WOSE. If there is no tension in such a silent moment it is not on this definition strictly a WOSE, for the silence is not impregnated with futurity. Both WOSEs and Dasein are no more when they no longer are the presence of the possibility of the future. Futurity is constitutive of both.

From the very beginning of a WOSE we are expecting it to come to an end. Even if factually we find ourselves wishing that it would never end our wishing is founded in our knowledge that it will. This knowing that a WOSE will come to an end is not necessarily thematised or conscious but it is constitutive of the WOSE. All the events recounted make sense in terms of an eventual end. The end may be postponed indefinitely, as in *Sheherezade's 1,001 Nights*, but the WOSE is always being-towards-an-end. Indeed it is in order to hear the end of each story, and in the

¹⁰⁵ BT 386

¹⁰⁶ And at times, even Heidegger's describes Dasein itself like a very story-like event. In his lecture course of 1925/6 he described Dasein thus: "I live in the understanding of writing, lighting things up, walking in and out and the like. More precisely, I am - as Dasein - speaking, walking, understanding, intelligible dealings [*Umgang*]. My Being in the world is nothing other than this being-in-motion [*Sichbewegen*] that already understands in these modes of Being" Quoted in Guignon 1983 from *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit. Gesamtausgabe*, vol.21 Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 1976 p.146

expectation of it that the Sultan spares Sheherezade's life. The end is present as an unspoken promise in every moment of a WOSE. The end constitutes a WOSE because it is the ultimate horizon against which the understanding is projected and in the light of which events in the story are meaningful. As well as the attunement discussed below, it is in part because the world of a WOSE is Dasein's world the characters of a story (even a fictional story) also have finitude such that we care about a dying hero or a doomed love affair. Even if the hero miraculously revives or the storyteller by *deus ex machina* transforms the possibilities of the story our involvement and engagement and interest are sustained by finitude of lives and stories: if all stories could be instantly transformed and all deaths were non-deaths and all ends were non-ends all that constitutes WOSEs, (and other stories) as such would be vitiated. Finitude is constitutive of WOSEs as it is of Dasein. As a comportment a WOSE always being-towards-an-end just as authentic Dasein is being-towards-death.¹⁰⁷

7 THE WOSE, ATTUNEMENT AND MEANING

In a WOSE if a funny situation is described the listener will be amused, if a happy event is revealed he will feel joy, if a tragedy unfolds he will be moved. This is not simply a matter of each listener reacting to information. The reaction is mainly determined by the manner of the telling.¹⁰⁸ If the listener is unmoved by a story it is described as not well-told. In the case of an audience of a professional performance which reacts heterogeneously the story will be understood as well-told by those who are caught up in it, and less well-told by those who are less involved. A 'better' telling is one which opens the possibility of authentic transposition to more listeners. Dasein of course always has some mood or other,¹⁰⁹ however during a WOSE its attunement is determined by the

¹⁰⁷ BT 277ff.

¹⁰⁸ This is not to say that the storyteller has total control over his listener(s) but rather that in the being-with of the telling his presentation of the story will determine if it moves the listener(s) or leaves them cold. His presentation is determined by how the storyteller makes use of the possibilities of engagement offered by the audience. The specific possibilities of the interaction of teller and listener or performer and audience vary with each and every telling, and are far too complex to analyse in detail, but whatever their particular ontic form, ontologically they are all manifestations of the articulation of the being-with of the Dasein in the situation. See Brook 1972 pp.25-29

¹⁰⁹ "in every case Dasein always has some mood" BT 173

WOSE. The mood is Dasein's own, and yet it springs from its involvement in the story. In listening to a WOSE, even if momentary or fragmented, a psychotherapist can "care" for and be-with his client. A WOSE is an ontic event of the articulation of care which makes possible the way of being-with which Boss noted was the essence of the psychotherapeutic relationship.¹¹⁰

In a performance situation the mood of an audience can be authentic, that is grounded in their own-most possibilities, or inauthentic, taken over from the 'they'. Automatic responses such as sentimentality are for the most part inauthentic. The most important, though never totally determinative factor, in the nature of the mood of the audience is the mood of the teller. If that of which the teller tells has a meaning for him (as described in Chapter Two), if the teller has an authentic emotional involvement with that of which he speaks and he does not cover over his own being attuned in his telling he manifests the truth of his own being. Benjamin, in *What is Epic Theatre?* describes the actor's job in a similar way to the way I describe that of the storyteller.¹¹¹

"The actor must show his subject, and he must show himself. Of course, he shows his subject by showing himself, and he shows himself by showing his subject." (Benjamin, 1970 p.150)

In showing the being of the teller, the WOSE tells a truth although the *dramatis personae* and *loci* of the tale may be totally fictional. In so far as the teller shows this truth of his being as being-with he shows the truth of the Dasein of the audience as well, for Dasein is primarily being-with, and the truth of his Dasein is thus also the truth of Dasein as such.¹¹² Any particular Dasein in the audience can of course turn away from such a showing, but if they do not do so they are brought in front of their own being-attuned and offered the possibility of authentically taking up their ownmost moodish possibility. Hence in the performance of a WOSE the audience is brought to its own authenticity. A well-told WOSE is an

¹¹⁰ "in my first letter to [Heidegger] I had expressly signalled out page 122 of his book *Sein und Zeit* (BT158-9), and drawn his attention to the fact that under the title 'vorspringende Fürsorge' he had described the ideal relationship between the psychoanalyst and his patient." Boss in Hoeller 1988, p.7

¹¹¹ The performance of an actor in certain circumstances has an existential similarity to that of a storyteller because fundamentally theatre is founded in Dasein's world-forming ability and hence the showing of Dasein itself. See FC Pt. II, Ch 6; Brook 1972; also Chapter Six below.

¹¹² "In so far as Dasein is its disclosedness essentially, and discloses and uncovers as something disclosed to this extent it is essentially 'true'. Dasein is 'in the truth'." BT 263

instantiation of more than one Dasein doing together what Heidegger analyses (apparently in terms of the individual) as the handing down of the heritage of Dasein.¹¹³

For Heidegger authentic historicity is grounded in the authentic anticipation of death.¹¹⁴ As we have seen above the finitude of the story world is constitutive of WOSEs and within WOSEs Dasein is understood as mortal. Thus the finitude of and in WOSEs makes possible the authentic mood that draws Dasein to resoluteness just as the anticipation of death of one's own Dasein makes possible anticipatory resoluteness in other, non-storytelling situations. Dasein is never unmoved by a WOSE, for it is always attuned by the Da of the storyteller into which it is transposed. Equally if a Dasein telling a story fails to transpose himself into the being-with of the listener(s), that is constitutes himself as an "individual ego with its ego-sphere"¹¹⁵ separated from the attuned being of the audience, such a Dasein fails to create a *well-told* oral storytelling event, and he abandons the listener(s) to an account of events into which they can only transpose themselves as indifferent. In so far as any Dasein, teller or listener, turns away from such transposition and constitutes itself by the indifference of everyday being-alongside it does not participate in a WOSE. A story that does not engage us is a *different sort of event*. Dasein has one way of being in a WOSE, another when listening to a "boring story". With reference to stories, boredom, and its opposite, are not objective characteristics of stories, nor subjective characteristics of Dasein, but determinations of the *relationship* of Dasein to itself and other Dasein. Nor is boredom a steady state. Boredom can flicker on and off, and in its profound form can lurk unremarked beneath everyday life. A WOSE breaks through all boredom but can be interrupted in an instant if teller or listener falls away from the authentic transposition.

To talk of the plot of a WOSE is to *interpret* the WOSE in terms of a conceptual framework which stands back from the actual experience of the WOSE. In other words there is no such thing as "plot" discoverable in the actual event of Dasein's engagement with the telling. In a WOSE there is only Dasein as transposed into the Da of the teller. Ricoeur writes of plot or emplotment as though it was an agent, as though the plot is some way shapes or guides the story, but plot is not a constitutive building block of

¹¹³ See BT Section 74 and the analysis of historizing in Chapter 3.

¹¹⁴ BT 438

¹¹⁵ FC 206

narrative it is an abstraction *post hoc*. The notion of plot arises at the same time as narrative begins to be written down. Aristotle's *On the Art of Poetry* dates from the age of Greek drama which was the first form of public narrative guided by text.¹¹⁶ Aristotle does not clearly distinguish the action of the drama from the representation, and he defines plot in two different ways viz: "The representation of the action is the plot of the tragedy" and, "the ordered arrangement of the incidents is what I mean by plot."¹¹⁷ Ricoeur cites the first of these definitions,¹¹⁸ but bases *Time and Narrative* on his adaptation of the second. The plot, rather than simply naming the "ordered arrangement of the incidents", becomes the *agent* which brings about the ordering.¹¹⁹ Ricoeur is admittedly concerned primarily with literature as he suggests that "mimesis₂ ... opens up the world of the plot and institutes ... the literariness of the work of literature."¹²⁰ Rather than following Ricoeur, I suggest that the separation that Aristotle begins to make, but does not make completely, is the beginning of an erroneous view of the primordial form of story (although possibly a legitimate description of the mediated form of narrative that is constructed by a dramaturge). Essential to a well-told oral storytelling event is the transposition which primordially brings Dasein alongside the events of the story in the Da of the teller. A well-told oral storytelling event is *one*, albeit complex, event.¹²¹

A narrative has a plot the way a building has a shadow. The shadow is not constitutive of the building, it is merely what is seen when one looks at the building in the light of the sun. Similarly a plot is not constitutive of a story, it is merely what is seen when one looks at a story in the light of theoretical analysis. Ricoeur might as well have said "guidance" guides the story, which is true but vacuous. The hanging together of a story, the relating of past events to future ones and all the other functions ascribed to plot actually arise from the being of Dasein. *The revelatory as-a-wholeness of story is given by the unity of the temporal horizons of Dasein's self-projection.* Telling a WOSE is an existentiell modification of

¹¹⁶ "Greek drama, though orally performed, was composed as a written text and in the west was the first verbal genre, and for centuries the only verbal genre, to be controlled completely by writing." (Ong 1982, p.142)

¹¹⁷ Aristotle tr. Dorsch 1965, p.39

¹¹⁸ "Plot, says, Aristotle, is the *mimesis* of an action" Ricoeur 1984, p.xi

¹¹⁹ "the plot transforms the events into a story" Ricoeur 1984, p.66. See whole section for full description and commentary in Chapter Three above.

¹²⁰ Ricoeur 1984, p.53

¹²¹ See also Bakhtin quoted in Bauman 1986, p.112

Dasein in which entities have meaning for Dasein.¹²² The coherence of the WOSE, and of any derivative form of story, is given by the unity of Dasein's temporal horizons which Heidegger calls the *existentiale* of meaning. The story-hood of a WOSE, that is its hanging together as a story, does not depend on the revelation of a plot or any other sequential or mechanical structure. It is given in an instant, the *Augenblick*, by Dasein. This is why we can grasp a story as a story even if we have not heard the beginning of a story or the end. That which makes a piece of discourse a story can be heard in a single phrase, or word, or even a silence. The phrase, "Once upon a time ..." can already transpose us. On the other hand any silence, word, phrase, plot or entire story can leave us cold and be mere idle talk, the mere imitation of what is *essential* in a story. It is understood as a story only in and by the ascription of inauthentic emotions and involvement.

8 LOGOS AND STORY

I have claimed that a WOSE is an event which is a special and particular way of Dasein's being-with. That which is claimed for such storytelling is not typical of everyday speech. I have suggested that WOSEs make manifest Dasein's being, that they present Dasein's being non-conceptually as world-forming, attuned futurity. Heidegger does not dwell upon storytelling as such as a particular form of discourse but he does consider the fact that there are many different forms of discourse.¹²³ He dismisses the notion, which has been prevalent in metaphysics since Plato, that the primary form of language is the true statement.¹²⁴ In *The Fundamental*

¹²² BT 193

¹²³ Heidegger scarcely mentions narrative in his writings. His only reference to narration in *The Fundamental Concepts* is a reference to what I would call boring story. (FC 302) However when he was writing *Being and Time* he was more aware that narration could not necessarily be reduced to assertion without an essential loss. "Between the kind of interpretation which is still wholly wrapped up in concerned understanding and the extreme opposite case of a theoretical assertion about something present-at-hand, there are many intermediate gradations: assertions about the happenings in the environment, accounts of the ready-to-hand, 'reports on the Situation', the recording and fixing of the 'facts of the case', the description of a state of affairs, the narration of something that has befallen. We cannot trace back these 'sentences' to theoretical statements without essentially perverting their meaning." BT 201

¹²⁴ "We may neither advance the positive true judgement, nor any other form, as the sole privileged form of the *logos* and then take all the others into account retrospectively ... We have not yet attained the correct approach at all. The correct approach is missing in Aristotle too" FC 336

Concepts he tries to show that all assertions are founded in a more primordial *logos* which is the articulation of man's existential nature as world-forming.¹²⁵ In the analysis of *logos* in ancient philosophy in which he does this he lays bare many of the phenomena which I believe are gathered together and primarily manifest in the telling of a well-told story.¹²⁶ Heidegger wishes to show that, even if later philosophers reduced *logos* in their understanding to reason or assertions, such reduction, and all writing and speech are only made possible on the grounds of a pre-logical openness for beings.¹²⁷ He is showing that, even in Aristotle, *logos* cannot be the atemporal, eternal showing of what is true, but always comes forth from the openness for beings that is existentially grounded in the world-forming temporality of Dasein.¹²⁸ Heidegger's reading of the ancient Greek philosophers is idiosyncratic and he and many Heideggerian commentators often complicate the issue by equating *logos* with his particular expository term *Rede* (the existentielle).¹²⁹

It is clear that the interpretation of *logos* in Ancient Greek philosophy is riven with highly contentious debate.¹³⁰ Eric Havelock, in his paper on the language of the Presocratics suggests that their thinking went along with an evolution of language.¹³¹ They were seeking to express the new thoughts made possible by writing and to reject the old way of thinking that sustained, and was sustained by, the still prevailing oral culture. Havelock metonymically equates the old oral culture with *mythos* and

¹²⁵ "The *pre-logical being open for beings*, out of which every *logos* must speak, has in advance always already *completed* beings in the direction of an '*as a whole*.' By this *completion* we .. understand ... the *prior forming of the 'as a whole' already prevailing*." FC 348

¹²⁶ Heidegger looks at *logos* in ancient Greek philosophy as a whole. In so far as he concentrates in the 1920s on any philosopher in particular it is Aristotle, but the whole section can be read also in the knowledge that he was becoming increasingly interested in the pre-Socratics. Nonetheless "Heidegger's attitude to the Presocratics is fundamentally determined by his view of metaphysics proper, and this means Aristotle." Sadler 1996 p.37 As we have seen according to Havelock the pre-Socratics were thinking on the very threshold of literacy. See BT55ff, BT 201ff; FC 288-9 and following sections.

¹²⁷ "logos is grounded in ... a pre-logical being open for beings." FC 344

¹²⁸ For a succinct but thorough treatment of Heidegger's complex reading of *logos* in Aristotle see Sadler 1996, pp.113-126

¹²⁹ See Biemel 1972 pp.69-73 and Guignon 1983 p.112ff. Much writing in the Heideggerian field takes over Heidegger's view of *logos* rather than debating its justification or coherence.

¹³⁰ See for a small sample of the issues in contention Kahn, Kirk, Havelock, Robb, and Moravcsik in Robb 1983. Heidegger himself acknowledges that, "In Plato and Aristotle the concept of the *logos* has many competing significations, with no basic signification positively taking the lead." BT 55

¹³¹ In Robb 1983

equates the *logos* of the Presocratics with the nascent abstract thinking potentiated by writing.¹³² Hence by the time Plato was writing *logos* became the repository of knowledge and its objectification had been achieved by writing, even though the practice of oral debate or dialogue continued.¹³³ Heidegger does not contrast *logos* with the earlier *mythos* but with the later interpretation of *logos* as reason, judgement or assertion.¹³⁴ Whilst not concerned with literacy as such, he clearly hears acoustic overtones in *logos* (which Havelock would apportion to *mythos*). Seidel in his commentary on Heidegger and the Presocratics is alert to the significance of oral speech in Heidegger's later writing on *logos*.¹³⁵ I cannot here attempt a definitive reading of *logos*, either in Heidegger or ancient philosophy, but having made these caveats and connections, I want to draw out some of the phenomena Heidegger identifies in his analysis of *logos* and show that they demonstrate the ontological connection between the primordial showing of *logos* (of which I maintain that story-telling is historically and existentiell-ly a primary instance) and the being of Dasein as temporally ecstatic and world-forming.

In *The Fundamental Concepts* Heidegger notes that everyday Dasein believes things to be present-at-hand and correspondingly talks about them with, and considers the essence of talking to be, assertions such as "a is b".¹³⁶ However even within this reduced understanding we are aware

¹³² "one can say of the Presocratics that their whole linguistic enterprise stands poised between the word acoustically delivered and the word articulated, written, and visible. Competition between *mythos* and *logos* has begun." Havelock in Robb 1983, p.12

¹³³ "though oral, the Socratic dialogue depended upon the previous isolation of language in its written form as something separate from the person who uttered it. The person who used the language but was now separated from it became the 'personality' who could now discover its existence. The language so discovered became that level of theoretic discourse denoted by *logos*. Within the *logos* resided knowledge of what was known, now separated from the personal knower - who could, however train himself to use it." Havelock 1986 p.114

¹³⁴ BT 55

¹³⁵ "Heidegger has come to favour expressions of hearing over those of seeing, sound over those of sight. In the case of seeing there is of necessity a subject differentiated off from that which is seen, namely, the object. In seeing one stands back and takes a look. One stands off from that which is looked at. In hearing, on the other hand, the sound is all around. One is in a vibrant field of sound. ("We set being in vibration when we question authentically" *Was Heist Denken?*, p.79) And this is why we hear, rather than see, being. Being vibrates. And one must listen; one must be in tune with the vibrations of being, if one is to catch its message, if one is to hear being's voice. ... It is not merely a question of hearing, but of being attuned to the Logos. And if one truly listens to the Logos, one shall be tuned in on being's wave frequency. ... This fact may at least in part explain the importance of the spoken delivery for Heidegger." Seidel 1964, p.101

¹³⁶ "The fundamental trait of everyday Dasein is that undifferentiated comportment toward beings precisely as something present at hand. The corresponding form of discourse in which such comportment at first and for the most part expresses itself - whether in

there are different types of expression and he notes that in the sort of statement that expresses a human comportment (wishing, commanding, questioning) we articulate and distinguish them "through particular signs (the question mark, the exclamation mark, the full stop), but above all through a particular rhythm or tone."¹³⁷ Heidegger acknowledges here the significance of orality to express a comportment of Dasein, but he does not follow it up.¹³⁸ Indeed his overlooking of the plenitude of this significance (whether from lack of interest or insight we cannot judge) is clear from the fact that in the quotation above the parenthetical phrase refers to writing and the final phrase to oral discourse but he does not advert to the enormity of the difference between the two. Rhythm and tone are part of the non-verbal element of discourse which show forth the attunement of Dasein, and in speaking one always and inescapably manifests some rhythm and some tone. Even though there are chirographic devices (such as 'lines' of poetry) and qualifying adjectives which can be ad-juncted to suggest a certain rhythm or tone the suggestion or reproduction is utterly impoverished, virtually nugatory, compared to what is and what can be made manifest in the speaking voice. Written texts are anonymous and their ambiguity and emotional vagueness are beyond measure. The same poem can be read countless different ways, written adjectives describing a tone of voice raise the question as to what tone of voice they themselves should be read in and so on and so forth.¹³⁹

conversation, in narration, in reporting, in proclamation, or in scientific discussion - is this undifferentiated habitual form of assertion: 'a is b'." FC 302

¹³⁷ FC 301

¹³⁸ Or at least not for twenty years: "it was all of twenty years after my doctoral dissertation that I dared to discuss in a class the question of language." Heidegger 1971, p.8 Even then he does not press this distinction hard enough even though he quotes von Humbolt approvingly; "Language, grasped in its actual essence, is perpetually and at every moment something *transitory*. Even its preservation through writing is always a merely incomplete preservation, a kind of mummification, which is necessary if we are to try to render once again the delivery of the written word. Language itself is not a work (*ergon*), but an activity (*energeia*). Its true definition can thus only be a genetic one. For language is the eternally self-repeating *labor of spirit* to make *articulated sound* capable of being an expression of *thought*. Taken strictly and directly, this is the definition of every instance of *speaking*; but in the true and essential sense, one can also regard the totality of such speech only as an approximation to language." von Humbolt, *On the Diversity of the Structure of Human Language and Its Influence on the Intellectual Development of Mankind*, (Berlin, 1936) in Heidegger 1971 (b) p.116-7 In pressing on into the relation of language to being and the effect of *techne* as a whole he apparently overlooks the part played by the effect on language of writing.

¹³⁹ Thus the task Heidegger sets himself later (in Heidegger 1971 (a) and (b)) of seeking to understand poetry is rendered immensely complicated because he works with the text of poems and does not turn his attention to the myriad possibilities of the modalities of encounter with text as sub-vocalised or spoken and heard.

By contrast, in the modalities of rhythm and tone of the spoken word are shown or hidden immediately and unambiguously the way of being of the speaker which renders a story well-told or badly told.¹⁴⁰ Heidegger does note that in spite of the dominance of the Greek theory of the *logos* as propositional statement Aristotle attempted in his *Rhetoric* "the mighty task of submitting the forms and formations of non-thetic discourse to interpretation"¹⁴¹ but he does not unambiguously make the step from, or connection between, 'non-thetic' and oral so his analysis of *logos* remains trammelled by the obscurity of abstraction. In spite of the obscurity, the link can be made. He writes "[*logos*] means the fundamental faculty of being able to talk discursively, and accordingly, to speak."¹⁴² Furthermore, "it is in the *logos* that man expresses what is most essential to him, so as in this very expression to place himself into the clarity, depth, and need pertaining to the essential possibilities of his action, of his existence."¹⁴³ In other words man expresses his essence in orality. Heidegger is not contrasting *logos* with writing as such, but with the way of thinking of later metaphysics. We, interpolating Havelock, can understand that the misapprehensions of later metaphysical thinking lie in the illusions arising from literacy. Heidegger has an enormous struggle making sense of *logos* because although he understands that the nature of *logos* is not such that it can be merely present-at-hand he does not see the historical reason for the confusion and must therefore take a long detour through the exposition of the primordially of worldhood that makes possible *logos* and language. He takes words to be things, just as Plato did.¹⁴⁴ Heidegger is sensitive to what is lost in such a grasping, though he writes of it in terms of poems rather than stories or WOSEs. He did not have at his disposal the scholarship of Havelock and Ong who both advance the claim

¹⁴⁰ In psychotherapy for example, is in listening to the *way* that a patient talks, often more than *what* he says, that the psychotherapist forms his judgement about the patients' way of being. We return to this point in Chapter Six.

¹⁴¹ FC 303

¹⁴² FC 305

¹⁴³ FC 303

¹⁴⁴ "When considered philosophically, the *logos* itself is an entity, and, according to the orientation of ancient ontology, it is something present-at-hand. Words are proximally present-at-hand" BT 201 In *The Fundamental Concepts* he is still struggling with the consequences of this misunderstanding, although its shortcomings are much clearer to him, see next quotation (FC 303) in text above. See earlier footnotes re his later approach to saying and poetry in 1971 (a) and (b).

that poetry only became separated from oral storytelling by the historical introduction of writing.¹⁴⁵

"When a poem is made the object of philological interpretation, the resources of grammar find themselves at a loss, and precisely with respect to the greatest creations of language." (FC 303)

Heidegger is also sensitive to how discourse is originally the expression and articulation of being-with, which although he does not explicitly say so must refer to oral discourse rather than textually mediated communication.¹⁴⁶ When reading, Dasein is withdrawn from other Dasein, even, and indeed most obviously, if one person is reading a text in the presence of another. If the reading is silent Dasein is absorbed in a private world, if the reading is out loud it is clear that the event is precisely not a speaking to from out of a being-with but a presenting of a text as a reading out of a script present-at-hand.

Heidegger never completely clarifies his allusions to orality but he is clear that *logos* is not merely the notation of knowledge. We may note that just as the issue of truth and falsity is irrelevant to the event of a well-told story, Heidegger asserts of *logos* that its "essence ... consists precisely in its containing as such the possibility of 'either true or false', of 'both positive and negative'."¹⁴⁷ *Logos* is not knowledge as true and false, but that which includes it. It is the possibility of truth and falsehood, which are of course equally constitutive of WOSEs. *Logos* is "an ability for ... which intrinsically entails *having a relating toward beings as such at one's disposal*."¹⁴⁸ In this sense *Logos* is clearly the ground of the possibility of any event of storytelling, which is a relating towards beings. *Logos* in *Being and Time* is not the exact equivalent of *Rede*,¹⁴⁹ *pace* Guignon,¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ "the divorce between poem and context would be difficult to imagine in an oral culture ... The romantic quest for 'pure poetry' ... derives from the feel for autonomous utterance created by writing and, even more, the feel for closure created by print." Ong 1982, p.161 "a ... cleavage opened up, between this theoretic discourse and the rhythmic narrative of oralism: the philosopher entered the lists against the poets." Havelock 1986 p.114

¹⁴⁶ "all discursivity places us in the dimension of understandability; indeed, discourse and language constitutes precisely this dimension of understandability, of mutual expression, requesting, desiring, asking, telling. Discourse gives something to be understood and demands understanding. By its very essence it is turned toward the free comportment and activity of human beings among one another." FC 306

¹⁴⁷ FC 337

¹⁴⁸ FC 337

¹⁴⁹ See BT 55-58

¹⁵⁰ Guignon (1983, pp.112-3) seizes on one element of Heidegger's discussion of *logos*, but Heidegger's use of *Rede* is more tightly circumscribed than those meanings he variously attributes to *logos*.

and in *The Fundamental Concepts* the terminology of existentialia is not used. Nonetheless throughout the period 1926-30 Heidegger is thinking of *logos* as an existential component of Dasein. Heidegger's writing on *logos* oscillates between the ontic and ontological levels because *logos* is shown in the event of discourse and is also the possibility of the event of discourse and the event itself. I believe that in *logos* Heidegger is approaching the same phenomenon in the existential potentiality of Dasein that I have outlined in my analysis of the WOSE as founded in Dasein's temporal structure. Heidegger puts it as follows:

"we are asking where the *logos* in general stands. We have to say that it is an essential *manner of comportment* belonging to man. We must therefore ask after the *ground of the inner possibility of the logos in terms of the concealed essence of man.*" FC 335

The "concealed essence of man" he identifies as "world formation".¹⁵¹ It is indeed concealed from Western metaphysics but it is precisely what is shown in a WOSE. As noted earlier, for the most part WOSEs are intermittent events in the ontic act of telling a story, and therefore this "essential *manner of comportment* belonging to man" is often overlooked, or dismissed, unanalysed as a numinous epiphanic moment. Nevertheless it is only because a WOSE is a possibility, however rare and obscured, that mankind wishes to listen to stories, and recognizes them as such.

9 SUMMARY

It follows from the claims above that in the case of a WOSE the relationship between the storyteller and the listener(s) is an *existentiell* modification of Dasein.¹⁵² Man hears the echo of the possibility of this mode of self-transformation in every story, just as he hears the call of conscience even in the deepest inauthenticity. It has been suggested that in the event of storytelling the Dasein of the audience is transposed into the Dasein of the teller whose world extends to include the environing world and *dramatis personae* of the story. This transposition is a

¹⁵¹ "What we here call *world-formation* is ultimately also the very *ground of the inner possibility of the logos*. ... *what it is*, is something we do not yet know." FC 335

¹⁵² "The question of existence never gets straightened out except through existing itself. The understanding of oneself which leads *along this way* we call '*existentiell*'" BT 33 See also BP 279

particular modification of the transposition into the other that is existentially constitutive of Dasein.¹⁵³ The mode in which Dasein is normally transposed is an indifferent going alongside.¹⁵⁴ This is precisely what is modified in the event of a WOSE. A WOSE does not demand a specific effort of turning towards one's ownmost possibilities and taking up the stance of anticipatory resoluteness, it simply brings Dasein in front of its own possibilities of being, and any given Dasein is free to turn away again from that with which it has been presented.¹⁵⁵ Dasein's "factual everyday understanding of itself [is a] ... reflection from the things with which it is concerned."¹⁵⁶ In listening to a WOSE it attends to the Dasein in the WOSE, and accordingly understands itself. The WOSE is a reflection of Dasein's being, neither as caught up in its own concerns, nor self-consciously as reflecting upon itself as an entity or person, but simply through transposition into an articulation of being-in-the-world as care. We remember that the essence of the WOSE is precisely not the presentation of information, but the presenting of the existentiell dimension of the existentialia of Dasein in Being-with. As noted in Chapter Three Heidegger ascribes the phenomena which pertain to a WOSE to poetry. In *Being and Time* he writes,

"In 'poetical' discourse, the communication of the existential possibilities of one's state-of-mind can become an aim in itself, and this amounts to a disclosing of existence." (BT 205)

Even more clearly in *The Basic Problems* he expresses the same thought before quoting from Rilke whose prose comes as close as is possible within the limits of text to the power of orality.

"Poetry, creative literature, is nothing but the elementary emergence into words, the becoming-uncovered, of existence as

¹⁵³ "the possibility of our transposing ourselves into [other human beings] ... already and originally belongs to man's own essence. Insofar as human beings exist at all, they already find themselves transposed in their existence into other human beings, even if there are factually no other human beings in the vicinity." FC 205

¹⁵⁴ "the illusion of such isolation [that one would have to seek a bridge from one human being to another] arises from the circumstance that human beings factually move around in a peculiar form of being transposed into one another, one which is characterized by an indifferent going alongside one another. This illusion of a prior separation between one human being and another is reinforced by the philosophical dogma that man is initially to be understood as subject and as consciousness, that he is primarily and most indubitably given to himself as consciousness for a subject." FC 208

¹⁵⁵ "*Authentic Being-one's-Self* does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from the 'they'; it is rather an existentiell modification of the 'they' - of the 'they' as an essential existentielle." BT 168

¹⁵⁶ BP 158

being-in-the-world. For the others who before it were blind, the world first becomes visible by what is thus spoken." (BP 171-2)

This world which becomes visible is not the environing world as though men who were blind suddenly are enabled to see the objects that lie about them but the worldhood of the world, that is to say its meaningfulness as shot-through with the attuned, futural, articulated being of Dasein.

What distinguishes a WOSE from a boring story and from mere information is that we *care* about it. Every WOSE articulates futurity, world, finitude and attunement. As such it continually calls Dasein to its authentic possibilities.¹⁵⁷ This is not simply a situation in which a storyteller, acting authentically, calls the inauthentic Dasein of his audience to become authentic - although in some cases this may happen.¹⁵⁸ What calls Dasein to its authenticity, both the Dasein of teller and of audience, is the possibility of authentic being-with, for a well told story is the evocation of Dasein's existentiell self-understanding.¹⁵⁹ Such possibility is in fact surely an instance of the "call of conscience" which silently calls Dasein back from its lostness in the everyday understanding of itself to its ownmost possibilities.

"When Dasein is resolute, it can become the 'conscience' of Others. Only by authentically Being-their-Selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another." (BT 344)

The immediate communication of authentic attunement, futurity and situatedness of a WOSE (which is not primarily constituted by words, nor by a 'plot', and which cannot be reduced to explanation) puts Dasein in front of itself as futural, authentic and attuned. Such authentic self-understanding is not primarily, and in fact is almost never, thematised philosophically let alone in terms of Heidegger's ontology of Dasein. It is

¹⁵⁷ This call is not a moralizing proclamation but like the call of conscience (BT 319-323) it is silent. It is the call of authentic Dasein to recognize itself through its understanding of its own being in being-with.

¹⁵⁸ Equally it could be that the storyteller has fallen into inauthenticity to be recalled by the authentic Dasein in his audience.

¹⁵⁹ "Dasein, as a Being-with which understands, can *listen* to Others. Losing itself in the publicness and the idle talk of the 'they', it *fails to hear* its own Self in listening to the they-self. If Dasein is to be able to get brought back from this lostness of failing to hear itself, and if this is to be done through itself, then it must first be able to find itself - to find itself as something which has failed to hear itself, and which fails to hear in that it *listens away* to the 'they.' This listening-away must get broken off; in other words, the possibility of another kind of hearing which will interrupt it, must be given by Dasein itself. The possibility of its thus getting broken off lies in its being appealed to without mediation." BT 315-6

the non-conceptual pre-ontological presentation to Dasein of being-attuned, of world, and of futurity. In so far as we know what a well-told story is, we have an understanding of what it is to be lifted out of the indifference of the 'they' and transposed into authentic being-with.¹⁶⁰ A WOSE has meaning for the Dasein that tells it and hears it. Thus in a WOSE we may say that entities are brought before us such that they have meaning for us, and our own being is revealed alongside the entities.¹⁶¹

In a WOSE one senses oneself engaged in the dynamics of the story, as the way of being of Dasein of both teller and listener(s) is modified. This modification is a possibility that lies latent in the tradition of storytelling that can be handed down from one generation to another, but it becomes an existentiell modification of Dasein only in an actual event.¹⁶² Here I re-emphasise that this modification pertains to story as *event*, and primarily as WOSE, and not to any putative narrative structure or text. This thesis, notwithstanding the limitations imposed upon it by its form as literary text, goes some way towards explaining what makes a story well-told and the essential place of that modality to the being of stories.¹⁶³ It is because what is revealed in a WOSE is primarily Dasein's being that a WOSE cannot be boiled down to a single moral or meaning. The meaning of a WOSE, like the meaning of Dasein is the tessellation of relationships and temporal horizons against which beings, and the being of Dasein, is revealed.

Any given WOSE is an existentiell modification of Dasein which transposes it into a manifestation of its own structure of being. The futurity, mood, and world of a WOSE are all drawn from Dasein - indeed a WOSE has no other being than as a way of Dasein's being-with. Its being-a-BOSE is necessarily as a way of being of Dasein, so whatever constitutes a WOSE comes from Dasein. A WOSE is an instance of the "authentic repetition of a possibility of existence that has been"¹⁶⁴ which is an "explicit handing down"¹⁶⁵ of a possibility of existence that has come down to us. Because a WOSE is a comportment of Dasein whose structure

¹⁶⁰ "Knowing oneself is grounded in Being-with, which understands primordially." BT 161

¹⁶¹ Cf. BT 192-3 and the special case of meaning discussed in Chapter Two.

¹⁶² Such an event can take place in informal conversation and in a psychotherapeutic context as well. It is beyond the remit of this thesis to enumerate all possible circumstances and events of such existentiell modification.

¹⁶³ It also lays the foundations for an investigation of the being of stories of a form other than the WOSE. Such an investigation is a task for future research.

¹⁶⁴ BT 437

¹⁶⁵ BT437

is founded in authentic Dasein's temporality we can see Dasein's authentic temporal structure in a WOSE. We can thus say Dasein is "story-like" (strictly WOSE-like) and through the WOSE deepen our understanding of Dasein. *The meaning of Dasein's being is that which articulates and is articulated in a WOSE.* It is attuned, understanding being-in-the-world which cannot in principal be reduced to a verbal or theoretical statement. WOSEs and Dasein are both constituted by futurity, by world and by mood, hence in the WOSE we can see Dasein's temporal structure. In a WOSE Dasein raises its understanding of itself to the level of interpretation. Dasein's awareness is turned towards its ownmost possibility of experiencing itself both as an individual and as being-with-others. Such WOSEs are Dasein's non-theoretical, non-conceptual understanding of its own authentic possibilities of being. In WOSEs Dasein pre-ontologically shows itself to itself.

In the final chapter we look at the application of this understanding of the potential of storytelling in the arenas of psychotherapy and make some brief comments on storytelling in performance. Chapter Six then concludes with a summary of the entire thesis highlighting the significance of the WOSE in different fields of theory and practice.

Chapter Six

Conclusion: Meaning, Psychotherapy, Performance and the Well-told Oral Storytelling Event

1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the is concluded thesis by drawing out some of the implications of our findings. Emphasis is placed on the relevance of our phenomenological analysis to applied social issues. I make some connections between what has been uncovered in the philosophical realm with theory and practice in psychotherapy and performance. I cannot hope to make all the possible connections between this philosophical analysis of the well-told oral storytelling event and theory in these fields so I will concentrate on some considerations that arise directly from practice. In this chapter I will refer to just a few of the many authors writing on narrative, not necessarily because they are the best-known or the most influential, but because they touch on issues which have been illuminated by this research. In my discussion I will not draw attention to the differences between the many schools of psychotherapy for three main reasons. Firstly as Omer puts it "pluralism is not a *de facto* temporary state of affairs, but reflects the fundamental nature of psychotherapy."¹ A survey in 1990 found that 68% of psychotherapists claimed to be eclectic.² Secondly, like Gendlin,³ I am interested in processes that are therapeutic regardless of theoretical framework rather than the theories which have mostly been created by people attempting to teach or research those processes in academic institutions. Thirdly, outcome research on psychotherapy has shown there is little or no correlation between the theoretical orientation of the therapist and the outcome of treatment.⁴

¹ Omer 1993 (b) p.668

² Cited in Bergin and Garfield 1994, p.143

³ Gendlin 1988

⁴ See Bergin and Garfield 1994, p.161 and Spinelli 1994, pp.70-77

However research has shown a correlation between certain individual therapists, regardless of training, and successful outcome.⁵ We may surmise therefore that there is something about those therapists' *way of being* and *way of being-with* that has a therapeutic effect, regardless of their training or theoretical approach. It is probable, although necessarily unproveable, that what characterises their way of being is a tendency towards authentic comportment including the facilitation, and possibly telling, of WOSEs.⁶ A WOSE is an instance of genuine discourse⁷ which makes possible a moment of vision, the *augenblick*.⁸ The moment of vision is not necessarily a moment of high drama, it is simply how Dasein sees when it is returned to its ownmost possibilities from out of the 'they'. That which makes Dasein's possibilities its own is its mode of taking them up, not the factual "ownership" or "location" of those possibilities. Thus Dasein transposed into the other can take over the possibilities of the Dasein of a story as its own in the moment of vision, and yet if it refuses the moment of vision in its factual life it can fail to take up possibilities that pertain to its own physical environment. A WOSE is not a technical achievement of a skilful teller, therapist or client, but rather an existentially honest moment, a revealing of the being of Dasein. In many cases a WOSE is the expression of the meaning that an entity has for Dasein.⁹ Finally although I emphasise the place of the WOSE in psychotherapy not all psychotherapy relies on telling of WOSE-type stories.¹⁰ The experience of a WOSE is often a significant element in therapy but it may be neither necessary nor sufficient.

Stories, and WOSEs, long pre-date psychotherapy. Many issues that in modernity are brought to psychotherapy were addressed in societies of primary orality through stories. Traditional stories are not overtly instructive nor moralizing but, as folklorist Kirshenblatt-Gimblett points

⁵ "The therapist factor, as a contributor to outcome, is looming large in the assessment of outcomes. Some therapists appear to be unusually effective." Bergin and Garfield 1994, p.182. See also Spinelli 1994 p.307

⁶ It is unproveable because there can in principle be no objective measurement of authenticity. Authenticity cannot be verified by another because it is rooted in the subject. Even the subject does not "know" themselves to be authentic, but simply opens itself to its ownmost possibilities. There may be *agreement* about a mutual experience of authenticity but never proof. Hence the concept of a WOSE does not lend itself to verification by standard psychological research methods.

⁷ Cf. BT 208 and BT 438

⁸ BT 376

⁹ Cf. Chapter Two

¹⁰ For example Cognitive Therapy, although clearly involving telling stories, may not be held to rely on a WOSE-type telling of stories. See Burns 1981

out, "like fables and proverbs, parables are a traditional technique for coping with problematic social situations".¹¹ She researches folklore "in its immediate context of use as a highly structured, integrated form of interpersonal behaviour"¹² because as she notes, scholars have tended to look at stories only in semi-official or ritual contexts and not so much at how they crop up in everyday, non-narrative contexts.¹³ In effect Kirshenblatt-Gimblett investigates the praxis of the moral instruction that MacIntyre believes characterises classical cultures.¹⁴ We are now in a position to understand the mechanism of such instruction. At its best, storytelling takes the form of a WOSE. In a WOSE the listener is transposed into the Da of the story and takes over the attunement and possibilities of the Dasein of the story as his own. Thus the listener is acquainted with the emotions and possibilities entailed in an action *directly*. Something has emotional or existential significance in a story only on the grounds of Dasein's authentic possibilities. The listener, and indeed the teller, of a story are thus confronted with a moral dilemma as their own, and put in front of themselves as the one who must choose. This shows us directly that morality is grounded in personal choice and not in objectively codified rules. Transposed into a WOSE we cannot help but face the dilemma of the Dasein in the story, and face it on the grounds of our ownmost having-been. At the same time as we are transposed, we take over the possibilities of that Dasein. They are handed down to us.¹⁵ We are confronted with the responsibility of our authentic situation and must choose for ourselves in the light of our having-been, futurity and being-with others. Stories teach us fundamentally *not* by the transmission of facts, *nor* by example, but by "handing-down ... the possibilities of the Dasein that has-been-there."¹⁶ Because a WOSE is essentially transposition it cannot in principle be equated to factual or fictional information, description and a moral. The meaning of a WOSE cannot be abstracted by analysis.¹⁷ It is essentially existential.

¹¹ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1975, p.107

¹² Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1975, p.107

¹³ "scholars have tended to neglect the type of narrative performance in which a narrator embeds a tale in a stretch of non-narrative discourse." Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1975, p.107

¹⁴ AV 114

¹⁵ Cf. BT 438

¹⁶ BT 437

¹⁷ This is true also of any story which reveals an existential aspect of human dilemmas, yet commentators do not hesitate to impose their own interpretations of the "meaning" of such stories. Benjamin notes the differing interpretations by commentators of the story in Herodotus of Psammenitus witnessing the triumph of Cambyses and comments, "From this

When we turn to the WOSE in performance I emphasise the significance of the non-boring telling of a story. The story can be told by one person, by a group of persons in a ritual or even by a group of actors. Since Hymes' paper, *Breakthrough into Performance*, folklorists have acknowledged the significance of the difference between performance and text; my brief treatment of performance in this thesis emphasises the importance of the modalities of boring and non-boringness in performance.¹⁸ Although I concentrate on designated performances, WOSEs can and do occur in any number of informal situations. The significance of our possibility of engagement in WOSEs is not at all confined to entertainment. As Bauman puts it, "in exploring the social nexus of oral storytelling we explore one of the most fundamental and potent foundations of our existence as social beings."¹⁹

In the final section of this chapter I review the findings of the whole thesis and point ahead to implications for practice and areas for further research.

2 MEANING IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

When Victor Frankl enlarged and republished *From Death Camp to Existentialism* he re-titled it *Man's Search for Meaning*. In it he expounded his "therapeutic doctrine" of logotherapy.²⁰ "Logotherapy" he wrote, "regards its assignment as that of assisting the patient to find meaning in his life."²¹ Yalom sees clients' requests in a similar light:

"Many clinicians have noted that, with accelerating frequency, patients come in for therapy because of complaints associated with lack of a sense of meaning in life." (Yalom, 1980, p.447)

story it may be seen what the nature of true storytelling is. The value of information does not survive the moment in which it was new. It lives only at that moment; it has to surrender to it completely and explain itself to it without losing any time. A story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time." Benjamin 1970, p.89-90

¹⁸ Hymes 1975

¹⁹ Bauman 1986 p.114

²⁰ Frankl 1964, p.97

²¹ Frankl 1964, p.105. Frankl felt that the search for meaning was not confined within psychotherapy, but dominated man's entire life; "striving to find a meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man" (Frankl, 1964 p.99)

Yalom links meaninglessness to the increased leisure made possible by modern living.²² If one is preoccupied with survival one does not worry about the meaning of one's life. Eagle, writing in the psychoanalytic tradition, observes the same symptom in the modern client.

"problems of self and of object relations - experienced as feelings of meaninglessness, feelings of emptiness, pervasive depression, lack of sustaining interests, goals, ideals and values, and feelings of unrelatedness - are the overwhelmingly predominant symptoms in today's modal patient." (Eagle, 1984, p.73)

Many other therapists have made similar claims,²³ but in the light of our foregoing analysis we must insist however that the problem is mis-stated. No one can be meaningless. The conditions for the possibility of the understandability of something are what one is; so one is continually faced with the conditions for the possibility of understanding which in turn makes the demand that one does make some interpretation. The interpretation, "this has no meaning" does not silence the question arising from this unavoidable structure of our being. Everything we encounter, we encounter 'for-something', and the network of significations points eventually back to ourselves.²⁴ Incessantly we are offered the possibility of interpreting.²⁵ Not to take up the challenge of this possibility, or to misinterpret the meaning we live, is to become a candidate for psychotherapy. In the psychopathology referred to as "meaninglessness" by Frankl, Yalom, Eagle and others we meet not "no meaning" but a deficient form of meaning. That is, what is called meaninglessness is a continual letting fall of an existential demand or possibility. It is precisely for this reason that what is called "no meaning" is experienced as a deficiency or lack. Whereas no car, no mortgage, no snow, or no flowers can all be experienced indifferently, positively or negatively according to the whim or disposition of the individual, no meaning strikes at the heart of the existence of the individual. "No meaning" is a meaningful interpretation of the self. It means the nihilation of one's meaningfulness, which is

²² "meaninglessness is intricately interwoven with leisure and with disengagement: the more one is engaged with the everyday process of living and surviving, the less does the issue arise." Yalom 1980 p.447

²³ E.g. Spinelli 1994, p.294; Bettelheim 1991, p.3; van Deurzen Smith, 1988, p.3; Polkinghorne 1988, p.154 ; May 1983, p.60; and many others.

²⁴ BT 118-9

²⁵ "The projecting of the understanding has its own possibility - that of developing itself." BT 188

constitutive of one's own being-in-the-world. Its meaning is that one has no values, purpose or worth.

A common response to this interpretation is for the person to give up the individual self which is thus threatened and retreat into acting a social role; in Heideggerian terms the 'they-self' whose meaning is apparently guaranteed by the 'they'. As one of the 'they' one is not touched by anything in particular and has merely conventional responses to whatever happens. As one of the 'they' one is cut off from one's own having-been, one's ownmost futurity, indeed one's own life. The result is, as May puts it, "One's own meaning becomes meaningless because it is borrowed from somebody else's meaning."²⁶ Strictly speaking one's own meaning is alienated and one experiences one's meaning as *reduced*, for it lacks grounding in the ownmost possibilities and having-been of one's authentic temporality, that is one's ownmost being. The problem with borrowing one's meaning from the 'they' is that no personal motivation can arise from such borrowed meaning and one is haunted by the very issues Heidegger raises at the beginning of *Being and Time*, viz. "mineness" and the fact that one's being is always an issue for oneself.²⁷ We continually have to keep choosing how to be, and even if we choose to be just as the other is, we cannot escape the existential condition of being forced continually individually to choose.

If one ceases for a moment to throw oneself fully into the concerns of the role one has chosen from amongst those offered by the 'they,' one is threatened by the possibility of taking one's ownmost possibilities seriously again or moving yet further from one's ownmost possibilities, into apathy. If we reject both the meaning of the they-self and of the authentic self the boredom of 'it is boring for one' that lurks in the ground of our Dasein can take us over.²⁸

"Apathy is frequently experienced as the only alternative when the world seems to propose nothing of great interest. Detachment becomes the only remedy when nothing in the world seems meaningful or worth the effort." (van Deurzen Smith, 1988, pp.150-1)

This apathy is an example of the occurrence of the third form of boredom, the experience of oneself as modified by the temporality of the "mere

²⁶ May, 1983, p.21

²⁷ BT 67-8

²⁸ FC 156-7

present".²⁹ "Nothing in the world seems meaningful" because of the "telling refusal on the part of beings as a whole".³⁰ One becomes detached because even the possibilities of the 'they' do not appeal. If one continues to turn away from one's ownmost attunement one may live this detachment as cynicism, but if one acknowledges one's attunement it manifests as depression.³¹ In depression although the client complains of meaninglessness, the fact that they *complain*, rather than accept their situation betrays the fact that their situation does have meaning which is negatively connoted.

3 THE PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC ENCOUNTER

In psychotherapy clients seek a meaning that is in some way positive. It is not however the sort of meaning that can be simply stated in writing, or even necessarily in words. It is not a meaning that can be expressed in an assertion of the form, "The meaning of my life is ...". It can be readily observed that those who do *not* complain of lack of meaning in their lives cannot necessarily sum up the meaning of their lives in a few sentences. In the light of our analysis of meaning in Chapter Two we can see that this meaning is a modification of an element constitutive of one's way of being, not an item of knowledge. What is more, existential meaning is that on the basis of which particular entities are meaningful for us and reciprocally reflect to us something of our own way of being.³² This is not done merely by talking about things, hence May warns against "intellectualizing tendencies" in existential psychotherapy and emphasises that "the important thing is *to be* existential."³³ Mair, a clinical psychologist who moved into psychotherapy, writes of the differences between the *modi operandi* of the two practices and makes the same point, although not in the terminology of existential psychotherapy; "knowing has to be lived and owned and undertaken as our own if it is to help us change".³⁴ But how exactly is this to be done? How does one "live"

²⁹ FC 124

³⁰ FC 139

³¹ "[In a major depressive episode] loss of interest or pleasure is nearly always present ... Individuals may report ... 'not caring anymore'", A.P.A. 1994 p.321

³² See Chapter Two, conclusion

³³ May 1983, p.170

³⁴ Mair 1989, p.22

meaning in the therapeutic hour? What is the difference between merely talking about things and "owning" one's knowledge? The last question echoes Heidegger's distinction between idle talk and "genuine discoursing."³⁵ Before answering it we must raise some more questions. Mair says of the sort of knowing that he advocates in psychotherapy,

"If you are to come to know personally, it means starting from and repeatedly returning to your own ways of experiencing, rather than resting content with some more conventionally constructed position. ... in reaching towards personal knowing these lived 'templates' need to be both owned and questioned." (Mair 1989, p.12)

Mair is clearly prioritizing the personal over the conventional, in Heideggerian terms authentic knowing over idle talk. Scott puts the same point in Heideggerian terms.

"Anything short of an understanding of the openness of man with the disclosures of beings, i.e., of the perceptive world-openness, promises to reflect a pathology of human thought in which the theoretician has not yet fulfilled the possibilities of his own temporal, immediate awareness which grounds his interpretations. In such a case, the equally dangerous madness of ignorance in the guise of intelligence will dominate, a domination in which the person repeatedly falls prey to his own interpretive creations and suffers, as a result, a *closure* from the world in the way he makes his interpretations of the world." (Scott 1984, p.155)

Both Mair and Scott are clear about the importance of their recommendations, but as practical instructions for how to do psychotherapy neither offers precise directives. How does a person, therapist or client, come to an "understanding of the openness of man with the disclosures of beings"? How *exactly* does one own one's lived templates? How *exactly* does one return to one's own ways of experiencing? Therapists mainly agree that a simple theoretical explanation will not do. May quotes approvingly the words of Frieda Fromm-Reichmann; "The patient needs an experience, not an explanation."³⁶ What *exactly*, we must ask, is the necessary experience? Almost every therapist since Freud has emphasised the importance of the *relationship* between the client and therapist, but theorists have differed about exactly what is essentially important in that relationship. Bergin

³⁵ BT 208

³⁶ May 1983, p.158

and Garfield, in their review of the whole range of psychotherapies conclude,

"Helping people deal with depression, inadequacy, anxiety and inner conflicts, as well as helping them form viable relationships and meaningful directions for their lives, can be greatly facilitated in a therapeutic relationship that is characterised by trust, warmth, acceptance, and human wisdom" (Bergin and Garfield 1994, p.181)

Although this is undoubtedly true it raises more questions about the therapeutic relationship than it answers. What exactly brings about "trust, warmth, acceptance and human wisdom"?

May uses the term "encounter" to describe the sort of intense relationship that can arise in the meeting between therapist and client, and in spite of his own study and erudition acknowledges that, "the phenomenon of encounter very much needs to be studied, for it seems clear that much more is going on than almost any of us has realized."³⁷ van Deurzen Smith writes of a "moment of merging", a "unity momentarily experienced ... when the work is progressing towards an honest appraisal of the client's aspirations."³⁸ How does this merging happen? van Deurzen Smith and May both seem to be inspired by Buber for whom "the relation to the You is unmediated."³⁹ Buber identifies two modalities of relationship, I-You and I-It which he believes are simply given ways of being. Whenever a man says "I" he is always saying either the "I" of I-It or the "I" of I-You. In I-It a human being constitutes himself as an observer separated from the observed. For Buber I-You occurs "only where all means have disintegrated".⁴⁰ Buber is lyrical, even mystical, about the I-You relationship but does not undertake a rigorous ontology. Nonetheless I-You clearly has parallels with Heidegger's authentic being-with and his emphasis on the *engagement* with the other parallels the engagement that has been highlighted in our analysis of the WOSE. It is this element of engagement that May and van Deurzen Smith are picking up on.

Boss, under the direct influence of Heidegger, writes of the importance of the client-therapist relationship and even recognises the significance of physical position. The face-to-face posture of everyday conversation can inhibit the disclosure of infantile ways of being and yet the couch can

³⁷ May 1983, p.22

³⁸ van Deurzen Smith 1988, p.209

³⁹ Buber 1970, p.62

⁴⁰ Buber 1970, p.63

promote it.⁴¹ All these writers are clearly pointing towards the happening of a particular form of relationship. Orlinsky and Howard in a meta-analysis of over one thousand outcome studies singled out the bond between therapist and client as the crucial factor in the success of therapy.⁴² Aebi cites as the main "non-specific factor" in successful therapy the therapeutic relationship itself.⁴³ What exactly happens in a successful psychotherapeutic relationship?

Another set of questions are raised by considering stories in psychotherapy. Polkinghorne and many others believe that narrative and narrative discourse play an important part in psychotherapy.⁴⁴ But *what part exactly* does narrative play in psychotherapy? As mentioned earlier, many therapists believe that telling stories to clients can be therapeutic.⁴⁵ Such stories may be created for each particular client,⁴⁶ or drawn from traditional oral folklore.⁴⁷ Some theorists believe that psychotherapy entails the therapist helping the client to tell their own story in a different way.⁴⁸ For Freud all clients' stories were variations of the Oedipus and Electra myths.⁴⁹ Some believe that it is important to acknowledge that narrative explanations are of a different order from scientific explanations and come closer to describing the human life-world that is the area of concern of psychotherapy.⁵⁰ Hence narrative epistemology has been advocated as a improvement over scientific epistemology in psychology and psychotherapy by Bruner, Polkinghorne and others.⁵¹ As Polkinghorne puts it; "explanation by means of narrative is contextually related and is therefore different in form from formal science explanation."⁵² He believes that;

⁴¹ Boss 1994, p.258ff.

⁴² In Bergin and Garfield 1994

⁴³ Aebi, J., "Nonspecific and specific factors in therapeutic change among different approaches to counselling", *Counselling Psychology Review*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1993. Discussed in Spinelli 1994, pp.86-90

⁴⁴ Polkinghorne pp.178ff, also Schafer 1980, Spence 1982, Efran 1994, Goncalves 1994, McLeod 1996(a), McLeod 1996(b), Omer 1993(a), Rennie 1994, White and Epston 1990 and many more.

⁴⁵ Chapter Four, section 3

⁴⁶ See Omer 1993 (b), White and Epston 1990, Gordon 1978

⁴⁷ See Peseschkian 1986 and Franzke 1989.

⁴⁸ See for example Goncalves 1994, Russell and van den Broek 1992, Polkinghorne 1988 and Spence 1982

⁴⁹ See Heaton, 1996 p.88-9, and Peseschkian 1986 p.30

⁵⁰ Hence Mair writes his approach is "narrative rather than computational" Mair 1989, p.197

⁵¹ Bruner 1986 and 1990, Polkinghorne 1988, Sarbin 1986, Howard 1991, May 1993 and Goncalves 1994

⁵² Polkinghorne 1988 p.21

"narrative is a scheme by means of which human beings give meaning to their experience of temporality and personal actions. ... It is the primary scheme by means of which human experience is rendered meaningful. ... [Therefore] the study of human beings by the human sciences needs to focus on the realm of meaning in general, and on narrative meaning in particular." (Polkinghorne 1988, p.11)

We have done in this thesis exactly what Polkinghorne believes is necessary, but in doing so have reached conclusions slightly different from him. Polkinghorne believes that the plot of the patient's story is transformed in psychoanalysis.

"The patient comes to the analyst with a story to tell, a story that is not so much false - since it does in some manner signify the truth - as incomplete and untherapeutic. Psychoanalysis is not merely the listening to an analysand's story, however. It is a dialogue through which the story is transformed. The plot brought by the analysand lacks the dynamic necessary to create a sequence, or design, that integrates and explains. The fuller plot constructed by the analytic work leads to a more dynamic, and thus more useful, plot which serves as a more powerful shaping and connective force. The new story must above all be hermeneutically forceful and must carry the power of conviction for both its teller and its listeners." (Polkinghorne 1988, p.179)

The term "plot" here, as in Ricoeur's analysis examined earlier, seems to explain but in fact is confusing. Polkinghorne does not seem to be suggesting that the client should simply make up the story they would rather know about themselves, in lieu of the one they do know. Nonetheless he claims it is the plot that must be transformed, so by plot he must mean the articulation of the events, not the actual events themselves.⁵³ Does he in fact mean by plot not "what happens" in the story but *how* "what happens" is told? Even if we read him thus, he has not really put his finger on what characterises a better telling. Polkinghorne does not make clear why a more "forceful" story is therapeutic - might it not be an even greater cause for woe? Is a story better just because it "integrates and explains"? All therapists are familiar with the client, often a serial client, who has a very well constructed story with a plot which both integrates and explains their situation but which does nothing to alleviate their distress. Indeed it is often a highly

⁵³ If we gloss him thus we move one step away from the abstraction 'plot' and one step towards seeing that the articulation of events in a story arises in Dasein.

coherent, plausible and forceful explanation of why they are presenting themselves for psychotherapy. Of course one also meets clients who have a very fragmented and incoherent life story, but by the same token there are many reasonably happy non-clients who have incoherent, fragmented but non-painful life stories. A dynamic, forceful, explanatory plot for the client's life story is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for psychotherapeutic cure.

Schafer pays more attention to the process of telling,⁵⁴ but nevertheless believes one works towards a "redescription of reality";⁵⁵ in effect a different story. For Goncalves, "life is a narrative and human beings are themselves narrators ... psychotherapy can be seen as the experiential atelier for the construction and deconstruction of clients' narratives."⁵⁶ Spence also believes that the structure of narrative is a highly significant variable;

"There seems no doubt but that a well-constructed story possesses a kind of narrative truth that is real and immediate and carries an important significance for the process of therapeutic change."
(Spence 1982, p.21)

He believes that in analysis one seeks not necessarily historical but "narrative" truth. Nevertheless neither Schafer nor Goncalves nor Spence appear to be advocating downright falsification or fabrication.

"Narrative truth can be defined as the criterion we use to decide when a certain experience has been captured to our satisfaction; it depends on continuity and closure and the extent to which the fit of the pieces takes on an aesthetic finality. Narrative truth is what we have in mind when we say that such and such is a good story, that a given explanation carries conviction, that *one* solution to a mystery must be true." (Spence 1982, p.31)

Spence is striving towards something important here, but he does not manage to express it clearly. What exactly is it that makes a story a 'good' story? What makes one story better than another? What makes a story therapeutic? McLeod moves one step closer to clarifying what is going on.

"Narrative therapy depends, like most other therapies, on an appreciation of, and an ability to operate within, the relational and emotional world of the client." (McLeod 1996 (b), p.198)

⁵⁴ "the analyst takes the telling as performance as well as content" Schafer 1981, p.35

⁵⁵ Schafer 1981, p.46

⁵⁶ Goncalves 1994, p.113

This sounds clearer, but again we can ask, how *exactly* does one "operate within the relational and emotional world of the client"? In one sense of course if one is in the presence of another one is "operating within the relational and emotional world" of the other, but McLeod cannot mean simply this. He implies that a specific way of operating or being is necessary. How does one operate properly? And, equally importantly, how could one tell if one was or was not doing so?

4 THE WOSE IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

We now have a fine collection of questions about meaning, narrative and relationship in psychotherapy. How does one live meaning in the therapeutic hour? What is the difference between merely talking about things and owning one's knowledge? How does one own one's lived templates? How exactly does one return to one's own ways of experiencing? What brings about trust, warmth, acceptance and human wisdom? How does the merging of momentarily experienced unity happen? What exactly happens in a successful psychotherapeutic relationship? *What* part does narrative play in psychotherapy? What exactly is it that makes a story a good story? What makes one story better than another? What makes a story therapeutic? How *exactly* does one operate properly within the relational and emotional world of the client? And, how could one tell if one was or was not doing so?

The answer to the last question is that overtly or covertly one who is not operating properly within the relational and emotional world of the client will be experiencing one of the three forms of boredom analysed in Chapter Four. The answer to all the other questions lies, in part or whole, in *the well-told oral storytelling event*. This will come as no surprise as it is to some extent already clear from the earlier chapters. Nor should it be a surprise to other theorists. As one psychoanalyst remarks when asked to write on the 'new' theories of narrative in psychotherapy, "psychoanalysts have known all along that we are dealing in stories and with stories all the time"⁵⁷ The purpose of clarifying the nature of the WOSE is to make clear *why* storytelling is important, how it can be useful or useless and the importance of our own inner criteria of boredom to guide us in telling and

⁵⁷ Wyatt 1986, p.193

listening to stories authentically. Further clarification is contained in what follows. I have listed these questions again in order to emphasis how much is *not* known about the process of psychotherapy, in spite of the huge amount of publishing on the subject. This is not in fact surprising given the limitations, discussed in Chapter Four, of text as a medium for the expression of existential knowledge. Nonetheless, even within these limitations we can usefully explain the place of the WOSE in psychotherapy. That is not to say it is either a necessary or sufficient element in successful psychotherapy, in part because the problems presented in psychotherapy are so diverse, but in many cases some of the most important changes that occur in the psychotherapeutic meeting occur during a WOSE.⁵⁸

A WOSE is a mode of relationship *and* a specific mode of narrative *and* an expression of existential meaning. We must recall that a WOSE is not necessarily a whole story with a recognisable beginning, middle and end. It is an event of telling in which teller and listener comport themselves authentically towards Dasein as living-in-the-world. Both are transposed into the Da of the story and take up the possibilities of the story *as their own*. Listener and hearer are with each other, in the same attunement, in the light of the story taken over as their own having-been. As I put it in the previous chapter, "in a WOSE we are transposed primarily into the Dasein of the storyteller whose 'Da' extends towards the entities and events recounted. It is through the Da of the storyteller as articulated, attuned possibility that we understand, and are moved and engaged by the story. Hence in listening to a WOSE one is not typically aware of undergoing an existential alienation, rather one has something of the opposite experience, one is brought to oneself."⁵⁹ Dasein can always strive, and is always called, towards authenticity, hence psychotherapy arises in those societies where face-to-face oral storytelling has fallen into decline.⁶⁰ There is surely an inverse relationship in any society between

⁵⁸ Milton H. Erickson was notorious for telling stories both in psychotherapy and in the instruction of psychotherapists, see Rossi 1980. His mode of storytelling was so powerful that it is normally interpreted as hypnosis. For an interpretation in terms of rhetoric see Willbourn 1988. Alternatively one could interpret hypnosis as a particular modulation of transposition in which the subject is turned away from their own world and entirely lost in the Da of the story, in a manner analogous to that in which Heidegger says Dasein is "benommen" by the world. See BT 61 & 344. This topic invites more detailed research than can be undertaken here.

⁵⁹ Chapter Five, Section 4

⁶⁰ Hence the psychotherapist is one of the typical characters of modernity in MacIntyre 1981.

the number of traditional oral storytellers and the number of psychotherapists.

A client presents for psychotherapy because some event or process in their life is causing them distress and they have not managed to sort it out on their own. Often a problem of human relationship is the immediate cause of presentation. The problem is thus one of behaviour or understanding or, normally, both. The client wishes not to feel distress, either by changing his behaviour or accepting it. To know what to do, or to accept what cannot be changed, the client needs to find the problematic events meaningful in a new way.⁶¹ For a new meaning to be useful and effective, as the therapists quoted above and many others have asserted, it is rarely enough that it is an intellectual re-ordering. The meaning needed is not theoretical but existential. It must be in Mair's terminology "lived knowledge", which is in Heideggerian terms not merely theoretical but attuned and articulated and understood in terms of the understander's ownmost possibilities. This is the precisely the sort of meaning one experiences in a WOSE. This meaning is not just that on the grounds of which we can name or discuss entities theoretically but that on the grounds of which we care about them and feel their presence in our lives and their effect and place in our future. It is constituted by authentic mood, possibility and presence. To tell, and indeed listen to a WOSE, is to "own" one's knowledge, as Mair would have us do. Because of the *transposition* in a WOSE of the teller and listener into the *Da* of the story,⁶² to articulate one's own existentiell knowledge in a WOSE is also to make it the listener's. This existentiell knowledge is exactly what is destroyed if an attempt is made to translate it into a "moral" or abstracted summary. *The essential meaning of a story cannot be reduced to assertions.*⁶³ Furthermore because we all fall into inauthenticity and yet always have the possibility of constituting ourselves authentically every individual articulation of authenticity in a WOSE recalls each listener to their *own* possibility of authenticity, hence Rogers' dictum, "when we speak most personally, we speak most generally too."⁶⁴

⁶¹ A new meaning does not have to make everything 'make sense'. It could simply be the recognition that one does *not* have to strive to make sense of oneself or of a significant other and one can gratefully abandon the attempt to do so.

⁶² "as soon as a WOSE has begun we always already find ourselves thrown into the story-world which is constituted by the event of telling." Chapter Five, Section 4

⁶³ Benjamin understood this well: "it is half the art of storytelling to keep a story free from explanation as one reproduces it." Benjamin 1970, p.89

⁶⁴ Cited in Mair, 1989 p.xiii

For each Dasein its own authentic possibilities are called by the authenticity of the Dasein of the teller into which one is transposed as Dasein-with.⁶⁵ This call, from Dasein's authenticity to Dasein's authenticity, arises from the ontological condition of the telling of a non-boring story. In the particular event of a WOSE the Dasein which usually calls is the Dasein of the teller, and the Dasein which hears the call is *both* the Dasein of the teller and the Dasein of the hearer(s). For a story to be a WOSE the actual story-event told is significant not because of its historical or veridical status, (although these may often be important for other reasons) but because of its existential possibility. If one is genuinely moved by and alongside what is told of, and take over the possibilities and finitude of the story as one's own, a WOSE happens. Heidegger expresses the essence of the same point in terms of authenticity in general.

"It is not necessary that in resoluteness one should *explicitly* know the origins of the possibilities upon which that resoluteness projects itself. It is rather in Dasein's temporality, and there only, that there lies any possibility that the existentiell potentiality-for-Being upon which it projects itself can be gleaned *explicitly* from the way in which Dasein has been traditionally understood. The resoluteness which comes back to itself and hands itself down, then becomes the *repetition* of a possibility of existence that has come down to us. Repeating is handing down explicitly that is to say, going back into the possibilities of the Dasein that has-been-there." (BT 437)

When a teller and a listener repeat "a possibility of existence" *together* in a WOSE they "merge" into the unity that van Deurzen Smith writes about, by transposition into the Da of the storyteller. It is because of the particular *existential* modification of the WOSE that the listener and teller feel the same thing.⁶⁶ A WOSE is an instance of Buber's I-You relationship in which I and You are not distinct because we are transposed into each other.⁶⁷ The distinction between I-You and I-It is very close to the distinction between authentic and inauthentic being-with. In a WOSE

⁶⁵ BT 319

⁶⁶ Spinelli, (1994, pp.314-41) with his Husserlian rather than Heideggerian framework misses this point in his description of being-with, and hence still struggles with the issue of getting access to the other. In a WOSE, and indeed any authentic being-with we are *already* transposed into the other, though we may hide from it, or hide it from ourselves, by discursive analysis or verbal "clarification".

⁶⁷ "The basic word I-You can only be spoken with one's whole being. The concentration and fusion into a whole being can never be accomplished by me, can never be accomplished without me. I require a You to become; becoming I, I say You. All actual life is encounter." Buber 1970 p.62

teller and listener are brought into authentic being-with and are brought back to their ownmost possibilities. This is the ontological situation that underlies May's assertion;

"in therapy, granted adequate clarification of the therapist, it is not possible for one person to have a feeling without the other having it to some degree also." (May 1983, p.22-3)

So the sort of knowing that occurs in a WOSE is not the appropriation of a certain piece of factual knowledge but the revelation of a way of being by virtue of being transposed into it.⁶⁸ In a WOSE one expresses one's attunement. May's statement describes the ontological situation as it is, and how it can be seen when the therapist is open to the truth of his own being, which is always necessarily being-with. As Heidegger emphasised, "Attunement is not some being that appears in the soul as an experience, but the way of our being there with another."⁶⁹ In telling a WOSE one modulates one's way of being and such truth as is revealed pertains primarily to one's existentiell possibilities, not necessarily one's ontic situation. Authenticity, telling a WOSE, and living a satisfying life are not matters of extreme, innovative creativity or making something utterly individual and unique but rather a matter of engaging with what is present on the basis of one's own particular being-in-the-world.

We have said that a client presents for psychotherapy because some event or process in their life is causing them distress. In essence the client's *way of being* is causing them distress. Even if the physical cause of distress is external, for example an abusive husband, the distress becomes the sort of problem that is presented in psychotherapy (rather than being a traumatic episode that passes) because of the client's response to the abuse.⁷⁰ The client's way of being-in-the-world is constitutive of the problem. Hence the way of being-in-the-world is to be investigated, and changed. Telling a WOSE can do both of these things, although not necessarily thematically or conceptually.⁷¹ In every WOSE teller and listener are brought back to their own authentic possibilities, and their way of being is modified in this

⁶⁸ Heidegger adverts to this different showing of truth in *The Fundamental Concepts* when in a rare reference to myth he notes that "what is at issue ... is ... different kinds of possible truth." FC 204

⁶⁹ FC 66

⁷⁰ For example suffering abuse and continuing to live with the abuser and not setting about the (often huge) task of changing or ending the relationship.

⁷¹ In fact a WOSE by definition affects the being-with of teller and listener, but not necessarily permanently. The after-effect depends on how each individual takes up the possibilities that are offered to them.

process.⁷² This is actually true of any WOSE whether it is a story of a client's actual historical life, or a story of the having-been of Dasein handed down by Dasein through the tradition of storytelling. The existentiell effect of a WOSE is not confined to the psychotherapeutic encounter. It does not matter whether the particular cases of Dasein within the story into whom the listener is transposed are the unnamed protagonists of traditional wonder-tales or particular named historical or fictional figures. A WOSE is constituted by the *authentic possibilities of Dasein*, and its truth relies neither on historical fact nor verisimilitude to everyday, ontic, contingent variables. Hence in traditional tales, which in their fullest actualizations are WOSEs, the protagonists are anonymous in order to facilitate the transposition of listeners.⁷³ Bettelheim realized that anonymized fairy tales could be a means whereby his patients could reach their own meaning, although he did not phrase his insight in Heideggerian terminology, nor did he use a concept like WOSE because he took it for granted that the tale would be well-enough told for the patient to be interested or touched by it in the first place.⁷⁴

"The fairy tale is therapeutic because the patient finds his *own* solutions, through contemplating what the story seems to imply about him and his inner conflicts at this moment in his life."
(Bettelheim 1991, p.25)

More accurately it is not merely "through contemplating" but rather through transposition that the story affects the patient. In fact if contemplation is taken to mean intellectual cognition, reflection and analysis the story may not be therapeutic at all for such intellectual activity reduces and objectifies the very immediate experience that is transformative.

Not all stories told in therapy are WOSEs. By virtue of their nature there can be no prescription that will guarantee a WOSE, nor determine

⁷² Hence "the activity of telling a story is often more powerful than its representation in [transcribed] dialogue would suggest." Rennie 1994, p.234

⁷³ "The fairy tale ... tells about everyman. ... If names appear, it is quite clear that these are not proper names, but general or descriptive ones. ... when the hero is given a name ... the use of very common names makes them generic terms ... This is further stressed by the fact that in fairy stories nobody else has a name" Bettelheim 1991, p.40

⁷⁴ Elsewhere, in the context of child-rearing, he shows an appreciation of some of the significance of oral rather than textual storytelling; "reading is not the same as being told the story, because while reading alone the child may think that only some stranger - the person who wrote the story or arranged the book - approves of outwitting and cutting down the giant. But when his parents *tell* him the story, a child can be sure that they approve of his retaliating in fantasy for the threat which adult dominance entails." Bettelheim 1991, p.28 Cf. also Franzke 1989 and Peseschkian 1986.

whether or not a story was well-told. Only those involved, by paying attention to the quality of their involvement can tell to what extent a story is or was a WOSE. Experience, not theory is the mode of access to such knowledge. Stories are created between the therapist and client.⁷⁵ The therapist must help the client to tell the story by becoming the appropriate audience. His way of being must be to be open to the client, in the sense of being willing to understand and take over his experience, but also *the therapist must be true to himself*. If he is not touched immediately he must not pretend. Equally if he does not understand immediately he must not interpose his intellectual interpretation to "help" him to do so. By owning his ownmost possibilities of attunement and understanding and rejecting the prefabricated diagnoses of the 'they' the therapist calls the client to their own authenticity, and "healing happens with a profound countenancing of [the client's] 'truth', his standing out in the uncoveredness of beings, and of the claims that make up his particular way of being."⁷⁶ The therapist may appear to be doing very little, but to be effective, "when ... [he] appears to be passively listening he has actively opened his perception to the patient, allowing him to appear, to come to being in the light of his healing understanding and behaviour".⁷⁷

It is clear that one of the more useful ways to pass the therapeutic hour is in the telling of WOSES. Research has shown that telling one's story is therapeutic regardless of context or manner of telling.⁷⁸ Participating in a WOSE is an especially therapeutic *and transformative* experience because the participant transposes into the Da of the story by taking over as his own the having-been of the story and hence the futuricity as possibility which is founded in that having-been. If a story told in psychotherapy is the client's own story, some part or meaning of which they have in the past denied, then in telling it as a WOSE they *take over* their ownmost having-been from which they had been turning away. In taking it over they free for themselves the possibilities that are founded in it. In such a WOSE the client's existence is revealed.⁷⁹ If the story is not the client's own they take over a possibility from Dasein that has been before them.

⁷⁵ "stories or narrative are somehow jointly produced, and not by the patient alone, as it might appear on first glance; but *between* patient and therapist through a subtle and elusive interaction of the two." Wyatt 1986, p.195

⁷⁶ Scott 1984, p.154

⁷⁷ Boss 1994, p.273

⁷⁸ Pennebaker 1988

⁷⁹ In fact such a WOSE is the achievement of what Groth claims is "The primary goal of existential therapy [which] is to reveal the patient's existence." Groth 1997 p.68

When the client does tell a story of their own life the more WOSEs, that is moments of WOSE, in their telling the more they acknowledge they experience their ownmost feelings and free themselves to take up their ownmost possibilities. This acknowledgement amounts to the freeing of possibilities. Clients tell their story in order to become true to themselves. Above all, they need to tell their story from their ownmost feelings and point of view. When they do so they are free from interpreting themselves as one does and, because they speak from their own possibilities and having-been, the way they have their time and the way the therapist has his time as the transposed listener is non-boring.⁸⁰ A therapist should therefore strive to assist the client to articulate honestly and openly their own having-been and their own being-in-the-world. When the client does so the therapist will find that they are interested and moved by the client's account.

It is not surprising therefore that a study found that the therapist's interest in the client was cited as a variable of major importance in psychotherapy.⁸¹ Jung believed that it was Freud's interest and kindness, not his techniques or theories that were therapeutic.⁸² The therapist's interest, if genuine, is a result of the client's process of gaining insight into their being-in-the-world. If the therapist is not interested or moved the client is not telling a WOSE. Erich Fromm remarked on this phenomenon in psychoanalysis;

"No amount of psychoanalytic interpretation will have an effect if the therapeutic atmosphere is heavy, unalive and boring."
(Fromm 1978, pp.42-3)

This does not mean that either therapist or client has to be a polished performer, far from it. What matters is the articulation of the mood and understanding that is grounded in authentic temporality. In practical terms, this means that the telling of a WOSE may entail copious expressions searching for words, repetitions correcting tonality and much gesture and modification in response to non-verbal questioning and eye-contact ascertaining the degree to which the listener grasps or fails to grasp

⁸⁰ "When I become true to what really matters to me I become passionate, I am no longer bored, because I no longer go along with what the crowd expects; I create my own meaning" van Deurzen-Smith 1990 p.8

⁸¹ Kline, F., Adrian, A. & Spevak, M., "Patients evaluate therapists" in *Archives of General Psychiatry* 31:113-6, 1974 cited in Spinelli, 1994

⁸² "Freud was kind to people and gave them his interest, that was what cured and that is what always cures - the human contact" Jung quoted in Bennett 1985, p.22-3

the meaning of the story being unfolded.⁸³ Gendlin's paper, *Befindlichkeit: Heidegger and the Philosophy of Psychology*,⁸⁴ offers a micro-analysis of the process of the client articulating what I have termed a WOSE. Gendlin notes that,

"During a psychotherapy interview the patient quite often says something, then stops, senses inwardly for half a minute or a minute, then says: 'No, what I said isn't quite right. I can't say how it feels, yet, but it's different than I said.'" (Gendlin 1988, p.49)

Further to their verbal statement, "the patient has something else there which is felt directly, and that cannot yet be said."⁸⁵ As the patient strives to articulate honestly their own feelings they are effectively telling their own story as a WOSE. The WOSE is the raising to the level of interpretation of the client's own having-been and futuricity. Gendlin calls this process of expressing what is first manifest non-verbally as a feeling, "lifting out."

"feeling must be understood as *implicitly* meaningful, and as changing when there are steps of 'lifting out', steps of explication or articulation. *To articulate is to live further. To go back into how one has been living is a forward-moving step.*" (Gendlin 1988, p.52)

Gendlin uses the term "articulate" in its colloquial sense here, meaning "put into words", not in Heidegger's existential sense. Gendlin's "articulation" is closer to Heidegger's "interpretation".⁸⁶ As the client expresses their feeling they themselves hear it and understand it as the feeling which they are living. As Gendlin reminds us *Befindlichkeit* is "how we find ourselves" and it is our own immediate, non-theoretical apprehension of our own being.⁸⁷ In understanding how we feel through articulation in a WOSE, we discover that "a feeling" is not a fixed disposition but rather a *process*. As we learned from Heidegger every attunement has its understanding,⁸⁸ so each moment of feeling has its own understanding, that is its own possibilities, and as we 'lift out' and

⁸³ These characteristics are typical of much oral storytelling in all contexts, precisely because they are the means by which the potential-for-meaning of face-to-face discourse is fully realized when '*le mot juste*' cannot be found. See Sobol 1992, pp. 70 & 75 and Ong 1982 p.37ff.

⁸⁴ In Hoeller, 1988. Hereafter cited as Gendlin 1988

⁸⁵ Gendlin 1988, p.49

⁸⁶ BT 188-9

⁸⁷ Gendlin 1988, p.44

⁸⁸ BT 182

understand each moment of feeling, it reveals *further possibilities of feeling and understanding*.⁸⁹ In so far as we articulate our authentic possibilities of feeling further we tell a WOSE and the process is therapeutic by virtue of bringing us in front of our ownmost way of being.⁹⁰ Such articulation is not confined to words. An eloquent story can be told by gesture, and in the meeting and avoiding of eye-contact.⁹¹ If, however, we take up inauthentic possibilities, such as learned, stereotypical responses, conventional judgments or sentimentality we cease to tell a WOSE and cease, for the while, to progress therapeutically. Taking up the authentic possibilities of understanding that come along with our authentic feelings however gives rise to the very understanding that clients are seeking in psychotherapy: not theoretical but *lived and owned* knowledge. The grasping of such understanding in turn changes how we feel so "when feeling ... leads to this 'lifting out' there is a directly felt changing of the feeling at each step."⁹² Hence Gendlin claims "patients who engage in the[se] kind of steps ... are successful in psychotherapy, while those who usually do not work in this way fail."⁹³ It is important that this process of articulation is lived and owned knowledge, that is to say that each statement is attuned and contextualized within the patients own past and possibilities, for if the attunement is merely considered objectively as an instance of a universal phenomenon it is destroyed as a lived experience.⁹⁴ Heidegger acknowledges this point in his discussion of awakening an attunement.

"If ... we make an attunement conscious, come to know of it and explicitly make the attunement itself into an object of knowledge,

⁸⁹ Arnold Mindell describes the same process of articulating and moving through one's own feelings as bringing 'secondary processes' to consciousness, which he calls 'primary process'. Mindell's techniques are not simply verbal, he uses the full gamut of non-verbal expressions of the field of being-with. When a feeling is raised to interpretation one's being is not exhausted. Another 'secondary process' will manifest and be available for interpretation. Mindell, 1987, p.31-33

⁹⁰ Wyatt is alive to the importance of the ongoing reshaping of stories in the light of what we learn from them: "stories in psychoanalysis are on the way to becoming authentic, as long as they continue to transcend themselves and recast themselves in the light of every new step of self-discovery." Wyatt 1986, p.207

⁹¹ Hence Boss remarks, "It is ... necessary that the physician pay close attention to the meaning of how the patient relates bodily at each moment of therapy." Boss 1994, p.259

⁹² Gendlin 1988, p.52

⁹³ Gendlin 1988, p.53 Gendlin cites, in support of his assertion, Gendlin, Beebe, Cassens, Klein and Oberlander, "Focusing Ability in Psychotherapy, Personality and Creativity" in *Research in Psychotherapy*, ed. Schlien, J., Vol.3, American Psychological Association, Washington DC. 1967

⁹⁴ Cf. Mair on using stories to articulate "the felt-for world I sense but do not clearly know" Mair 1989, p.259

we achieve the contrary of an awakening. The attunement is thereby precisely destroyed, or at least not intensified, but weakened and altered." (FC 61)

Mere intellectual cognition changes nothing for the client, and drives out the attuned understanding that is therapeutic, hence the emphasis by Boss, Mair, Scott and others on the importance of authentic being-with the client. The therapist should be able to tell if truly owned knowledge is being expressed, not just by the form of speech but more directly because, as the audience of the client's WOSE he will also necessarily be *affected* by it. Hence Jung's assertion,

"in effective therapy a change occurs in *both* the therapist and the patient; unless the therapist is open to change the patient will not be either." (Quoted in May 1983, p.22)

Not every instance of what Gendlin calls "lifting out" would necessarily be identifiable as a story in everyday parlance and some would not constitute WOSEs if, for example, what the client "lifted out" was an articulation of their own understanding of the present relationship with the therapist. Finally we can also note that in analysis the 'Freudian slip' is typically a precursor to a WOSE. The analyst is alerted by it and draws it to the analysand's attention thereby eliciting the repressed, affect-laden story of the analysand's trauma.⁹⁵

5 THE WOSE AND THE 'POETRY OF EXPERIENCE'

Because narrative theory is dominated by the analysis of literary *textual* creations it cannot explain the particular powerful emotional and interpersonal conditions and effects of a WOSE. As a result they are ascribed to poetry or a "poetics of experience",⁹⁶ although writers are well aware that mere versification is adequate neither to explain nor to cause

⁹⁵ More research can be done in this area. It must be remembered that in psychotherapy WOSEs are far from deliberate or polished performances. They are a primordial form of being-with which can arise at any moment, without, and often precisely because of, the lack of any deliberation. The 'Freudian slip' itself makes manifest the real concerns of the client which give shape to his authentic narrative which he is covering over with his sanitized, inauthentic account.

⁹⁶ Mair 1989, Ch. 6

the emotional intensity they are considering.⁹⁷ Snyder spells out the limitations of the type of narrative therapy that simply promotes "re-authoring" of the client's life story and draws attention to the importance of "poetic intelligence".⁹⁸ Drawing on Bateson's notion of the immanent self, she writes,⁹⁹

"Th[e] concept of mind as immanent (vs. transcendent) in continually creative and interacting feedback loops is immensely useful in clarifying the distinction between self-authoring in the context of poetic intelligence and self-authoring within the traditional formulation of the self. In the latter case the human being perceives him/herself as acting on the world. In the former the experience is rather one of giving oneself over attentively and actively to a participatory process which is trustworthily intelligent and creative." (Snyder 1996, p.344)

In listening to a WOSE, or in telling one, a person is "given over attentively to a participatory process" rather than standing back as an objective observer. Snyder's exegesis is a exposition in psychological terms of the engaged aspect of the WOSE, and the ontological condition of being-with that makes it possible, that we have laid out above.¹⁰⁰ She attempts to clarify the phenomena in terms of literary concepts and makes no reference to Heidegger. She writes of permeable selves which can have "experience of shared and co-created meanings flowing through the interactive process ... of a relational, participatory existence"¹⁰¹ and quotes not Heidegger but Tom Anderson's statement that "the center of the person is not in the person, but outside - in the conversation and connection."¹⁰² Mair also talks of the same phenomena in terms of "poetics".

"the essentials of our deeper lives, are only to be reached and shared in a poetic expression. A poetics of experience, perhaps. A poetics requires that you are deeply attentive to yourself and others, so that you become the meeting place of messages spoken

⁹⁷ "we need a poetic concern with our experiencing, our awareness of ourselves and the world, and not just a prosaic concern with experiencing. I'm not referring here to poetry, in a formal sense." Mair 1989, p.63 (My underlining).

⁹⁸ Snyder 1996

⁹⁹ In "The cybernetics of self" in Bateson 1972

¹⁰⁰ Bateson's cybernetic understanding of the self (Bateson 1972) contains interesting parallels with Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world; however the differences between the axioms and jargon of the systems within which each writes makes an exact correlation too great a task to attempt in this context.

¹⁰¹ Snyder 1996, p.349

¹⁰² Snyder 1996, p.348 Tom Anderson is not identified further, nor the source of his remark.

and unspoken, the place of transformation of what is moving between and amongst you. ... You have to listen to the lilt and rhythm, to the use of words and phrases, the telling metaphor, the silence, and the moving spaces in between. ... So much, almost everything, in psychotherapy (that deeper meeting between us) is in this poetic realm" (Mair 1989, p.63)

He also attempts to describe the felt-experience of what a Heideggerian would call consciousness of being-with. He is sensitive to the volatility of our authentic being-with, and how we can move from sharing (as in a WOSE) to rejecting or closing (as in boredom or inauthenticity). In spite of his training as a psychologist his language, in attempting to convey this understanding is lyrical rather than scientific. That of which he writes does not of its nature lend itself to the language of objectivity for it is essentially rooted in personal, and interpersonal experience.

"Th[e] realm of the between seems to me to be of such powerful importance in therapy. And it is such a curious realm. It is intangible, invisible, moving, disappearing, expanding, softening, hardening, opening, welcoming, freezing over, clamping shut - you will know the feeling as the relationship between you and someone else changes. Somehow the atmosphere allows things at one moment that it doesn't allow at all the next. It's as if something had trapped shut. The realm of the between is in motion. Meaning in motion is the nature of the between. Moving patterns of intention. It is very different from statistical association, which is how we deal with the between in almost all of our formal science of psychology. It concerns entering *inside* relationships, inside whatever is going on, and is sensed as going on, between us." (Mair 1989 p.65)

Mair does not limit himself to poetics but also explains his position in terms of narrative and implicitly, although he does not emphasize the point, oral narrative.¹⁰³ He emphasises the importance of speaking, and paying attention to how we speak. He asserts, like Polkinghorne, the importance of the non-scientific knowledge gained through stories.¹⁰⁴ He even moves towards a description of the practice necessary to promote the kind of interaction he believes to be therapeutic. His notion of "imaginative participation" describes well the type of listening and

¹⁰³ "the approach I am concerned with is *narrative* rather than *computational*. It involves speaking together and telling of what we know." Mair 1989 p.197

¹⁰⁴ "I want to make as strong a claim as possible for the recognition in psychology of a story-mode to complement the more familiar statistical-mode of knowing." Mair 1989, p.256 Cf. Polkinghorne 1988

willingness on the part of the therapist that is conducive to the telling of a WOSE by a client.

"Imaginative participation seems, therefore, to be fundamentally important for psychotherapy and any other personal knowing. It involves really entering into the feel and sense of the body, the person, beside you." (Mair 1989 p.66)

Although Mair does not use Heideggerian language it is clear that for a therapist to elicit, and indeed tell, WOSEs he must be prepared to face or be brought into anticipatory resoluteness. Any attempt to maintain a professional persona which keeps an "objective" distance would be antithetical to this form of psychotherapy. It is also clear that the WOSE is a form of discourse well suited to psychotherapy precisely because the WOSE manifests a mode of the very same structure that we as Dasein are. Hence we most accurately express ourselves in stories, any theoretical abstracted self-definition is a *diminished* version of self-understanding. Telling a WOSE is a way of being of Dasein in which its being can become transparent to itself. In a WOSE Dasein can see the temporal structure of itself as care. One must not collapse the differences between the two however; a WOSE is a passing event of telling whereas Dasein continues as a living entity, and Dasein is not thrown into the world of a WOSE as it is into the contingent world. Nevertheless, it is helpful to understand a client as more like a story than an object and to know that many wonderful stories can contain appalling and tragic incidents.¹⁰⁵ We can see that for the individual person a frame story can be the basis for the positive meaning of such incidents.¹⁰⁶ The key variable in such existential meaning is not the content of the story but how it is told.

6 THE WOSE IN PERFORMANCE

Since Malinkowski anthropologists have been aware of the significance of performance and context in interpreting narrative.¹⁰⁷ The importance of

¹⁰⁵ "All sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them." Isak Dinesen quoted by in Arendt 1958 p.175

¹⁰⁶ Polkinghorne also draws story and meaning together, "The whole of an individual human existence is articulated in the narrative plot; it is much more than a simple chronicle listing of life occurrences. The self, then, is a meaning rather than a substance or a thing." Polkinghorne 1988 p.152

¹⁰⁷ "The text, of course, is extremely important, but without the context it remains lifeless. As we have seen, the interest of the story is vastly enhanced and it is given its proper

the concept of the WOSE for performance is to emphasise firstly that a good or non-boring performance is not simply the same thing as a boring performance only slightly better presented, but is an existentially distinct occurrence. A boring performance is ontologically more akin to watching paint dry than it is to a WOSE. A WOSE is a specific revelatory manner of being-with, in which what is primarily revealed is the being of Dasein. Those societies which lose sight of what it is to tell a story well lose sight of that particular path of authentic being-with. It can of course be retrieved as we always have the possibilities of discovering, or rediscovering more possibilities, but mostly and increasingly in fact we retain and retell the skeletons of stories without an awareness of the full possibilities of telling them well.¹⁰⁸ In part because of the dominance of theoretical discourse in education few writers on the practice of performance have concerned themselves with the significance of boredom.¹⁰⁹

All participants in a WOSE are brought to their ownmost possibilities wherever the WOSE occurs. In a WOSE being-with is raised to the level of interpretation, not as verbally articulated but at the level of awareness of mood. This is the phenomenon of moments of non-discursive knowing in psychotherapy, and of co-attunement of audiences at public performances of WOSEs. It is by virtue of this phenomenon that stories, if they are well-told create and sustain communities. Equally well-told stories sustain the individuals within societies by calling them back to their ownmost possibilities. For this reason storytelling is prophylactic not just because it instructs people in the ways of society and the dangers and

character by the manner in which it is told. The whole nature of the performance, the voice and the mimicry, the stimulus and the response of the audience mean as much to the natives as the text; and the sociologist should take his cue from the natives. The performance, again, has to be placed in its proper time setting - the hour of the day, and the season, with the background of the sprouting gardens awaiting future work, and slightly influenced by the magic of the fairy tales. We must also bear in mind the sociological context of private ownership, the sociable function and the cultural role of amusing fiction. All these elements are equally relevant; all must be studied as well as the text. The stories live in native life and not on paper, and when a scholar jots them down without being able to evoke the atmosphere in which they flourish he has given us but a mutilated bit of reality." Malinkowski 1926 p.29-30

¹⁰⁸ In this sense modern 'revivalist' storytellers are like the pseudo-scientists of MacIntyre's moral fable (AV 2), they play with the fragmented and muddled shards of a broken whole which they no longer understand. Haggarty (1996) makes an impassioned plea for the recognition and remedy of this situation.

¹⁰⁹ Brook 1972 and 1991 and Haggarty 1996 are rare exceptions.

difficulties of human existence but because the very process of listening to a well-told story creates a lived experience of community.¹¹⁰

Society and individuals are poorly served by the narrowness of an excessively rational discourse but in modernity the 'they' values what can be measured and discussed objectively above the knowing of experience.

"the art of storytelling is coming to an end. Less and less frequently do we encounter people with the ability to tell a tale properly. More and more often there is embarrassment all around when the wish to hear a story is expressed. It is as if something that seemed inalienable to us, the securest among our possessions, were taken from us: the ability to exchange experiences. One reason for this phenomenon is obvious: experience has fallen in value." (Benjamin 1970, p.83)

Despite the modern tendency towards the impoverishment of experience, from time to time we are profoundly moved, deeply influenced and modified in our being by a WOSE and our authentic being is evoked. Petzet records an occasion on which Heidegger, removed from his usual environment of well-schooled students, turns to story to express what his audience had not grasped in his philosophical delivery. After the first delivery of *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* in Bremen in 1930, the discussion after the lecture at the house of H. Kellner threatened to fall into "senseless psychologizing talk". Heidegger called for the *Parables of Chuang-tsu*.

"Heidegger began to recite the legend of the joy of the fishes and the joy felt by the one who stands on the bridge above the brook and watches the play of the minnows in the water. The deep meaning of the legend cast a spell on all who were present. With the interpretation he offered of that legend, Heidegger unexpectedly drew closer to them than he had with his difficult

¹¹⁰ Berry writes lyrically of the relationship between community and story: "The tobacco cutting is the most protracted social occasion of our year. Neighbors work together; they are together all day every day for weeks. ... The crew to which I belong is the product of kinships and friendships going far back; my own earliest associations with it occurred nearly forty years ago. And so as we work we have before us not only the present crop and the present fields, but other crops and other fields that are remembered. The tobacco cutting is a sort of ritual of remembrance. Old stories are re-told; the dead and the absent are remembered. Some of the best talk I have ever listened to I have heard during these times, and I am especially moved to think of the care that is sometimes taken to speak well - that is fittingly - of the dead and the absent. The conversation, one feels, is ancient. Such talk in barns and at row ends must go back without interruption to the first farmers. How long it may continue is now an uneasy question; not much longer perhaps but we do not know. We only know that while it lasts it can carry us deeply into our shared life and the happiness of farming." (Berry 1990 p.142)

lecture, which remained inaccessible to most of them." (Petzet 1993, p.18)

The very numinosity of the experience of a WOSE renders it refractory to description and analysis, and theorizing and literacy-based research and pedagogy have been of their nature antipathetic to attempts to study what makes a story well-told. Such study as there is comes from the world of praxis, not *theoria*. The structural importance of authenticity in the WOSE explains the paradox that actors and storytellers speak of needing to be truthful when performing, even when they perform a fictional tale. It is rare for a WOSE to be the speaking of a script, but it is not impossible. It is rare because it is far too easy merely to read, and extraordinarily difficult to make written words authentically one's own. Yet, in a few wonderful cases it can be done. Peter Brook's company achieve this feat more often than most, as is witnessed by the reviews of his work.¹¹¹ His company searches for a way to be authentic, to be truthful to their being and to the play that has been handed down to them.¹¹² In a WOSE the tellers are being-with the audience - thus they take over their possibilities and experience the feedback of their response to the tale, and the possibilities of telling opened or closed thereby.¹¹³ This is why there can be no definitive form of a WOSE, or of a play.¹¹⁴ Even if the script of a play remains the same each performance will be different. Indeed the fixity of form of scripted or choreographed theatre is a huge problem of which Brook is well aware.¹¹⁵ The essence of theatre is not the fixed text.

¹¹¹ See Willbourn 1985, and Roose-Evans 1984 for further citations. Brook has based many of his productions on tales from the oral tradition, e.g. *The Mahabarata*. and *The Conference of the Birds*.

¹¹² See Brook 1988 pp. 180-185

¹¹³ See Brook 1972 pp.27-9 for a description of an experiment demonstrating the relationship of audience to actor and a discussion thereof.

¹¹⁴ "The theme in oral poetry exists at one and the same time in and for itself and for the whole song. This can be said both for the theme in general and also for any individual singer's forms of it. His task is to adapt and adjust it to the particular song that he is re-creating. It does not have a single 'pure' form either for the individual singer or for the tradition as a whole. Its form is ever changing in the singer's mind, because the theme is in reality protean; in the singer's mind it has many shapes, all the forms in which he has ever sung it, although his latest rendering of it will naturally be freshest in his mind. It is not a static entity, but a living, changing, adaptable artistic creation. Yet it exists for the sake of the song. And the shapes that it has taken in the past have been suitable for the song of the moment." (Lord 1960 p.94)

¹¹⁵ "A performance gets set and usually has to be repeated - and repeated as well and accurately as possible - but from the day it is set something invisible is beginning to die." Brook 1972 p.18

"La vraie forme n'arrive qu'au dernier moment, parfois même au-delà du dernier moment. C'est un naissance. La vraie forme n'est pas comme la construction d'un bâtiment, la suite d'une série d'actions constructives et logiques. Au contraire, le vraie processus de construction est en même temps une sorte de démolition. Cela veut dire que l'on s'achemine de plus en plus vers la peur, comme toute démolition. On crée un vide" (Brook, 1991, p.34)¹¹⁶

At the same time as accepting the volatility and protean quality of truly engaging performance Brook points out that he is creating "un vide" - an empty space. This empty space is what is filled in our being-with; if one dares to leap from Heideggerian terminology to the praxis of theatre one may say it is the opening of the Da of the story. It would be entirely appropriate to hear in this "vide" also a resonance with Heidegger's use of the term "clearing".¹¹⁷ What is shared in a WOSE is not fundamentally factual information but the *way of being of Dasein* which is open to being. Authentic story-telling in the oral tradition is a very special case of what Heidegger talks about when he talks of Dasein handing itself down to itself.¹¹⁸ In story Dasein shows itself to itself. In an earlier epoch of Being, when Dasein was pre-literate, no story could be told without the living presence of a particular Dasein, hence every telling was *already* attuned. The significance of showing of attunement in speech has been overlooked as we have become more and more used to reading, and to hearing speech that is in fact mere reading aloud.¹¹⁹ Reading allows us to "understand" stories, just as it allows us to know information without attunement. This would not formerly have been possible. Traditional wisdom is *attuned understanding*, so the meaning of a statement is always affected by the *being* of the speaker. Brook, working on one of the two great Hindu epics, was sensitive to this truth.

"In the thinking behind *The Mahabharata* you find that the word appears from a person with a different value depending of the quality of the person - so exactly the same statement coming out of

¹¹⁶ "The true form arrives only at the last moment, sometimes even after the last moment. It is a birth. The true form is not like the construction of a building, the outcome of a series of logical, construction moves. On the contrary the real process of construction is really a sort of demolition. That is to say you head closer and closer to fear - just like all demolition. You make a space."

¹¹⁷ BT 401-2

¹¹⁸ BT 435-8

¹¹⁹ "In literature cultures the illusion is widespread that if one has the exact words someone has uttered, one has by that very fact his exact meaning. This is not true." Ong 1967, p.32

the mouth of a dishonourable man has a different value coming out of the mouth of an honourable man." (Brook interviewed in Willbourn, 1985, p.36)

The same point can be put in Heideggerian terms. The Dasein of the speaker provides the unified temporal horizon of the story-world into which the audience transposes itself. If the speaker holds open that world in anticipatory resoluteness, that is with a more profound understanding of his own being, world and other Dasein, there is more meaning in his words for the audience, of which each member takes according to his own being and ability.¹²⁰ And for each one, that ability is expanded to the extent that he lets himself be further opened by his being transposed into the story. If he truly is transposed his own unified temporal horizon is expanded such that a deeper understanding is possible. This is the actual, living process which is referred to in Heidegger's text but is somewhat obscured by the density of his writing. What is handed down is *not* essentially the story itself as a plot that is learned by heart, but the *way of being* shown in, and in the showing of, the story. In becoming authentic, individual Dasein steps into the authentic Being-with-one-another of co-historizing that is determinative for the destiny of its people. Hence Heidegger writes, and I repeat the quotation;

"Only in communicating and in struggling does the power of destiny become free. Dasein's fateful destiny in and with its 'generation' goes to make up the full authentic historizing of Dasein." (BT 436)

Telling a story well is thus inseparably tied up with struggling towards authentic being-with. Hence the professional art of good storytelling cannot be learned merely by the accumulation of technical skills, but only by a willingness to undergo a transformation in one's way of being.¹²¹ This is why traditionally the art of storytelling was learned by apprenticeship.¹²² It cannot in principle be learned by the cognizing of factual information, however detailed. There is thus a limited value in attempting to write further about the details of the performance of a

¹²⁰ Meaning is affected by the hearer as well as the speaker. Cf. Lepper: "the recipient of an utterance cannot be discounted when considering the meaning of that utterance." Lepper 1996, p.226

¹²¹ And indeed in many traditional societies storytelling events are associated with existentially transformative rituals, and the tellers are considered to have shamanic properties. See Eliade 1972

¹²² Haggarty 1996, p.16

WOSE, it is important rather to acknowledge the limitations of textual description and didacticism. *Theoretical, textual discourse is precisely what covers over what is essential in storytelling even as it attempts to describe it.*

7 CONCLUSION

Any attempt to summarize the path of this thesis is in danger of falling into the trap of purporting to reduce understanding to information that can simply be listed, recorded and delivered unambiguously. I am mindful of the perils of misinterpretation to which text is liable,¹²³ and the peril of too grand a design.¹²⁴ In view of the emphasis that has been placed on orality we must agree with Plato that "any writer ... who claims that clear and permanently valid truth is to be found in a written speech lays himself open to reproach."¹²⁵ There is an irony in explicating the importance of oral face-to-face discourse in a written text. The essence of the topic of this thesis is not captured on these pages, they merely point towards it. Nevertheless we can usefully review some key points.

This is in a sense a phenomenology of oral storytelling. In Chapter One we explored Heidegger's ontology of Dasein, the nature of being-in-the-world and the existentialia. We went on to explore the temporal dimensions of those existentialia. In Chapter Two we looked in detail at the existentialia of meaning. We followed Heidegger's separation of meaning from signs as such. He shows that signs are not the origin of meaning but are made possible by Dasein's meaning. We rejected Caputo's notion that Heidegger was thinking "beyond Being" in favour of a reading of Heidegger as trying to think Being ever deeper.¹²⁶ We highlighted the importance of the special case of meaning wherein we say entities have meaning and the being of Dasein is revealed simultaneously.

¹²³ "once a thing is committed to writing it circulates equally among those who understand the subject and those who have no business with it; a writing cannot distinguish between suitable and unsuitable readers. And if it is ill-treated or unfairly abused it always needs its parent to come to its rescue; it is quite incapable of defending or helping itself." Plato 1973, #275

¹²⁴ Champigny's text is a pertinent warning: his topic is the ontology of narrative, but it is doubtful whether one can extract a coherent analysis or conclusion from his text. Champigny 1972

¹²⁵ Plato 1973 #277

¹²⁶ In so doing he eventually moves beyond the ontology of Dasein and beyond considering the existential dimension of meaning, but not beyond Being itself.

Heidegger moves from this type of meaning to the existentials of meaning without a clear differentiation in the text. It was suggested that a rhetorical antithesis revealed by an *oral* reading made possible a coherent interpretation of the notoriously difficult key passage.¹²⁷ Meaning is existentially Dasein's access to being, and hence it was shown that it is not ultimately separable from the worldhood of the world. Recognising a particular entity as having meaning reveals Dasein's being as alongside the entity, attuned and understanding; in other words as care. At the same time we showed that when we say something has meaning we mean that it has meaning for us as attuned beings, i.e. that it *matters* to us. This is in accordance with Heidegger's later remark that by "care" he meant to indicate the way that being "gets to me".¹²⁸ We looked at structural metaphors of meaning in *Being and Time* and concluded that they are the exegetical forerunners of the exposition of temporality as ecstatic. After Heidegger has laid out his ecstatic phenomenology of time and Dasein's temporality he no longer uses the term "meaning" as an existential. We suggested that Heidegger used the term "meaning" qua existential to attempt to capture Dasein's temporal as-a-wholeness. Meaning qua existential does not of course have a separate existence from Dasein but is precisely constitutive of Dasein's existence. It was proposed that the as-a-wholeness of an act of narrative is derived from the as-a-wholeness of Dasein, and that hence we can understand Dasein's as-a-wholeness by means of the term narrative, which in turn illuminates what Heidegger meant by "meaning" qua existential.

Our pre-ontological understanding of narrative is thus also a means of access to the concept of ecstatic temporality. At the same time it was proposed that the essence of narrative is nothing other than Dasein's ecstatic temporality. In other words the hanging together of a story is not brought about by an agent such as a plot, but is rather given to the story by Dasein as transposed into the *Da* of the story. To orient this claim within narrative theory we reviewed the work of Ricoeur, MacIntyre and others and highlighted the ontological vagueness of the concept of plot, and the significance of the fact that an understanding of narrative is taken for granted. Much of the erroneous thinking on the nature of narrative was ascribed to the primacy given by theorists to *text* in the being of narrative.

¹²⁷ BT 192-3

¹²⁸ Dreyfus 1991 p.239

It was proposed that the essence of narrative lies in *oral narrative*. We reviewed the work of the orality theorists Ong and Havelock to bring out the significance of this claim. Just as Heidegger showed that Dasein is always attuned, so too all speech betrays attunement. That which differentiates a story from a mere listing of events is our attuned understanding being alongside what is recounted. This is our transposition into the story. This is possible to the extent that we take up our authentic possibilities of ecstatic temporality. Our ecstatic temporality is also the grounds of the possibility of the inauthentic transposition into fascination or titillation by events recounted.¹²⁹ If we have our time as the mere passing of instants or as one long now *cut off* from our ownmost having been and futurity we cannot fully take over the authentic futurity and attunement of the Da of the story. We are on such occasions more or less *bored* although we may cover it over by passing the time. Therefore the next part of our approach to the essence of narrative looked at boredom.

In the first instance this was done through a commentary of Heidegger's analysis of boredom in *The Fundamental Concepts*. The commentary provides access to the complex thinking of the original. Heidegger interprets boredom in terms of temporality. In boredom Dasein takes up its own temporality as closed down and cut off from its ownmost past and future. In such boredom one could not be fully engaged in a story, one is not immediately touched, moved or excited. In other words a story which bores is not well-told. The analysis of boredom was used to show that we must understand that the essential form of narrative is non-boring and gets its essential structure from Dasein's ecstatic temporality.

This was verified in our close analysis of story in Chapter Five. The primordial form of story was shown to be the WOSE. It was noted that a WOSE is an existentiell transformation of Dasein that may be a momentary episode and may not last throughout the telling of a tale from beginning to end. One can be transposed into authentic being-with simply in a moment of overhearing "and then...".¹³⁰ Equally one can remain

¹²⁹ We can be transposed into mere fascination or concern but the coherence of a story as a whole is ultimately grounded in and given by the openness and the unity of the temporal horizons of our authentic possibilities.

¹³⁰ The degree to which a story is constituted by our authentic transposition can be demonstrated by the curious phenomenon that it is possible to hear of the slaughter of thousands of people on television news and remain indifferent and unmoved, and yet be moved almost to tears by a tale of a child distressed by undeserved chastisement. In the former case neither newsreader nor television viewer is transposed into a WOSE, in the

unmoved and indifferent throughout an entire epic.¹³¹ In so far as we are bored by a story its story-hood is diminished. The as-a-wholeness and coherence of a story is given by the Dasein of the teller and of the listener. In Chapter Six we have looked briefly at some practical implications of our philosophical findings. We noted the recurrent presentation of the issue of "meaninglessness" in psychotherapy and noted that its status as *complaint* was grounded in its meaning as a nihilation of one's being-in-the-world. This nihilation is an ontological possibility, but its ontic realization was identified as a particular complaint of modernity. In a brief review of writing on the psychotherapeutic encounter we drew attention to the emphasis placed on the emotional and personal relationship of client and therapist. We suggested that the WOSE was a paradigm for a successful form of psychotherapeutic engagement.

A WOSE is not necessarily overtly therapeutic nor necessarily a mode of dyadic discourse. We therefore applied the analysis of the WOSE to storytelling in performance and traditional storytelling. It was shown that the WOSE enables us to understand why it is that a storyteller or actor telling a fictional story must nonetheless be true to themselves. Also the phenomenon of an audience united in response to a story can be understood in terms of transposition into authentic co-attunement. These brief excursions into the practical arenas of psychotherapy and performance are no more than indications of the possibility of application of the results of this research. Serious consideration and application must be undertaken in further interdisciplinary research and practice.

MacIntyre, Taylor, Benjamin, Bettelheim and Berry all regret the passing of a society which was characterised by oral storytelling.¹³² Heidegger believed that "contemporary man" was attuned by profound boredom,¹³³ and in the *Beiträge* he identified boredom as "the concealed destination of modernity in the scientific era."¹³⁴ Durkheim, some thirty years before the publication of *Being and Time* had identified the problem of anomy arising from the de-structuring of society by unbounded technological and material advancement.¹³⁵ This analysis of the essence and significance of

latter teller and hearer are transposed, even if only for a moment, and take over the child's attunement as their own.

¹³¹ Strictly speaking one is always transposed, but in indifference one is transposed as indifferent open neither to one's ownmost possibilities nor the others.

¹³² MacIntyre 1981, Taylor 1989, Benjamin 1970, Bettelheim 1991, Berry 1990

¹³³ FC 166

¹³⁴ Heidegger 1989 p.157

¹³⁵ Durkheim 1952

the well-told oral storytelling event is a positive response to the concerns these thinkers have expressed. It points towards the WOSE as a phenomenon which liberates man from his reductionist engagement with text. Alphabetic writing is *technology*, one of the earliest forms of the technology that has come to dominate Dasein.¹³⁶ There is a great deal of work to be done on the sociology of interpersonal dynamics in a society whose members no longer tell stories and spend up to twenty-four hours per week watching television.¹³⁷ Current research does not add up to grounds for optimism.¹³⁸ The WOSE is not mere entertainment of comparable value and effect to other leisure activities, nor can the effect of existentiell transformation it brings about be replaced by intellectual discursive knowledge. It is a mode of being-with the lack of which impoverishes our human possibilities. If we wish to sustain our way of being as caring for others we would do well to encourage well-told oral storytelling, not just in psychotherapy or performance, but throughout society. Such encouragement is not best done by technical manuals or text-based instruction but by the immediate process of telling and listening to stories.¹³⁹

This analysis also points to the need for research and hard work in the praxis of professional storytelling, above all in emphasising that the elusive quality of excellence is of paramount significance. The Western audience is not only addicted to sensationalism, it is also deeply, profoundly bored and for the most part, as Brook has observed, does not know what it is missing.¹⁴⁰ The greatest challenge to contemporary storytellers is to raise the expectations of its audience back to the level of authentic engagement, and then to meet those expectations.

There is also a challenge to contemporary theories of narrative in this thesis. It has been shown that the coherence of the primordial form of story arises from the as-a-wholeness given to a story by Dasein. The

¹³⁶ See Heidegger 1951 and 1978. The extent to which contemporary man is unaware of the impact of technology on his way of being is an indication of its pervasiveness. As Sisson remarked prophetically, "The ease of technology will, in any case, in the end produce a race of diminishing consciousness, for whom the only persuasion is by force. The triumph of technology would be to leave people with so little consciousness that they did not notice the change." Sisson 1978 p.212

¹³⁷ It has been started by Postman 1986

¹³⁸ See Putnam 1996

¹³⁹ The hegemony of text-based education in Britain, and its consequences, are both illustrated by the fact that at the time of writing, March 1997, British Telecom has produced a booklet, which has been very popular, entitled *Talkworks*. It is a *written* guide to the art of having conversations.

¹⁴⁰ Brook 1972, Ch.1

notion of plot is a re-ification arising from mistaking the essential form of story to be text. Likewise the agency of the plot is a misattribution of the dynamics of attunement and understanding in Dasein.¹⁴¹ Strictly speaking we should say that there is a primordial form of story which collapses into a different sort of event, a mere sequence of assertions, when it falls into boringness. Stories mediated by texts, films and other media are closer to the primordial form of story the more they allow the viewer, reader, or listener to transpose themselves authentically into the story. To the extent that the Dasein of the teller and listener takes up its authentic possibilities in transposition the story reveals the truth of Dasein.¹⁴² To the extent that Dasein transposes itself into inauthenticity the story falls into the titillation of idle talk, and to a greater or lesser extent a version of the passing the time of the second form of boredom. There is much research to be done to draw out the implications of this understanding of narrative for theorists in many different fields.

The challenge to psychotherapy is to allow theoretical discourse and analysis to be augmented by the wisdom of Dasein's authentic revelation of its own being. The significance of (pre-ontological) existential meaning revealed and available in WOSEs is not transcribable so the medical model of 'symptoms', 'diagnoses' and 'cures' all identifiable and transcribable is not always appropriate. Theoretical knowledge encourages interpretation and judgement which is often inappropriate in psychotherapy. Perhaps recognising the significance of our stories is the route to recognising that mental health is a result of showing to ourselves and one another the truth of our attuned, understanding being and accepting it. In so doing we may hand down to each other and our children the wisdom about life that is revealed in stories that truly touch us.

The challenge to philosophers is to pay heed to the existentiell transformation of boredom and to recognise the significance of the untranscribable meaning of oral discourse. It is timely, in view of the problems caused by excessive academic publishing, that academics should

¹⁴¹ Many other 'elements' of stories can be re-assessed on the basis of this insight. Emotional tension, for example, is the attunement that arises from the 'not' at the heart of the projection of possibilities arising from our having-been. Possibilities are presented which may not happen but which have meaning for us in so far as we are transposed into the Dasein of the story and take over its having-been. As some possibilities will be nihilated our own being as transposed is threatened.

¹⁴² This offers itself as a fruitful basis for a theory of the narrative work of art. There is great potential for research to be done in aesthetics relating this understanding of the transposition of Dasein in WOSEs to Heidegger's later writing on art (e.g. in Krell 1978) and to other writers on truth and art, notably Gadamer 1979.

recognise the limits of text-based discourse and revitalize oral pedagogic dialogue. This revival would entail a rapprochement of philosophy and rhetoric which were driven apart by the sophistry originally made possible by the ambiguity and abstraction visited upon language by alphabetisation.¹⁴³ Thinking would once again be served by text and not overwhelmed by it. In talking and being-with one another the existential meaning of our attunement would be honoured and the potential of storytelling to transform and enlighten human being would once again be realised.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ See Vickers 1989 for a stout defence of the virtues of rhetoric and a plea for a recognition of its relevance in modernity.

¹⁴⁴ It is said in India that a man who knows by heart the great oral epic poem *The Mahabharata* is enlightened. In the light of our analysis we can understand how this ancient saying could be true.

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