

MAN IN PHILOSOPHY

One of the themes that are the order of the day in modern philosophy is no doubt the theme: *Man in the world*, respectively *Man in the situation*. We come across it time and again in pragmatism, in the philosophy of life and—last but not least—in existential philosophy as an adage, a first datum, a slogan. And no wonder. For on closer study this theme appears to be fundamental for the whole manner of philosophic speculation as it is advocated and practised by present-day irrationalist thinkers. Heidegger has formulated the fundamental significance of this theme for the whole of his philosophy as follows: “Die These (viz.: Zum Wesen von Dasein als solchem gehört das “In-der-Welt-sein”) ist ursprünglich und einfach”¹). Whereas in his opinion all our ideas are nothing but projections in which man-in-the-world transcends over the world and over himself, *this* idea is according to him no projection, no “Entwurf”, no self-transcending idea, but, simple and original as it is, it is the idea which is the basic foundation of all existential—ontic and existential—ontological activity. It determines the place of man, also that of man’s self-determination and world-design. It indicates the constant, unchangeable and immovable *frame* within which the human mode of being moves; it effectuates the possibility of the human mode of being including human culture as result and as activity. *Man is in the world*; this state of affairs cannot be changed in the least by any man, however much freedom constitutes the nucleus of his existence.

This means: the fact that man is in the world is a *transcendental* fundamental²) idea of Heidegger’s philosophy, also of his view of culture. It is the basic *dogma* of all his philosophic speculation; a dogma which has nothing behind it, which rests in itself, which is not supported by anything outside itself: an apriori beyond the possibility of discussion, at least *philosophic* discussion, since for Heidegger philo-

¹) Vom Wesen des Grundes, p. 21.

²) For the meaning of “transcendental idea” see H. Dooyeweerd, *Transcendental Problem of Philosophic Thought*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1948.

sophic discussion is only made *possible* because man is in the world, and philosophic speculation is intrinsically bound up with man's being-in-the-world.

In Jaspers and Jean-Paul Sartre we meet with similar though not identical ideas.

In Jaspers, who is *inter alia* oriented on Wilhelm Dilthey's "*Problematik*", this being-in-the-world of man is especially seen as a "being-in-situation", as being in an historical tradition and in a culturally and socially determined situation.

And in Sartre, who in his ontology attributes the nature of being exclusively to the non-typically human, and considers the human mode of being as a self-isolation of man, a reaction against existence as a kind of "throw-off", and thus as a *néantisation* (negation) of 'being', "un trou dans l'être", the theme of "man in the world" is primarily approached from corporeality to which human existence is at once intrinsically bound and intrinsically alien.

But however different in the manner they are worked out, also by being combined with other themes mutually diverging from one another, nevertheless the philosophic-anthropological conceptions of these thinkers severally and collectively prove to be dominated by the (more than) philosophic dogma, the transcendental idea of man-in-the-world, man-in-the-situation.

At the very outset we wish to state this emphatically, as in our opinion this axioma, this starting-point contains, calls up the idea of a crisis of culture, and once it has been called up it can no more be driven away.

Besides this first basic axioma modern existential thought knows a second *dogma* which like the first is of fundamental importance for philosophic speculation on man and human culture, and which is equally dogmatically put forward, at the very beginning, dominating the whole, as a thesis which speaks for itself and can claim universal validity. This second dogma stands in a polar relation of strain to the former, and together with the first it becomes in my opinion the "dialectic basic motif" of all existential philosophy.

This dogma enunciates the fundamental *distance* between man and everything that is non-human, their distinctness and separateness, the difference in nature between them which cannot be bridged over by something else.

With a view to this Heidegger calls man "*das Wesen der Ferne*". His being-in-the-world should not be seen in such a way that man is

enclosed by this being-in-the-world. Nothing is less true. It is especially here that the idea of *transcendence* comes to the fore. Man transcends, outsteps himself, rises out above himself, goes beyond and outside himself. There is no existential philosopher but this idea of man's transcendence is of essential importance in answering the question: "Who is man?". Man transcends *himself* and as a consequence certainly his "being-in-the-world", and the manner in which he is in the world in the situation of the moment. Man is *en route*, is a "pilgrim", has a "Worauf-hin" (Heidegger), and this "telos", this eschatological horizon of the human mode of being causes man always to be "un-zu-hause", however he may be in the world.

Part of this "being authentic man" is to be faithful to this call of transcendence. And when this call is not obeyed, and a man "innerweltlich" restricts himself to thoughtfulness, care and forethought with regard to the "intramundane", he lives in a state of decadence, that is essentially in self-estrangement, "uneigentlich". In such a case a man is in process of losing himself, denying himself, betraying himself, falling away from himself.

In Jasper's philosophy the world is the theatre, or also the arena of human activity. But not in such a way that the telos of man's activity is in this world. He is not in the world *in order to* be in the world, but he is in the world for something else, he is in it to stand aloof from it, and he finds his telos in the transcending, the world-transcending act of the experience of being, which cannot be brought about unless the world "disappears", becomes "transparent", and the "Vergewisserung" on the *Transcendent* befalls man in the tragic defeat.

And however highly Sartre may value the corporeality of man, this does not alter the fact that the "essence" of human existence is to Sartre an annihilation of being, an annihilation which also corporeality cannot escape. Moreover, also with Sartre the idea of transcendence renders the telos, the destiny of man. For Sartre, too, it is the central idea of the typically human existence. Only by way of annihilation of existence can a man be faithful to the call of transcendence, and this transcendence is nothing else, nothing less—or rather—nothing more than the useless passion of self-deification, of the conscious striving after an illusion whose character is clearly understood. An illusion and a striving, leaving the world of being behind them.

Man is distance, keeping distance, creating distance.

This fundamental idea is of decisive importance for the views of these thinkers on culture.

For culture, in so far as it is not considered as cultural activity, is always result, effect, product of a human, controlling formative power, guided by unhampered imagination, or in other words: led by a previous free design, by human counsel. As such it is characterized by the historical aspects of our reality. For the culture-forming power of man the natural becomes the material, the object shapable and to be shaped. Only under the aspect of a finality, an objective and consequently of a free design is man capable of acting creatively in the natural aspects of reality, and of creating culturally. Thus no house was ever built without previous human imagination, design, objective and subsequent shaping, formative activity.

In so far now as culture is not produced by ourselves, but as a result of precious activity by ourselves or by others, stands as it were before us, it belongs according to the basic view of the existential philosophers referred to, to the "world", in which man moves as existence. This means, it does not belong to us *intrinsically*, but is at most the situation, the tradition (Jaspers) in which we find ourselves existing, but which in principle we shall have to transcend so as not to become the victims of inner self-alienation by exterioration. Culture exists to be conquered. He who makes traditional culture his habitation, who is at home in it, lives essentially in a condition of decadence (Heidegger), has stumbled on the way to the Transcendent (Jaspers), has instead of the unprotectedness in the pursuit of the Illusion entrenched himself in false security and objectivities and is "de mauvaise foi" (Sartre).

Culture is a menace, a temptation, a snare to man rather than a gift, a boon, a service to him. We are to *warn* one another above all against culture. Since it is "past" ("Gewesenes", Heidegger), "tradition" (Jaspers), "facticité" (Sartre), it is a temptation to ensconce oneself in it, instead of keeping aloof from it and transcending it. It is there for us to move through rather than to use, to be *replaced* rather than to be accepted gratefully. It can only be appreciated as "pièce de résistance". As soon as man loses this original distance of his towards culture, he has come to belong to it and is alienated from himself.

Man-in-the-world, therefore, at the same time man menaced by the world, challenged by the world. Cultural man is the challenged man who is attacked, and if not, if he lives his life as cultural man and is absorbed by culture, he is lost, fallen away from himself. Cultural

man can only hold his own as cultural man if he keeps transcending himself incessantly, and conquers his past, his tradition, his "facticité", i. e. conquers himself as man of definite culture.

There is no culture but it is there to be conquered. There is no culture but is a temptation to man to be "zu Hause" in it. The *revolutionary* attitude is the only *legitimate attitude* towards all existing *culture*. The conservative one is on the other hand radically wrong. Not so much because a certain culture might have its defects and deficiencies, which are not to be preserved, but only because fundamentally all culture has to be thrown into the crisis, and because the cultural crisis is the human call par excellence. Here one of two alternatives has to be faced: it is either man in the crisis and betray human nature, or culture in the crisis, and serve it. Man is amiss when in his opinion it is all well with culture, culture is at fault when it is all well with man.

This dialectic in the relation between man and culture will in its radical character become clearer still when we pay due consideration to the concepts of *freedom* and *contingency* in existential philosophy.

The *concept of freedom* links up this philosophy *inter alia* with idealistic philosophy, both that of Kant and the great German idealists (Hegel, Fichte, Schelling) and that of the Neo-Idealism of the Baden School (Rickert, Windelband).

When Immanuel Kant distinguishes theoretical and practical *Vernunft*, and sharply keeps the provinces of each of them apart, he wishes to give natural science its full rights, but in its own domain and its own boundaries. And he does this in order to accord a place to *faith*, faith, that is, in the rational and moral freedom of man, in the ethical autonomy of man. The domain of man's moral life of freedom ought not to be examined by scientific thought scientifically and should certainly not be under scientific control. This is not permissible and in his opinion it is impossible. Only "praktische *Vernunft*" rules supreme there, which is at all events not of a theoretical nature.

Fichte, in his philosophy of freedom, going beyond Kant, placed this belief in "practical *Vernunft*" foremost in his system; he leaves no place at all for a theoretical *Vernunft* independent of the rational, moral self-realization of man. "Das Ich setzt sich selbst *und* das Nicht-Ich". All reality is a creation of the praktische *Vernunft*, also the Nicht-Ich. It derives its meaning from the free, creative, self-realization of the moral personality, and its existence is justified as being

the "material for duty". It is no pole with its own power and meaning overagainst the moral social subjectivity and its self-realization, for it finds its origin in the practical Vernunft, in the rational moral subjectivity of man, in "das Ich". Human culture is, therefore, in this idealistic philosophy entirely under the aegis of the moral selfrealization of man. With regard to its existence a crisis is out of the question. The creation of culture is justified and warranted as a manner of moral self-realization of man. In the philosophy of values of the Baden School, however, a radical change takes place, and a weakening of this rationalistic moralistic "humanity" concept, which explains reality wholly from human rational moral subjectivity and justifies it in its relevance to humanity and with reality also all cultural activities and results. Whereas in the old idealism human "Vernunft" was central and dominant, this is no longer the case in the philosophy of values. The "value" concept replaces the idea of Vernunft. "Reasonableness" is again forced back and entirely reserved for science and theoretical philosophy. But the a-theoretical Values of religion, art und morals are said to be values which can no longer lay claim to *truth*, since they are a-rational. The human imparting of sense, culture is a free creation of man. But this freedom is also, and particularly, being free from reason; Freedom is no longer rational and consequently the greater part of human culture is not rational either. Only philosophy and special sciences are rational culture still. In a gigantic struggle Rickert tries to save the theoretical purity, objectivity, efficiency, neutrality and the general validity of the theoretical value of Truth from the menace of the other a-theoretical values. Only the idea of a "splendid isolation" will bring a solution. But the price paid for it is very high indeed, since theory and practice, philosophy and life will henceforth intrinsically be perfect strangers to one another. The whole practice of life and also the whole of cultural life—the field of theoretical culture, that of science and philosophy excepted—occupies a free and independent position beside and often overagainst philosophic theoretical thought and that of the special sciences. The sense and meaning of the non-theoretical cultural areas is beyond all reasonableness and thereby also beyond the control and guidance of science.

The *philosophy of life* heralds an entirely different attitude. It will also deprive theoretical thought of its independence and accord science and philosophy a place in life, with Dilthey more particularly a place in spiritual life and subordinate and subservient to it.

Dilthey himself fought a lifelong struggle with regard to the question

whether priority was due to the theoretical science of history, *historica* or to history itself. Inwardly in doubt he was often not able to accord priority to the one or the other, and his position was often one of 'given and take', or he fell into obvious circular reasoning. Historical conceptualization arises from historical life, although it should not be identified with it. Ultimately he had no doubt lost his heart to *historica*, and to theoretical historical reason, wherefore he may not improperly still be classed with the neo-positivists. But with all this nobody has contributed so much to the rise and domination of historicism as Dilthey has.

This means in the first place to the *relativism of science*. And just because in making scientific reason absolute, belief in human reason had as a last resource taken recourse to the Neo-Idealists such as Rickert and Windelband, the relativation of science in scientific philosophy means no less than the end of rationalism and the beginning of irrationalism. Of Kant's proud building of autonomous, objective, neutral Vernunft which he had declared to be of general validity, not a stone was on end, practical Vernunft having, moreover, been given another meaning: irrational praxis, life, the deed, the irrational cultural act and cultural creations. Reason, scientific reason first of all, had been dethroned. She had to put up with the humble position of hand-maiden to a culture which, on having sprung from non-rational sources, authoritatively went its own way and forced its will upon philosophy and practical science to such an extent that theoretical thought was said never to be intrinsically capable of adequately forming value-free judgements rising *beyond the spirit of its own time*. The validity of the judgement of philosophy and special science was limited to the domain of culture and of the cultural period within which philosophic and scientific thought moved. Its validity was essentially "historisch beding" (conditioned historically). They were mere phenomena of culture and their validity reached no further than the phase of the cultural area to which they belonged. For Dilthey this "historisches Bewusstsein" was the royal road to man's self-deliverance, since—when necessary and desirable—he was now able, out of this 'historical consciousness' as being historical and *therefore* relative, to deprive everything that presented itself to man authoritatively, and with a claim to universal validity, of its authoritative power. And this was of immense significance.

For Dilthey had, as historicist, reduced the whole of human spiritual life, not least religion, to cultural phenomena. The key to "under-

standing" the totality of man he had placed into the hands of the historian, because he had historified the existence, the "essence" of man. Man *is* his history, *is* his culture. His culture is his being, his variable constant. Philosophic and religious selfknowledge of man coincided with an insight into his own cultural life and with cultural philosophy.

We stated already that for Dilthey himself this insight was in the first instance a deliverance, even to such an extent that with him there could be no question of a crisis of culture. On the contrary, culture was the be-all and the end-all.

But the destructive effects of this "culturism" were not slow to appear. The immanent teleology of "life", cultural life, did not know a single constant standard beyond life. If not in individualism—the philosophy of life is rather universalistic than individualistic—this had to end in complete subjectivism. For now that reason had been banished, the last norm to hold a position of independent superiority over human subjectivity, had to these 19th century thinkers been sent into the desert. Since then the problem of standards, man's sense of norms and his founding his consciousness on something else than on the complete subjectivity of man has become acute. *And with it culture and man's cultural activity turned adrift.* Here lies one of the roots of the present crisis of culture. If—as is the case in the philosophy of life, and as appears terrifyingly in Nietzsche's glorification of power, of the powerful deed, as a free human creation finding its justification in *itself* and in the increase of its power—if any human formative activity, having the power to win through and to come to domination, is by this very fact qualified as real culture, and the aim of cultural activity is merely held to be the increase of its power and its superiority, then an undisciplined culture, a bold, nay a daemonic culture can in no way be exposed any longer as inwardly antinomous and then we are, irretrievably and helplessly, in for a struggle for power which need no longer shun any weapon whatever. The idea of the self-justification of culture, which finds its right in its own existence, and in its own continuance and expansion its unlimited duty, can in principle be put on a level with the deepest crisis of culture, if not with the beginning of its undoing.

But where is help to be obtained if—as is the case with all historicism—in advance already, it is as dogma, as "historisches Bewusstsein" an established fact that science, morality, religion and the whole of man's spiritual life are themselves nothing else than culture, and

accordingly "historisch bedingt" and that they are inwardly powerless and helpless against the course taken by any culture? For then they are themselves already on board the ship of culture and sail on it without being able to determine the route in the slightest degree. We do not steer, but are being steered, and only find limited scope for our activities, in the course of things, fixed without any act on our part. And a task which of inherent necessity must be serviceable to the trend of that culture.

If I see well, in historicism and especially in the historicalist philosophy of life, the ideas of contingency and freedom are as good as synonymous. Freedom is contingent, and the contingent is free. Freedom is contingent, i. e. she is non-reasonable; her structure is not constant; she is her own possibility; she finds her own possibility, just as culture is private ground and has her own potentialities of power. Under the history-forming power and expansion of power of the free deed of culture no ground can be discovered for reason; apart from the free, and consequently rationally inappreciable origin of human culture-creating action, she is purely fortuitous. Her "facticité" finds no other justification but in her "facticité": she *is* there; she *is power*, she confirms herself. Why? Just because, i. e. for no reason whatever! Just chance; contingent. That any culture, that the cultivation of sciences in Western Europe, that Western system of law, Western morality and customs, Western Christianity are as they are, is purely accidental. They might also have been quite different. And they would in that case be equally meaningful and as unjustifiably justified by their existence, their presence by their factual domination. The historically developed "form" of historical culture is purely contingent.

With equal justice, however, it can also be stated that *the contingent is free*. For in this historicism of culture the existing and ruling culture happens to find her glory in her unhampered potentialities of expansion. The rulers of a culture are in this under no commitments whatever and under no pledge to anybody or anything; *they have the power*. The power of culture is power of freedom, is sovereign power. The rulers of a culture are at liberty to mobilise law and morality, religion and art, the press and the army, man and community, and steer them in the direction of their own, sovereign pleasure. Here there is not even the idea of a crisis of culture, for here there is nothing else but the worship of the power of culture and the rulers of culture.

The contingent ruler, organizer, leader, culture-planner is man, free man. The contingent, the "facticité" is free, is sovereign.

It is but a step from historicism to nihilism, since the idea of contingency dominating in historicism is in itself already a nihilistic idea. To the historicist contingency has another meaning than, for instance, to Leibnitz. Leibnitz distinguished contingent truths and eternal rational truths, *vérités de fait* and *vérités de raison*. The *vérités de fait* could in their factuality not be explained from the *vérités de raison*, but this did not alter the fact that as "truths" they were more than "factuality", more than naked, brutal and bold factuality, as according to Leibnitz they at least possessed a "ratio sufficiens" for their factuality, a sufficient *ground*. This is, however, not so in historicism. There "contingency" means the same as "without ground", arbitrary, lawless, irrational. The contingent does not offer a single hold and has no inner meaning. In no way does it rise beyond its brutal presence, and has not a single explanation to offer for its existence. It might as well not have existed.

As soon, therefore, as this idea of the contingent begins to dominate in the idea of culture and in the philosophy of culture, irrationality forces its way into the idea of culture like a flood, and culture is experienced as being inundated, as it were, with lawlessness and steeped in it. Its "being" has no axiological, and—at bottom—no religious priority over its "non-being". The reason why this is so ominous for the conception of man and the self-picture he designs of himself is that historicism identifies man with his culture. A nihilistic anthropology then follows closely upon the heels of a nihilistic view of culture.

The only thing in this conception of culture and man still offering some ground to escape this total nihilism and relativism is the *idea of liberty, human skill and ingenuity, human power*. Being contingent, freedom may be as she is and accordingly identical with her historical situation; the historicist philosophy of life has on the other hand no less emphasized the *freedom* of the contingent, the *human* character of culture and history. The "situation", the "phase" and area of culture is liable to free human formative activity and a resultant of a human free act of power. Man is master, also of his situation, also of history, also of culture, and his rule is a creative one, for according to Dilthey this is the gain bestowed upon us in the "historisches Bewusstsein". With it he dominates, not only the future of culture, but he is also

the "dominus", the creative ruler of his own future-being. Culture and man have a *free* future, and are as such unpredictable, undefinable, elusive, unknowable, surprising, ever new, endowed with the gift of eternal youth. Therein is the sense of man and culture. Freedom is creative freedom, being-man is being creator, culture is "Neu-Formung", "Neu-Gestaltung", self-creation of man. Nihilism and cult of freedom contend for supremacy in this historicism, and each of them wants to say the final word. The ground-less and sense-less contingent and grounding, sense-creating freedom *both* determine man as well as culture. In this idea of contingency there is always again the idea of the inanity of man and culture, the radical idea of culture is the crisis of man, whereas in principle this idea of freedom presents the self-adoration of man, and the glorification, nay deification of culture. Daemonization and deification: both are fully, in their entirety and radically present.

Inherent necessity makes it impossible in the long run for daemonization and deification to remain in a state of unstable equilibrium. Thus it is that in the view of culture of existential philosophy to-day we are confronted by a radical change in the mutual relationship between the ideas of contingency and freedom referred to above. It is true, the existential philosopher also subscribes to the basic principle of historicism: "Man is history". Nor is the existential philosopher averse from historicizing all typically human life. In my opinion Sartre outbids historicism to a considerable extent by historicizing also the organic being of man and making it in some way dependent on free human power of disposition and organizational activity.

But with all this, historicism in the existential version undergoes a qualitative transformation. For the existentialist introduces a division, a separation between cultural life and the human mode of being and assumes a fundamental inherent difference between the philosophy of culture and anthropological ontology (ontological anthropology) so that when the existentialist says that man is his (cultural) history, he only refers to an indirect identity and that he will strongly oppose the view that this identity judgement can be reversed, asserting that cultural history comprises the whole of man.

In the second place the ideas of contingency and freedom are quite familiar to and frequently used by existentialist as well as cultural historicist. But not in the same way and in the same sense. For the anthropological idea of freedom of the existentialist makes freedom an *inner* human mode of being and act of being which is not contained

within culture, cultural life and the creation of power producing culture, but which has to be found *behind* it: the freedom of the inner *potentiality* of starting the work of forming culture. Not the cultural *work*, but creative imagination preceding the *execution* of cultural *work*, not as yet technical hand-operation of some material, but only playing as it were with material possibly to be formed in historical imagination, in the project, the "Entwurf", this is really *existential life* and the province of sovereign, human freedom.

The idea of contingency in its essence, on the other hand, is entirely reserved for historical culture, the being, the past, "the world". It is "facticité", "das Seiende", "das Dasein". Typical in this respect is e. g. Jaspers' idea of free philosophizing. According to him this is at bottom without object and without content. And that, because it is *free*. "Objective" culture, on the other hand, is purely contingent, deprived of freedom, controllable and an object of control. Culture no longer dominates, but the inner freedom of man *dominates* over culture.

In the fourth place the problems of existential philosophy are the combination: *Man in the world*. This being-in-the-world is the apparently impossible unity of freedom and contingency, impossible since it is subversive of man and world. Man, who is free and because of his freedom imparts sense and meaning to things, finds himself in a contingent and therefore "sense-disturbing", sense-destroying world. Sovereign man is placed in an essentially refractory, uncontrollable and unmanageable world. Freedom and contingency have become here the two repelling poles which mutually exclude one another, and human cultural work is the crisis of man as well as of culture. The crisis of man: his cultural work is an impossible task, a task which is bound to result in a fiasco, a failure, in defeat. For as soon as it is detached from the blood-warm, spontaneous inner free designing of man, the result will immediately be a merely contingent antipole against human free mode of being. Defence and resistance. *Congeaed humanity*, which as such becomes a temptation to human self-realisation, to the inner act of freedom to *estrangle from* itself and to escape into this created "culture", to be absorbed in this "world", have one's home there, to "provide", to live on what one has, to become bourgeois, to congeal, to curdle and to clot.

Culture is one half of the human mode of being and as such the least important. For man, the uncompleted and incompletable unity in the sense of the continuous and never to be completed *activity to unite*

of the inner, significant act of freedom and contingent, inane "outside" world is equal to the *history* of this unifying activity, and as history of this activity he is inwardly as alien to its result as he is to non-human outward reality. He is not able to dominate over culture, or only in so far as in a revolutionary spirit he receives and transforms existing culture into an ever new activity of unification. And so in infinitum. Therefore this activity towards unification is a relationship of *tension*. Essentially man is on strained terms with all culture, because of his being-man and on account of the nature of the "outside" world, to which also all culture belongs. It is the relationship of tension between freedom and contingency, which cannot be conquered and by which culture can never be adequately incorporated into human existence. Man in the world: this means struggle, strife, tension, and alienism; it is: Freedom in contingency; fire in water! an antithesis which cannot pass into synthesis.

Existential philosophy is, in its way, a philosophy of crisis. In the first place it is a philosophy of the crisis of *man*, of human certainties, of man-in-the-world. As such it is best known, professed and attacked more than any other.

For existential philosophy wishes to be a call, wishes to call man back from every way in which he is in the world, also in the world of culture, and to point out to him that as soon as he sees himself as a man of culture and experiences and feels himself to be so, he is estranged from authentic humanity and has fallen into the unauthentic mode of being. The "immanent teleology" of the cultural man of Dilthey, who is to be completely identified with his past culture and his cultural creation, cultural immanent man is *defeated* man. Dilthey's historicism then only holds for "unauthentic" man who never gets down to true humanity and gets entangled in a false image and is deceived by it.

Such a man has fallen a prey to inanity.

But for the existential philosopher the same thing holds good of him who gives himself completely, heart and soul to cultural activity and seeks the meaning of his life in culture-creating activity.

This is the inevitable result of a radical change of interests with the existentialist. For him the question: How do we establish a satisfactory culture? is a question of secondary importance, even a *temptation*, which, indeed, he is not to try to avert by prayer—there is for such a belief in God no room with Jaspers, Heidegger or Sartre—but which he is to overcome from his own inner strength (in Jaspers' terminology:

"origin"). For the dominating question, the only interest known by the existential philosopher is: How do I form myself to be the new man? *Self-interest* is the religious dogma of the existentialist. The "self", seen as complete freedom and being released from every tie to the *contingent*.

As early as the nineteenth century the theme of the *self-estrangement* of man is repeatedly heard. Dilthey seeks the self-deliverance from self-estrangement as the "*historisches Bewusstsein*"; Feuerbach and Marx "preached" self-estrangement both as fruit and as root of the belief in God; Kierkegaard inveighs against "bourgeois" Christianity as self-estrangement from existential inwardness and "infinity dialectic" of the personality. And existential philosophy cannot be understood without this theme of the struggle against man's self-estrangement from the primary and dominant, thoroughly (ir)religious theme of man's self-interest.

In spite of all cultural *pessimism* there prevails among all existentialists an "unverfroren" optimistic faith in *man*. It belongs to the true worth of man that he can find no other ideal, no other destiny than in himself and in *self-cultivation*. The only true culture is the self-culture of man. A *self-cultivation* born and nourished from the *self-cult* of man. The "woraufhin" is himself, the "self" of man. Man stands in a certain relation to himself, and this relationship goes deeper than his relation to the "outside" world. "Man-in-the-world" is the man who stands in a certain relation to himself, before being in some relation in the world and to the world. He who forgets the latter or neglects it, takes from existentialism what distinguishes it from the philosophy of life. Human existence is transcendence, it means to transcend life and culture. And this is because existential philosophy professes a dynamic in the nucleus of human existence, a dynamic of man transcending *himself*. Man en route for his future self has the destiny, ontologically founded, of always transcending his own innerness and a fortiori of always transcending a certain activity to unite his own innerness with the outside world, in the direction towards his own future, to his own "more" self, as self-perfection.

In this self-perfection and self-culture man is inwardly and essentially interested. This self-perfection it is, and it alone, which is the eschatological telos of human existence. No existential philosophy but it handles this idea of self-transcendence as autonomous and "selbstherrliche" human activity creating human dignity as the last norm,

as human destiny and as the central idea of anthropology. Human culture stands *behind* cultural history studied by the historian of culture. Human history stands *behind* the history studied by the historian. It stands *behind* it and *above* it; it proceeds as the inside of human existence, outside the external and outward "phases" of cultural history. At best it "meets" cultural history. Therefore the anthropologist is another than the historian, and the anthropological biographer another than the historiographer.

At the same time a shift has taken place in what is to form the object of interest and hereby cultural history is largely sucked dry and declared to be void of interest. Interesting in the sense of decisive is not culture, nor is it cultural history and cultural science. The interest lies in what is enacted *behind* culture and its history: the history of the human self-design, of the free internal human decisions, in the inner human area of existence that is before and outside culture. "Man as history" is man-at-a-distance from the world of culture, at a distance from his own "being-in-the-world"; it is man who transcends his own being-in-the-world, indeed himself, permanently, and who is en route to his own future *self*-being. As history he is precisely *not* "of" the world, and certainly not "for" the world, and in consequence by no means of or for the historian, but only of or for a philosophical anthropologist, not least for the philosophizing *psychiatrist*. The internal history of the creative, free shaping of his own self-image, his own self-project, is the real existential history of man. The behaviour, the attitude, the constitution and the history of it, the "Entscheidung", decision to adopt this attitude is the "essence" of human existence. Included, too, is the attitude and "decision" of free existence in respect of the "history" of the meeting of this self-projection with the—subordinate to it—activity of uniting existence and contingent situation, of man's own existence and his own contingent being-in-the-world which is in truth not that man is in the world, respectively that he is cultural man, but it is, indeed, that man's being-in-the-world is *in* man, in his "consciousness" (Sartre), in his "Entscheidungsmacht" (Jaspers); a potentiality of his inner selfbeing and power of being-himself (Jaspers); an "Existenzial" of the human mode of being (Heidegger). Not the being-in-the-world is the interesting thing, but the "being-in-man" of one's own being-in-the-world is the only object of interest. Objective cultural history and culture realization only touch the outward side of human existence. Culture is only an outward part, an externalization and therefore "an und für sich" extremely

unimportant. Only in that this external human mode of being has been incorporated into man's inner being, in that culture has been *subjectivized* and has been "appropriated and embodied in his own mode of being" for the purpose of transcending and defeating this "contingent side", can a second or third rate place be assigned still to culture.

From this angle the average attitude of man is typified by existential philosophy as an attitude in defeat, as a phenomenon of decadence. For average man takes a lively interest in culture. His whole existence is "Sorge und Fürsorge", a "Besorgend und fürsorgend in-der-Welt-sein", and by this, by this pragmatic attitude to life he is so much pre-occupied that he "forgets" in his flight from himself, that he stands in relationship to himself, and has to be, not in the first place cultural man, but first of all man of self-perfection. He is, unfortunately, interested in culture, instead of the building up of his own inner personality, his own future free self, which transcends all culture, at most using it and rejecting it as a transition stage.

For the philosophy of culture and for the anthropology of existentialism nothing is so illuminating and decisive as its doctrine of *antithesis*. Nothing reveals so clearly and convincingly the religious character and foundation of existential philosophy as does this doctrine. The antithesis between authentic and unauthentic man, between *Selbst-Sein* and self-disloyalty, and correlated with it the doctrine of man in the state of decadence, man "de mauvaise foi". It is the antithesis between the man of the self-interest, which "disinterests" every other interest, and the man of culture-interest: interest in technè, technical and other sciences, morals, system of law, social welfare, religion. For all these domains—the existential philosopher uncritically accepts here the historification and relativation of total man, also of his religion, and morals, as was done by historicism—belong to the essentially relative spheres, since they are *outward* and historic-cultural. The religion of self-interest surpasses the whole of culture and makes it relative. And where this self-cult in this existentialist sense does not take place, a man must in the eyes of the existentialist in religious disloyalty have fallen away from himself, and given himself up to culture worship. He has become the prisoner of the power of culture, the deserter of freedom, the guilty slave of the contingent world. He is in the world, whereas the world is not in *him*. And he has silenced his conscience. He is the bourgeois man, the bourgeois prisoner of the society of which he is a member, of positive

religion, to which he gave himself up without defence, of conventional ethics, which suffers public opinion to rule over him tyrannically. He has given up his own freedom to his own contingent situation. In other words *culture has become his crisis*, because he has refused *to be the crisis of culture himself*. Culture is his narcotic, because he refused, awake and vigilant at the altar of self-cult, to be interested only in his own future self and his own self-image. He is estranged from himself and, so far as this is possible, has deprived himself of himself.

In the meantime existential philosophy holds to the idea that man, also free man, the man of self-culture and of the self-project, somehow depends on the contingent world, in which he moves as "outside" world.

Man *is* in the world, and however much this *being-in-the-world* is itself contained in man and as such becomes innerness, nevertheless the existential philosopher with dialectic consistency at the same time fully upholds the independent function of "outside world", „situation", "culture" and non-human mode of being.

Thus with Sartre contingent reality is the only being; the human, subjective pole of freedom, on the other hand, "le néant" and the self-realization of man can in his opinion only be accomplished as annihilation. Man is a hole in being and has his home in being. With Jaspers the self-transcendence of man in the direction towards the Transcendent cannot take place but in the world, and that particularly in the historical cultural world in which man is "hic et nunc". Without tradition no self-transcendence. And with Heidegger (in "Sein und Zeit) man, conscious of his freedom-to-death, returns to the reality of the Being, to be occupied in it" *sorgend und besorgend*", albeit also with the knowledge that this cultural activity is only of a relative value and ultimately immaterial, so that a boundless tolerance with regard to events *in* the world characterizes 'authentic' man.

The way of self-transcendence runs right across culture, its heritage and its new creations. Thus authentic man is at the same time both the crisis of culture and the man who shapes culture, the guardian of the patrimony of culture (Jaspers) and the man who in his inner nature keeps aloof from it, identical with his body and corporeality (Sartre) and distinct from it, inclined towards the world and to culture and inwardly free from it. With Heidegger this ambivalent relationship is then more specifically heroic-tragic, with Jaspers patient-tragic, with Sartre illusionistic-tragic. The oneness of being-in-the-world and of

the being-in-man of his being-in-the-world is a oneness of an infinitely tragic endeavour, in which man on the one hand in full freedom determines his own destiny and future, and on the other is as it were fettered to the cultural situation.

If culture does not become his crisis, he becomes thanks to his inner existential freedom the crisis of culture. And, even if Heidegger may with some justice be said to be the grave-digger of West European culture, it cannot be denied that Heidegger's nihilistic doctrine of death lives by the grace of the human act of culture: an act digging, indeed, the grave of all culture, but being itself accomplished again as *deed of culture*. Even as the crisis of culture, man is and remains "doomed" to be cultural man, and as "being-in-the-world" to transcend himself. As soon as this "being-in-the-world" disappears entirely, all human existence vanishes. The ideal of selftranscendence and culture-transcendence is an unattainable ideal, and, when reached is also the end of human existence (Jaspers). In order that the "being-in-the-world" shall be *in* man, it is necessary that man should be in the world. Here we can hear as it were Nietzsche's: "Brüder, seid der Erde treu" sound through the whole of existential philosophy.

And yet, the only real danger menacing this philosophy, comes indirectly from culture. Culture may become the crisis, nay the grave of man. And for the average man culture, his technical skill, his religion, his morals, his political life, his art-life, his being pragmatically occupied with the cares of life, are indeed nothing else but his grave.

Existential philosophy has set itself the task of waking cultural man from this death. It wishes to be a call, nothing less, and never fails to add: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear".

Whatever results from this philosophy, it certainly is not a *joy* in human cultural work. No joy in labour. No delight in technical skill or in science. Existential philosophers are rather cultural desperadoes (Beerling). Their "doctrine of life" does not reach its goal so long as culture is not distrusted as a temptation and a menace, an attempt on humanity, and so long as man does not set himself the task of being the crisis of culture himself.

This is the only note of optimism in this view of man and culture. Fortunately man *can* be the crisis of culture. He can be *in* the world, not of the world. Let him be it. Let him "stand fast in liberty" above the contingent "Umwelt", from which he cannot detach himself. And

let him teach himself and others, only to be himself, only to take an interest in his own realization of this "being himself", and to keep culture, also his own cultural work inwardly at a distance. Let him keep his heart for himself and himself alone. As Dr. Smit has rightly observed, existential philosophy is at bottom anti-historistic and therefore also anti-cultural.

Now in this respect the very existence of culture is menaced, for this modern, radically subjectivistic self-cult of man, which considers the designing of man's self-image, which always transcends all concrete culture, to be the only true human cultural task, undermines and weakens the religious bond and ties of man to culture and to the cultural task. This modern form of self-centralization of man leads to a self-violation, a "self-scorching" of man and thus to a crisis of culture. For the ontology of existentialist philosophy has violated the *religious* totalitarian view of man and the world, because the being of the being is with the existentialists a mere word, being as it is no longer knows a religious significant unity between the being of man and the being of the world. Free existence and contingent world reality break up and are intrinsically alien and hostile to one another. In the existentialist idea of freedom man binds himself to himself, and this to the detriment of the world in which he lives. Man's function of freedom has completely been made absolute here. Near this idol true culture cannot bloom. And cultural *service*, the call to work do not thrive here. At best the cultural work of cultural life can be appreciated here as a necessary evil and as a regrettably unavoidable, although not understandable, contingent and tragic means to an end which makes this culture and the historical existence of man relative and undoes it. This is bound to happen because it is inevitable that when man places himself in the centre as object of cult and worship, the religious totalitarian view should be marred and the result is a gulf which can only exist by the grace of the breaking up of human existence into dialectically opposite poles.

The last century has been called a century without God. Although fully aware of the danger there is of concluding this essay by giving the appearance of "exploiting" God as a *Deus ex machina*, I cannot but see this menace to the serious and joyful surrender of man to tradition and his own cultural work as the inevitable consequence of the process of saecularisation that made the glory of man immanent to man and overrated it to such an extent that no room was

left for God any longer, for His creation, His guidance and His redemption. He who makes God superfluous, makes himself impossible, for he prevents himself in theory and practice from leaving man and the world in their proper place. In a unity given by God and maintained by Him, a unity of man and the world, of personal life-story and cultural history of mankind, he makes it impossible for himself to find his own task and vocation not in himself, but in the God Who placed man in the world in order that in loving service he might employ his own historic freedom in the execution of a cultural task which not only makes it worth while to work and to plan, but also causes it to be an inexpressible punishment, particularly for human nature, to be cast loose from his cultural vocation or sentenced to an intrinsically inane task in life. The self-interest of man is fatal to all joy of work. The true service of God, on the other hand, is the only source of a "labour service" in which faith, hope and charity grant peace on earth to man and the world.

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