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EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY

BY PAUL TILLICH

The distinctive way of philosophizing which today calls itself “*Existenzphilosophie*” or “Existential” philosophy emerged as one of the major currents of German thought under the Weimar Republic, counting among its leaders such men as Heidegger and Jaspers. But its history goes back at least a century, to the decade of the 1840’s, when its main contentions were formulated by thinkers like Schelling, Kierkegaard, and Marx, in sharp criticism of the reigning “rationalism” or panlogism of the Hegelians; and in the next generation Nietzsche and Dilthey were among its protagonists. Its roots are still more ancient, deeply embedded in the pre-Cartesian German tradition of supra-rationalism and “*Innerlichkeit*” represented by Böhme.

“Existential” Philosophy thus seems a specifically German creation. It sprang originally from the tensions of the German intellectual situation in the early nineteenth century. It has been strongly influenced by the political and spiritual catastrophes of the Germans in our own generation. Its terminology has been largely determined by the genius and often by the demon of the German language—a fact which makes the translation of Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* practically impossible.

But when we come to understand the import of the name and the basic critical drive of the “Existential” philosophy, we realize that it is part of a more general philosophical movement which counts its representatives in France, England, and America as well as in Germany. For in calling men back to “Existence,” these German thinkers are criticising the identification of Reality or Being with Reality-as-known, with the object of Reason or thought. Starting from the traditional distinction between “essence” and “existence,” they insist that Reality or Being in its concreteness and fullness is not “essence,” is not the object of cognitive experience, but is rather “existence,” is Reality as immediately experienced, with the accent on the inner and personal character of man’s immediate experience. Like Bergson, Bradley, James, and Dewey, the “Existential” philosophers are appealing from the conclusions of “rationalistic” thinking, which equates Reality with the object

of thought, with relations or "essence," to Reality as men experience it immediately in their actual living. They consequently take their place with all those who have regarded man's "immediate experience" as revealing more completely the nature and traits of Reality than man's cognitive experience. The philosophy of "Existence" is hence one version of that widespread appeal to immediate experience which has been so marked a feature of recent thought. In its influence not only on ideas but also on historical events, the international character of the movement is obvious—as witness the names of Marx, Nietzsche, and Bergson.

This appeal to "Existence" emerged just a hundred years ago, in the decade from 1840 to 1850. During the winter of 1841–42 Schelling delivered his lectures on *Die Philosophie der Mythologie und der Offenbarung* in the University of Berlin, before a distinguished audience including Engels, Kierkegaard, Bakunin, and Burckhardt. In 1840 Trendelenburg's *Logische Untersuchungen* had appeared. In 1843 Ludwig Feuerbach's *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft* came out. In 1844 Marx wrote his manuscript *Nationalökonomie und Philosophie*, not published till a few years ago. The same year brought Max Stirner's *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* and Kierkegaard's recently translated *Philosophical Fragments*; it also brought the second edition of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*, which subsequently came to have a tremendous influence on "Existential" philosophy. In 1845–46 Marx wrote the manuscript of *Die Deutsche Ideologie*, including the *Thesen über Feuerbach*, and in 1846 Kierkegaard brought out the classic work of "Existential" philosophy in the narrower sense of the term, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Schelling's Berlin lectures are based on his development of the position achieved in the *Philosophy of Freedom* in 1809, and the *Weltalter* in 1811. In his Munich lectures in the later twenties he had tried to show that the "positive philosophy," as he calls his type of Existential philosophy, had predecessors in men like Pascal, Jacobi, and Hamann, and in the theosophic tradition stemming from Böhme. Kant contributed to it through his Copernican revolution. Even in Plato "Existential" elements are obvious, especially in the non-dialectical method of the *Timaeus*. For Schelling takes the problem of the "positive philosophy" to be as old as philosophy itself. And in this Kierkegaard and Heidegger fully agree, as appears in Kierkegaard's use of the authority of Socrates, in Heidegger's

close relation to Aristotle and Kant, and in the praise Lessing receives from all the Existential philosophers.

After this striking emergence of Existential philosophy in the fifth decade of the nineteenth century, the impulse of the movement subsided; it was replaced by Neokantian idealism or naturalistic empiricism. Feuerbach and Marx were interpreted as dogmatic materialists, Kierkegaard remained completely unknown, Schelling's latest period was buried with a few contemptuous sentences in the textbooks on the history of philosophy. But a new impulse to "Existential" thinking came from the "*Lebensphilosophie*" or "Philosophy of Life" of the eighteen-eighties. During this decade appeared Nietzsche's most important works. In 1883 Dilthey published his *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften*; Bergson's *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience* came out in 1889. The "Philosophy of Life" is not identical with Existential philosophy. But if we understand the latter in a larger sense—as for historical and systematic reasons we must—then the "Philosophy of Life" includes most of the distinctive motives of Existential philosophy. Accordingly I should also assign certain features of pragmatism, especially of William James' thought, to this philosophy of Existence as immediately experienced.

The third and contemporary form of Existential philosophy has resulted from a combination of this "Philosophy of Life" with Husserl's shift of emphasis from existent objects to the mind that makes them its objects, and with the rediscovery of Kierkegaard and of the early developments of Marx. On the one hand Heidegger¹ and Jaspers,² on the other the Existential interpretation of history found in German "Religious Socialism,"³ are the main representatives of this third period of the philosophy of experienced Existence.

I do *not* propose to give here a history of Existential philosophy. This has been done, in rather fragmentary and implicit fashion, by Karl Löwith,⁴ Herbert Marcuse,⁵ and others of the younger genera-

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Halle, 1927); *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (Bonn, 1929).

² Karl Jaspers, *Philosophie*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1938; 1st ed., 1932); *Vernunft und Existenz* (Groningen, 1935).

³ Paul Tillich, *The Interpretation of History* (New York, 1936).

⁴ Karl Löwith, *Von Hegel bis Nietzsche* (Zürich, 1941).

⁵ Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* (New York and Oxford, 1941). See also Werner Brock, *Contemporary German Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1935).

tion who have felt the actual impact on their lives of the problems emphasized by Existential philosophy. But I shall offer a comparative study of those ideas which are characteristic for most of the Existential philosophers, disregarding the distinctive features of their individual systems. My own evaluation and interpretation of the significance of these ideas will remain implicit in my exposition. I shall state them explicitly only in a short conclusion.

I. THE METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY

1. The distinction between *essentia* and *existentia* in the philosophical tradition

The philosophy of "Existence" derives its name, and its way of formulating its critical opposition to rationalistic views of Reality, from the traditional distinction between "essence" and "existence." "Existence"—which comes from *existere*, meaning *heraustreten* or "emerge"—designates in its root meaning "being" within the totality of Being, in distinction from "not being." *Dasein*, a word which has received a pregnant meaning in Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, adds the concrete element of "being in a special place," being *da* or "there." The scholastic distinction between *essentia* and *existentia* was the first step toward giving a more significant meaning to the word "existence." In that distinction, "essence" signifies the What, the *τι ἔστιν* or *quid est* of a thing; "existence" signifies the That, the *ὅτι ἔστιν* or *quod est*. *Essentia* thus designates what a thing is *known* to be, the non-temporal object of knowledge in a temporal and changing thing, the *ὄντα* of that thing which makes it possible. But whether a thing is real or not is not implied in its essence: we do not know whether there is such a thing by knowing its "essence" alone. This must be decided by an existential proposition.

The assertion of the scholastics that in God essence and existence are identical is the second step in the development of the meaning of "existence." The Unconditioned cannot be conditioned by a difference between its essence and its existence. In absolute Being there is no possibility which is not an actuality: it is pure

The introduction to *Schelling, The Ages of the World*, translated with introduction and notes by Frederick de Wolfe Bolman, Jr. (New York, 1942), gives an excellent description of Schelling's development from an Essential to an Existential philosophy.

actuality. In all finite beings, on the other hand, this difference is present; in them existence as something separated from essence is the mark of finitude.

The third step in the enrichment of the term "existence" came from the discussion of the ontological argument, from its criticism by Kant and its re-establishment in a changed and broadened form by Hegel. This discussion brought out the fundamental fallacy involved. The ontological argument relies on the sound principle of the identity of Being and thinking, which all thinking presupposes: this identity is the "*Unvordenkliche*" (that principle prior to which thought cannot take place, the *Prius* of all thinking), as Schelling called it. But the argument surreptitiously transforms this principle into a highest Being, for the existence or non-existence of which demonstrations can be advanced. Kant's criticism of this interpretation is valid; but it does not touch the principle itself. On the contrary, Kant himself, in a powerful passage, describes the *Unvordenklichkeit* of Being-as-such from the point of view of an imagined highest Being who asks himself: Whence do I come? Hegel not only re-establishes the ontological argument in a purified form, he extends the principle of the identity of Being and thought to the whole of Being in so far as it is the "self-actualization of the Absolute." In this way he tries to overcome the separation of existence from essence in finite beings: for him, the finite is infinite both in its essence *and* in its existence.

2. Hegel's doctrine of essence and existence

The post-Hegelian attack on Hegel's dialectical system is directed against his attempt to absorb the whole of reality, not only in its essential but also in its existential and especially in its historical aspect, into the dialectical movement of "pure thought." The logical expression of this attempt is found in statements like these concerning essence and existence: "Essence *necessarily* appears." It transforms itself into existence. Existence is the being of essence, and therefore existence can be called "essential being." Essence *is* existence, it is not distinguished from its existence.⁶

It is in the light of these definitions that certain familiar propositions of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* must be understood. If existence is essential being, reason is real and reality is rational.

⁶ Hegel, *Logik*, ed. Lasson, II, 103, 105.

And therefore: "It is the task of philosophy to understand what is; for what is, is Reason. . . . If philosophy builds a world as it ought to be, such a world can indeed be realized, but only in imagination, a plastic material on which anything can be impressed." The task of philosophy is not to sketch an ideal world; on the contrary, we must say: the task of philosophy is "the reconciliation with reality." In contrast to this statement it can be said: the task of Existential philosophy was first of all to destroy this Hegelian "reconciliation"—which was merely conceptual, and left existence itself unreconciled.

3. Dialectical and temporal movement

Trendelenburg's *Logische Untersuchungen* seem to have made an impression on the post-Hegelian philosophers very similar to that made by Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* on the post-Neokantians. He expresses his criticism of the dialectical movement in Hegel's *Logic* as follows: "Out of pure Being, which is explicitly an abstraction, and of Nothing—also an explicit abstraction—Becoming cannot suddenly emerge, this concrete intuition which controls life and death."⁸ Two things are required—and implicitly supposed by Hegel—in order to "think" movement: a thinking subject, and an intuition of time and space. The principle of negation, moreover, the driving force of the dialectical process, cannot lead to anything new without presupposing the experience of the thinking subject. It is motion that distinguishes the realm of existence from the realm of essence.

Kierkegaard, who occasionally refers to Trendelenburg, expresses his insight as to the difference between merely dialectical and real Becoming in a more vivid way: "Pure thought is a recent invention and a 'lunatic postulate.' The negation of a preceding synthesis requires time. But time cannot find a place in pure thought."⁹

Schelling calls the claim of Hegel's rational system to embrace not only the real, the What, but also its reality, the That, a "deception." No "merely logical process is also a process of real becoming."¹⁰ When Hegel uses phrases such as: "the Idea decides to

⁷ Hegel, *Philosophie des Rechts*, ed. Lasson, 14, 15.

⁸ Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen* (Berlin, 1840), 25.

⁹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (tr. Lowrie, Princeton, 1941), 278.

become Nature," or, "Nature is the fall of the Idea," he is either describing a real, non-dialectical event, or his terminology is meaningless.

Marx attacks in similar fashion the Hegelian transition from logic to Nature. He calls it "the fantastically described transition from the abstract thinker to sense experience."¹¹ But his criticism is more fundamental. It is directed against Hegel's category of "Aufheben" (which means both negating and preserving in a higher synthesis). "Because thinking is taken to imply at the same time its 'opposite,' sensible existence, and since it therefore claims that its motion is a real and sensed action, it believes that the process of 'Aufheben' in thought, which in fact leaves the object as it is, has actually overcome the object."¹² This confusion between dialectical negation, which removes nothing but merely labels things as having been "aufgehoben," and real revolutionary "negation" through practical activity, is responsible for the reactionary character of Hegel's dialectical system—in spite of its principle of negation. It is obvious that this criticism strikes not only Hegel, but every rational theory of progressive evolution, idealistic as well as naturalistic, including the later so-called "scientific Marxism."

4. Possibility and actuality

The impotence of the "philosophy of essence" to explain existence is manifest in the fact that reason can deal only with possibilities: *Essentia est possibilitas*. Schelling writes: "Reason reaches what can be or will be—but only as an idea, and therefore, in comparison with real Being, only as a possibility."¹³ Kierkegaard may have learned this from Schelling; he writes: "Abstract thought can grasp reality only by destroying it, and this destruction of reality consists in transforming it into mere possibility."¹⁴ This is especially true of history: we cannot know an historical reality until we have resolved it into a mere possibility. "The only reality to which an existing individual may have a relation that is

¹⁰ Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, Cotta ed. (Stuttgart, 1856–61), II, 3, 65.

¹¹ Marx, *Der Historische Materialismus*, ed. Alfred Kröner (Leipzig, 1932), I, 343.

¹² *Ibid.*, 338.

¹³ Schelling, *Werke*, II, 3, 66.

¹⁴ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 279.

more than merely cognitive is his own reality, the fact that he exists."¹⁵ Only in the aesthetic attitude—in Kierkegaard's psychology, the attitude of detachment—can we be related to "essence," the realm of possibility. In the aesthetic attitude, which includes the merely cognitive, there are always many possibilities, and in it no "decision" is demanded; in the ethical attitude a personal decision must always be made.

Very interesting is a statement of Marx making exactly the same point. He notes that according to Hegel "my real human existence is my philosophical existence." Hence if our existential being comes to perfect realization only in the medium of thought, my real natural "existence" is my existence as a philosopher of nature, my real religious "existence" is my existence as a philosopher of religion. But this is the negation of religion as well as of humanity. This criticism touches not only Hegel but also those who are today replacing religion with the philosophy of religion, and those who are trying to dissolve human existence into a mere scientific "possibility."

5. The immediate and personal experience of Existence

Since Existence cannot be approached rationally—since it is "external" to all thought, as Feuerbach and Schelling emphasize—it must be approached empirically. Schelling discusses empiricism at great length. He is so much in sympathy with it that he declares he would prefer English empiricism to the dialectical system of Hegel. He wrote the often-quoted and misquoted sentence that the true philosophers among the English and French are their great scientists. On the other hand, he differentiates between the various forms of "empiricism." He denies what he calls "sense empiricism," but he accepts what he calls "a priori empiricism." Of the latter he says, "Rational philosophy is likewise empirical with respect to its material."¹⁶ But its truth does not depend on any existence. "It would be true even if nothing existed."¹⁷ For its object is the realm of intelligible relations—of the *Sachverhalte*, as Husserl later called it.

As distinguished from such an "a priori empiricism," the approach of Existential philosophy to "Existence" is completely a

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 280.

¹⁶ Schelling, *Werke*, II, 3, 102.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 128.

posteriori. We experience "Existence" in the same way we experience a person through his actions. We do not draw conclusions from observed effects to their causes, but we encounter a person immediately in his utterances. In the same way, Schelling suggests, we should look at the world-process as the continuous self-revelation of the *Unvordenkliche* (that which all thinking must presuppose). This *Unvordenkliche* is not God, but it reveals itself as God to those who receive the revelation in some immediate crisis of experience. This revelation involves freedom on both sides; it is not a necessity of thought, like the idea of the "Absolute" taken as the highest concept of rational philosophy. In this fashion Schelling returns to Kant's critical position: God as God is an object of faith, and there is no rational realization of the idea of God. For pure thought God remains a mere possibility; on this Kant and Schelling agree. But then Schelling goes on to try to approach the God of revelation in terms of a third type of empiricism, "metaphysical empiricism"—a procedure that leads him to a speculative reinterpretation of the history of religion. The speculative urge in his mind conquered the Existential restriction and humility he had himself postulated.

Although the philosophers of "Existence" denied Schelling's "metaphysical empiricism"—many of them were greatly disappointed by his Berlin lectures—they all demanded with him an "empirical" or experiential approach to Existence. And since they assumed that Existence is given immediately in the inner personal experience or concrete "Existence" of men, they all started with the immediate personal experience of the existing experienter. They turned, not to the *thinking subject*, like Descartes, but to the *existing subject*—to the "*sum*" in *cogito ergo sum*, as Heidegger puts it. The description of this *sum*, of the character of immediate personal experience, is different for each representative of Existential philosophy. But on the basis of this personal experience each of them develops a theory in rational terms, a philosophy. They all try to "think Existence," to develop its implications, not only to live in "Existential" immediate experience.

Thus for Schelling the approach to Existence is the immediate personal experience of the Christian, traditional faith—although rationally interpreted. For Kierkegaard it is the immediate personal experience of the individual in the face of eternity, his

personal faith—although interpreted by a most refined dialectical reasoning. For Feuerbach it is the immediate personal experience of man as man in his sense-existence—although developed into a doctrine of Man. For Marx it is the immediate personal experience of the socially determined man, his Existence as a member of a social class—though interpreted in terms of a universal socio-economic theory. For Nietzsche it is the immediate personal experience of a biologically determined being, his Existence as an embodiment of the Will to Power—although expressed in a metaphysics of Life. For Bergson it is the immediate personal experience of dynamic vitality, man's Existence as duration and creativity—although expressed in words taken from the realm of non-existential space. For Dilthey it is the immediate personal experience of the intellectual life, man's Existence in a special cultural situation—although explained in a universal *Geistesphilosophie*. For Jaspers it is the immediate personal experience of the inner activity of the Self, man's Existence as "self-transcendence"—although described in terms of an immanent psychology. For Heidegger it is the immediate personal experience of that kind of being who is "concerned" with Being, his Existence as care, anxiety, and resoluteness—although claiming to describe the structure of Being itself. For the Religious Socialist it is the immediate personal experience of man's historical Existence, the pregnant historical moment—although expressed in a general interpretation of history.

6. The Existential thinker

The approach to Existence or Reality through immediate personal experience leads to the idea of the "Existential thinker," a term coined by Kierkegaard but applicable to all Existential philosophers. "The way of objective reflexion makes the subject accidental and thereby transforms his Existence into something impersonal—truth also becomes impersonal, and this impersonal character is precisely its objective validity; for all interest, like all decision, is rooted in personal experience."¹⁸

The Existential thinker is the interested or passionate thinker. Although Hegel applies the words "interest" and "passion" to those driving forces in history which the "cunning Idea" uses for its purposes, there is for him no problem of Existential think-

¹⁸ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 173.

ing, because individuals are but the agents of the objective dialectical process. It is chiefly Marx who uses the term "interest" in this connection, though it is not lacking in Kierkegaard also. According to Marx, the Idea always fails when it is divorced from interest.¹⁹ When united with interest, it can be either ideology or truth. It is "ideology" if, while claiming to represent society as a whole, it expresses merely the interest of a partial group. It is "true" if the partial group whose interest it expresses represents by its very nature the interest of the entire society. For Marx, in the period of capitalism this group is the proletariat. In this way he tries to unite universal validity with the concrete situation of the Existential thinker.

Feuerbach and Kierkegaard prefer the term "passion" for the attitude of the Existential thinker. In his beautifully written *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft* Feuerbach says: "Do not wish to be a philosopher in contrast to being a man . . . do not think as a thinker . . . think as a living, real being . . . think in Existence."²⁰ "Love is passion, and only passion is the mark of Existence."²¹ In order to unite this attitude with the demand for objectivity, he says: "Only what is as an object of passion—really is."²² The passionately living man knows the true nature of man and life.

Kierkegaard's famous definition of truth reads, "An objective uncertainty held fast in the most passionate personal experience is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an Existing individual."²³ This, he continues, is the definition of faith. Such a view seems to exclude any objective validity, and can hardly be considered the basis for an Existential philosophy. But Kierkegaard tries to show through the example of Socrates that the Existential thinker can be a philosopher. "The Socratic ignorance which Socrates held fast with the entire passion of his personal experience, was thus an expression of the principle that the eternal truth is related to an Existing individual." The validity of the truth which appears in a passionate personal experience is based on the relation of the Eternal to the Existing individual.

¹⁹ Marx, *Der Historische Materialismus*, I, 379.

²⁰ Feuerbach, *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft* (Zürich, 1843), 78.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

²² *Ibid.*, 60.

²³ Kierkegaard, *Postscript*, 182.

The Existential thinker cannot have pupils in the ordinary sense. He cannot communicate any ideas, because *they* are just *not* the truth he wants to teach. He can only create in his pupil by indirect communication that "Existential state" or personal experience out of which the pupil may think and act. Kierkegaard carries out this interpretation for Socrates. But all Existential philosophers have made similar statements—naturally, for if the approach to Existence is through personal experience, the only possibility of educating is to bring the pupil by indirect methods to a personal experience of his own Existence.

Interest, passion, indirect communication—all these qualities of the Existential thinker are forcefully expressed in Nietzsche. In no respect is he more obviously a philosopher of experienced Existence than in his description of Existential thinking. None of the later Existential philosophers has approached him in this, though they all hold the same attitude. While in Marx objective validity is united with "Existential" personal experience because of the special situation of the proletariat, in Nietzsche it is the Master-man in general and his prophet in particular who stand in the favored place where validity and Existence coincide.

The Existential thinker needs special forms of expression, because personal Existence cannot be expressed in terms of objective experience. So Schelling uses the traditional religious symbols, Kierkegaard paradox, irony, and the pseudonym, Nietzsche the oracle, Bergson images and fluid concepts, Heidegger a mixture of psychological and ontological terms, Jaspers what he calls "ciphers," the Religious Socialist concepts oscillating between immanence and transcendence. They all wrestle with the problem of personal or "non-objective" thinking and its expression—this is the calamity of the Existential thinker.

II. ONTOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF THE EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY

1. Existential immediacy and the subject-object distinction

The thinking of the Existential thinker is based on his immediate personal and inner experience. It is rooted in an interpretation of Being or Reality which does *not* identify Reality with "objective being." But it would be equally misleading to say that it identifies Reality with "subjective being," with "consciousness" or feeling. Such a view would still leave the meaning of "sub-

jective" determined by its contrast with that of "objective"; and this is just the contrary of what the Existential philosophy is aiming at. Like many other appeals to immediate experience, it is trying to find a level on which the contrast between "subject" and "object" has not arisen. It aims to cut under the "subject-object distinction" and to reach that stratum of Being which Jaspers, for instance, calls the "*Ursprung*" or "Source." But in order to penetrate to this stratum we must leave the sphere of "objective" things and pass through the corresponding "subjective" inner experience, until we arrive at the immediate creative experience or "Source." "'Existence' is something that can never become a mere object; it is the 'Source' whence springs my thinking and acting."²⁴ Schelling follows Hegel in emphasizing the "subject" and its freedom against Substance and its necessity. But while in Hegel the "subject" is immediately identified with the *thinking* subject, in Schelling it becomes rather the "Existing" or immediately experiencing subject.

All the Existential philosophers reject any identification of Being or Reality with the objects of thought, which they feel is the great threat to personal human Existence in our period. Nietzsche writes in the third book of the *Will to Power*: "Knowledge and Becoming exclude each other. Consequently knowledge must signify something different. A 'will to make recognizable' must precede it; a special kind of becoming, man, must have created the deception of Being"²⁵—that is, of objective Being. All the categories establishing the objective world are useful deceptions necessary for the preservation of the human race. But the "Source," Life itself, cannot be made into an object of thought by these categories.

For Bergson we lose our genuine Existence, our real nature, if we think of ourselves in the "spatialized" terms appropriate to objective things. "The moments in which we grasp ourselves are rare, and consequently we are seldom free. Our existence is more in space than in time."²⁶ Real Existence, our true nature, is the life in self-possession and duration.

According to Marx, "*Verdinglichung*," for men to become "ob-

²⁴ Jaspers, *Philosophie*, I, 15.

²⁵ Nietzsche, *Wille zur Macht* (1884–88); *Werke* (Taschenausgabe, Leipzig, 1906), IX, 387.

²⁶ Bergson, *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience* (German tr., Jena, 1911), 182.

jects," things or commodities, is characteristic of the present world. But to be essentially human is just the opposite. Natural forces and their transformation through technology are really *man's* natural forces, they are man's objects, confirming *his* individuality. Industry is the secret revelation of the powers of human nature.²⁷

Jaspers declares that personal Existence ("Existential Subjectivity") is the center and aim of Reality. No being who lacks such a personal experience can ever understand Existence. But those beings who do possess it can themselves understand such defective and sub-human creatures to be the result of a tragic loss of personal Existence. Heidegger denies that it is possible to approach Being through objective reality, and insists that "Existential Being," *Dasein*, self-relatedness, is the only door to Being itself. The objective world ("*Das Vorhandene*") is a late product of immediate personal experience.

The meaning of this desperate refusal to identify Reality with the world of objects is clearly brought out by Nietzsche when he says: "When we have reached the inevitable universal economic administration of the earth, then mankind as a machine can find its meaning in the service of this monstrous mechanism of smaller and smaller cogs adapted to the whole."²⁸ No one any longer knows the significance of this huge process. Mankind demands a new aim, a new meaning for life. In these words anxiety about the social character of the "objective world" is clearly revealed as the motive for the fight of the philosophers of personal Existence against "objectivation," against the transformation of men into impersonal "objects."

2. Psychological and ontological concepts

The principle of personal Existence or "Existential Subjectivity" demands a special type of concept in which to describe this immediate personal experience. These concepts must be "non-objectivating," they must not transform men into things; but at the same time they must not be merely "subjective." In the light of this double demand we can understand the choice of psychological notions with a non-psychological connotation.

If the philosophy of personal Existence is right in maintaining

²⁷ Marx, *Der Historische Materialismus*, I, 301, 304.

²⁸ Nietzsche, *Wille zur Macht, Werke*, X, 114.

that immediate experience is the door to the creative "Source" of Being, it is necessary for the concepts describing immediate experience to be at the same time descriptive of the structure of Being itself. The so-called "affects" are then not mere subjective emotions with no ontological significance; they are half-symbolic, half-realistic indications of the structure of Reality itself. It is in this way that Heidegger and many other philosophers of personal Existence are to be understood. Heidegger fills his book *Sein und Zeit* not with definitions of *Sein*-as-such or *Zeit*-as-such, but with descriptions of what he calls *Dasein* and *Zeitlichkeit*, temporal or finite Existence. In these descriptions he speaks of *Sorge* (care) as the general character of Existence, or of *Angst* (anxiety) as the relation of man to nothingness, or of fear of death, conscience, guilt, despair, daily life, loneliness, etc. But he insists again and again that these characterizations are not "ontic," describing merely a particular being, Man, but are rather "ontological," describing the very structure of Being itself. He denies that their negative character, their seemingly pessimistic connotations, have anything to do with actual pessimism. They all point to human finitude, the real theme of the philosophy of personal Existence. It remains, of course, an open question how the psychological meaning of these concepts can be distinguished from their ontological meaning. Most of the criticism directed against Heidegger deals with this problem; and it appears that Heidegger implicitly admitted that he was unable to explain the difference clearly, and that he himself has increasingly emphasized human nature as the starting-point of the Existential ontology.

But this does not solve the problem. It is obvious that all the Existential philosophers and their predecessors have developed ontology in psychological terms. In Böhme, in Baader, in Schelling's *Human Freedom*, and in many other places, we find the belief in an essential relationship between human nature and Being, the belief that the innermost center of Nature lies in the heart of man. An especially important example of this ontological use of a psychological term is the conception of "Will" as the ultimate principle of Being. We find this in Böhme and in all those influenced by him, and before Böhme in Augustine, Duns Scotus, and Luther. Schelling's early view of the Will as "*Ur-Sein*" and his whole later voluntarism developed in his doctrine of Freedom, Nietzsche's symbol of the Will to Power, Bergson's *élan vital*, Schopenhauer's

ontology of Will, the "Unconscious" of Hartmann and Freud—all these concepts of the non-rational are psychological notions with an ontological significance. The philosophers of Existence have used them, as well as other psychological concepts, to protect us from the annihilation of the "creative Source" by an "objective world" created out of that "Source" which is now swallowing it like a monstrous mechanism.

3. The principle of Finitude

In Hegel the whole world-process is explained in terms of the dialectical identity of the finite with the infinite. The Existential divorce of the finite from the infinite is entirely denied, not merely, as in mysticism, overcome in occasional ecstatic experiences. Kant's critical warning against such undue transgression of the limits of the finite mind is quite ignored.

The philosophy of experienced Existence re-establishes the consciousness of the divorce of the finite from the infinite. All the Existential philosophers strongly emphasize this point. Schelling, himself more responsible than anyone else for the victory of the Principle of Identity, and of intellectual intuition as the means of achieving it, later asserts that it is valid only in the realm of essence, not in that of existence. Kierkegaard follows Schelling: "The rationalistic Idea is the Identity of subject and object, the unity of thought and Being. Existence, on the other hand, is their separation."²⁹ With respect to finitude he says: "Existence is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite."³⁰ But this synthesis is just the opposite of Identity. It is the basis of Existential despair, of the will to get rid of oneself. Despair is the expression of the relation of separation in this synthesis; it reveals the dynamic insecurity of the spirit. Jaspers' description of the "boundary-situations," our historical relativity, death, suffering, struggle, guilt, points in the same direction. Especially strong is the idea of finitude expressed in his doctrine of the necessary *Scheitern* (shipwreck) of the finite in its relation to the infinite. "Since Personal Existence tries in the process of becoming to transcend the measure of its finitude, the finite being—is finally ruined."³¹

Feuerbach says: "The subject which has nothing outside itself,

²⁹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 112.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 350.

³¹ Jaspers, *Philosophie*, III, 229.

and therefore no limits within itself, has ceased to be a finite subject.”³² Marx describes man as a being related to objects through want, sensuality, activity, suffering, and passion. Nietzsche’s pragmatic view of knowledge as well as his longing for eternity shows his consciousness of our finitude in thinking and being.

But most important in this connection is Heidegger’s attempt to interpret Kant’s critical philosophy in terms of Existential philosophy, primarily in terms of human finitude. In his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929) he introduces the subject of his inquiry as Kant’s attempt to found metaphysics on the human, that is, the finite, character of reason.³³ Finitude is the very structure of the human mind, to be distinguished from mere shortcomings, error, or accidental limitations. While for Kant God—as a mere ideal—has an infinite “intuition,” man has a finite intuition, and therefore needs to employ discursive thinking. “The character of the finitude of intuition is its receptivity.”³⁴ Therefore finite knowledge has “objects”—the definition of finitude in Feuerbach and Marx, with which Dilthey’s interpretation of reality as resistance may be compared. For Heidegger, Kant’s epistemological problem is: “How must that finite being we call man be equipped in order to be aware of a kind of Being which is not the same as he himself?”³⁵ The several chapters of the *Kritik* answer this question step by step. “The revelation of the structure of the ‘pure synthesis’ reveals the very nature of the finitude of reason.”³⁶ While an ontology which claims to have knowledge of Being a priori is arrogant, an ontology which restricts itself to the structure of finitude is possible.³⁷ Such an ontology can be called a doctrine of human nature, but not in the sense of giving any special knowledge of the human race. An ontological doctrine of man develops the structure of finitude as man finds it in himself as the center of his own personal Existence. He alone of all finite beings is aware of his own finitude; therefore the way to ontology passes through the doctrine of man. But of course, in traveling this way he cannot escape his finitude. The way to finitude is itself finite and cannot

³² Feuerbach, *Grundsätze*, 39.

³³ P. 19.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 66.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 118.

claim finality: such is the limit set upon the Existential thinker. Heidegger concludes his analysis with the statement that the fight against Kant's doctrine of the *Ding-an-sich* was a fight against the acknowledgement of the finitude of our human experience in knowing.

4. Time as "Existential" or immediately experienced, and Time as measured

For the whole Existential philosophy the analysis of finitude culminates in the analysis of Time. The insight that existence is distinguished from essence by its temporal character is as old as the philosophy of Existence. An essay on the doctrine of Time in the different philosophers of Existence, their agreements and their differences, would be a worth-while task. I must confine myself to a few suggestions.

The general tendency is to distinguish "Existential" or immediately experienced Time from dialectical timelessness on the one hand, and from the infinite, quantitative, measured Time of the objective world, on the other. That qualitative Time is characteristic of Personal Experience is the general theme of the Existential philosophy. In his *Weltalter* Schelling distinguishes three qualitatively different kinds of Time: the pre-temporal, the temporal, and the post-temporal; he tries to escape from infinite progress and regress by assuming a beginning and an end. Kierkegaard seeks to escape from measured and objective Time through his doctrine of the *Augenblick*, the pregnant moment in which Eternity touches Time and demands a personal decision. Secondly, he tries to avoid the objectivity of the Past through his idea of "*Gleichzeitigkeit*," which takes all history to be contemporaneous with the pregnant moment, and claims a repetition of the Past is a present possibility. Nietzsche escapes from infinite, quantitative Time through his doctrine of "eternal recurrence," which gives to every moment the weight of eternity, and through his eschatological division of Time through the symbol of the "Great Noon."

Marx's distinction between pre-history and history tries to introduce a definite qualitative element into the course of quantitative Time. Religious Socialism, through its doctrine of the "center of history" which determines the beginning and the end of "historical Time," and through its idea of "time fulfilled" or the *Kairos*, has tried to go in the same direction of transcending quan-

titative through qualitative Time. Bergson's fight against quantitative and objective Time, in which Time is subjected to Space, belongs to the same line of development.

Most radical is Heidegger's distinction between "Existential" and objective Time. No one has emphasized so strongly as he the identity between experienced Existence and temporality: "Temporality is the genuine meaning of Care,"³⁸ and Care is finite Existence. Heidegger carries through this idea with respect to the whole structure of experienced Existence, especially in connection with the anticipation of our own death, which generates the way in which we can grasp ourselves as a whole. In his analysis of Kant he indicates that for himself Time is defined by "self-affection," grasping oneself or one's Personal Existence. Temporality is Existentiality. In distinction from this qualitative Time, objective Time is the Time of the flight from our own Personal Existence into the universal "one," the "everyone," the average human Existence, in which quantitative measurement is necessary and justified. But this universal Time is not *eigentlich* or proper; it is Time objectified, and it must be interpreted in the light of Existential Time, Time as immediately experienced, and not *vice versa*.

III. THE ETHICAL ATTITUDE OF THE EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY

1. History viewed in the light of the future

All the Existential philosophers agree on the historical character of immediate personal experience. But this fact that man has a fundamentally "historical Existence" does not mean merely that he has a theoretical interest in the past; his Existence is not directed toward the past at all. It is the attitude not of the detached spectator, but of the actor who must face the future and make personal decisions.

Schelling calls his positive philosophy "historical philosophy," because being "historical" means for him being open for the future. Since the revelation of *das Unvordenkliche* is never completed, the positive philosophy is never finished. We have already touched on Kierkegaard's doctrines of the "pregnant moment," of contemporaneity and repetition, as well as on the use made of these ideas by German Religious Socialism to interpret history.

³⁸ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Halle, 1927), 326.

For Marx man's experience is fundamentally conditioned by the historical and cultural setting of his life. Human nature is itself historical, and cannot be understood without an understanding of its present stage of dehumanization, and of the demand for a "real humanism" in the future. Philosophical doctrines of human nature and of ontology are dependent on the revolutionary achievement in the future of what man has the power to make of himself.

In his second *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung* Nietzsche states emphatically the historical character of human experience. "The word of the past is always an oracle uttered. Only as builders of the future, as knowing the present, will you understand it."³⁹ In this Heidegger follows Nietzsche: The historical character of human experience lies in its orientation toward the future. Mere historical knowledge is not man's real rôle as an historical being. Absorption in the past is an estrangement from our task as the makers of history.⁴⁰

2. Finitude and estrangement

The description of man's "Existential situation" or present estate as finitude is usually connected with the contrast between man's present estate and what he is "essentially," and therefore ought to be. Ever since Schelling's *On Human Freedom*, the world we are living in, including Nature, has been described as a disrupted unity, as fragments and ruins. In accord with Kant's half-mythological and genuinely "Existential" doctrine of radical evil, Schelling speaks of the transcendent Fall of Man as the "presupposition of the tragic nature of Existence." Kierkegaard's famous work on *Angst*, in which he interprets the transition from essence to existence, is his psychological masterpiece: the *Angst* of finitude drives man to action and at the same time to an alienation from his essential being and to the profounder *Angst* of guilt and despair.

Both Schelling and Kierkegaard aim to distinguish "finitude" from "alienation" or "estrangement." But neither really succeeds; the finite character of immediate personal experience makes the "Fall" practically inescapable. Nietzsche, Heidegger, Jaspers, and Bergson do not even try to make a distinction. They describe immediate experience in terms of both finitude *and* guilt—that is, in tragic terms. *Verfallenheit*, being lost and a prey to the

³⁹ Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen, Werke*, II, 161.

⁴⁰ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 396.

necessity of existing, constitutes guilt. As Heidegger says, "Being guilty is not the result of a guilty act, but conversely, the act is possible only because of an original 'being guilty.'"⁴¹ The tragic interpretation of life which has prevailed among the European intelligentsia during the last decades is not unrelated to the Existential philosophy.

Marx described the situation of dehumanization and self-estrangement in innumerable fragments. One of the most precious pieces is his description of the function of money as the main symbol of self-estrangement or alienation in present society. But estrangement is not for him an inevitable tragic necessity. It is the product of a special historical situation, and can be overcome through human action. It is in this attitude that the Utopian elements of the later Marxist movements are rooted. But the subsequent history of these movements has shown that Marx's description of man as a passionate and suffering being holds true even after a victorious revolution. The relation between finitude and estrangement is fundamental for Existential philosophy.

3. Finitude and loneliness

Every personal Existence is unique, says Jaspers: "We are completely irreplaceable. We are not merely cases of universal Being."⁴² Heidegger speaks of the *Jemeinigkeit* of personal Existence, its belonging to me and nobody else.⁴³ Men usually live in the common experiences of daily life, covering over with talk and action their real inner personal experience. But conscience, guilt, having to die, come home to the individual only in his inner loneliness. The death of another as an objective event has nothing to do with our personal attitude toward our own death. Nietzsche praises the higher type of man who is lonely and cut off not only from the masses but also from others like himself. Nietzsche's estimate of the average man is exactly that of Heidegger and Jaspers. Kierkegaard goes even beyond them in emphasizing man's inner experience of loneliness before God. Anything objective and universal has no other meaning for him than an escape from the ethical decision each individual has to make.

Feuerbach and Marx seem to diverge on this point from the

⁴¹ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 284.

⁴² Jaspers, *Vernunft und Existenz* (Groningen, 1935), 19.

⁴³ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 42.

other philosophers of Human Existence. Feuerbach makes a very profound comment on the problem of loneliness: "True dialectic is not a monologue of the lonely thinker with himself. It is a dialogue between the Ego and the Thou."⁴⁴ This Ego-Thou philosophy has had great influence on present-day German theology since Buber and Griesebach. But the question is, what can we substitute for this inner loneliness? Without such an alternative the Ego-Thou relation remains a mere form. This is implied in Marx's criticism of Feuerbach, that he knows man in the abstract, and man the individual, but not man the social being. Marx himself sees only this social man. But he there discovers man's estrangement, which is not only man's estrangement from himself but also from every other man. For him, this loneliness arises from present historical conditions which must be transformed. But the struggle to create true humanity in the proletariat has led in actual fact not to "community," but only to "solidarity," a relation which is still external and remains a symbol of man's estrangement.

In all the Existential philosophers it is this loss of community that has provoked the flight from the objective world. Only in that world—in what Herakleitos called "the common world in which we live our waking lives"—is genuine community between man and man possible. If this common world has disappeared or grown intolerable, the individual turns to his lonely inner experience, where he is forced to spin out dreams which isolate him still further from this world, even though his objective knowledge of it may be very extensive. Here is suggested much of the social background of the philosophy of Human Existence.

CONCLUSION—THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY

We have considered a large group of Existential philosophers, covering a period of about a hundred years. They represent many different and even contradictory tendencies in philosophic thought, and they had many different and even contradictory effects on religion and politics. Do they all exhibit some common trait which justifies calling them all "Existential philosophers?" If the above analysis is correct, there can be no doubt that they display a very fundamental unity. This unity can be described in both negative and positive terms: all the philosophers of Existence share a com-

⁴⁴ Feuerbach, *Grundsätze*, 83.

mon opposition to a common foe, and all have a common aim, though they try to attain it in very different ways.

What all philosophers of Existence oppose is the "rational" system of thought and life developed by Western industrial society and its philosophic representatives. During the last hundred years the implications of this system have become increasingly clear: a logical or naturalistic mechanism which seemed to destroy individual freedom, personal decision and organic community; an analytic rationalism which saps the vital forces of life and transforms everything, including man himself, into an object of calculation and control; a secularized humanism which cuts man and the world off from the creative Source and the ultimate mystery of existence. The Existential philosophers, supported by poets and artists in every European country, were consciously or subconsciously aware of the approach of this self-estranged form of life. They tried to resist it in a desperate struggle which drove them often to mental self-destruction and made their utterances extremely aggressive, passionate, paradoxical, fragmentary, revolutionary, prophetic and ecstatic. But this did not prevent them from achieving fundamental insights into the sociological structure of modern society and the psychological dynamics of modern man, into the originality and spontaneity of life, into the paradoxical character of religion and the Existential roots of knowledge. They immensely enriched philosophy, if it be taken as man's interpretation of his own existence; and they worked out intellectual tools and spiritual symbols for the European revolution of the twentieth century.

To understand the fundamental drive and function of Existential philosophy, it is necessary to view it against the background of what was happening in the nineteenth-century religious situation, especially in Germany. For all the groups that appeared after 1830 had to face a common problem, the problem created by the breakdown of the religious tradition under the impact of enlightenment, social revolution, and bourgeois liberalism. First among the educated classes, then increasingly in the mass of industrial workers, religion lost its "immediacy," it ceased to offer an unquestioned sense of direction and relevance to human living. What was lost in immediacy Hegel tried to restore by conscious reinterpretation. But this mediating reinterpretation was attacked

and dissolved from both sides, by a revived theology on the one hand and by philosophical positivism on the other. The Existential philosophers were trying to discover an ultimate meaning of life beyond the reach of reinterpretation, revived theologies, or positivism. In their search they passionately rejected the "estranged" objective world with its religious radicals, reactionaries, and mediators. They turned toward man's immediate experience, toward "subjectivity," not as something opposed to "objectivity," but as that living experience in which both objectivity and subjectivity are rooted. They turned toward Reality as men experience it immediately in their actual living, to *Innerlichkeit* or inward experience. They tried to discover the creative realm of being which is prior to and beyond the distinction between objectivity and subjectivity.

If the experience of this level of living is "mystical," Existential philosophy can be called the attempt to reconquer the meaning of life in "mystical" terms after it had been lost in ecclesiastical as well as in positivistic terms. It is however necessary to redefine "mystical" if we are to apply it to Existential philosophy. In this context the term does not indicate a mystical union with the transcendent Absolute; it signifies rather a venture of faith toward union with the depths of life, whether made by an individual or a group. There is more of the Protestant than the Catholic heritage in this kind of "mysticism"; but it *is* mysticism in trying to transcend the estranged "objectivity" as well as the empty "subjectivity" of the present epoch. Historically speaking, the Existential philosophy attempts to return to a pre-Cartesian attitude, to an attitude in which the sharp gulf between the subjective and the objective "realms" had not yet been created, and the essence of objectivity could be found in the depth of subjectivity—in which God could be best approached through the soul.

This problem and this solution are in some respects peculiar to the German situation, in others common to all European culture: analogies to the Existential philosophy can be found all over Europe from France to Russia, from Italy to Norway. It is the desperate struggle to find a new meaning of life in a reality from which men have been estranged, in a cultural situation in which two great traditions, the Christian and the humanistic, have lost their comprehensive character and their convincing power. The

turning towards *Innerlichkeit*, or more precisely towards the creative sources of life in the depth of man's experience, occurred throughout Europe. For sociological reasons it was in Germany both more philosophical and more radical than in other lands. There it became that quasi-religious power that transformed society, first in Russia and then in other parts of Europe, during the first half of the twentieth century.

In understanding Existential philosophy a comparison with the situation in England may be helpful. England is the only European country in which the Existential problem of finding a new meaning for life had no significance, because there positivism and the religious tradition lived on side by side, united by a social conformism which prevented radical questions about the meaning of human "Existence." It is important to note that the one country without an Existential philosophy is that in which during the period from 1830 to 1930 the religious tradition remained strongest. This illustrates once more the dependence of the Existential philosophy on the problems created by the breakdown of the religious tradition on the European continent.

In their struggle against the meaninglessness of modern technological civilization, the several philosophers of Existence used very different methods and had very different aims. In all of them the Existential emphasis was only one factor among others, more or less controlling. Schelling shared the belief of German Romanticism that a new philosophy, and in particular a new interpretation of religion, could produce a new reality. But this assumption was wrong; and his immediate influence remained very limited, restricted to the theology of the restoration period. Feuerbach's significance for Existential thinking lies more in his destruction of Hegel's reconciliation of Christianity with modern philosophy than in his metaphysical materialism, which indeed considerably strengthened the bourgeois-mechanistic interpretation of nature and man.

Kierkegaard represents the religious wing of Existential philosophy. He himself claimed not to be a philosopher, and those who consider him the classic type of Existential thinking often assert that a genuinely Existential thinker cannot be one. But Kierkegaard's actual work reveals a much more intimate connection. As a religious thinker he encountered the obstacle of a church

which had become "bourgeois" in both theory and practice, and he was able to maintain his own radical Christianity only in terms of an absolute paradox and of a passionately personal devotion. As a philosophical thinker, however, he produced a "dialectical" psychology which has contributed greatly to an anti-rationalistic and anti-mechanistic interpretation of human nature.

If we call Marx an Existential thinker, this can obviously apply only to certain particular strains of his thought: to his struggle against the self-estrangement of man under capitalism, against any theory that merely interprets the world without changing it, against the assumption that knowledge is quite independent of the social situation in which it is sought. Like Kierkegaard, Marx wanted to be no philosopher: he pronounced the end of all philosophy and its transformation into a revolutionary sociology. But the impulse he gave to the interpretation of history, his doctrine of "ideology," his introduction of sociological analysis into economics, made him a powerful force in the philosophic discussion of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, long before he became the greatest political force in the fight of the twentieth century against the traditions of the nineteenth.

Like Marx, Nietzsche and the "*Lebensphilosophen*" are Existential philosophers only in certain of their views. Nietzsche's attack on "European nihilism," his biological interpretation of the categories of knowledge, his fragmentary and prophetic style, his eschatological passion; Dilthey's problem of the Existential roots of the different interpretations of life; Bergson's attack on spatial rationality in the name of creative vitality; the primacy of life as over against its products in Simmel and Scheler—all these ideas reveal their Existential character. But just as Marx never called into question natural science, economic theory, and dialectical reason, so Nietzsche and the *Lebensphilosophen* always presupposed the scientific method and an ontology of life. Heidegger, and less emphatically Jaspers, returned to the Kierkegaardian type of Existential philosophy, and in particular to the dialectical psychology of Kierkegaard. They reintroduced the term "Existential" to designate a philosophy that appealed to immediate personal experience, and they coöperated with a theology that was profoundly influenced by Kierkegaard, especially

by his attack on the secularized bourgeois churches. But with the help of Aristotle and the "*Lebensphilosophie*" Heidegger transformed the dialectical psychology into a new ontology, radically rejecting the religious implications of the Existential attitude, and replacing it with the unchecked resoluteness of the tragic and heroic individual.

It is a dramatic picture that Existential philosophy presents: the polarity between the Existential attitude and its philosophic expression dominates the whole movement. At times the Existential element prevails, at times the philosophical—even in the same thinker. In them all the critical interest is predominant. All of them are reacting—in theory and practice—against an historical destiny the fulfilment of which they are furthering by their very reaction against it. They are the expression of the great revolution within and against Western industrial society which was prepared in the nineteenth century and is being carried out in the twentieth.

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