

—and especially that there was, once upon a time—a “good” *mimesis* (the sort Plato wanted), a *mimesis* of *logos*, and a “bad” *mimesis* (that of the “sophist,” the prototype of the spectacular merchant who sells the simulacra of *logos*). But we never pursue this logic to its end, for doing so would require that we recognize the following: if there is a necessity to *mimesis*, then it is because *logos* does not present itself of its own accord—and maybe because it does not present itself at all, because its logic is not the logic of presence.⁶²

This amounts to recognizing that “social *logos*,” the logic of “association,” and “association” itself as the *logos* all require *mimesis*. Has there ever been a *logos* that was not “social”? Whatever *logos* means—whether a word or number, a gathering or welcoming in which Being is manifest, reason that is rendered or constructed—it always implies sharing, and it always implies itself as sharing.

By effacing the intrinsic moment or dimension of *mimesis*, we efface this sharing. We give ourselves the representation of a presence that is immanent and enclosed, self-constitutive and self-sufficient, the integrally self-referential order of what we call a “logic” in the most general and basic sense. In this sense, “logic” represents self-referentiality held to its ontological condition, which is the originary—and, as such, existential—plurality or sharing of *logos* itself.

Against this good conjunction of the logical and the mimetic, we now oppose the “bad” one: that where logic remains within its immanent order, cold and faceless (which today, for us, is the “logic of capital”), all the while outwardly producing a *mimesis* that dissimulates it according to its inverted simulacrum, the self-consuming “spectacle.” The self-referentiality of the “image” stands in opposition to the self-referentiality of the process or the force, as its product and truth. As over and against the “Greek” paradigm, this is the way in which our tradition has for a long time set up the “Roman” paradigm: the site of circus games, burlesque theater, and the theater of cruelty; without “civil” identification; the Empire and the reason for Empire [*raison d'Empire*]; the forum emptied of its meaning. . . .⁶³

Aeschylus or Nero . . . our referring to things in this way, which sets the Greek stage in such violent contrast to the Roman circus

and which also divides—this is a remarkable example—the Christian traditions of Protestantism and Catholicism, or divides the several different forms of the profane theatrical tradition), reveals a consciousness that is itself conflicted, as is demonstrated by its unease with regard to the spectacle: “good” (re)presentation is represented as lost; “bad” (re)presentation is represented as both popular and generalized. But, in fact, both of them are our representations; they compose the double spectacle that we give to ourselves, the double spectacle of the double unrepresentability of social Being and its truth. There is one unrepresentability because of a certain retreat, and another unrepresentability on account of a certain vulgarity. Maybe we have to begin by taking some distance from this double spectacle, by no longer wishing to be Greeks, by no longer fearing that we are Romans, and by simply understanding ourselves as moderns, where being modern means the following: taking note of an exposed “unrepresentability” as such, but which is nothing other than the very presentation of our co-appearing, of “us” co-appearing, and whose “secret” exposes itself and exposes us to ourselves without our even beginning to penetrate it—if it is a matter of “penetrating” it at all.

The Measure of the “With”

The bare exposition of co-appearance is the exposition⁶⁴ of capital. Capital is something like the reverse side of co-appearance and that which reveals co-appearance. Capital’s violent inhumanity displays [*étale*] nothing other than the simultaneity of the singular (but the singular posing as the indifferent and interchangeable particularity of the unit of production) and the plural (itself posing as the system of commodity circulation). The “extortion of surplus-value” presupposes this concomitance between the “atomization” of producers (of “subjects” reduced to being-productive) and a “reticulation” of profit (not as an equal redistribution, but as a concentration that is itself more and more complex and delocalized).

One could say that capital is the alienation of being singular plural as such. This would be quite accurate so long as one did not

understand being singular plural as a primitive, authentic subject, a subject to which capital happened as its other and purely by accident. (Nothing could be more foreign to Marx's thinking.) Capital is the "alienation" of Being in its being-social to the extent that it puts this being in play as such. It is not the negative dialectic of some prior community that occurs within a continuous historical process; instead, it exposes a singular-plural constitution or configuration that is neither the "community" nor the "individual." Incalculable "surplus-value"—"value" as indefinite, circulatory, and autotelic growth—exposes the inaccessibility of a primordial or final "value." In a paradoxical and violent way, it immediately poses the question of an "outside-value" or "absolute value"—which would be immeasurable, priceless (what Kant called a "dignity"). There is, then, a certain concomitance between the globalization of the market and that of "human rights": these rights represent the supposed absolute value that capital claims to exchange for . . . itself.

However, this is also why there is the stripping bare [*mise à nu*] of being-social and, at the same time, its being brought to life [*mise à vif*], exactly because the "rights-bearing" "human" is "valuable" in itself. In fact, he is nothing other than the idea of a "value in itself" or a "dignity." If "humanity" must be worth something, or if Being in general must "be worth something" under the heading "humanity," this can only be by "being valuable" *singularly* and, simultaneously, in "being valuable" by and for and with the *plural* that such singularity implies, just as it implies the fact of the "value" itself. Indeed, who could be [more] valuable for oneself than oneself? "Being valuable" is worth something only within the context of being-with, that is, only insofar as it concerns *commerce* in every sense of the word. But it is precisely the sharing of these senses—the commerce of goods/the commerce of being-together—that capital exposes: the sharing of the senses of *exchange*, the sharing of the sharing itself. Capital exposes it as a certain violence, where being-together becomes being-of-market-value [*l'être-marchand*] and haggled over [*marchandé*]. The being-with that is thus exposed vanishes at the same time that it is exposed, stripped bare.

To say that this violence exposes being singular plural as an ab-

solute of existence is not to justify it. For this violence violates what it exposes. This, however, does not amount to declaring that the "secret" of capital has been revealed, along with the means of converting it into its opposite. Instead, the violence of capital gives the measure of what is exposed, of what comes to "us" to expose itself: singular plural being-with is the only absolute measure of Being itself, or of existence. But this is an incommensurable measure if it is equal to the "at each time" of each "one" and, *at the same time*, to the indefinite plurality of coexistences *against* which each one *is measured* in turn—according to the indefinite commensuration of the coincidences of commerce, combat, competition, comparison, communication, concurrence, concupiscence, compassion, *co-jouissance*. . .

There is a common measure, which is not some one unique standard applied to everyone and everything. It is the commensurability of incommensurable singularities, the equality of all the *origins-of-the-world*, which, as origins, are strictly unexchangeable [*insubstituable*]. In this sense, they are perfectly unequal, but they are unexchangeable only insofar as they are equally with one another. Such is the sort of measurement that it is left up to us to take.



"Society" is neither Greek nor Roman—nor Judeo-Christian, to which we will return later. Society knows itself and sees itself as bared, exposed to this common excess [*démésure*]. At one and the same time, it sees itself as something quite evident and transparent, whose necessity eclipses that of every *ego sum*, and as an opacity that denies itself every subjective appropriation. At that moment when we clearly come [to stand] before ourselves, as the lone addresser(s) facing the lone addressee(s), we cannot truly say "we."

But it is through this that we now have to attain to a knowledge of the "we"—attain to a knowledge and/or a praxis of the "we." The "we" is not a subject in the sense of egoistic self-identification and self-grounding (even if this itself never takes place outside of a "we"); neither is the "we" "composed" of subjects (the law of such composition is the aporia of all "intersubjectivity"). However, the "we" is not nothing; it is "someone" each time, just as "each one" is

someone. Moreover, this is why there is no universal "we": on the one hand, "we" is said each time of some configuration, group, or network, however small or large; on the other hand, "we" say "we" for "everyone," for the coexistence of the entire universe of things, animals, and people that is mute and without "us." "We" neither says the "One" nor does it say the adding together of "ones" and "others"; rather, "we" says "one" in a way that is singular plural, one by one and one with one.

Nothing can really be thought about this situation unless the one, in general, is first thought in terms of with-one-another. Yet, it is here that our ontology fails, since we are "amongst us" [*entre nous*] and since "Being" comes down to just that—if I can say it like this.

(It is as if Being has come back to this "between," which is its true place, as though it had been a matter of a "forgetting the between" rather than "forgetting Being." Or rather, it is as if the invention of Being, throughout the whole tradition, were nothing but the invention of our existence as such—as the existence of us and as us, us in the world, we-the-world. "We" would be, then, the most remote, absolute priority of every ontology; as a result, "we" would also be the most belated, most difficult, and least appropriate effect of the ontological demand.)

The *with* constitutes a sort of permanent end point of the tradition. It is a minor category; in fact, even up until today, including Heidegger in certain regards, it is barely a category at all insofar as "Being" has been represented as being alone with itself, and as having no coexistence or coincidence. So, when Husserl declares "the intrinsically first being, the being that precedes and bears every worldly Objectivity, is transcendental intersubjectivity: the universe of monads, which effects its communion in various forms,"⁶⁵ this Being constitutes for him nothing less than an ultimate horizon, freed from contingency and the exteriority of coexistents. It corresponds to a transcendental solidarity rather than an empirico-transcendental simultaneity. As a result, it again becomes something like a substratum rather than something open or disposed in itself through its coconstitution. Generally speaking, then, the

Being of philosophical ontology cannot have coessence, since it only has non-Being as its correlate. But what if Being itself *is* the coessentiality of existence?

Since being-social appears to us to lie beyond our reach, whether as community (subsumption under the Subject, pure Being without relations) or as association (accommodation of subjects, relation without essentiality), it is the category of the "other" that crosses through much contemporary thinking. It would be necessary to show how this category, and the obsession [*la hantise*] that it ends up constituting for a good portion of our thinking, both represents the incommensurability of Being as being-with-one-another *and* runs the risk of covering over or deferring this Being's realm, insofar as it is the realm of the *with*, that is, insofar as it is the measure of this incommensurability.

The other is presented as the *alter ego* or as the other of the ego, as the other outside of the self or as the other within the self, as "others" or the "Other"; all these ways of looking at it, all these aspects, all these faces, and all of "those whom we cannot look in the face" [*ces indévisageables*]⁶⁶—whose necessity is, in every case, incontestable—always bring us back to the very heart of the matter, to an alterity or alteration where the "self" is at stake. The other is thinkable, and must be thought, beginning from that moment when the self appears and appears to itself as a "self."

Yet, this identification of the self as such—its subjectivization in the deepest and richest philosophical sense of the term, the one that reaches its extreme limit in Hegel—can only take place once the subject finds itself or poses itself originally as other than itself, doing so in the infinite presupposition of the self that constitutes it as a subject and according to the necessary law of such presupposition. This would be a self that is older and more originary than itself, a self in itself that is other than the self for itself. This is really not much more than a transcription of Hegel.

Therefore, the self knows itself principally as other than itself: such is the constitution of "self-consciousness." And yet, the logic of this constitution is paradoxical, since it involves simultaneously the opening of the self to the other *and* its closure. In fact, the al-

terity of the other is such that to recognize it is to be denied access to it; there can be access only on the condition of a radical alteration or, more precisely, a radical alienation. A dialectic of the same and the other, of the same in the other, of the same as other, undoes this aporia, but this undoing comes at a price, the price of the dialectic in general. It reveals that the power of the negative which holds the self to the other, the dis-alienating and reappropriative power of alienation itself as the alienation of the same, will always be presupposed as the power of the self, or the Self as this very power. The Self remains alone in itself even as it emerges out of itself. What is properly lacking or passed over in this false emergence is the moment of the *with*.

Open to the other and occurring as other, the self has its originarity in the loss of self. Birth and death become the marks of a point of origin [*provenance*] and destination within the other: an origin/destination as a loss, as the memorial mourning of the immemorial, and as the reconquering or reappropriation of an inappropriable aseity in all its irreducible alterity. This other is not "with"; it is no longer and not yet "with"; it is nearer and further away than every being-together. It does not accompany identity; it crosses through it, and transgresses it; it transfixes it. Within the discourse about alterity, a general mode of *trans-* (transport, transaction, transcription, transfer, transmission, transformation, transparency, transubstantiation, transcendence) continually runs alongside the mode of *cum-*, but it will never be able to eclipse it or replace it.

In and of itself transcendent, the subject is born into its *intimacy* ("interior intimo neo"), and its intimacy wanders away from it *in statu nascendi* ("interfeces et urinam nascimur"). "To exist" is no longer "to be" (for itself, in itself), to-already-no-longer-be and to-not-yet-be, or even to-be-lacking, that is, to-be-in-debt-to-being. To exist is a matter of going into exile. The fact that the intimate, the absolutely proper, consists in the absolutely other is what alters the origin in itself, in a relation to itself that is "originarily plunged into mourning."⁶⁶ The other is in an originary relation to death and in a relation to originary death.

In this way, then, "solitude" appears. This is the Christian event, which does not mean that it was not prepared for well in advance, or that it was not, in its own way, contemporary to our whole tradition. Solitude par excellence is solitude of the self insofar as it relates to itself, outside of itself *in extremis* and *in principis*, outside of the world, ex-isting existence. Consciousness of self is solitude. The other is this very solitude exposed as such: as a self-consciousness that is infinitely withdrawn in itself, into itself—in itself as into itself.

As such, the coexistent—the other person, but also the other creature in general—appears as that which is in itself infinitely withdrawn. It appears inaccessible to "me" because it is withdrawn from the "self" in general, and because it is as the self-outside-itself: it is the other in general, the other that has its moment of identity in the divine Other, which is also the moment of the identity of everything, of the universal *corpus mysticum*. The Other is the place of *community* as *communion*, that is, the place of a being-self-in-other [*être-soi-en-l'autre*] that would no longer be altered or where such alteration would be identification. In this world, the mystery of communion announces itself in the form of the *nearby* [*prochaine*].

Proximity is the correlate of *intimacy*: it is the "nearest," the "closest," which is also to say "the most approximate" or "infinitely approximate" to me, but it is not me because it is withdrawn in itself, into the self in general. The proximity of the nearest is a minute, intimate distance and, therefore, an infinite distance whose resolution is in the Other. The nearest is that which is utterly removed, and this is why the relation to it presents itself (1) as an imperative, (2) as the imperative of a love, and (3) as a love that is "like the love of myself."⁶⁷ The love of self, here, is not egoism in the sense of preferring oneself over others (which would contradict the commandment); it is an egoism in the sense of privileging oneself, one's own-self [*le soi-propre*], as a model, the imitation of which would provide the love of others. It is necessary to love one's own-self in the other, but reciprocally, one's own-self in me is the other of the ego. It is its hidden intimacy.

This is why it is a matter of "love": this love is not some possible

mode of relation; it designates relation itself at the heart of Being—in lieu of and in the place of Being⁶⁸—and designates this relation, of one to another, as the infinite relation of the same to the same as originally other than itself. “Love” is the abyss of the self in itself; it is the “delectation” [“dilection”] or “taking care” of what originally escapes or is lacking; it consists in taking care of this retreat and in this retreat. As a result, this love is “charity”: it is the consideration of the *caritas*, of the cost or the extreme, absolute, and, therefore, inestimable value of the other as other, that is, the other as the self-withdrawn-in-itself. This love speaks of the infinite cost of what is infinitely withdrawn: the incommensurability of the other. As a result, the commandment of this love lays out this incommensurability for what it is: access to the inaccessible. Yet, it is not sufficient to discredit such love as belonging to some intemperate idealism or religious hypocrisy. Rather, it is a matter of deconstructing the Christianity and sentimentality of an imperative the openly excessive and clearly exorbitant character of which must be read as a warning to us; I would even go so far as to say that it just is a warning to us. It is a matter of wondering about the “meaning” (or “desire”) of a thinking or culture that gives itself a foundation the very expression of which denotes impossibility, and of wondering how and to what extent the “madness” of this love could expose the incommensurability of the very constitution of the “self” and the “other,” of the “self” in the “other.”

With regard to this constitution, then, and at the heart of Judeo-Christianity and its exact opposite, it would be a matter of understanding how the dimension of the *with* both appears and disappears all at once. On the one hand, the proximity of what is nearby [*prochain*] points to the “nearby” [“l’auprès”] of the “with” (the *apud hoc* of its etymology). One could even add that it encircles this “nearby” and makes it stand out on its own, as a contiguity and simultaneity of being-near-to as such, without any further determination. That is, what is “nearby” is no longer the “nearness” of the family or the tribe, which may be what the primary meaning of the Biblical precept refers to; it is not the nearness of the *people* or the *philia*, or the brotherhood; it is what underlies every logic of

the group or ensemble, every logic of community that is based on nature, blood, source, principle, and origin.⁶⁹ The measure of such “nearness” is no longer given, and the “nearby,” the “very near” is exhibited as stripped bare, without measure. As such, everyday milling around [*le côtoiement*], the crowd, the mass all become possible—right up until the piling-up of bodies in the anonymous mass grave or the pulverization of collective ashes. The proximity of what is nearby, as pure dis-tance, as pure dis-position, can contract and expand this dis-position to its extreme limit, both at the same time. In universal being-with-one-another, the *in* of the in-common is made purely extensive and distributive.

On the other hand, this is why the “nearby” of the *with*, the simultaneity of distance and close contact, the most proper constitution of the *cum*-, exposes itself as indeterminantness and as a problem. According to this logic, there is no measure that is proper to the *with*, and the *other* holds it there, within the dialectic of the incommensurable and common intimacy, or within an alternative to it. In an extreme paradox, the other turns out to be *the other of the with*.



As a result, there are two different measures of the incommensurable to be found within the very depths of our tradition, two measures that are superimposed, intertwined, and contrasted. One is calibrated according to the Other; the other is calibrated according to the *with*. Because the intimate and the proximate, the same and the other, refer to one another, they designate a “not being with” and, in this way, a “not being in society.” They designate an Other of the social where the social itself—the common as *Being* or as a common *subject*—would be in itself, by itself, and for itself: it would be the very sameness of the other and sameness as Other. In contrast, being-with designates the other that never comes back to the same, the plurality of origins. The just measure of the *with* or, more exactly, the *with* or being-with as just measure, as justness and justice, is the measure of dis-position as such: the measure of the distance from one origin to another.

In his analytic of *Mitsein*, Heidegger does not do this measure justice. On the one hand, he deals with the indifference of an "uncircumspective tarrying alongside" and, on the other, an "authentic understanding of others"⁷⁰—the status of which remains indeterminate as long as what is in question is anything other than the negative understanding of the inappropriability of the death of others or the codestination of a people. Between this indifference and this understanding, the theme of existential "distantiality"⁷¹ immediately reverts back to competition and domination, in order to open onto the indistinct domination of the "one" [*Das Man*]. The "one" is produced as nothing other than that conversion which levels out the general attempt by everyone to outdistance everyone else, which ends in the domination of mediocrity, of the common and average measure, common as average. It ends with the "common-mediocre" concealing the essential "common-with." But, as such, it remains to be said just how being-with is essential, seeing as it codetermines the essence of existence.

Heidegger himself writes that: . . . as Being-with, Dasein "is" essentially for the sake of [*umwillen*] Others. . . . In being-with, as the existential "for-the-sake-of" of Others, these have already been disclosed [*erschlossen*] in their *Dasein*.⁷² The *with*, therefore, designates being-with-regard-to-one-another, such that each one is "disclosed" ["ouvert"]⁷³ then and there, that is, constituted as existing: being the *there*, that is, the disclosure of Being, being an "each time" of this disclosure, in such a way that no disclosure would take place (no Being) if the one "disclosed" did not disclose itself with regard to an other "disclosed." Disclosure itself consists only in the coincidence of disclosures. To-be-the-there is not to disclose a place to Being as Other: it is to disclose/be disclosed to/through the plurality of singular disclosures.

Since it is neither "love," nor even "relation" in general, nor the juxta-position of in-differences, the "with" is the proper realm of the plurality of origins insofar as they originate, not from one another or for one another, but in view of one another or with regard to one another. An origin is not an origin for itself; nor is it an origin in order to retain itself in itself (that would be the origin of nothing); nor

is it an origin in order to hover over some derivative succession in which its being as origin would be lost. An origin is something other than a starting point; it is both a principle and an appearing; as such, it repeats itself at each moment of what it originates. It is "continual creation."

If the world does not "have" an origin "outside of itself," if the world is its own origin or the origin "itself," then the origin of the world occurs at each moment of the world. It is the *each time* of Being, and its realm is the *being-with* of each time with every [other] time. The origin is for and by way of the singular plural of every possible origin. The "with" is the measure of an origin-of-the-world *as such*, or even of an origin-of-meaning as such. To-be-with is to make sense mutually, and only mutually. Meaning is the fullest measure of the incommensurable "with." The "with" is the fullest measure of (the) incommensurable meaning (of Being).

Body, Language

The plurality of origins essentially disseminates the Origin of the world. The world springs forth⁷⁴ everywhere and in each instant, simultaneously. This is how it comes to appear *out of nothing* and "is created." From now on, however, this being created must be understood differently: it is not an effect of some particular operation of production; instead, it is, insofar as it is, as created, as having arisen, come, or grown (*cresco, creo*); it has always already sprung from all sides, or more exactly, it is itself the springing forth and the coming of the "always already" and the "everywhere." As such, each being belongs to the (authentic) origin, each is originary (the springing forth of the springing forth itself), and each is original (incomparable, underivable). Nevertheless, all of them share originary and originality; this sharing *is itself* the origin.

What is shared is nothing like a unique substance in which each being would participate; what is shared is also what shares, what is structurally constituted by sharing, and what we call "matter." The ontology of being-with can only be "materialist," in the sense that "matter" does not designate a substance or a subject (or an antisub-

ject), but literally designates what is divided of itself, what is only as distinct from itself, *partes extra partes*, originally impenetrable to the combining and sublimating penetration of a "spirit" [or "mind"], understood as a dimensionless, indivisible point beyond the world. The ontology of being-with is an ontology of bodies, of every body, whether they be inanimate, animate, sentient, speaking, thinking, having weight, and so on. Above all else, "body" really means what is outside, insofar as it is outside, next to, against, nearby, with a(n) (other) body, from body to body, in the dis-position. Not only does a body go from one "self" to an "other," it is *as itself* from the very first; it goes from itself to itself; whether made of stone, wood, plastic, or flesh, a body is the sharing of and the departure from self, the departure toward self, the nearby-to-self without which the "self" would not even be "on its own" ["à part soi"].⁷⁵

Language is the incorporeal (as the Stoics said). Either as an audible voice or a visible mark, saying is corporeal, but what is said is incorporeal; it is everything that is incorporeal about the world. Language is not in the world or inside the world, as though the world were its body: it is the outside of the world in the world. It is the whole of the outside of the world; it is not the eruption of an Other, which would clear away or sublimate the world, which would transcribe it into something else; instead, it is the exposition of the world-of-bodies as such, that is, as originally singular plural. The incorporeal exposes bodies according to their being-with-one-another; they are neither isolated nor mixed together. They are *amongst themselves* [entre eux], as origins. The relation of singular origins among themselves, then, is the relation of *meaning*. (That relation in which one unique Origin would be related to everything else as having been originated would be a relation of saturated meaning: not really a relation, then, but a pure consistency; not really a meaning, but its sealing off, the *annulment* of meaning and the end of the origin.)

Language is the exposing of plural singularity. In it, the all of being is exposed as its meaning, which is to say, as the originary sharing according to which a being relates to a being, the circulation of a meaning of the world that has no beginning or end. This is the

meaning of the world as being-with, the simultaneity of all presences that *are* with regard to one another, where no one is for oneself without being for others. This is also why the essential dialogue or polylogue of language is both the one in which we speak to one another and, *identically*, the one in which I speak to "myself," being an entire "society" onto myself—being, in fact, in and as language, *always simultaneously "us" and "me" and "me" as "us," as well as "us" as "me."* For I would say nothing about myself if I were not with myself *as* I am with numerous others, if this *with* were not "in" me, right at me, at the same time as "me," and, more precisely, *as the at-the-same-time* according to which, solely, I am.

At this exact point, then, one becomes most aware of the essence of singularity: it is not individuality; it is, each time, the punctuality of a "with" that establishes a certain origin of meaning and connects it to an infinity of other possible origins. Therefore, it is, at one and the same time, infra-/intraindividual and transindividual, and always the two together. The individual is an intersection of singularities, the discrete exposition of their simultaneity, an exposition that is both discrete and transitory.

This is why there is no ultimate language, but instead languages, words, voices, an originally singular sharing of voices without which there would be no voice. In the incorporeal exposition of languages, all beings pass through humanity.⁷⁶ But this exposition exposes humanity itself to what is outside the human, to the meaning of the world, to the meaning of Being as the being-meaning of the world. Within language, "humanity" is not the subject of the world; it does not represent the world; it is not its origin or end. It is not its meaning; it does not give it meaning. It is the exponent, but what it thus exposes is not itself, is not "humanity"; rather, it exposes the world and its proper being-with-all-beings in the world, exposes it as the world. Moreover, this is why it is also what is exposed by meaning; exposed as "gifted" with language, humanity is, above all, essentially ex-posed in its Being. It is ex-posed to and as this incorporeal outside of the world that is at the heart of the world, that which makes the world "hold" or "consist" in its proper singular plurality.

It is not enough to say that the "rose grows without reason." For if the rose were alone, its growth without reason would enclose within itself, by itself, all the reason of the world. But the rose grows without reason because it grows along with the reseda, the eglantine, and the thistle—as well as with crystals, seahorses, humans, and their inventions. And the whole of being, nature, and history do not constitute an ensemble the totality of which would or would not be without reason. The whole of being is its own reason; it has no other reason, which does not mean that it itself is its own principle and end, exactly because it is not "itself." It is its own disposition in the plurality of singularities. This *Being* exposes itself, then, as the *between* and the *with* of singulars. *Being*, *between*, and *with* say the same thing; they say exactly *what can only be said* (which is called the "ineffable" elsewhere), what cannot be presented as a being among [*parmi*] others, since it is the "among" of all beings (*among*: inside, in the middle of, with), which are each and every time among one another. *Being* says nothing else; as a result, if saying always says Being in one way or another, then Being is exposed only in the incorporeality of the saying.

This does not signify that Being "is only a word," but rather that Being is all that is and all that goes into making a word: being-with in every regard. For a word is what it is only among all words, and a spoken word is what it is only in the "with" of all speaking. Language is essentially in the with. Every spoken word is the simultaneity of at least two different modes of that spoken word; even when I am by myself, there is the one that is said and the one that is heard, that is, the one that is resaid. As soon as a word is spoken, it is resaid. As such, meaning does not consist in the transmission from a speaker to a receiver, but in the simultaneity of (at least) two origins of meaning: that of the saying and that of its resaying.

As far as meaning is concerned, what I say is not simply "said," for meaning must return to me resaid in order to be said. But in returning to me in this way, that is, from the other, what comes back also becomes another origin of meaning. Meaning is the passing back and forth [*passage*] and sharing of the origin at the origin, singular plural. Meaning is the exhibition of the foundation with-

out foundation, which is not an abyss but simply the *with* of things that are, insofar as they are. *Logos* is *dialogue*, but the end [or purpose] of dialogue is not to overcome itself in "consensus"; its reason is to offer, and only to offer (giving it tone and intensity), the *cum-*, the *with* of meaning, the plurality of its springing forth.

It is not enough, then, to set idle chatter in opposition to the authenticity of the spoken word, understood as being replete with meaning. On the contrary, it is necessary to discern the conversation (and sustaining) of being-with as such within chatter: it is in "conversing," in the sense of discussion, that being-with "sustains itself," in the sense of the perseverance in Being. Speaking-with exposes the *conatus* of being-with, or better, it exposes being-with as *conatus*, exposes it as the effort and desire to maintain oneself as "with" and, as a consequence, to maintain something which, in itself, is not a stable and permanent substance, but rather a sharing and a crossing through. In this conversation (and sustaining) of being-with, one must discern how language, at each moment, with each signification, from the highest to the lowest—right down to those "phantic," insignificant remarks ("hello," "hi," "good" . . .) which only sustain the conversation itself—exposes the with, exposes itself as the with, inscribes and *ex-scribes* itself in the with until it is exhausted, emptied of signification.

"Emptied of signification": that is, returning all signification to the circulation of meaning, into the carrying over [*transport*] that is not a "translation" in the sense of the conservation of one signification (however modified), but "trans-lation" in the sense of a stretching or spreading out [*tension*] from one origin-of-meaning to another. This is why this always imminent exhaustion of signification—always imminent and always immanent to meaning itself, its truth—goes in two directions: that of common chatter and that of absolute poetic distinction. It is exhausted through the inexhaustible exchangeability of "phantic" insignificance, or exhausted by the pure "apophantic" significance, declaration, or manifestation ("apophansis") of this very thing as an unexchangeable spoken word, unalterable as this very thing, but there as the thing *as* such. From one to the other, it is the same *conatus*: the "with" according

to which we expose ourselves to one another, *as* "ones" and *as* "others," exposing the world *as* world.

Language constitutes itself and articulates itself from out of the "as." No matter what is said, to say is to present the "as" of whatever is said. From the point of view of signification, it is to present one thing as another thing (for example, its essence, principle, origin, or its end, its value, its signification), but from the point of view of meaning and truth; it is to present the "as" *as such*. That is, it is to present the exteriority of the thing, its being-before, its being-with-all-things (and not its being-within or being-elsewhere).

Mallarmé's phrase "I say 'a flower' . . ." expresses [the fact] that the word says "the flower" as "flower" and as nothing else, a "flower" that is "absent from all bouquets" only because its "as" is also the presence *as such* of every flower in every bouquet. Giorgio Agamben writes, "The thinking that tries to grasp being *as* beings retreats toward the entity without adding to it any further determination . . . comprehending it in its being-such, in the midst of its *as*, it grasps its pure non-latency, its pure exteriority. It no longer says *some thing* as '*some thing*' but brings to speech this *as* itself."⁷⁷ Every spoken word brings to speech this "as itself," that is, the mutual exposition and disposition of the singularities of the world (of a world of singularities, of singular worlds, of world-singularities). Language is the element of the with *as such*: it is the space of its declaration. In turn, this declaration *as such* refers to everyone and to no one, refers to the world and to its coexistence.



Although he was certainly not the first to do so, La Bruyère put it in the following way: "Everything is said, and one comes to it too late. . . ." Certainly, everything is said, for everything has always already been said; yet, everything remains to be said, for the whole *as such* is always to be said anew. Death presents the interruption of a saying of the whole and of a totality of saying: it presents the fact that the saying-of-everything is at each time an "everything is said," a discrete and transitory completeness. This is why death does not take place "for the subject," but only for its

representation. But this is also why "my death" is not swallowed up with "me" in pure disappearance. As Heidegger says, insofar as it is the utmost possibility of existence, it exposes existence *as such*. Death takes place essentially as language; reciprocally, language always says death: it always says the interruption of meaning as its truth. Death *as such*, [like] birth *as such*, takes place as language: it takes place in and through being-with-one-another. Death is the very signature of the "with": the dead are those who are no longer "with" and are, at the same time, those who take their places according to an exact measure, the appropriate measure, of the incommensurable "with." Death is the "as" without quality, without complement: it is the incorporeal *as such* and, therefore, the exposition of the body. One is born; one dies—not as this one or that one, but as an absolute "as such," that is, as an origin of meaning that is both absolute and, as is necessary, absolutely cut off (and consequently, immortal).

It follows that one is never born alone, and one never dies alone; or rather, it follows that the solitude of birth/death, this solitude which is no longer even solitude, is the exact reverse of its sharing. If it is true, as Heidegger says, that I cannot die in place of the other, then it is also true, and true in the same way, that the other dies insofar as the other is with me and that we are born and die to one another, exposing ourselves to one another and, each time, exposing the inexposable singularity of the origin. We say in French "mourir à" ["dead to"]—to the world, to life—as well as "naître à" ["born to"]. Death is *to* life, which is something other than being the negativity through which life would pass in order to be resuscitated. To put it very precisely: death as fertile negativity is that of a single subject (either individual or generic). Death *to* life, exposition *as such* (the ex-posed as ex-posed = that which turns toward the world, in the world, the very *nihil* of its creation) can only be being-with, singular plural.

In this sense, language is exactly what Bataille calls "the practice of joy before death." Language is not a diversion, not an arrangement with the intolerability of death. In one sense, it is the tragic itself. But it is joy as the destitution of meaning, which lays bare the

origin: the singular plural as such. It is the *with* as such, which is also to say the being-such as such: perfectly and simply—and immortally—equal to itself and to every other, equal to itself *because* and *as* it is equal to every other; it is, therefore, essentially *with* every other equally. As is often said, this is a “common fate”: we have nothing in common except our telling ourselves so (and I have nothing in common with myself except in telling myself so); we exchange, and we do not exchange; we un-exchange [*in-échangons*] this extreme limit of the saying in every spoken word, as speaking itself. Language exposes death: it neither denies it nor affirms it; it brings it to language, and death is nothing but that, that which is essentially brought to language—and that which brings it there.

“Death speaks in me. My speech is a warning that at this very moment death is loose in the world, that it has suddenly appeared between me, as I speak, and the being I address: it is there between us at the distance that separates us, but this distance is also what prevents us from being separated, because it contains the condition for all understanding.”⁷⁸ As such, then, “literature” is language stretched out [*en tension*] toward birth and death, exactly because it is, and insofar *as* it is, striving toward address, understanding [*entente*], and conversation. And it is stretched like this since it occurs as recitation, discourse, or singing. (Each of these, in turn, forms the dis-position of language itself, language’s exteriority to/in itself; each forms language’s sharing, not only the sharing of languages, but that of voices, genres, or tones; it is a multiple sharing without which there would be no “as” in general.) “Literature” means the being-in-common of what has no common origin, but is originally in-common or with.

If, as Heidegger says, this is why the relation to one’s own death consists in “taking over from [one]self [one’s] ownmost Being,” this taking over does not imply, contrary to what Heidegger himself says, that “all Being-with Others, will fail us when our ownmost potentiality-for-Being is the issue.”⁷⁹ If being-with is indeed co-essential to Being *tout court*, or rather is to Being itself, this ownmost possibility is coessentially a possibility of the with and as the with. My death is one “ownmost” co-possibility of the other exis-

tences’ own possibility. It is, or it “will be,” my death that says “he is dead” in their speaking; in this way, my death is not, it will not be, anywhere else. It is “my” possibility insofar as it withdraws the possibility of the “mine” into itself: *that is to say*, insofar as this “mineness” is returned to the singular plural of the always-other-mineness. In “he *is* dead,” it is indeed Being that is in question—and as being-with.

“Death,” therefore, is not negativity, and language does not know or practice negativity (or logic). Negativity is the operation that wants to depose Being in order to make it be: the sacrifice, the absent object of desire, the eclipse of consciousness, alienation—and, as a result, it is never death or birth, but only the assumption of an infinite supposition. As such, then, Being is infinitely presupposed by itself, and its process is the reappropriation of this presupposition, always on this side of itself and always beyond itself; it is negativity at work. But things work out completely differently if Being is singular plural dis-position. The distancing of disposition is *nothing*; this “nothing,” however, is not the negative of anything. It is the incorporeal by which, according to which, bodies are with one another, close to one another, side by side, in contact and (therefore) distanced from one another. This *nothing* is the *res ipsa*, the thing itself: the thing as being-itself, that is, the being-such of every being, the mutual exposition of beings that exist only in and through this exposition. *Such* is a demonstrative; being-such is the demonstrative essence of Being, the being who shows itself to another being and in the midst of beings.

Moreover, whether they are aware of it or not, all the different ways of thinking negativity lead to the same point (they at least pass through it, even if they refuse to stop there). It is that point where the negative itself, in order to be the negative (in order to be the *nihil negativum* and not just the *nihil privatum*) must avoid its own operation and be affirmed in itself, with no remainder; or else, on the contrary, it must be affirmed as the absolute remainder that cannot be captured in a concatenation of procedure or operation. (It is the critical, suspended, inoperative point at the heart of the dialectic). Self-presupposition interrupts itself; there is a syn-

copation in the process and in its thinking, a syncopation and instant conversion of supposition into dis-position. Dis-position is the same thing as supposition: in one sense, it is absolute antecedence, where the "with" is always already given; in another sense, it does not "underlie" or preexist the different positions; it is their simultaneity.

The non-Being of Being, its meaning, is its dis-position. The *nil negativum* is the *quid positivum* as singular plural, where no *quid*, no being, is posed *without with*. It is *without* (at a distance) precisely to the extent that it is *with*; it is shown and demonstrated in being-with, [which is] the evidence of existence.

In addition, evil is only ever [found] in an operation that fulfills the *with*. One can fulfill the *with* either by filling it up or by emptying it out; it can be given a foundation of plenitude and continuity or an abyss of intransitivity. In the first case, the singular becomes a particular within a totality, where it is no longer either singular or plural; in the second case, the singular exists only on its own and, therefore, as a totality—and there too it is neither singular nor plural. In either case, murder is on the horizon, that is, death as the operative negativity of the One, death as the *work* of the One-All or the One-Me. This is exactly why death is [actually] the opposite of murder: it is the inoperative, but existing, "with" (such that murder inevitably lacks death).

The "with" is neither a foundation nor is it without foundation. It is nothing except for being-with, the incorporeal *with* of the being-body *as such*. Before being spoken, before being a particular language or signification, before being verbal, "language" is the following: the extension and simultaneity of the "with" insofar as it is the *ownmost power* of a body, the propriety of its *touching* another body (or of touching *itself*), which is nothing other than its definition as body. It finishes itself there, where it is-with; that is, it comes to a stop and accomplishes itself in a single gesture.

In this sense, "to speak with" is not so much speaking to oneself or to one another, nor is it "saying" (declaring, naming), nor is it proffering (bringing forth meaning or bringing meaning to light). Rather, "to speak with" is the conversation (and sustaining) and

conatus of a being-exposed, which exposes only the secret of its own exposition. Saying "to speak with" is like saying "to sleep with," "to go out with" (*co-ire*), or "to live with": it is a (eu)phemism for (not) saying nothing less than what "wanting to say" means [*le "vouloir-dire" veut dire*] in many different ways; *that is to say*, it says Being itself *as* communication and thinking: the *co-agitatio* of Being. "Language" is not an instrument of communication, and communication is not an instrument of Being; communication *is* Being, and Being *is*, as a consequence, nothing but the incorporeal by which bodies express themselves to one another *as such*.

Coexistential Analytic

The existential analytic of *Being and Time* is the project from which all subsequent thinking follows, whether this is Heidegger's own latter thinking or our various ways of thinking against or beyond Heidegger himself. This affirmation⁸⁰ is in no way an admission of "Heideggerianism"; it completely escapes the impoverished proclamations of "schools." It does not signify that this analytic is definitive, only that it is responsible for registering the seismic tremor of a more decisive rupture in the constitution or consideration of meaning (analogous, for example, to those of the "cogito" or "Critique"). This is why the existential analytic is not complete, and why we continue to feel its shock waves.

The analytic of *Mitsein* that appears within the existential analytic remains nothing more than a sketch; that is, even though *Mitsein* is coessential with *Dasein*, it remains in a subordinate position. As such, the whole existential analytic still harbors some principle by which what it opens up is immediately closed off. It is necessary, then, to forcibly reopen a passage somewhere beyond that obstruction which decided the terms of being-with's fulfillment, and its withdrawal, by replacing it with the "people" and their "destiny." This is not a matter of saying that it is necessary "to complete" the merely sketched-out analysis of *Mitsein*, nor is it a matter of setting up *Mitsein* as a "principle" like it deserves. "In principle," being-with escapes completion and always evades occupying the

place of a principle. What is necessary is that we retrace the outline of its analysis and push it to the point where it becomes apparent that the coessentiality of being-with is nothing less than a matter of the co-originary of meaning—and that the “meaning of Being” is only what it is (either “meaning” or, primarily, its own “precomprehension” as the constitution of existence) when it is *given as with*.

There is no “meaning” except by virtue of a “self,” of some form or another. (The subjective formula of the ideality of meaning says that “meaning” takes place for and through a “self.”) But there is no “self” except by virtue of a “with,” which, in fact, structures it. This would have to be the axiom of any analytic that is to be called coexistential.

“Self” is not the relation of a “me” to “itself.”⁸¹ “Self” is more originary than “me” and “you.” “Self” is primarily nothing other than the “as such” of Being in general. Being is only its own “as Being.” The “as” does not happen to Being; it does not add itself to Being; it does not intensify Being; it is Being, constitutively. Therefore, Being is directly and immediately mediated *by itself*; it is itself mediation; it is mediation without any instrument, and it is nondialectic: dia-lectic without dialectic. It is negativity without use, the *nothing* of the with and the *nothing* as the with. The with as with is nothing but the exposition of Being-as-such, each time singularly such and, therefore, always plurally such.

Prior to “me” and “you,” the “self” is like a “we” that is neither a collective subject nor “intersubjectivity,” but rather the immediate mediation of Being in “(it)self,” the plural fold of the origin.

(Is mediation itself the “with”? Certainly, it is. The “with” is the permutation of what remains in its place, each one and each time. The “with” is the permutation without an Other. An Other is always the Mediator; its prototype is Christ. Here, on the contrary, it is a matter of mediation without a mediator, that is, without the “power of the negative” and its remarkable power to retain within itself its own contradiction, which always defines and fills in [*plombe*] the subject. Mediation without a mediator mediates nothing: it is the mid-point [*mi-lieu*], the place of sharing and crossing

through [passage]; *that is, it is place tout court and absolutely*. Not Christ, but only such a mid-point; and this itself would no longer even be the cross, but only the coming across [*l’croisement*] and the passing through, the intersection and the dispersal [*l’écartement*],⁸² radiating out [*étoilment*] from within the very di-mension of the world. This would be both the summit and the abyss of a deconstruction of Christianity: the dis-location of the West.)

“Self” defines the element in which “me” and “you,” and “we,” and “they,” can take place. “Self” determines the “as” of Being: if it is, it is *as* [en tant que] it is. It is “in itself” prior to any “ego,” prior to any presentable “property.” It is the “as” of all that is. This is not a presentable property, since it is presentation itself. Presentation is neither a propriety nor a state, but rather an event, the coming of something: of its coming *into the world*, where the “world” itself is the plane [*la géométrie*] or the exposing of every coming.

In its coming, that which exists appropriates itself; that is, it is not appropriated, neither by nor into a “self” (which could only preexist what exists by removing and neutralizing the coming in itself). What is born has its “self” *before* self: it has it *there* (which is the meaning of Heidegger’s “Dasein”). *There* means *over-there*, the distance of space-time (it is the body, the world of bodies, the body-world). Its appropriation is its moving [*transport*] and being-moved through [*transappropriation*] this dispersal of the *there*; such is the appropriating-event (“Ereignis”). But its being determined as such does not signify that there is some event in which the “proper self” would spring forth, like a jack-in-the-box, but that the coming is in itself and by itself appropriative as such. (As a result, differencing [*différent*] is in itself the propriety that it opens.) This is why “self” does not preexist (itself). “Self” equals what ex-ists as such.

Thus, insofar as “self,” or “ipseity,” means “by itself,” relation to itself, returning into itself, presence to itself as presence to the “same” (to the sameness of the “as such”), ipseity occurs or happens to itself as coming; and such coming is anticipation, which is neither preexistence nor providence, but instead the unexpected arrival [*sur-venance*], the surprise and the being-placed back [*remise*] into the “to come” as such, *back into what is to come*. “Self” is neither a

past given nor a future given; it is the present of the coming, the presenting present, the coming-to-be and, in this way, coming into Being. But *there where* it comes is not "into itself," as though into the interior of an determined domain; it is "beside itself."⁸³ *Beside itself* means into the dispersal of the dis-position, into the general element of proximity and distance, where such proximity and distance *are measured against nothing*, since there is nothing that is given as a fixed point of ipseity (before, after, outside the world). Therefore, they are measured according to the dis-position itself.

From the very start, the structure of the "Self," even considered as a kind of unique and solitary "self," is the structure of the "with." Solipsism, if one wants to use this category, is singular plural. Each one is beside-himself insofar as and because he is beside-others. From the very beginning, then, "we" are with one another, not as points gathered together, or as a togetherness that is divided up, but as a being-with-one-another. Being-with is exactly this: that Being, or rather that *to be* neither gathers itself as a resultant *commune* of beings nor shares itself out as their common substance. *To be* is nothing that is in-common, but *nothing* as the dispersal where what is in-common is dis-posed and measured, the in-common as the with, the beside-itself of *to be* as such, *to be* transfixed by its own transitivity: *to be* being all beings, not as their individual and/or common "self," but as *the proximity that disperses [écarte] them*.

Beings touch; they are in con-tact with one another; they arrange themselves and distinguish themselves in this way. Any being that one might like to imagine as not distinguished, not dis-posed, would really be indeterminate and unavailable: an absolute vacancy of Being. This is why the ontological moment or the very order of ontology is necessary. "*To be*" is not the noun of consistency; it is the verb of dis-position. Nothing consists, neither "matter" nor "subject." In fact, "matter" and "subject" are nothing but two names that are correlates of one another; in their mode of consistency, they indicate the originary spacing of the general ontological dis-position.

As such, then, "being-there" (*Dasein*) is *to be* according to this transitive verbal value of the dis-position. Being-there is [the] dis-posing [of] Being itself as distance/proximity; it is "to make" or "to

let" be the coming of all with all *as such*. *Dasein* (that is, humanity as the index of Being) thus exposes *Being-as-to-be*.

Someone enters a room; before being the eventual subject of a representation of this room, he disposes himself in it and to it. In crossing through it, living in it, visiting it, and so forth, he thereby exposes the disposition—the correlation, combination, contact, distance, relation—of all that is (in) the room and, therefore, of the room itself. He exposes the simultaneity in which he himself participates at that instant, the simultaneity in which he exposes himself just as much as he exposes it and as much as he is exposed in it. He exposes himself. It is in this way that he is [a] "self," that he is it, or that he becomes it as many times as he enters into the disposition and each time that he does. This "at each time" is not the renewal of the experiences or occurrences of one self-same subject: so long as "I" am "the same," there will still always need to be an *other* time where I dis-pose myself according to this "sameness." This, in turn, implies that another time in general—that is, other times, indefinitely—are not only possible, they are real: the "each" of the "each time," the taking place of the *there* and as *there*, does not involve primarily the succession of the identical; it involves the simultaneity of the different. Even when I am alone, the room is at the same time the room where I am close to, next to, alongside of all its other dispositions (the way it is occupied, how it is passed-through, and so on). One is not in the disposition without being with the other-disposition, which is the very essence of dis-position. These "times" are discontinuous, but they are their being-with-one-another in this discontinuity. "Each time" is the singular-plural structure of the disposition. Therefore, "each time mine" signifies primarily "each time his or hers," that is, "each time *with*": "*mineness*" is itself only a possibility that occurs in the concurrent reality of being-each-time-with.

The world, however, is not a room into which one enters. It is also impossible to start from the fiction of someone who is alone and finds him- or herself in the world: in both cases, the very concept of the world is destroyed. This concept is that of being-with as originary. That is, if the meaning (of Being) is dis-position as

such, then this is being-with as meaning: the structure of *with* is the structure of the *there*. Being-with is not added on to being-there; instead, to be there is to be with, and to be with makes sense—by itself, with nothing more, with no subsumption of this meaning under any other truth than that of the with.

In being-with and as being-with, *we* have always already begun to understand meaning, to understand ourselves and the world as meaning. And this understanding is always already completed, full, whole, and infinite. We understand ourselves infinitely—ourselves and the world—and nothing else.



“With” is neither mediate nor immediate. The meaning that we understand, insofar as we understand it, is not the product of a negation of Being, a negation destined to represent itself to us as meaning, nor is it the pure and simple ecstatic affirmation of its presence. “With” neither goes from the same to the other, nor from the same to the same, nor from the other to the other. In a certain sense, the “with” does not “go” anywhere; it does not constitute a process. But it is the closeness, the brushing up against or the coming across, the almost-there [*l'à-peu-près*] of distanced proximity.

When we try to evaluate this closeness (as if in a marketplace or railway station, or in a cemetery, we were to ask what are the meanings and values of these hundreds of people, of their restlessness and passivity), it comes out as frantic or distraught. But the meaning of the “with,” or the “with” of meaning, can be evaluated only in and by the “with” itself, an experience from which—in its plural singularity—nothing can be taken away.

In understanding ourselves, we understand that there is nothing to understand; more precisely, this means that there is no appropriation of meaning, because “meaning” is the sharing of Being. There is no appropriation; therefore, there is no meaning. This is itself our understanding. This is not a dialectical operation (according to which “to understand nothing” would be “to understand everything”), nor is it a matter of turning it into the abyss (to understand the nothing of this same understanding), nor is it a re-

flexivity (to understand, for all understanding, that we understand ourselves); instead, it is all these replayed together in another way: as *ethos* and *praxis*.

To put it in Kantian terms, if pure reason is practical *by itself* (and not by reference to and according to any reverence for some transcendental norm), this is because it is essentially “common reason,” which means the “with” *as* reason, as foundation. There is no difference between the ethical and the ontological: the “ethical” exposes what the “ontological” disposes.

Our understanding (of the meaning of Being) is an understanding *that* we share understanding between us and, at the same time, *because* we share understanding between us: between us all, simultaneously—all the dead and the living, and all beings.