

Whitehead says: "Philosophy is the attempt to make manifest the fundamental evidence as to the nature of things. . . . The aim of philosophy is sheer disclosure. . . . Our lives are passed in the experience of disclosure. As we lose this sense of disclosure, we are shedding the mode of functioning which is the soul. We are descending to mere conformity with the average of the past. Complete conformity means the loss of life" (*Modes of Thought*: 67, 87).

If my interpretation of "Heidegger's existentialism" is at all right, however, he's evidently explicating much the same fundamental insight—not only formally, with respect to his understanding of philosophy itself as ontology and ontology as phenomenology, but also materially, with respect to his understanding of human existence. Consider, e.g., the following:

[M]an's finitude, as Heidegger sees it, is not only the limitation of his temporality in time; his being is also radically limited in space. Man's world, as comprising the other beings to which he is essentially and really related, never coincides with the totality of beings as such, but is always a restricted phenomenal field bounded by an external environment. The reason for this . . . is that man's having a world at all is grounded not in his openness to possibility as such, but in his being necessarily confined to some specific range of possibilities inherited from his finite past and projected into his finite future. Thus man's relatedness to others is itself relative. He does not participate in them fully, as they are in themselves, but is in principle required to encounter them under the perspectives imposed by his own particular projects of self-understanding. Naturally, in his average, everyday existence, man is not fully conscious of this spatial limitation of his world and, in fact, hides from himself the situational character of the 'truth' (*Wahrheit*) constituted by his highly restricted encounters with others. He treats other things and persons as the mere objects of his own finite appreciations, and so 'falls' (*verfällt*) or succumbs to his world by absolutizing its limitations. As authentic existence, however, man acknowledges that the truth in which he stands is always a relative truth, and he holds himself open for ever new encounters with others whose being in themselves transcends their being for him as objects in his world. Although as a man, he must continue to exist within his world and may always succumb to a new bondage to it, his authenticity consists in being dialectically free from it, and therefore free for both himself and the other beings that make up the environment beyond him (*The Reality of God*: 154 f.).

And also the parallel passage discussing what, in Heidegger's view, is "the most common and typical human reaction" to the experience of finitude, i.e., "anxiety":

[O]ne reaction to this anxiety . . . is to flee from it, to try to suppress one's awareness of one's radical finitude by existing as though one were not finite. Thus, for example, despite the fact that our relatedness to our world is always relative, we typically hide from ourselves the situational character of the 'truth'

(*Wahrheit*) constituted by our radically restricted encounters with others. . . . We treat other things and persons as the mere objects of our own finite appreciations, and so 'fall' or succumb to our world by absolutizing its limitations. Or, again, we try to evade the fact of our own having to die by talking about death as something that happens only in general—not to this unique individual or that but to an anonymous 'one' (*das Man*). . . . *I* do not die, but *one* dies—someday, far away in the future. Furthermore this attempt to suppress one's awareness of one's real situation is a social conspiracy already well underway before anyone of us as an individual arrives on the scene and is tempted to succumb to it. Indeed, on Heidegger's view, the privileged part of my world made up of my fellow human beings is ordinarily and for the most part simply one grand conspiracy to evade the threat of nothingness by creating and maintaining the world of everydayness. Every thing and person has its proper place—namely, the place assigned to it by the ideas and values of the relevant social-cultural group, its language and institutions; and the rules of conventional behavior in force in the group relieve one of the responsibility of making one's own free decisions in face of the novel demands of the moment ("Heidegger's Existentialism": 11).

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