

THE BECOMING OF BEING

In his book, *Heidegger and the Tradition*, Werner Marx outlines what he considers to be the fundamental task of philosophy in our age.

We are convinced that it is the present-day 'need of philosophy' to keep alive the question of the essence of essence. To be sure, the philosophical consciousness of our time has already to a large extent found its way back from the historicist, relativist, and positivist tendencies of the most recent past to the realization of the necessity of 'essence' and possibly of an 'essential order.' But philosophy has been influenced so basically by the repercussions of 'historical' or 'epochal' thinking since Hegel's death, preeminently through the efforts of Kierkegaard, Marx, and Nietzsche, by the insights of the natural sciences, and by the shattering experiences of the past century, that it cannot simply return to the traditional doctrine of essence, to Aristotelean *ousia* or the conceptions of substantiality based thereon. Awakened, moreover, by the transcendental turning point, especially, however by Hegel's insights in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, philosophy has seen itself ever more strongly forced to think the essence of man as a doer, if not indeed as a creator or cocreator who not only can alter his world but even fashion the new. If philosophy today wants to go back to a 'doctrine of essence,' then it must try to think an 'other' essence, not an essence that, like the Aristotelean *ousia*, is 'eternal', and, as the 'same', is the ground of every change, of all coming to be and passing away. The immense difficulty of the task consists rather in so comprehending the essence of essence that the *new* can arrive and the essence of man play a role in such a transformation — without the essence again becoming 'historicized' and 'humanized' through such arrival of the new and participation by man.¹

This task is as pressing today as it was when Marx formulated it over fifteen years ago.

It is not at all certain, however, that this 'need' can be met, or even that the various criteria listed for the 'other' sense of essence are comprehensible when taken together. There are two conditions posited for the new notion of Being or essence. First, Being is to be thought in such a way that it is possible to speak of a 'becoming of Being.' Contained in this condition is the demand that Being's becoming in some sense be thought of as mediated

by human activity and/or cognition. Second, this humanly mediated essence, which is to allow for the 'new' to appear in time, is *not* to thereby be relativized or historicized. That is, even though Being is to in some sense involve historicity, truth must not be thought of as thereby relativized. There are clearly at least two conceptual difficulties with the formulation of this program. Corresponding to the two requirements for the 'new' notion of essence, we may ask two fundamental questions. In what nontrivial sense, if any, is it possible to speak of an essence of essence which allows the *ontologically* new to appear through history? Second, even if some sense can be given to talk of an essence that allows for the ontologically original, doesn't this necessarily commit one to a doctrine in which truth, both ontic and ontological truth, is contingent upon the particular point that has been reached in history? What can *truth* mean in an ontologically becoming universe, if not a relativized truth?

I. THE QUESTION OF ONTOLOGICAL BECOMING

Aristotle thought of Being in terms of the Being of beings. Confronted with the obvious way in which particular things changed through time, and the equally obvious sense in which, through these changes, it was still possible and necessary to speak of things as the 'same,' the Greeks were forced to come to terms with the relation of substance and attributes. What is the principle through which *this* thing can be thought of as a *this*, even though it undergoes alteration and change? The Being of beings, the principle in terms of which it is possible to comprehend the *this* as a *this*, is thought by Aristotle as the *hypokeimomenon*, that which lies at the ground of the thing. It was essential, however, that this substance, the ground and foundation of the thing as thing, be thought of as involving movement and change in itself, so as to account for the natural changes that things undergo. Thus the Being of the being, for Aristotle, was the substance or ground of the thing which involved movement within itself. In order that the movement did not alter the *thisness* of the thing, however, the principle of the movement of the thing must be a principle of circular movement. That is, the substance was thought as the principle for an alteration which repeats itself indefinitely. While the Being of beings involves change *within* itself, therefore, that Being of the thing did not *itself* change. In the same way that members of an organic species only give rise naturally to

other members of the same species, the Being of a particular being only arises from or can give rise to another *this* of the same type as itself. Further, just as the Being of an individual being remains constant, the general relation of substance to thing also was thought so as to preclude development. That is, the essence of essence, the Being of beings as such, was comprehended by Aristotle as eternally the same for all possible beings. At two levels, then, the Aristotelean Being of beings dismissed the possibility of a 'becoming of Being.' Neither the principle or substance of the particular thing or kind of thing could change *nor* could the essence of essence itself, the fundamental relation of substance to things in all things, change.

If we turn to the quote from Werner Marx which began this paper, we see that he recognizes several developments which help to open the question of the essence of essence. While it is impossible to consider the 'insights of the natural sciences' here, I am confident that a careful consideration would show that these insights by themselves are not sufficient grounds for criticism of the Aristotelean essence of essence. Similarly, the events of the past century, while certainly ghastly, are not sufficiently different in kind from preceding events to account for such a momentous change in the direction of philosophy. Indeed, it has yet to be determined whether and to what extent such historical events do, or should, influence philosophical thought. This leaves two reasons from Professor Marx' list which might count as motivations for considering the question of the essence of essence. (That they are such motivations, if they are, for raising the problem of the becoming of Being, in no way commits us to the intelligibility of this issue.) Marx cites the historical thinking of the nineteenth century, especially represented in philosophy by Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Karl Marx, and the transcendental turn in philosophy itself. While it is true that Hegel in particular is mentioned, it may at first seem surprising that Professor Marx should include the transcendental move as a factor in opening up the question of the essence of essence. After all, both Kant and Husserl *meant* the transcendental turn to yield apodictically necessary knowledge which was *not* to be variable through time. And yet there are clear progressions in thought from Kant through Hegel to Marx, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard, and from Husserl, to Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty. That is, the transcendental turn has twice led in the history of ideas to a variety of positions which call into question the eternal

selvesameness of Being. So we may be justified in hypothesizing some sort of connection between the transcendental turn in philosophy and the appearance of 'epochal' thought. To discover whether and in what sense the question of the becoming of Being is intelligible, we must then turn to a preliminary consideration of the motivations for raising this problem that came from transcendental thought.

The Kantian 'Copernican revolution' had among its objects the making of knowledge itself an object for investigation. In a summary fashion we can characterize the results of this inquiry as the discovery of the 'diadicty' of consciousness. While it would be more historically just to quote Kant on this point, we can accept Hegel's statement of this principle from the Introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as illustrative.

In consciousness one moment is for an other; in other words, consciousness in general has the determination of the moment of knowledge in it. At the same time, this other is to consciousness not only something for it; it is also something outside this relationship or in itself, the moment of truth.

These two moments, concept and object, being-for-another and being-in-itself, fall within that same knowledge. . .²

There is a marked and crucial difference in terminology between Kant and this passage from Hegel. Indeed we will see that this shift in terminology manifests a major development along the road to the posing of the question of the becoming of Being. What Hegel calls 'being-in-itself,' "the moment of truth" is for Kant the structure of the object of experience which itself derives from the necessary structure of any possible experience. "The necessary conditions of the possibility of experience in general are at once the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience as well."³ That is, Kant's transcendental move reveals that the form of objects in the world, what had traditionally been thought of as the Being of beings, is grounded in the form of cognition itself. Thus, with Kant the ground of the necessity of the Being of beings is found in the necessity of the conditions of experience. If we turn to a consideration of classical physics, the motivation for this 'turn' becomes obvious. The traditional traits of the Aristotelean Being of beings are that it is eternal, necessary, self-same, and intelligible. The only one of those which was made problematic by the scientific revolution was necessity. The method of physics moved at once in two directions. It was both empirical and mathematical. That is, in so far

as the laws were discovered by observation they seemed to be purely contingent, they could be otherwise. On the other hand, in that the laws were essential explanatory principles, they demanded a necessity that could not be grounded through empirical induction. Hence it was precisely in order to *save* the traditional Aristotelean essence of essence in its necessity that Kant undertook to give the Being of beings a transcendental grounding.

It is, therefore, proper to say that at least one of the intentions of the transcendental turn in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to supply an intelligible guarantee for the necessity of the Being of beings. This ground of necessity, however, was determined by Kant to be found in the necessity of the conditions of experience. This notion had two 'critical' results, one thought by Kant, the other left unthought. First, the classically conceived Being of beings, since it now found its ground in the conditions of possible experience, could only be intelligible in regard to possible objects of experience. That is, the 'pretensions' of reason to make comprehensible the Being of all beings as such, now had to be limited to the intelligibility of all, and only, phenomenal objects of possible experience. This, of course, is the result that Kant acknowledge. There was a further result of the transcendental move, however, which is crucial for our inquiry. The intelligibility of the notion of the becoming of Being remains impossible insofar as a sharp division is made between Being as such and the rational cognition of Being. Kant certainly maintains such a break. Indeed, with the clear separation of phenomenon and thing-in-itself he strengthens such a division. On the other hand, the Being of *phenomenal* beings is now seen to be dependent on the conditions for rational experience. The forms of sensibility and the pure concepts of the understanding supply the form in terms of which any phenomenal object can be as it is. The doctrine of the transcendental object in the A Deduction especially indicates the role of sensibility and the categories. Every phenomenal object must have a form which is necessitated by the conditions of possible experience; the object is the same object through time and alteration only insofar as it is the synthetic product of understanding and sensibility. Thus the Aristotelean Being of beings is no longer thought of as residing in the being by itself. Rather, the phenomenal object is as it is only through the mediation of rational activity. This allows for an essential connection between the Being of beings and man's relation to beings. Being *is* itself only insofar as it is Being for a *rational* being, and is constituted by such a being.

With Kant, of course, this relation of the Being of beings and the Being of rational beings extends only to the Being of phenomenal beings. Further, as the conditions for the possibility of experience are taken to be the same for all finite experience, the structure of the Being of phenomenal beings never changes. In order to make intelligible the possibility of a doctrine which could arise out of Kant and which asserted the becoming of Being, there must be at least some quasi-constitutional connection between man and the Being of beings. This condition is supplied for phenomenal being by Kant. But, the Being which is constituted or co-constituted by man must be seen to be the 'same' as Being itself if there is to be a doctrine of the becoming of Being. That is, the distinction between Being-in-itself and Being-for-consciousness must be systematically broken down. Insofar as Kant upholds this distinction, the constitutive activity of human agency extends merely to phenomenal being, i.e. the *appearance* of Being, but not to Being itself. The appearance of Being is not seen as basic or 'essential' to Being.

It was precisely the breakdown of the Kantian distinction between Being-for-consciousness and Being-in-itself in the Post-Kantian world which first raised the possibility of the becoming of Being. We can now begin to see in what way the question of the becoming of Being is intelligible. The acceptance of *something like* the transcendental turn is the absolute precondition for the intelligibility of the question of the becoming of Being. Only if the Being of beings is understood to stand in an essential relation to the Being of rational beings, can we understand what could be meant by a becoming of Being. If this is accepted, however, the Hegelian claim from the Introduction to the *Phenomenology* becomes operative. Then being-for-consciousness, or knowledge of beings, and being-in-itself, the condition of the objectivity of beings, Being, "falls within that same knowledge. . ." In the light of the 'diadicity' of consciousness, the Being of beings gets seen as the *horizon* of objectivity, *in* consciousness. This association of Being with the horizon of objectivity in consciousness is the very step in the evolution of the problem of the essence of essence which is made possible by the transcendental turn. This association, however, itself depends for its plausibility on the systematic destruction of the distinction between being-in-itself, taken in a radical sense, and being-for-consciousness. Man, that is, must be seen as 'providing the space' where Being can happen. While there might be 'entities' without man, this doctrine must hold the

position that there can be no *Being* without man. This now also refocuses the question away from the Being of beings, and directs inquiry towards the meaning of Being itself, as the horizon of and for all beings. Yet a third condition must be met if the question of the becoming of Being is to be intelligible. Not only must there be acceptance of something like a transcendental turn and an association of the horizon of consciousness with Being, there must further be the assertion that man's own Being is itself 'historical.' That is, the temporal condition of objectivity must be seen as holding in regard to the essence of man. Temporality and historicity must be seen as being essential to humanity. Thus the Kantian distinction of transcendental and phenomenal selves must also be systematically discarded.

In light of these three conditions, we can come to a preliminary understanding of what it would mean to assert the 'becoming of Being.' To ask whether Being becomes is to ask: 1) Whether and in what sense is the horizon of objectivity the condition for the Being of phenomenal beings? 2) Whether and in what sense are the horizon of objectivity and the Being of all beings the 'same'? 3) Whether and in what sense do temporality and historicity pertain necessarily to the essence of man? We can also ask the question of the becoming of Being in a different guise. Can we and must we think the essence of man as both the necessary condition for the possibility of the occurrence of Being and also as *a* being? This way of posing the question links together the three conditions for the becoming of Being. If, on the one hand, man is only a being among other beings, then his Being is irrelevant to Being itself. As the only reason we have uncovered for raising the question of the becoming of Being is the relation between man and Being as such, the question need not arise if man is only a being, and not the 'place' where Being happens. If, on the other hand, man is *not* a being, then it is unclear that temporality applies to man's Being and hence to Being itself. Man understood as essentially Spirit, in the Hegelian sense, for example, would only 'fall into' time. While for Hegel beings become, Being itself, as Spirit, is outside of temporality and historicity. Hegel does not assert the becoming of Being. Rather, he still operates within the Aristotelean orbit. Thus, if Being is to become, then man must be both *a* being and the occasion for Being. Without either of these conditions, the becoming of Being is inconceivable.

Having grasped the sense of this question of the becoming of Being,

however, a new problem presents itself. The three conditions taken together, the transcendental turn, the identification of the horizon of objectivity with Being as such, and the historicity of man, appear to be a prescription for relativism. Indeed, given these conditions it is even unclear what sense 'truth' can have, whether relativist or not. We must, then, turn to the meaning of 'truth' within the framework of the question of the becoming of Being.

II. THE QUESTION OF TRUTH

In the passage quoted at the beginning of this study, Werner Marx suggests that the 'immense difficulty' of the task of philosophy in our age is to think the essence of essence in such a way as to allow for the ontologically new and yet not fall into historicism or relativism. Truth has traditionally been understood as a particular kind of 'relation.' For there to be truth, meant there was an 'agreement' between the 'real,' ordinarily understood as either an entity or a state of affairs, and a 'thought,' which was seen as either an image or a judgment, sometimes as a judgment which itself was a 'picture.' In this context, the noteworthy aspect of this 'definition' of truth is the radical independence of the real from the 'representation' of the real. The entity or state of affairs intended by the representation in no way was thought to depend upon man or his thinking. The judgment needed to 'adjust' itself to the facts of the case, and the facts remained unaltered and unalterable by the judgment upon them. Indeed, if this were not the case, it is unclear what 'truth' could mean. Thus, the correspondence notion of truth thinks of truth as an agreement between two separate entities, the judgment or thought and the real or the fact.

With Kant, the independence of the real from the thought about it is called into question, at least for phenomenal objects. As the Being of the phenomenal object depends upon the forms of sensibility and the categories, that the phenomenally real *is* real depends in some sense upon the nature of the cognition of it. The rational faculties, the way in which the object is experienced and thought, supplies the horizon in terms of which the object could be as it is. Thus, the factually real, the object of the true judgment, was asserted *not* to be independent of rational cognition. The fact as fact depended in its Being upon the conditions of objectivity, established in and through subjectivity. The synthetic *a priori*

judgment is both about the world and normative for the particular facts in the world. With the transcendental turn, therefore, the radical opposition between thought and reality begins to be broken down. This does not mean, however, that Kant abandoned the traditional agreement notion of truth. "The nominal definition of truth, that it is the agreement of knowledge with its object, is assumed as granted."⁴ Truth is still understood by Kant to be the agreement of a judgment with its object. The object, however, is now taken to be dependent in its structure upon the horizon of objectivity of rational experience as such, if not upon the particular judgment in regard to it.

The transcendental turn thus leaves the conception of truth as a correspondence between a judgment and its object unchallenged. Given the constancy of the horizon of objectivity for Kant, this is easily comprehensible. There can be truth only if the objects of experience have a particular form. But the form of the objects of experience is, and must be for Kant, precisely the same as the form of judgment. The identification of the Being of phenomenal beings with the necessary principles of rationality assures that formally, phenomenal objects will agree with the structure of judgment. Thus the truth of a particular judgment depends only upon the agreement of the matter of the judgment with the material dimension of the object. Truth is impossible without experience, but the *content* of true judgments is independent of human cognition. Hence that there is truth as defined in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, truth concerning beings, is formally related to and dependent upon there being rational experiences, but the content of that truth is independent of the variability of humanity. No horizon of objectivity, no truth; but as that horizon is constant, that a particular judgment is true depends only upon the existence of the contingent, factually real. We will call propositional truths about beings ontic truths, following Heidegger's terminology.

Already with Kant, however, a new problem with 'truth' arises. What is the truth status of those judgments *in* the *Critique* which describe the ontological horizon, or the conditions of objectivity, themselves? The categories of the understanding and the forms of intuition are not themselves ontically observable as objects in terms of themselves. As involved with the Being of beings they are not objects or beings, and to treat them as such is to necessarily falsify our 'knowledge' of them. As I will use the term, 'ontological truth' will refer to truth concerning Being rather than truths

about particular beings. It seems clear that for Kant 'Being' is thought as the ground for the possibility of phenomenal beings, that which supplies the possibility for there *being* phenomenal objects. In the Kantian context, therefore, any statement or quasi-statement which attempts to reveal the conditions for the possibility of experience, and thus the conditions for the possibility of objects of experience, attempts to express ontological truth. But these very conditions yield the 'horizon' in terms of which phenomenal objects appear. All phenomenal appearances must *be* temporal, for example, and that they are so temporal is the condition *for us* under which they can be thought according to the categories. The pure intuition which is time itself, however, can not appear within time, hence no propositions concerning time itself can have either the status of being ontically true or ontically false. Thus ontological truth, or the truth of the horizon of beings, must be different in structure from ontic truth, or the truth concerning beings.

At this point the Hegelian notion of ontological truth, or the truth of shapes of objectivity, as the agreement of a concept with itself emerges. That a judgment is true of a being depends upon the agreement of the judgment with the facts of the case. But the 'facts of the case' are ontologically grounded in the manner in which they are grasped, the 'shape' of the cognition of them. The moment of being-in-itself, as objectivity, falls within consciousness. If a variety of such horizons are possible or actual, as they are for Hegel, what can it mean for any one such horizon to be 'true'?

For knowledge, however, the goal is fixed just as necessarily as the sequence of the progression. It is that point where knowledge no longer has need to go beyond itself, where it finds itself, and where the concept corresponds to the object and the object to the concept.⁵

That is, the ontologically 'true' shape of cognition is that shape in and for which no 'contradictions' of a structural nature arise.

The examination of ontological truth is carried out by natural consciousness, for Hegel, in that and through the fact that natural consciousness examines its own ontic knowledge. Insofar as natural consciousness attempts to gain knowledge of objects, it attempts to make its awareness of beings correspond with the in itself, or the condition under which the object is taken to be possible as object.

And if, in this comparison, the two moments do not correspond then it seems that consciousness will have to alter its knowledge in order to bring it into accord with the object. In the alteration of the knowledge, however, the object itself becomes to consciousness something which has in fact been altered as well. For the knowledge which existed was essentially a knowledge of the object; with change in the knowledge, the object also becomes an other, since it was an essential part of this knowledge. Hence it comes to pass for consciousness that what had been to it the in itself is not in itself or, what was in itself was so only for consciousness.⁶

In striving for knowledge, natural consciousness attempts to know the truth concerning beings. This truth always presupposes some horizon in terms of which the objects appear. If the beings can not be grasped according to this horizon, however, not only is the knowledge of the beings altered, but also the horizon in terms of which the beings appeared, has altered. "Thus the examination is not only an examination of knowledge, but also of the standard used in the examination itself."⁷

For Hegel, ontic truth is the agreement of knowledge with its object. But that object *is* as it is only insofar as it is situated in a particular 'shape' of consciousness, or horizon of objectivity. If the specific judgment concerning the object can not be made to correspond with the object, then not only the knowledge of the object must be changed, but also the 'shape' or horizon in terms of which the object appeared must be changed. The criterion for ontological truth is the agreement of the conditions of objectivity with themselves.

We must note once again, however, that for Hegel, Being itself, Spirit as absolute self-consciousness, is the principle of the process of the development of self-consciousness. As such process it pre-exists specific self-consciousness of it. The horizon of objectivity *is* Being, for Hegel, only for that shape of consciousness which is Absolute Knowledge. Thus Being itself does not become, though ontological knowledge of it certainly does. There is nothing that can properly be called 'relativism' of truth in Hegel, nor is there even a problem of relativism. There *is* only one ontological truth or truth of Being.

The Hegelian corpus, however, embodies only two of the three conditions which we have outlined for the intelligibility of the becoming of Being. Attainment of closure in history, the end of history, is the necessary condition for the writing of both the *Phenomenology* and the *System* as they now stand. That is, man, as Spirit, must be comprehended as es-

entially ahistorical and atemporal if the ultimate agreement of concept with itself, ontological truth for Hegel, is to be realizable. This ultimate atemporality of Spirit, however, clearly fails to realize our third condition for the intelligibility of the becoming of being. This is precisely the position which is denied by Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Karl Marx. For a position that holds the radical becoming of Being, neither correspondence nor coherence can be adequate notions of ontological truth. A correspondence conception of ontological truth is inadequate because Being is not a being with which a judgment can either correspond or not. A coherence notion of ontological truth is inadequate because it presupposes an ultimate end to history, which the radical becoming of Being denies. Ontic truth, truth about beings, seems to remain amenable to treatment according to the traditional correspondence model. Regardless of the ontological horizon of beings, truth is the agreement of a judgment with the particular being it is about, *itself*. Even to say this much, however, is problematical. If Being radically becomes, then the Being of beings becomes as well, and whether a judgment is true of a particular being would appear to depend on the Being of that being at the specific time that the judgment is formulated. What then can 'truth' mean in a world of ontological becoming, if not an historically relative truth? To come to grips with this question, we must reconsider the notion of an ontological horizon or 'world' in the light of twentieth century conceptions.

For Husserl, each object of an act of consciousness has both an internal and external horizon. In seeing an ashtray, for example, I intend not only those parts of the ashtray that I can 'actually' perceive. Rather, that the ashtray is seen as an ashtray means that I intend 'emptily' the absent sides of the object. Only because each focal content of consciousness is placed within an horizon of absent elements, can the object *mean* anything at all. The sense of our cognitions is supplied by the context in which they appear. This context, however, is not only composed of the missing perspectives on the object; the object itself and as such is situated in both spatial and temporal horizons, populated by other objects, which are not focally attended to. This 'external' spatio-temporal horizon is the 'world,' against which any object can and must appear.

It [the world] is experienced, not merely thought about or meant; yet it is experienced only in the manner of a horizon, or rather, *the* horizon, of anything perceived or otherwise directly experienced.⁸

As with Hegel, then, the mature thought of Husserl asserts the *experienced* nature of the ultimate horizon which is the world.

Now Kant teaches explicitly that the world itself is not an object of possible experience. . . [But] I cannot accept the Kantian assertion. . . For us, real particulars are experienced, but the world is experienced too, indeed the two are inseparable.⁹

It is of the nature of the world, however, to be experienced only as horizon, and never as focal object. As consciousness is essentially temporal, the horizontal life-world contains pre-predicative significance and goals which are at once both the ground for all explicitly predicative judgments and for all specific projects which delimit particular domains and directions of focal attention, including the project which is scientific investigation. In the *Crisis*, Husserl equally makes clear the grounding of all projects, including the scientific project, in the life-world.

The life-world is the world that is constantly pre-given, valid constantly and in advance as existing, but not valid because of some purpose of investigation, according to some universal end. Every end presupposes it; even the universal end of knowing it in scientific truth presupposes it, and in advance, . . .¹⁰

Thus for the late Husserl, all meaning finds its foundation in the pre-given, passive synthesis which is the horizon of all experience, the life-world. The structure of the life-world grounds the structure of every object in it, i.e. every object. Regardless of the structural meaning of focal objects of experience, an apophantic judgment concerning the object is true if and only if the meaning intended in the judgment is evidently fulfilled. That is, there is 'truth' only where there is a correspondence between the judging and the intentional object of the judging. But what about the 'truth' of the life-world itself? As long as the life-world was considered by Husserl to be ahistorical and atemporal, this problem could not arise. In the *Crisis*, however, and especially in *Experience and Judgment*, Husserl progressively comes to see the life-world as historically conditioned in its very structure. Put in the terms of Part I of this work, this amounts to the third condition for the becoming of Being. The predelineated horizon of the life-world is itself permeated with the results of previous focal investigation of a previous life-world. "In other words, the world as interpreted by the cognitive accomplishment of those who originated modern

science [for example] becomes the world *as experienced* by us."¹¹ In a remarkable fashion, at the end of Husserl's career, he reaches precisely the conclusion which is the touchstone of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. The structural horizon of objectivity is itself the result of previous historical investigations of a previous world. The new in-itself is the old in-itself-for-consciousness. Husserl's emphasis on the essentiality of temporality in and for consciousness, however, precludes Hegel's notion of ontological truth as the coherence of the world with itself which can only be realized at the end of history.

This is the philosophical situation of Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Heidegger realized the implications of Husserl's work prior to his teacher. *Being and Time*, and indeed every one of Heidegger's works, struggles with the question of ontological truth. In this preliminary study of the formal conditions for such a truth we intend to concentrate solely on *Being and Time*. Heidegger returns to the ancient Greek notion of truth as *aletheia*, unhiddenness, for both a conception of ontic and ontological truth. Beings show themselves, but from out of the non-thematic horizon of Being. Being unhides and 'shows' itself, but never thematically and only in and through particular beings. Thus truth is a showing or an 'uncoveredness' of both Being and beings. But Being and beings can be 'uncovered' only insofar as Dasein is Being-in-the-world; they are uncovered with and for Dasein.

Being-true as Being-uncovering, is a way of Being for Dasein. What makes this very uncovering possible must necessarily be called 'true' in a still more primordial sense. . . . Uncovering is a way of Being for Being-in-the-world. . . . What is primarily 'true' — that is, uncovering — is Dasein.¹²

Dasein is Being-in-the-world and hence 'Being un-covering,' the true. As historical, however, Dasein is finite, its un-covering is always a limited disclosure. In that they show themselves Being and beings remain hidden and concealed; there is no perfect disclosure. Hence Dasein is equally in 'untruth.'

To be closed off and covered up belongs to Dasein's *facticity*. In its full existential-ontological meaning, the proposition that 'Dasein is in the truth' states equiprimordially that 'Dasein is in untruth.'¹³

Truth necessarily involves the interplay of hiddenness and unhiddenness, concealment and unconcealment; truth is finite.

Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, attempts to clearly distinguish two senses of 'truth.' Dasein is the primarily 'true' in that its Being is 'to be uncovering.' That anything like uncovering, or truth, occurs, depends for the Heidegger of *Being and Time* upon the being whose Being is 'to be uncovering,' being-in-the-world, Dasein. On this level 'truth' means the Being of the being which is Dasein. As such the Being of *this* being, Dasein, supplies the conditions and the ground in terms of which there *can be* beings and Being. "Of course, only as long as Dasein *is* (that is, only as long as an understanding of Being is ontically possible) 'is there' Being."¹⁴ Thus, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger asserts that the 'to be uncovering' of Dasein *is*, in a fundamental sense, ontological truth. Ontic truth, on the other hand, which eventually gets interpreted in the tradition as the truth of the apophantic judgment, is thought as 'Being-uncovered.' " 'Truth' in the second sense does not mean Being-uncovering (uncovering), but Being-uncovered (uncoveredness)."¹⁵

Being and Time gives us some clues for the possibility of thinking truth, both ontic and ontological, in the light of the becoming of Being. First, Heidegger, through the notion of ontological truth as 'to be uncovering,' allows us to think the becoming of ontological truth and the becoming of Being in terms of the becoming of Dasein's Being. Different 'uncoverings,' different 'Beings,' are granted and given in that the Being of Dasein, as 'Being uncovering' is not static, but radically related to time. That is, Being becomes in that Dasein's Being becomes. For Dasein's Being to become is for the manner and structure of Dasein's 'Being-uncovering' to become. In that the world in which Dasein is being-in-the-world becomes the manner and direction of Dasein's 'Being-uncovering' also becomes. Thus the historical becoming of the world involves a change in the uncoveredness of beings, i.e. a change in the Being of beings. Different 'regions' of Being emerge with changes in the Being-uncovering of Dasein. However, aside from the ontic condition for any Being whatsoever, the Being of Dasein, there is no necessity here that any new *beings* emerge with this becoming of Being. Rather, it is the *Being* of beings which is becoming. But this means that *ontic* truths concerning beings, once secured, need not be altered by the becoming of Being. For example, in the later Heidegger, the work of art 'sets up a world.' The Being of the work of art *is* to set up a world. To say that the work of art sets up a world, does *not* mean that ontic truths concerning the presence at hand of the work of

art are themselves altered by the work of art. There is a sense in which the Being of objects as present at hand has *already* been uncovered prior to the contemporary work of art. The work of art, in that it sets up a world, reveals and uncovers a new region of Being, not only in regard to the work of art itself, but also in regard to all other beings within the world. It does not, however, cancel the previous uncoverings of beings.

The argument for ontic relativism arising out of the becoming of Being rests upon the notion of a constantly shifting horizon of objectivity. If apophantic, judgmental truth always rests in its possibility upon a pre-given world of meaning and structure, and if this structure changes, we seem to need some criterion for the truth of a particular world horizon. Failing this all specific judgments are hypothetical; 'If Being is *this* way, then S is P.' But the becoming of Being appears to assert the impossibility of a final judgment concerning the world-horizon. Thus all truths of ontic judgments are relative to the particular historical world they are stated in. (A special problem of circularity emerges in regard to the statement of the historical claim itself.) The foundation of this argument, however, is the idea that judgments concerning beings which *have been* true can become *untrue* through a change of horizon. The notion of *aleitheia*, however, suggests the continued truth, in some sense, of ontic judgments, through changes in the world.

As Being progressively becomes 'unhidden,' new 'ways' of Being emerge. This notion is to be contrasted with the essentially Aristotelean notion of new species of beings. For Aristotle man is different from the monkey in that the essence 'humanity' is different from the essence 'monkeyness.' The relation between the particular monkey and its essence and between the particular man and his essence, however, are the same in both cases. If truth is conceived as *aleitheia*, insofar as both man and monkey are uncovered in the direction of the present at hand, the Aristotelean formulation remains appropriate. But two other points must be made in addition to the traditional Aristotelean one. First, the condition and the ground for the possibility of presence at hand as such must be seen as the Being of Dasein as 'to be uncovering.' As Dasein is the being which has an understanding of Being, the Being of Dasein as 'to be uncovering' is already uncovered for Dasein in a pre-ontological fashion in that Dasein is. The becoming of Dasein into Being must thus be seen as the 'advent' of Being and of beings. Second, to see that both monkey and man are appro-

priately revealed as present at hand in some quasi-Aristotelean fashion, does not exhaust the Being of either man or monkey. Insofar as Dasein is historical, the world and through it the Being of beings other than Dasein, remain continually in the process of Being uncovered. 'New' ontological dimensions become opened up and thus new ontic truths become revealed without the necessary cancellation of previous ontic truths.

To formalize these considerations, there can be non-relative ontic truth concerning beings, given the becoming of Being, if and only if two conditions are met. First, the becoming of Being must be an addition to Being, which alters the sense of previous ontic truths without altering the truth of judgments concerning already existent beings. New *types* of truth, and thus new relations between beings and Being emerge through and in the becoming of Being. The becoming of Being must therefore be thought as an event and an advent of truths concerning beings in that it is an expansion of the ontological horizon in terms of which beings can be as they are. We will call this condition for the possibility of non-relative truths concerning beings in the light of the becoming of Being, the *additive nature* of the becoming of Being. The second condition for the possibility of non-relative truth in the light of the becoming of Being is that the very notion of a final and complete *ontological* truth is dismissed. If Being becomes in the sense of new dimensions of Being being-uncovered through the becoming of new ontological determinations of beings, then Being must be thought of as developing through time. The notion of a final ontological truth of Being necessarily presupposes an eternity of selfsameness in regard to Being which is in principle disallowed by the additive nature of the becoming of Being. To think of a final truth of Being is to consider Being as if it were *a* being, with a definite fixed essence. Ontic truths may be non-relative, although no final and complete list of 'facts' can ever be compiled. Ontological truth is neither relative nor non-relative; it is *emergent*. Being-uncovering always involves 'Being-covered' or hiddenness and this hiddenness is not accidental but necessary in regard to ontological truth, or Being-uncovering. From this it follows that in principle no final ontological truth is conceivable.

We have thus uncovered five formal conditions for the intelligibility of non-relative ontic truths concerning beings, the becoming of Being, and the thinkability of both together. 1) The transcendental turn, interpreted as the identity of the Being of phenomenal beings and the horizon of cognitive

objectivity. The conditions of the possibility of experience must be thought as the same as the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience. 2) The objective horizon of the objects of phenomenal experience must be identical with Being as such. That is, the Kantian distinction between being in itself and being for consciousness must be broken down. 3) Man must be seen as essentially temporal and historical. 4) The becoming of Being must be thought as additive rather than as merely an alteration. 5) Absolute, complete and final ontological truth must be impossible.

The revelation of the formal conditions which must be met if the becoming of Being and non-relative truth are to be comprehensible together, however, does not amount to an argument in favor of either the actual intelligibility of such a notion or of its truth. Given the above we do not know whether these conditions can be met. In addition, some of the conditions, in particular the crucial condition number 4, are anything but clear in regard to their sense. Thus it is only by arguing for the truth of each condition and by specifying concretely the way in which each condition can be fulfilled, that one can argue for the truth, or falsity, of the doctrine of the becoming of Being.

NOTES

- 1 Werner Marx, *Heidegger and the Tradition*, (Evanston : Northwestern, 1971), p. 9.
- 2 Hegel, Introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, quoted from the Dove translation contained in Heidegger, *Hegel's Concept of Experience*, (New York : Harper and Row), pp. 20, 21. All quotes from the Introduction are from the Dove translation, will be cited as Int., and the page references are to the Heidegger volume.
- 3 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (New York : St. Martin's), A158, B197.
- 4 Kant, *ibid.*, A58, B82. This definition is repeated twice in the *Critique*, at A191, B236 and at A642, B 670.
- 5 Hegel, Int., p. 16.
- 6 Hegel, *ibid.*, p. 22.
- 7 Hegel, *ibid.*, p. 23.
- 8 David Carr, *Phenomenology and the Problem of History*, (Evanston : Northwestern, 1974), p. 143.
- 9 Husserliana, IX, p. 95. As quoted in Carr, *Phenomenology and the Problem of History*, p. 152.
- 10 Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, (Evanston : Northwestern, 1970), p. 382.
- 11 Carr, *Phenomenology and the Problem of History*, p. 216.
- 12 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 263, H.220.
- 13 Heidegger, *ibid.*, p. 265, H.222.
- 14 Heidegger, *ibid.*, p. 255, H.212.
- 15 Heidegger, *ibid.*, p. 263, H.220.