

## The being-with of being-there

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**Abstract** In *Being and Time*, Heidegger affirms that being-with or *Mitsein* is an essential constitution of Dasein but he does not submit this existential to the same rigorous analyses as other existentials. In this essay, Jean-Luc Nancy points to the different places where Heidegger erased the possibility of thinking an essential *with* that he himself opened. This erasure is due, according to Nancy, to the subordination of *Mitsein* to a thinking of the proper and the improper. The polarization of Being-with between an improper face, the *Anyone*, and a proper one, the *people*, which is also, as Nancy shows, a polarization between everydayness and historicity, between a being-together in exteriority (indifference and anonymity) and a being-together in interiority (union through destiny), between a solitary dying and the sacrificial death in combat, leaves the essential *with* unthought. This essay shows not only the tensions that arise out of Heidegger's own analyses of *Mitsein* and affect the whole of *Being and Time* but also underlines in the end a "shortfall in thinking" inherent not only to

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A slightly different version has been published under the title "L'être-avec de l'être-là" in *Lieu-Dit* 19 "Communauté" (Spring 2003). All additions in square brackets are the translators' unless otherwise indicated. The German words in parentheses are Nancy's additions. For the translation of citations from *Being and Time*, we have used the Macquarrie & Robinson's translation which we have modified only when constrained by Nancy himself. Overall, we have tried to be faithful to the Heideggerian tone of Nancy's text by using the accepted English translation of the central concepts of *Being and Time*. When we depart from the accepted translations, it is to remain true to Nancy's paraphrases, emphases, and displacements. For example, we refrain from using "authentic" and "inauthentic."

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Heidegger's work but, as Nancy claims, to our Western tradition, a shortfall which Nancy has attempted to remedy in his *Being Singular Plural*.

**Keywords** Martin Heidegger · Being and time · Mitsein · Being-with · Community · The people · Death · Destiny

Under this title, whose ridiculousness I fully assume, I would like to draw the reader's attention to the following problem: Heidegger's *Dasein*, also known to the English speaker as "Being-there," entails by its definition the constitutive, or primordial, property of Being at the same time "Being-with" (*Mitsein*). More precisely, Heidegger introduces the term *Mitdasein* (literally "Being-there-with"). The latter does not evoke anything in the mind of the reader unfamiliar with *Being and Time*, and the former probably only rings a faint bell. Indeed, despite the fact that both concepts are duly attested and repeated throughout this work, they do not belong to the usually fraught imagery of its "system" or of its "economy" (unlike, in addition to *Dasein*, terms like "care," "anxiety," "world," "Being-towards-death," etc.). This circumstance is not accidental: it stems from the text itself. Despite the presence of the terms *Mitsein* and *Mitdasein* in the text, no lengthy or rigorous analyses of the concepts are provided as in the case of the main concepts—far from it. Yet, *Mitsein* and *Mitdasein* are posited as co-essential to *Dasein*'s essence, that is, to its property as an existent for which Being is not its ontological foundation but rather the bringing into play of its own sense of Being as well as of the sense of Being itself. Therefore, Being-with, and more precisely Being-there-with, constitutes an essential condition for *Dasein*'s essence. How? It is not easy to answer this question due to the limited analysis presented in the text (and one must add that Heidegger's later works do not supplement this analysis in any substantial way, even though they do not completely abandon the motive in question). Why this point of resistance and relative obscurity? Why doesn't the analytic of *Dasein* offer access to one of its essential dimensions in any explicit and detailed way?

Presumably, I should first refine and unfold the question itself since it calls for nothing less than a careful re-reading of the entire work that could well lead to an entire reformulation of its issue, that is, the "sense of Being." But for the moment, I would like, in a couple of pages, to provide the schema for an analysis to come. I will do this in the most economical way, without entering into the details of the text: it seems advisable to me to first elucidate the principle of a subsequent commentary.

## 1 *Dasein*

*Dasein* is characterized by the bringing into play of its own Being in its Being itself, or rather, to be, for *Dasein*, means to bring its Being into play, exposing it to having-to-be (and not to becoming) what it is, since it "is" its "to-be" or its "ex-Being," its Being-outside-of-itself. *Dasein* does not have to become [*devenir*] but to come to

itself [*advenir*] in the act of taking responsibility for an essential non-essence whose sense is a Being-ahead-of-itself or a Being-exposed, or brought into play.

This is a property of *Dasein* as *da-sein*, as Being-the-there: it is, or rather, it has to be the “there” of an opening, that is, of its own (or in each case its own) way of letting itself be or of deciding to be according to this exposition which is also its Being-in-the-world. (Let/decide: two faces, two possibilities or two aspects of the same exposition.) *Dasein* has to be the singular “there” of an ownmost way of wording that is of making and/or opening onto a totality of sense. In sum, the *da* of *sein* is its exposition.

Therefore, one can say: *Dasein* is a singular, unique possibility of making/letting an ownmost sense of the world and/or the world of an ownmost sense open itself. This sense has as an essential property; its ultimate sense in its own suppression. Death, or the cessation of this *da*, means as well that the *da* does not open onto anything but its own opening. To assume this horizon, which is precisely not a horizon, to assume the finite *horos* of an infinite *apeiron*, is exactly what is at stake in *Dasein*'s Being at stake. In sum, is it the making *mine* of that which cannot be mine, or the letting myself be disappropriated at and from the fullest point of mineness (an inverted version of the Hegelian death).

## 2 Mitsein and the problem

Moreover, *Dasein* is essentially *Mitdasein*. This means that *Mitsein* is essential to *Dasein*: it is a Being-with unlike the putting together of things, but an essential *with*.<sup>1</sup>

Here begins that which will give rise to the problem we want to address, provided one is attentive enough. I will therefore sketch this problem right away. Heidegger does everything to affirm the essentiality of the *with*; his desire to do this determines the first characteristic of the *with* as the refusal of the simple external “with” of things which are only put together, only contiguous to one another. The ultimate characteristic of the *with*, as we will see, will introduce the category of *the people* which will come to crystallize the possibility of *Dasein* to historicize itself. And it is, as is well known, this motive of the people which led to the later involvement with Nazism. And it is around this same motive that a close argument with Nazism was carried on beyond 1933 during which Heidegger certainly disavowed Nazism, but at the same time constantly brought it into relation with a higher thinking of the people and of history, as the texts of the *Beiträge* and the lectures of the same years show.

Where does the dangerously decisive inflection happen, and how, and why? This question, I also want to mention from the start, does not pertain only to Heidegger. It concerns the whole of Western thinking in its way of comprehending or failing to comprehend what Heidegger was the first to have elucidated precisely: the essential character of the existential *with* (that is, of the *with* as condition of possibility of

<sup>1</sup> Our analysis here follows § 26 of *Being and Time*.

human existence—if not even of the existence of all beings, a point to which I cannot pay attention here). We could say it in the following way: from *Being and Time* onward, it becomes noticeable how *co-existence* constitutes an *experimentum crucis* for our thinking.

### 3 Of the common

Let us take up again the problematic of *Mitdasein*. It is, first of all, noteworthy that Heidegger does not undertake the analysis that, one could think, seems necessary here, that is to say the analysis of the way in which many *Dasein* can be the *there together*. The question could arise in the most elementary way: What kind of *there* for many? A common *there* or the *there* of each? But then, brought together in what way?

How is *Mitdasein* possible? First of all, how should one picture it? As the Being-with of several *Dasein*, where each opens its own *da* for itself? Or as the Being-with-the-there, or maybe more precisely as a Being-the-there-with, which would require that the openings intersect each other in some way, that they cross, mix or let their properties interfere with one another, but without merging into a unique *Dasein* (or else the *mit* would be lost)? Or else—in a third way—as a common relation to a *there* that would be beyond the singulars? But what would such a *there-beyond* be?

Thus we have in reality three possible modes of the “common”: the banal Being-alongside (a common mode in the sense of ordinary, vulgar), the common as the sharing of properties (relations, intersections, mixtures), or, lastly, the common as ownmost structure in itself, and thus as communal or collective.

In other words, we have pure exteriority and pure interiority at both extremities. Between those two another regime appears, one that is hard to name. However, one must immediately note that the two extreme regimes are *a priori* at least potentially detracting from the principle of the essentiality of the *with*: the former insofar as it seems to fall back into the simple contiguity of things, the latter one insofar as it seems to suppose a single communal *Dasein* beyond the singulars. In fact, it is exactly this double potentiality that is mobilized in *Being and Time*, and this happens precisely because the intermediary regime remains underdeveloped in this work and will remain so in the rest of Heidegger’s work.

(Let me add in passing the following parenthesis: I use the word “regime” intentionally so as to let its political meaning resonate. The first regime corresponds to democracy, or at least to the vision of democracy held by the author of *Being and Time*, like so many others of his epoch; the last one corresponds to something whose expectation, during the same epoch, leads more or less obviously toward one or the other form of “totalitarianism.” By means of this correspondence, I want to underline the fact that politics here comes as a result, and not as the cause of a fundamental disposition of thinking or of civilization at the time of its “discontent,” a discontent which, we shouldn’t forget, is *common* at this epoch and through to ours.)

Carrying on with a survey of the development of Heidegger’s work, it is true that after *Being and Time* most of the motives of the “existential analytic” disappear from Heidegger’s thinking and that he will have tried to impress on the fundamental

disposition of his thinking a decisive “turn” (no longer from man to Being, but from Being to man). But it is all the more striking to observe that, despite this development, it is not difficult to point to the presence, at least latently but sometimes explicitly, of the “people” (for instance, throughout the “foundings” evoked in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, or throughout Hölderlin and all of the motives of poetry and language—underpinned by the idea, expressed in the *Beiträge*, that “the people is one voice”).<sup>2</sup> In a symmetrical way, one could easily show that the theme of the vulgar-common passes through and permeates—without ever being thematized again under the name of the “Anyone”—many analyses of technology [*la technique*] (many, but not all: this point should be further developed).

#### 4 Shortfall in thinking

It is therefore all the more noticeable that Heidegger never attempted a specific examination of that which had at first been undertaken under the terms of *Mitdasein* and *Miteinandersein* (“Being-with-one-another”), since the *with* had been declared essential to the existent’s essence (an assertion that nothing in the development of the work can lead us to believe has been forgotten or minimized: Heidegger has never stopped thinking in a collective or common dimension and nothing in his thinking even approaches solipsism).

Some will say at this point: that is precisely the problem! He has always been a communitarian or communal thinker in the hypernational and hyperheroic style that Lacoue-Labarthe qualifies as “archi-fascism”<sup>3</sup> and in which the individual has no weight at all, except insofar as it can be transcended toward (devoted or sacrificed to?) the Gest and the Legend of a common foundation and inauguration, that is, in so far as the individual measures up to a destiny and a civilization. This is true, but it is no less true that no other thinking has penetrated more deeply into the enigma of *Being-with*, and that during Heidegger’s time as well as today, no object of thought remains more unthought than this enigma (which is an enigma exactly because thinking has kept it at a distance for so long). Nowadays, the decline of politics, as well as the re-emergence of all sorts of communitarisms over at least 20 years, are sufficient testimony to a shortfall in thinking regarding this matter. And this shortfall betrays without a doubt a fundamental disposition of our whole tradition: between two subjects, the first being “the person” and the second “the community,” there is no place left for the “with,” nor in a more general way for that which would neither be a “subject” (in the sense of a self-constitution) nor a simple thing (in the sense of the things put simply beside one another, a sense of the *with* which Heidegger precisely wants to dismiss).

This is why I want to return, schematically, to the economy of *Being and Time* to examine the way in which the *with* has been hidden, lost or suppressed between the *Anyone* and the *people*.

<sup>2</sup> [See Heidegger 2000, section 196 “Da-sein and the People”: “What is ownmost to a people, however, is its “voice”].

<sup>3</sup> [See Lacoue-Labarthe 2007, p. 84].

## 5 Collaboration or co-proprietion

Let us start again with the *Anyone*. It constitutes the improper mode (*uneigentlich*, too often translated as “inauthentic”) of the Being-with: *common* existence in the sense of “banal” or “commonplace.” *Anyone* behaves as everyone does, and *anyone* erases or levels down distinctions of values (nobility, grandeur, etc.). It is not useful to spend time on this famous description.

On the other hand, the following must be highlighted: while the improper modalities of *Dasein* will be uncovered almost immediately in the work, we will have to wait (some 50 paragraphs) until the proper (*eigentlich*) mode of Being-with can be presented as historicity or historicality. The *Anyone* is not historical, and since it is only *everyday* Being-with, it is everydayness itself which will later be shown to be deficient in historicity. But then, historicity will have to break with everydayness in order to define itself. The difficulty of assuming everyday existence—which is also the difficulty of assuming that the every-day could take charge of the in-each-case-mine (*je-mein*) of *Dasein*—constitutes a fundamental point of resistance, whose thread can be followed easily throughout the whole Western tradition. How could the ordinary elevate itself to sense, to value or to truth? But on the other hand, how is it possible to receive a sense, a value or a truth that would not accommodate the ordinary? This double-bind<sup>4</sup> is nowhere as perceptible as in Heidegger, even if he does not address it as such. He affirms on many occasions, however, that the proper does not float far off from the improper, but consists in a modified grasp of the world of the improper itself...<sup>5</sup>

An indication is nevertheless given that points in the direction of the proper of Being-with. In § 26, Heidegger analyzes the specific relational mode of the *with*: “taking care of” or “caring for,” “solicitude” (*Fürsorge*). “Taking care of” is distinguished from using or “Being-concerned-with,” which constitutes the mode of relation with beings that are not of the character of *Dasein*. (Let us note in passing: on the one hand, the separation between human beings and other beings remains as clear-cut and watertight as in any other classical thinking; on the other hand, the relation to “nature” is addressed only in an allusive and elusive way. This double observation would in the end force us to draw some consequences relative to our own discourse: namely, regarding that which immediately engages the *with* in a separation—which I would dare to call ontologically arrogant—from the world of the supposedly simple and flat Being-alongside one another of things. But this is not the place to develop this aspect.)

There are two positive species of “taking care of” (the negative species, the refusal or rejection of the other, contribute only to confirm this: even in the negative mode, the *with* is affirmed as essential. Solitude and isolation are also modes of the *with*, states Heidegger.) The first species consists in taking care of or caring for the other *in her place*, to spare her from the troubles of care. This solicitude relieves

<sup>4</sup> [In English in the original]

<sup>5</sup> I refer on this precise point to “La décision d’existence” in *Une pensée finie* (Galilée 1990) [Nancy 1994, pp. 82–109]. On the general issue, see also “L’ ‘éthique originaire’ de Heidegger” in *La pensée dérobée* (Galilée 2000) [Nancy 2002, pp. 62–86] and *Être singulier pluriel* (Galilée 1996) [Nancy 2000].

the other of her own care: it is de-propriating. (As was often pointed out: social assistance is, among other things, at the horizon of Heidegger's depreciation, and this already corresponds to a certain political tone.)

The second species, on the contrary, consists in putting the other in, or in handing her over to, her own care or to the propriety of her own care: that is, to the logic of her Being as a decision of existence, a decision which decides the ownmost bringing into play of the sense of Being. (One can propose a somewhat enlightening analogy—and at the most suggest further developments: the difference between two species of *Fürsorge* resembles that which differentiates a psychological therapy from a psychoanalytic relation as it is understood especially from Lacan onward.)

How can we leap ahead of the decision and the opening of the other—ahead, in brief, of her *da*—so as to “hand it over” to her? This is not clearly established. Nor is it clearly established, consequently, how it is possible that the ownmost be given back to the ownmost from an exteriority. Yet, this must be possible, and in the terms thus posed, the necessity of a regime of non-exteriority between existents (and not the simple beings or entities) must follow. The *with* understood according to existentiality must therefore be elucidated as the nature of a very peculiar species of space—the word “space” being heard here simultaneously in the literal sense, since the existents are also bodies, extended beings, and in the figurative sense, which would answer the question: “what is happening *between us*?” (How can we, however, separate the literal from the figurative sense: this would be a supplementary question in which, among other things, the problematic of the proper would inscribe itself again... We will have to leave this question aside too.)

The question of the “between us”—which would in fact be the question of the “between” according to which there can be “us”—would arise in regard to the two possibilities given by Heidegger's text: on the one hand, we find a common occupation by virtue of an exterior task (and the substitution of the one for the other is possible); on the other hand, we find “an engagement for the same affair in common”<sup>6</sup> (*das gemeinsame Sicheinsetzen für dieselbe Sache*) which arises properly out of each existent. On the one hand, the *with* remains in exteriority—an exteriority itself *common* in both senses of the word—and on the other, it is transmuted in the community of a relation to a unique thing or cause. On the one hand, simple cooperation, on the other co-propriation. On the one hand, occupation, on the other, preoccupation: which also comes back to saying that a genuinely caring or preoccupied “taking care of” can be found only on the second side of the alternative.

But how can co-propriation happen? This we do not learn. We only know that there must be a common thing or cause.

## 6 From death to destiny

Before we learn, much later, that this thing-and-cause is nothing other than that of the people as common destiny or co-destiny, we will have made our way through

<sup>6</sup> [Heidegger 1962, p. 159, German edition, p. 122].

the central and most well-known part of the work, the long road of the analytic of the existent according to care, anxiety, decision, and the exposition of its Being to its own bringing into play. In the end, and as we well know, it is a question of bringing into play the proper itself in its ultimate possibility which plays itself out as the impossibility of positing the proper, thereby ceasing to expose and appropriate it. Death brings about the abandonment of any positing of a proper sense of Being (one can even say: of a *sense* in general) and represents the liberation of the improper will from such a sense.

This death must be distinguished from *demise*: the latter is in itself only the common lot of the cessation of life. Death, on the other hand, offers the supreme possibility of maintaining the exposition of the existent through to its extinction. Because of this, death is ownmost and no one can substitute herself for my death. Here “taking care” reaches its limit. Or rather, we understand better how, at its peak, caring for the other consists in handing her over to her own death. In a manner which is not elucidated either (nor even evoked), it would be a matter of properly pointing out to the other her most proper and most inalienable propriety of dying.

To resolve oneself for one’s own freedom or to be properly handed over to the freedom of Being “towards” death (*zum Tode*) understood as essential finitude, that is, understood as the infinity of exposition, such is the sense of the bringing into play of the sense of Being that the existent *is*, and that it is, in each case, properly for itself in a singular and unsharable way. *My* death is that for which no other can substitute her care for mine. The other can only care by handing me over to my own care: but again, the nature of such an operation is not elucidated. Be that as it may, the outcome is the same: it is an absolute solitude in death. On this level then, there is an essential limitation to the principle of the essentiality of the *with*. This, however, is not posited by Heidegger in those terms.

Nevertheless, as § 74 will later teach us, such an existent harshly isolated by its own death has not yet risen to the height of *destiny*. At the same time and as a consequence, it has not yet exercised anything of a “proper” *Being-there-with*. On the contrary, this being freed for one’s own death occurs continually against the background of an improper Being-with. *Anyone* dies *commonly*, while *I* die alone. If nothing of death is shared, then everything around it remains in exteriority (in the same way, the corpse will return to the sheer material juxtaposition of things).

But the matter is different if one reaches (if *anyone* becomes capable of reaching... but nothing is said of such a capacity) the level and the intensity of destiny. *Destiny* means being sent toward, or being destined to, certain possibilities that are no longer of the order of the sole existent’s supreme possibility, but through which a *history* happens (destiny: *Geschick*, history: *Geschichte*). A history, that is, a non-everydayness.

## 7 Can anyone proceed to the people?

How, then, does *anyone* reach the level of destiny? Through the essential Being-with. The sole existent, at the mercy of fate’s blows (*Schicksal* and not *Geschick*) can most certainly welcome the coincidence of these blows in its decision of



existence. It can make itself “transparent” to them, that is, let its Being-decided be enacted through this contingency. The existent is then qualified as *schicksalhaft*, fateful. It is not yet seized by destiny. One could say that it is able to be destined without being yet destined or destinal.

Heidegger writes in § 74: “But if fateful Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, exists essentially in Being-with others, its historizing [*Geschehen*, a word that also means event, J.-L. N.] is a co-historizing (*Mitgeschehen*), and is determinative for it as *destiny* (*Geschick*).” On the level of an essential *with* then, the event is transformed from a blow of fate into a destinal event. And it is precisely the dimension of the essential *with* that allows, or even brings about, this transformation.

Heidegger continues: “[With the word *destiny*] we designate the historizing of the community, of a people. Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates any more than Being-with-one-another can be conceived as the occurring together of several subjects [in a note, Heidegger refers here to § 26 where the principle of an essential *with* distinct from juxtaposition is first posited, J.-L. N.]. Our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being-with-one-another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities. Only in the message (*Mitteilung*)<sup>7</sup> and in struggle (*Kampf*) does the power of destiny become free.”<sup>8</sup>

So there is no passage from the *Anyone* to the people, despite the fact that, at the same time, the *Anyone* and the *people* appear clearly as the two faces of Being-with, the improper and the proper. There is no passage, then, from one to the other, and nothing which would allow us to define the modality of a “modified grasp” of the improper *with* by the proper *with*.

The *Anyone* remains improper for it is in exteriority and each one remains either at the mercy of or opened to its singular fate: a unique fate insofar as it is one’s own death, but a banal fate insofar as it is the common cessation of life. The *people* is proper since in it, or as it, the *with* precedes itself as the *common* of a *community*. On either side, there is a transcendental antecedence of either the improper or the proper. Consequently, the community of the people *a priori* hands down “determinate possibilities” which are not the possibility of one’s own death as impossibility. Despite the fact that these possibilities of the people—that is, as well the people as possibility—are neither specified nor depicted, they are characterized closely enough by “the message and struggle”: it is a matter of a common cause for which it is necessary to fight, which supposes that the people gives itself first and foremost in a conflict with other people.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> This word means normally “communicating,” but such a translation would be too ambiguous here. I prefer to translate it as “message.” One would remain closer to its meaning in translating it as “sharing” [*partage*]. But one must also understand that it is a matter of sharing an announcement or a call: a “communiqué” addressed to the community to signify and hand it over to its destination. Hence the modification in my translation of “communicating” into “message.” A simple commentary on the occurrence of the term *Mitteilung* here in conjunction with *Kampf* could focus the stakes of the question of the *mit*. It is not a “communication” where it would only be a matter of talking among us, but an address which destines or sends us to seize our destiny by assault.

<sup>8</sup> [Both citations are from Heidegger 1962, p. 436 modified, German edition, p. 384].

<sup>9</sup> We can find this motive much earlier in the history of the thought of peoples (e.g., in Herder’s *Treatise on the Origin of Language*, Book II, Law III). Languages, cultures and peoples posit themselves according to opposition, while individuals posit themselves according to differentiation.

In a surprising, though very classical (Fichtean, Hegelian), way in the context of *Being and Time*, only a common destiny can truly sanction everyone's fate, or, more precisely, the sense of this fate. In sum, the *common fate* of death disappears twice: once as a common demise which remains external to the Being-delivered-over to the ultimate possibility of existing, and again according to the sublimation that the *common destiny* operates on individual death.

In both cases, the *with* has preceded, and succeeds to, every kind of individuality. But in one case, it precedes and succeeds it as the anonymity and indifference of all the juxtaposed existents; and in the other case it precedes and succeeds it as the community endowed with its own destinal possibilities. In the end, there will have been two constitutions of the *Being-there-with*: an impossible one, in the crowd, where the essentiality of the *with* is dissolved, and a hyper-possible one, in the people, where the essentiality of the *with* determines and potentializes itself. From the one to the other, one does not see any passage (*one* does not see, and neither *I* nor *we* can find ourselves...).

## 8 Between the proper and the improper

Between the two, it is nothing less than the *Being-the-there-with* which finds itself passed over. Indeed, the *Mitdasein* must determine the *with* as the proximity (contiguity and distinction) of multiple *theres*, thereby giving us the following to consider: multiplicity is not an attribute extrinsic to *Dasein*, since the concept of the *there* implies the impossibility of a unique and exclusive *there*. A *there* can only be exclusive—which it also inevitably is insofar as it is “mine”—if it equally includes a multiplicity of other *theres*. The analogical model here could be taken from Leibniz's monadology or from one of those topological schemes inaugurated by Moebius' strip whose concept of “neighborhood,” present in topology, proposes a suggestive metaphorical proximity between mathematics and the ontology of the *with*.

The interweaving of the limit and continuity between the *theres* must determine the proximity not as sheer juxtaposition, but as *composition* in a very precise sense which must rely on a rigorous construction of the *com*-. In sum, this is nothing other than that which is demanded by Heidegger's own emphasis on the character of a *with* irreducible to exteriority. For a *Being-with-the-there* to happen, there must be a contact, therefore a contagion and encroachment, even if minimal, even if only as an infinitesimal drift of the tangent between the concerned openings. A relative indistinction of the edges of the openings must occur and their lines of sight or horizons must at least tend to intersect one another. *I* can only open myself *there* by opening at the same time onto other *theres*, as we say of a door that it opens onto a *garden*. The *with* must constitute the nature of the “on,” of the “against,” (as in “plywood” [*contrecolle*]), and of the “trans” (as in “transsexual”). (And this means too, to note in passing, that the *with* itself has a complex nature, com-posed and inter-laced.)

If that is the case, however, then neither the simple *Anyone* nor the simple *people* can fulfill this condition. Yet this condition is exactly the existential condition of a

Being-with which would not be secondary in the constitution of existence, but truly and essentially equiprimordial in the existent.

As much as Heidegger felt with peculiar acuity the necessity of the primordially of the *with* (he is probably the first one, after the relation of consciousnesses constituting the Hegelian subject, to aim at this in such a clear way), he himself has erased the possibility he opened: namely, the possibility of thinking of the with exactly as he had indicated, as neither in exteriority, nor in interiority. Neither a herd, nor a subject. Neither anonymous, nor “mine.” Neither improper, nor proper. The limit, the deadlock or the leading astray have been inscribed exactly in the space of, and thanks to, the opening of the text of *Being and Time* itself.

## 9 ...and death to share

At the same time, the death to which Heidegger subjected the Being-there or the existent found itself quietly erased or dialecticized. In other words, Heidegger has, somehow against his own intention, sublimated, sublated or heroicized the infinity of the end or the absolute finitude that “death” signifies—or rather, un-signifies—in destiny. In an unexpected way, “Being-towards-death” reveals itself as *destined* insofar as the essential *with*, understood properly as *community* and not improperly as the *Anyone*, brings, conducts or abducts each existent towards a historical possibility which bestows upon it a kind of hyper-existence—certainly concealed as such in the text, but inevitably deducible from the opposition between the historicity of the community and the improper history of everydayness.

This hyper-existence—which I name in this way by analogy with the hyper-essence of God in negative theology—is revealed in § 75 when Heidegger opposes the instantaneous nature of the resoluteness in which the genuine “loyalty of existence to its own Self” is played out to the duration and concatenation of life in the *Anyone*. It is not according to the duration of lived experiences, but according to the instantaneous nature of resoluteness, that this loyalty to one’s own self “stabilizes” itself (by opposition to the inconstancy of the *Anyone*) in making itself thus “be in a moment of vision for what is world-historical in its current Situation.” Therefore, we must understand that “As fate, resoluteness is freedom to *sacrifice* some definite resolution, and to sacrifice it in accordance with the demands of some possible Situation or other.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, sacrifice is the last word on the bringing together of singular Being-towards-death and Being-common-towards-destiny in the “moment of vision.” Consequently, the ownmost *taking care* of the

<sup>10</sup> The citations are from the German edition, pp. 390–391 [Heidegger 1962, pp. 442–443 modified]. Concerning the word “sacrifice,” it must be noted that it is used here to translate the German words *Aufgabe* or *Selbstaufgabe* [normally, a task to which one devotes oneself], which differ from the religious terms *Opfer*, *Aufopferung* or *Selbstaufopferung*. It is somewhat excessive to use “sacrifice”: it is more a matter of “self-renunciation” or “self-resignation” in favor of the *Mitsein* and its *Mitgeschick*. However, none of these terms is sufficient to render the movement of handing over one’s own singular fate to the destiny of the people. And insofar as it is a matter of “struggle” (likewise later in the comments on the Rhine, see below) it is judicious to use “sacrifice” here—on the condition that a longer commentary be developed elsewhere.

other consists in exposing or disposing her to this sacrifice. *The* sacrifice in the singular, or dialectics, we can only say after Bataille...

Later, after his nazi involvement and at a time where he will have largely abandoned the themes of *Dasein*, and even more, the one of *Mitdasein*, Heidegger will still be speaking, in his commentary on Hölderlin's hymn *The Rhine*, of the community of soldiers on the battlefield. Indeed, we can see in the *Beiträge* a persistence of the first theme without a redevelopment of the second one at the same time that a new emphasis is put on the people, concerned this time to produce an understanding of the people as opposed to the one of Nazism (in a word, an understanding of the people as "voice," and not as "race"). In other words, Heidegger will have persisted—even beyond the time of the War, as I suggested briefly—in his effort to think a *with* at the height of the essentiality with which he had invested it.

I will not go further here in this analysis, whose goal was only to elucidate its principle. I want, instead, to indicate another register of analysis which imposes itself from here onward.

This other regime must largely go beyond Heidegger, though start from him, because one must above all avoid rejecting en bloc that which closely connects an indispensable essentiality of the *with* and a dreadful destinality of community. One must therefore ask the following question: why this leap from the *with* into the so-understood people?

Two lines of response present themselves:

(1) This leap does not depend on Heidegger himself, but on an extremely deep determination of at least Western thinking, if not more. Individual fate never suffices to build a destination—other than tragic (or absurd, in the modern version of the tragic). One can even risk the hypothesis that Greek tragedy was a response to the fading away of a community of destiny (families, lineages, peoples) in favor of a common fate of man unknown to former cultures. Contrary to appearances, the individual bears the despair of Western consciousness (and it is no accident if Western monotheism wants to accomplish its salvation by reintegrating the individual into the *people* of God).

Without a doubt, it is destination itself which must be questioned since even the destiny of the people, or destiny as people, in Heidegger, does not offer any final destination. The destination of destiny is not accounted for; it is therefore the whole composition of history which is brought into play. An old project, as we know, that began with the different forms of progressive rationalism, only then to be doubled by the different catastrophisms of decline. As we also know, there is in Heidegger a vision of the history (of Being) which accomplishes and exhausts itself in a "last sending" doomed to a definitive "forgetting" of Being, and consequently of sense, or of the sense of its sense. In a certain way, it is always a negative or positive form of Hegelianism in the most common sense of the word.

But this also means that the ahead-of-itself of the existent remains to be thought otherwise than as destination (that is, very precisely as ex-position) and that the ex-position itself must be thought as co-ex-position, as exposition of and to the essential *with* of its co-constitution. Indeed, this *remains* a task to which

neither sacrifice, nor community, nor tragedy, nor salvation, can provide an answer.<sup>11</sup> In a paradoxical way, Heidegger failed to satisfy his own exigency. But this paradox is tritely common to the whole of philosophy...

(2) As a corollary, it appears, then, that it is the *with* that most properly pays the price of the operation. Following another paradox, more internal to the course of *Being and Time* itself, the affirmation of the essentiality of the *with* is insidiously neglected in favor of another category, community, which appropriates the *with* into a destinal unity in which there is no room for the contiguity of the *theres*, nor consequently any logical, ontological or topological room for the *with* as such. This deficit is not to be imputed to Heidegger alone either, nor does a simple ethical–political condemnation suffice to settle it.

It is, actually, more a matter of asking oneself how a co-exposition can be thought, which would in sum expose itself to nothing other than itself, and not to the hyper-existence of a community; how a communication (*Mitteilung*) can be thought, which would not consist in a message for the community; how a moment of vision can be thought, in which the exposition to death would not constitute a sacrifice, but would share between all existents, between us, the eternity of each existence.

For if it is exactly at the place of the *with* that both the chance and the risk of existence manifest themselves, then one must also remember, in conformity with the Heideggerian paradox, that this place is that of death. Between the insurmountable death of a solitary dying and the sacrificial death in combat for the advent of the people—and for that matter without excluding those two extreme possibilities—how can a sharing of death be thought? How can death between us, or even death as the co-opening as such of the *there*, be thought?

To tell the truth, Heidegger came very close to this question when, within the analytic of Being-towards-death, he considered the following point: in grasping its ownmost possibility from death as the end of any possibility, the existent “dispels the danger that it may, by its own finite understanding of existence, fail to recognize that it is being outstripped by the existence-possibilities of others” (§ 53). Hence, “death individualizes—but only in such a way that, as the possibility which is not to be outstripped, it makes Dasein, as Being-with, have some understanding of the potentiality-for-Being of others.”<sup>12</sup> Could this understanding of the possibilities of others—if it were possible to say more based only on this isolated passage—be transformed directly into the “sacrifice in accordance with the demands of some possible Situation or other” that I quoted earlier? Of course, in the context of § 53 “self-sacrifice”<sup>13</sup> was suggested to be the “utmost possibility,” and the mention of the “the potentiality-for-Being of others” follows directly upon the one about

<sup>11</sup> I can only quickly gesture to the following regarding all of Husserl’s investigations on the topic of intersubjectivity: regardless of their merits, they always fail to touch the *with* as such, to touch its pace [*allure*] or its texture of *between* that the inter-subjective presupposes and obscures more than it reveals its modality.

<sup>12</sup> [Both citations are from Heidegger 1962, pp. 308–309 modified, German edition, p. 264].

<sup>13</sup> [“giving itself up” as it appears in the Macquarrie & Robinson translation].

sacrifice. Yet, this transition is not clear. Nothing explains sacrifice as the privileged mode of an “understanding of the possibilities of others;” even less, since “the others,” not being characterized in any way, cannot be identified as “the people.” The transition—leap or mutation—from the plural to the singular is not carried out—and as we know, it won’t be carried out later either. How are we to understand this “sacrifice” if it is not put to the service of a destinal cause, for which the “possibilities of the others” cannot offer any clue? Between “sacrifice” and “understanding,” as well as between “the people” and “the others according to Being-with,” a gap remains which is neither indicated nor analyzed, but on the contrary overlooked, be it intentionally or not. Again, it is the *with* which remains unthought, and the sharing of death.

## 10 Coda

Or should we not, at the same time, juxtapose with death another word, a word that Heidegger was uttering outside of the text, outside of the work, but not outside of thinking, during the exact period of *Being and Time*?

In his correspondence with Hannah Arendt in the years 25–28, we find the precise elements, not extensively developed but still explicitly present, of a thinking of love which could fill the gap between the improper and the proper of the *with* in *Being and Time*. In the correspondence, love is, indeed, qualified as the genuine space of a “we” and of a world that can be “ours,”<sup>14</sup> and represents the genuine “taking care” of the other, since its formulation, borrowed from Augustine, is *volo ut sis*: “I want that you be what you are.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, love is a *mitglauben*, a shared faith in the “story of the other” and a *mitergreifen*, a shared grasp of the “potential of the other,”<sup>16</sup> in such a way that love is always a singular *with*: “*your* love” since “Love as *such* does not exist.”<sup>17</sup>

In those letters, then, we find a specific existential analytic of sharing according to which love would not substitute itself to death, but would coincide with it. I do not want to undertake a reading of those letters here, it will have to be carried out somewhere else. But it is essential to highlight the fact that this keeping of love outside of the general realm of the *with*, whose truth it nevertheless contains—a fact that Hannah Arendt herself will perpetuate throughout her work where the *amor mundi* excludes, as an exception, the love-passion between two existents—is not exclusive to Heidegger and constitutes, on the contrary, an axiom for any thinking of the “common” in the whole Western tradition—a tradition which, moreover, is in its own structure constantly counter-exposed to the Christian commandment of love. We have not finished considering this paradox and its enigma.

<sup>14</sup> Letter of 8.V.25 [Arendt and Heidegger 2003, p. 19].

<sup>15</sup> Letter of 13.V.25 [Arendt and Heidegger 2003, p. 21].

<sup>16</sup> Letter of 22.VI.25 [Arendt and Heidegger 2003, p. 25].

<sup>17</sup> Letter of 9.VII.25 [Arendt and Heidegger 2003, p. 27].

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