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The Temporality of Innovative Thinking

An ontological reflection on the structure of innovative-
contemplative thought processes

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Abstract

Since ground-breaking ideas have become of utmost importance for our knowledge driven society, scientists from several disciplines have recently started to investigate the cognitive process underlying innovative thinking and successfully developed a variety of models describing this process. I selected three related models (“Becoming aware”, “Theory U”, “Triple-loop learning”) as background for my analysis. Although their common subject-matter is the process of innovative-contemplative thinking, they are situated in different fields of research. Since these models are basically methodological descriptions, situated on an epistemological plane, they lack in a profound theoretical understanding of the ontological foundation of this process. Thus, it was the purpose of this thesis to identify the ontological dimension of innovative-contemplative thinking, in order to improve the comprehension of its meaning. To achieve this goal, I had to take three methodological steps. At first, it was necessary to perform a synoptic analysis of the exemplary models, with the objective of determining the constitutive structure of this process. Secondly, I investigated the ontological theory of Martin Heidegger, with regard to the core structure found via the synoptic analysis. Thirdly, these findings were used to reflect on their meaning for the epistemological levels and steps. Thereby, I came to the conclusion that the primordial meaning accompanying the cognitive process of innovative-contemplative thinking is a transformation of one’s ontological status. The temporal constitution of the subject, spanning simultaneously across the past, the present and the future, is stepwise deconstructed, in order to disclose one’s primordial existence. As a result, highly innovative ideas are enabled to come to the fore.

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1. Introduction

Being is essentially a becoming. Time does never stand still and the world is permanently changing. At least since Aristotelian Physics, change is a constitutive aspect of the occidental conception of reality. Additionally, this idea has been confirmed by modern physics at the beginning of the 20th century. Change is widely recognized as the ontological condition sine qua non for novelty and innovation.¹ Nevertheless, innovative ideas and fundamental transformations in our worldview seem to be rare and demanding. In opposition to the realm of being, our intellectual realm of knowledge structures seems to be conservative, gradually changing and highly predictable. Thomas S. Kuhn has shown that “paradigm shifts” like the Copernican Revolution or the foundation of Genetics are relatively seldom events compared to the intermediate, preceding periods of “normal science”.² Although science is just a single aspect of human life, it can be taken as a paradigmatic example, since new and innovative knowledge is its dedicated goal. Even a significant change of a person’s opinion about something is time-consuming, requires a lot of good evidence and even better personal reasons to change it. Thus, it is interesting to ask for an explanation of this obvious disparity between ontological change and epistemological innovation. Why does the permanent, constitutive flux of the world (including ourselves) not go hand in hand with a gradual change of knowledge about it? Why are cognition and the corresponding knowledge based on highly stable categories and patterns, which undergo rare changes only if absolutely necessary, although the objects and matters of fact captured by cognition never stop changing?

At this point it is not possible to answer this question satisfyingly; however it is possible to retain an interesting aspect. Obviously, there are (at least) two different kinds of human cognition: an innovative and a conservative one. For the most part, human cognition takes place as mere categorization in terms of already acquired concepts. The resulting knowledge totally remains within traditional boundaries. In this case one's intellectual scope enlarges only quantitatively. But sometimes a qualitative change of one's knowledge structures happens. The essence of these less prominent cognitive events is that something unknown is not just classified as an exemplar of an already established category, but rather new categories, and associations between them, are introduced. Obviously, this innovative and much less frequent mode of thinking differs substantially from analytical problem solving in respect of pre-given limits, which was acknowledge as the prototype of human cognition in the traditional paradigm of cognitive science. Thus, innovative thinking has rather recently become a subject-matter of scientific investigation. By treating it as a distinct cognitive process, it was possible to identify a certain structure. This structural description

1 cf. Gillespie 2008, p.1

2 cf. Kuhn 1996;

of innovative thinking exclusively remains within an epistemological understanding. But absolutely new and ground-breaking ideas never leave their bearer's personality unaffected. Closely related to creativity, innovative thinking takes place as incalculable transformation of the whole person. Due to this fact, I use the term “innovative-contemplative thinking/thought-process” to distinguish a specific kind of innovative thinking that involves the person existentially. In the case of innovative-contemplative thinking, the epistemological process is bound to an equivalent ontological process, which is much less investigated and understood than its epistemological correlate. Therefore the aim of my thesis is firstly to identify the ontological dimension of innovative-contemplative thinking, and secondly to reflect its meaning for the epistemological process by drawing conclusions.

During the previous decade, substantial progress has been made in analysing the epistemological structure of the innovative-contemplative thought process. I am using three of these epistemological models, which are structurally related, as guideline for my ontological investigation. My working hypothesis is that the ontological dimension of the innovative-contemplative thought process exhibits a similar structure as its epistemological counterpart, since they occur hand in hand. To proof this assumption, I perform a synoptic analysis of the three epistemological models, which are situated in the field of Cognitive Science, aiming at the identification of a common core structure (Chapter 3). Prior to this, I am introducing these models by giving a historical review. In a second step, I use the fundamental epistemological structure as a template for my ontological investigation, in order to show that the existential transformation follows an equivalently pattern (Chapter 5). Since Martin Heidegger extensively studied the principles whereupon profound ontological changes rely, his theories are particularly suitable for my analysis. But since his work constitutes a rather complex system, I provide a short introduction of his basic concepts in order to facilitate a proper understanding of the ontological process structure (Chapter 4). In conclusion, I make use of this analysis to perform an ontological reflection on the innovative-contemplative thought process (Chapter 6). An ontological reflection is a philosophical method, examining the existence and essence of the involved entities – the thinking person. My basic finding is that the ontological transformation, accompanying the innovative-contemplative thought process, is a step-wise degradation of one's temporally constituted subjectivity.

1.1 The process of innovative thinking – a paradox?

Basically, the thesis at hand is concerned with a methodological issue. “Method” is derived from the Greek word μέθοδος, meaning “following after” or “pursuit”.³ Hence, a method is a predefined way

³ <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=ME%2FQODOS&la=greek>

which has to be followed, in order to achieve a certain kind of knowledge. Through the rise of natural science during modern age, the quantitative experiment became the predominant method to gain certain knowledge.. Since an experiment must be reproducible by anybody, anywhere, at any given time, the attained knowledge is abstract (independent of the specific situation) and objective (independent of individuals). Of course, the process of innovative thinking is not equivalent with a scientific experiment. Nevertheless, its appearance as a process or method is a practical, yet questionable methodological preconception. By treating innovative thinking as a certain and distinct process, its observability and the possibility to describe a general structure is achieved. Every process is a clear and distinct phenomenon, circumscribed by a beginning and an end. It consists of particular steps which are systematically ordered and functionally connected. Therefore it must be possible to predict the outcome of a process if its systematic structure and the input is known. In a nutshell, any process is characterized by an objective sequence of steps – all instances of this kind have an equivalent structure, their functioning is based on the same principles and they result in a predictable outcome. Although many real world processes only allow for probability estimations, since our understanding of them is based on models which involve measurement inaccuracies, too many variables or unknown relations and structures, it must per definition be possible to predict the result of any process. Maybe the conception of innovative thinking as a process is not the ideal (and for sure not the only reasonable) approach. The result of innovative thinking is actually an innovation. Innovations are diametrically opposed to the normal output of processes. Radical innovations are virtually unpredictable, totally surprising and radically different from all existing ways of thinking. Innovations are situated and context dependent, thus it is possible that the same idea is a celebrated innovation at time-point A, yet absolutely irrelevant and neglected for the time-point B. Furthermore, innovations are non-objective, since there are usually many opponents to new and innovative ideas in the first place.

Hermeneutic circularity

Obviously, this methodological inquiry relies on an intrinsic paradox, for which the question arises if it is appropriate to treat and investigate innovative thinking as a process? Yes and no, since the subject-matter of this thesis is not merely an intellectual process, but likewise an existential transformation. Therefore it is necessary to take a closer look at this specific process before starting its proper investigation. The methodological paradox encountered above is rooted in the so-called “Hermeneutic circularity”, since it is impossible to absolutely and clearly separate the epistemological from the ontological dimension of the innovative thought process. Therefore it is misconceived as a rational, abstract and objectionable process, which could be modelled in the logical framework of a formal algorithm. An algorithmic thought process functions solely within a

predefined system of rules, which is why it can be modelled on a computer. The essence of an innovative thought process is that it transcends the hitherto existing intellectual framework. Hence, it requires something more than just cognitive activity, namely an existential practice. A radical innovation in terms of one's cognition is based on a change of one's existential constitution, since the latter gives rise to the former.⁴ The cognitive transformation(s) constituting the process of innovative-contemplative thinking are in essence a metamorphosis of the whole person. Via this mode of thinking, human beings do not merely produce new ideas. The radically new and innovative idea, which is supposed to be the “product” of this process, is “equi-primordial” (*gleichursprünglich*) with a correlative (equally fundamental) change of the person having this idea. In the course of this thesis it will become clear why the innovative idea can neither be the cause, nor the consequence of this metamorphosis. Since the interdependence of epistemology and ontology in the course of innovative thinking can never be resolved nor should it be neglected, it is the best solution to just accept it. “Das Entscheidende ist daher nicht 'aus dem Zirkel heraus-, sondern in ihn nach der rechten Weise hineinzukommen' (SuZ, 203), das heißt 'ursprünglich und ganz in diesen 'Kreis' zu springen' (SuZ, 418).”⁵ This is the prime reason why Heidegger's hermeneutic conception of phenomenology is the perfect “theoretical medium” for an analysis of a process taking place in the intellectual as well as the existential domain. In respect and reference to his opus I term the subject-matter of this inquiry “innovative-contemplative thought process”, thereby highlighting the existential involvement of the whole person. Becoming aware is basically becoming self-aware, or rather aware of one-self.

4 cf. Peschl 2008, p. 6: “In this mode of learning change is not solely based on cognitive reflection any more, but more importantly on *existential reflection* and learning.”

5 Vorlauffer 1994, p.48

2. Chronological development of the field of research

The scientific field dedicated to the investigation of cognitive processes yielding innovative ideas exists approximately since a decade. The first noteworthy treatise was published in 2003 by Francisco Varela, Pierre Vermersch and Nathalie Depraz. This interdisciplinary book called 'On becoming aware', is a rather tentative and general approach to the innovative-contemplative thought process, which has triggered further researchers to investigate it. One of them is Markus Peschl (University of Vienna), who has developed a constructivist variety of the initial model, emphasizing its importance for teaching and learning situations. Another one is Otto Scharmer (Presencing Institute) who created a model called "Theory U", which is a social technology of highly innovative leadership. These three theories constitute the subject matter of the adjacent analysis of the innovative-contemplative thought process.

In this chapter, I am introducing the structure of three epistemological models by Scharmer, Peschl and Depraz et al in terms of their historical development. For the unacquainted reader this should serve as an introduction into the subject-matter. Prior to that, I briefly sketch the main philosophical source of the initial model by Depraz et al, which are the methodological deliberations by Edmund Husserl. By presenting the philosophical background of these models, I would like to foster and deepen the readers understanding of their commonalities and peculiarities.

2.1 Phenomenological Origin

The aim of this section is to introduce the phenomenological reduction as philosophical precursor of "On becoming aware", to raise the reader's awareness of the peculiarities this thought process depends on. The three authors Natalie Depraz, Francisco Varela and Pierre Vermersch united three different approaches to the phenomenon of awareness based on their analogy. "In fact, the reductive operation will be presented as the theoretical analogue of that 'becoming aware' described in its procedural effectuation in the first Part, just as the reflective act is its psychological analogue, or mindfulness/awareness its meditative analogue."⁶ Phenomenological Reduction, Psychological Reflection and Mindfulness Meditation are treated and analysed as distinguished variants of one and the same process. Therefore they are supposed to exhibit a common structure, which will be explained in detail during the following chapter. However, I would like to highlight the theoretical reference to the phenomenological reduction, since this thesis has an exclusively theoretical focus. For gaining a profound understanding of the subject-matter as well as its scientific development it is necessary to take a closer look at the phenomenological reduction and its background, since the

⁶ Depraz 2003, chapter 6

influence on this discipline is remarkably strong.⁷

The phenomenological Reduction

About 100 years ago, the German philosopher and mathematician Edmund Husserl founded a novel philosophical discipline called Phenomenology. Like Rene Descartes, who is commonly regarded as the founder of modern thinking, he was eager to find absolute and necessary truth. Husserl's main principle was the search for an indubitable and irreducible basis of knowledge to emanate from, which should turn philosophy into a rigorous science. In a nutshell, his quest for absolute certainty is couched in the phenomenological maxim “Zu den Sachen selbst!”⁸ These *things as such* are in fact the phenomena of Phenomenology, which differ essentially from ordinary things – objects.⁹ In reference to the famous hyperbolic doubt by Rene Descartes (whom he calls the prime father of phenomenology – cf. Paris lectures), Husserl develops the phenomenological equivalent called “*epoché*”.¹⁰ When performing the hyperbolic doubt, the existence of absolutely everything that can possibly be doubted (our sensual information, the distinction between dream and reality and finally the principles of geometry and logic) is called into question.¹¹ The epoché is equally rigorous but on a different level. Not the existence as such is challenged but our common notion of the world as something external, distinct and necessary. “In short, the epoché entails a change of attitude towards reality, and not an exclusion of reality. The only thing that is excluded as a result of the epoché is a certain naivety, the naivety of simply taking the world for granted, thereby ignoring the contribution of consciousness.”¹² Husserl calls this naive and common attitude towards the world and all worldly objects “Generalthesis der natürlichen Einstellung”¹³ which is suspended via the act of epoché. Obviously, this initial step of entering into the phenomenological field may be strange or even unpleasant to take, since it is diametrically opposed to the natural and familiar ways of cognition.

7 Depraz 2003, p.170: “This is the reason why each of us has drawn from Phenomenology the concept providing the general orientation for the present work, which can be summed up as follows: the practical and procedural description of the phenomenon of awareness, grasped from the standpoint of its internal dynamics, as has been shown in the first Part.”

8 Husserl 1998, p. 6: “*It is the spirit of science to count nothing as really scientific which cannot be fully justified by the evidence. In other words, science demands proof by reference to the things and facts themselves, as these are given in actual experience and intuition. Thus guided, we, the beginning philosophers, make it a rule to judge only by the evidence.*”

9 German language knows a telling difference between *Sache* and *Ding*, which hints at the present distinction. Cf. Depraz 2003, p. 176: “By contrast with the *Ding*, the *Sache* is to be understood as the object of the business of thinking, the problem or the theme of reflection. [...] Returning to things themselves is a matter of paying attention to the object inasmuch as it is a subjective meaning, or an entity originally envisaged through an act of consciousness.”

10 Precht 2006, p. 27: “Die Funktion, die bei Descartes der methodische Zweifel erfüllt, übernimmt bei Husserl der methodische Schritt der 'Epoche': die Einklammerung der Gesamtheit aller bisherigen Überzeugungen.”

11 Cf. Rene Descartes: *Mediationes de la prima philosophia* – first Mediation

12 Gallagher & Zahavi 2008, p. 23

13 cf. Husserl 1983, p. 61: “*We put out of action the general positing which belongs to the essence of the natural attitude; we parenthesize everything which that positing encompasses with respect to being: thus the whole natural world which is continually 'there for us', 'on hand', and which will always remain there according to consciousness as an 'actuality' even if we choose to parenthesize it.*”

“The phenomenological ethic runs profoundly counter to nature. The reduction is not an exercise that the subject would operate willingly, of his own accord, and in a spontaneous fashion. Of his own accord, such a subject would remain with, or would return much more naturally to, the daily course of his familiar activities and of his most comfortable thinking.”¹⁴

Due to the fact that the phenomenological attitude does not doubt the being of beings as such, but rather their way of being with respect to their appearance in consciousness, it does not uncover the self-contained *ego cogito* as the absolute and unshakable fundament of true knowledge (*fundamentum absolutum inconcussum veritatis*). Thus, the pivotal question centres on the result of this unnatural but far-reaching method. Where does it lead to; or rather what does the person who performs it attain thereby? Does it reveal an unorthodox, inconvenient and even uncanny world? Or maybe there is nothing left, since nothing remains unaffected by the scope of it? Fortunately, this is not the case! In contrast to Descartes, Husserl discovers pure consciousness as the realm where things appear as they are – as phenomena. “Anstatt in den Bewusstseinsakten zu leben bzw. sie zu vollziehen, richten wir unseren Blick auf diese Bewusstseinsakte und 'erfassen sie selbst als das absolute Sein, das sie sind.' Was bleibt ist also das Bewusstsein als Objekt unserer Betrachtung.”¹⁵

In a way it seems that the structure of this method is equivalent with introspection. Throughout his career Husserl has been accused of this similarity and struggled to clarify it, since there is an essential difference between these two modes of thinking. The reflective movement of introspection aims at an internal mental sphere of conscious activity. Since Rene Descartes, this inner mental realm (*res cogitans*) is abysmally separated from the external world consisting of objects (*res extensa*). Within this metaphysical framework of modern age thinking, the reflective movement of introspection has a paradoxical position, since it is a mental act directed towards a mental object. For an adequate understanding of the phenomenological methodology it is a necessary prerequisite to overcome the Cartesian dichotomy insurmountably separating the world from the mind, as stated by the first principle of Husserl's Ideas. “No conceivable theory can make us err with respect to the *principle of all principles: that every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of intuition, that everything originarily (so to speak in its 'personal' actuality) offered to us in 'intuition' is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there.*”¹⁶ Husserl identifies the primordial structure of consciousness as intentionality or aboutness, which is in line with his first epistemic principle. Conscious thought always has content and must be about something.¹⁷ Thus, the phenomenological reduction is misconceived as the

14 Depraz 2003, chapter 6

15 Precht 2006, p. 58

16 Husserl 1983, p. 44

17 cf. Husserl 1998, p. 12/13: “*The essence of consciousness, in which I live as my own self, is the so-called*

reflection on internal and self-contained states – like introspection – since their ontological meaning has been refuted “Indeed, for phenomenology, as Donn Welton (2000, p.17) indicated, mental acts do 'not belong to a closed interior realm available only to introspection. Rather, they have their being by virtue of their relationship to that which transcends them'.”¹⁸

Summary & Conclusion

To summarize the core structure of Husserl's methodological considerations, I would like to highlight the bilateral meaning merged in the term “reduction”. On the one hand it bears a negative connotation, referring to the suspension of all doubtful (empirical) knowledge, prejudices and methodological presuppositions – whatsoever. On the other hand this methodical negation discloses another – phenomenal – perspective for the thinking person a source of positive experience.¹⁹ This fundamental yet strange realm of intentional consciousness can only be brought into focus and become the origin of genuine knowledge, which is absolutely evident or apodictic, if all other modes of thinking are momentarily abrogated. According to Husserl, solely the reduced apperception is capable of intuitive and therefore apodictic knowledge, since the direct structure of givenness is in accord with intentionality. “Nach vollzogener phänomenologischer Reduktion richtet sich der Blick auf das Bewusstseinserebnis selbst. Diese Form der Reflexion stellt eine innere Wahrnehmung dar, in der die notwendige Existenz des Gegenstandes verbürgt ist.”²⁰

There exists an enormous scientific discourse about the phenomenological reduction, but for the purpose of this thesis I would like to conclude by pointing out a particular aspect of outstanding importance for the process of innovative-contemplative thinking as well as the second part of the present thesis – its “operative dynamics”.²¹ I mentioned above that the process of innovative-contemplative thinking precludes a strict methodical procedure in the sense of natural sciences, which likewise is true for the phenomenological reduction. Although it is explicitly conceptualized for the investigation of a specific field – pure consciousness – it lacks a designated object, category or schematic description thereof. As a result it can never be a certain, positive and finite enumeration of distinct steps, which would result in a predictable “piece of knowledge” if followed stringently and correctly. This factual openness is a central constitutive aspect for the phenomenological reduction (as it is for the process of innovative-contemplative thinking), due to

intentionality. Consciousness is always consciousness of something.”

18 Gallagher & Zahavi 2007, p. 23; also cf. Husserl 1998, p. 12: “The expression *ego cogilo* must be expanded by one term. Every *cogito* contains a meaning: its *cogitatum*.”

19 cf. Rizzoli 2008, p. 4: “Hiernach hat die Rede von Reduktion zugleich eine negative und eine positive Bedeutung. Denn einerseits soll sie dazu dienen, einen bereits vorliegenden Erfahrungsboden zu dekonstruieren und ihn 'auf ein bewusst methodisch verarmtes Erfahrungsfeld' zurückführen, andererseits soll die Reduktion aber auch einen vorher nicht zugänglichen anschaulichen Bereich erschließen, der nun für positive Erfahrungen zur Verfügung steht.”

20 Precht 2006, p. 60

21 Rizzoli 2008, p. 4

the fact that it has to suspend and subsequently transcend the status quo. To meet these requirements it is necessary to give up the ontological certainty and power implied in a strong subjectivity, for the sake of the *things* being able to show themselves as they are. “Unvermeidlich ist es aber, dass wesentliche Züge des Erforschten erst durch diese analytische Untersuchung ins Blickfeld rücken und thematisiert werden können. Die Explikation des Forschungsfeldes macht somit eine Selbstkorrektur, d.h. einen neuen Entwurf der Reduktion erforderlich, mit dem wiederum eine neue Zugangsweise zum thematischen Gegenstand erschlossen wird.”²² Since the course of this cognitive process is not predetermined by a subjective conception, but emerges as an adequate response to the pre-givenness of *things themselves* (Sachen selbst) it potentially undergoes an endless transformation – is essentially hermeneutic.²³

2.2 The “core cycle” of becoming aware

The topic of this section is the fundamental structure of the innovative-contemplative thought process discovered by Depraz, Varela and Vermersch. First I am discussing their aim and scientific approach, followed by presentation of their findings. In search of an appropriate method to explore the realm of subjective experience from a first-person perspective, Francisco Varela adopted the philosophy of Edmund Husserl. Varela was a Chilean Neuroscientist and Cognitive Scientist, who became famous for developing the concept of autopoiesis together with Humberto Maturana.²⁴ During the later stages of his career he increasingly devoted his research to cognitive phenomena like embodiment and consciousness. His extensive research on first-person methodology finally resulted in the profound book “On becoming aware”, which was published in 2003 – two years after his sudden death. The highly interdisciplinary research presented in this volume has been conducted in close collaboration with the Co-authors Natalie Depraz, a French philosopher primarily specializing in the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, and Pierre Vermersch, a French psychologist investigating the realm of first-person experience via introspection. Together they intended to “seek *the sources and means for a disciplined practical approach to exploring human*

22 Rizzoli 2008, p. 4

23 This methodical point arouses an ongoing debate or even imbroglio between the followers of Husserl and Heidegger ever since it is raised and it is a widely accepted demarcation to attribute “hermeneutic” to the phenomenology of Heidegger and characterize Husserl's phenomenology as “pre-hermeneutic” (cf. Von Hermann 2004). The common claim is that the Husserlian reduction remains within the boundaries of the subject, predetermining the constitution of the world in relation to its intentionality, which is ultimately abandoned not until “Being and Time” or even Heidegger's so-called “turn”. This is not the right place to settle this, but in the light of Rizzoli's recent interpretation in “Erkenntnis und Reduktion” I admit that Husserl's reduction is hermeneutic in essence, appending that it does not reach the ontological dimension of Heidegger's thinking, but remains on an epistemological level (cf. On becoming aware). This concatenating discrepancy is exactly the reason why Heidegger's concept of thinking provides an excellent source for a meaningful ontological continuation of Husserl's work and his successors.

24 cf. Maturana & Varela 2011

experience.”²⁵ The critical question is what do they mean by experience? “Experience is always that which a singular subject is subjected to *at any given time and place*, that to which s/he has access 'in the first person'.”²⁶ Primarily this means that experience is absolutely personal and specific. It is persistent as well as persistently changing as a result of its spatio-temporal constitution. Above all, exclusively the experiencing person itself has direct access to its own experience – as a first-order observer. Since this is regarded as a natural human activity or *praxis*, they initially approach the realm of human experience in a pragmatic manner. They do not establish a theoretical model a priori, which they could test empirically in a subsequent step. But they observe and analyse already existing practices to explore subjective experience, and create a theoretical description based on their practical findings. “What we are calling 'the act of becoming aware' is a human act that is so basic that it is quite independent of the contexts in which one becomes aware of one's own conscious activity.”²⁷ Their empirical investigations are mainly focused on three different sub-forms of this fundamental capability: psychological introspection, phenomenological reduction and mindfulness meditation (*shamatha*).²⁸ These practices exhibit obvious differences, since they have been developed in various ways against the background of cultural and historical circumstances. Nevertheless, a common and invariant form is supposed to be concealed in them, as they seem to be particular implementations of a single characteristic trait.

How is it possible to study experience?

Although they approach this cognitive ability via empirical means, their study does not match the conventional scientific framework. The phenomenology of Edmund Husserl has not just inspired the choice and understanding of this studies topic. Beyond that, its methodological considerations rely on his ideas as well. Subsequently to the reductive act of *epoché*, the phenomenological inquirer has obtained the possibility and responsibility to disinterestedly describe the structures of subjective consciousness given to him in pure *Evidenz*, i.e. intuition. Maintaining the reductive attitude, s/he is enabled to describe *the things* as they virginally appear. Therefore, any phenomenological description is free from prejudices and develops gradually in mutual dependence with the unfolding of its subject-matter. *Formally*, this study is in accordance with that, since it aims to give “a *procedural description* of the reflective act.”²⁹ They start off their analysis abandoning all a priori statements, trying to develop their descriptions in the course of its own unfolding (“on the

25 Depraz 2003, p. 1

26 Depraz 2003, p. 2

27 Depraz 2003, p.15

28 Depraz 2003, p. 169: “In fact, the reductive operation will be presented as the theoretical analogue of that 'becoming aware' described in its procedural effectuation in the first Part, just as the reflective act is its psychological analogue, or mindfulness/awareness its meditative analogue.”; also cf. Varela 2000, chapter I. “Three Methods of Accessing First-Person Experience”

29 Depraz 2003, p. 20

go”). In addition, the empirical examples, like shamatha, guided introspection or the orthodox heartprayer, are not perceived as individual examples of a certain category, but as *eidetic variations*. “Such eidetic variations make its essence appear in a facet which harbours in its own manner the complete *eidos*, but without restricting it to any one of these possible variations. In this way they show that the act must be able to be concretized in a variety of ways.”³⁰ The notion of *eidetic variation* is taken one-to-one from Husserl, who introduces this term (in his 'Ideas') for the methodical step after successful reduction. It designates an imaginative run through all conceivable possibilities of a phenomenon, for the purpose of discriminating its circumstantial, thus redundant, from its intrinsic, thus necessary features. In contrast to a rational categorization, which is based on the comparison of distinct individuals – previously considered of the same kind – and subsequent abstraction, the eidetic variation is designed to identify the essence (*eidos*) of something.³¹ To particularize the difference between category and essence, I pose the following question: what do humans base the selection of individuals for the comparison in course of a categorization? This pre-reflective and intuitive knowledge informing every rational category is what the term essence (*eidos*) denominates.

Suspension

After this short introduction and discussion of the methodological aspects of “On becoming aware” against the background of Husserl's phenomenology, the stage is set to present the results of this fascinating study. “What we found was the following: *epoche* and intuitive evidence form the *minimal* but self-sufficient *cycle* of the reflecting act. That means they call for one another: *epoche* is naturally completed by an intuition that crystallizes for the subject and which serves as strong internal evidence; this evidence is prepared for and qualified by a gradual process of completion [*remplissement*] that has its own quality of suspension.”³² Their studies reveal the cycle between epoché and intuitive evidence as the context-insensitive “core process of becoming aware.”³³ At a first glance this structure strongly resembles Husserl's interconnection between epoché and intuitive evidence (see above). Nevertheless, their empirical investigations highlight “a gradual process of completion”, preceding and shaping form and content of the intuition, which emerges as compelling subjective insight. Since this preparative phase is categorized as a particular variety of suspension, it

30 Depraz 2003, p. 21

31 cf. Gallagher & Zahavi 2008, p. 27: “Quite simply, it involves using our imagination to strip away the unessential properties of things. If the object that I am examining happens to be a book, what features of it can I imaginatively vary without destroying the fact that it is a book. [...] The result is that the core set of properties that resist change – those properties that belong to the book per se and which, once changed, would make the object cease being a book – constitute the essence, the ‘what makes a book a book’.” I really don't think it is necessary to go into detail about the 'eidetic variation', because it is independent of the phenomenological reduction and an equally discussed topic in the scientific community. This could be a highly interesting issue for another methodological thesis.

32 Depraz 2003, p. 24

33 Varela 2000, p. 4

seems that they have successfully identified the fine-grained structure of epoche. Consequently, this study marks a substantial improvement of Husserl's methodological conception by augmenting its fine-structure and at once its scope. Taking a closer look at their findings confirms that they have actually discovered the constituent sub-steps of the phenomenological mind-set.³⁴ They subdivide the process of becoming aware into three interrelated parts: 1) suspension, 2) redirection and 3) letting-go. Beside the suspension of our “natural attitude”³⁵ originally constituting the Husserlian epoché, two additional steps are distinguished (see Figure 1).

Redirection

The initial *suspension* phase is followed by a shift of attention from the “external world” to the “interior mental realm”, which they coined *redirection*. “So the suspension creates a space, the new comes up, and then you can redirect. Redirection is a specific gesture.”³⁶ As discussed in the context of phenomenological reduction (see above), it does not make sense to interpret the gesture of redirection against the background of Cartesian dualism – as an act of reflective introspection. The phenomenological heritage of the authors interdicts such a (scientific) reading from the outset, since “phenomenologists are not interested in consciousness per se. [...]. They are interested in consciousness because it is world-disclosing.”³⁷ The shift of attention towards a person's cognitive sphere is actually a more fundamental path to “the external world” than the apparently direct approach of our everyday or scientific endeavours, as “without consciousness, no appearance.”³⁸ - Thus, to focus on one's experience of the world is an extremely critical step towards a proper understanding of it, since the human mind serves as the “medium” wherein the world is disclosed and constituted. In correspondence with the phenomenological reduction, through the act of redirection “we are no longer primarily interested in *what* things are – in their weight, size, chemical composition, etc. – but rather in *how* they appear, and thus as correlates of our experience.”³⁹ Being interested in the *how* of a subjective appearance, is not synonymous with a mechanistic understanding. It is not the ambition of a phenomenological approach to give a mere

34 Nevertheless, they call it epoché as well; it does not have exactly the same technical meaning as in the writings of Edmund Husserl. “Both following the greek-phenomenological meaning of *epoche* as suspension and breaking with it by enlarging it in a holistic way, we call *epoche* the organic whole of the three phases, because phases A1 (redirection, note by the author) and A2 (letting-go, note by the author) imply that phase A0 (suspension, note by the author) is always reactivated at each step.” The first two phases, suspension and redirection, are in accordance with Husserl's epoche and his reduction. The third stage of letting-go, cannot be attributed to him, but to the work of his famous scholar Martin Heidegger. The meaning of this thesis is to investigate the reasons for this two-fold background, thus helping towards a profound understanding of this cognitive process.

35 cf. Husserl 1983, § 30

36 Varela 2000, p. 5

37 Gallagher & Zahavi 2008, p. 26

38 Gallagher & Zahavi 2008, p. 24

39 Gallagher & Zahavi 2008, p. 25; also cf. Depraz 2003, p. 34: “Strictly speaking then, we're talking here about the very movement of the reduction as a conversion from the object to the act, or as a passage from *quod* (what) to *quomodo* (how).”

explanation of the neuronal networks or cognitive faculties and their interactions, since this would imply to treat the mind as an isolated object of investigation and thus in opposition to the world. Since the gesture of redirection as an epistemological instrument relies on the ontological basis of “correlational interdependence between specific structures of subjectivity and specific modes of appearance or givenness”⁴⁰, mind and world are seen as fundamentally interdependent. Obviously, this interdependence is not situated on the level of rational and reflective consciousness, since everyone usually perceives the world as external and in opposition to the internal realm of one's thoughts (in accordance with the natural attitude). Let's recall that the redirecting person is looking towards a pre-reflective, non-conscious and existential sphere of human being, which the whole process of becoming aware relies upon and cannot be parenthesized by the prior act of suspension. “The reflecting act takes off from the non-availability of what is reflected upon; you might say it takes off from the non-verbal, from the pre-reflective, from the ante-predicative.”⁴¹ Through the process of innovative-contemplative thinking, one seeks access to a realm where meaning and understanding no longer relies on concepts. Since this dimension of human awareness is, neither the objective world, nor the subjective mind (due to the fact that both are distinct and conceptualized subject matters), the attentional shift of redirection isn't fully sufficient. Thus, a further change of cognition is necessary.

Letting-go

The process of redirection is about shifting one's attention from the conscious-independent realm of objective reality, towards the pre-reflective level of personal experience. Already, this is a rather unusual kind of cognitive activity (and mostly requires substantial training), but how to continue henceforward may feel even more uncanny for most people. The authors call the third and final step in the process of becoming aware *letting-go*. Letting-go means that “you have to change from voluntarily turning your attention from the exterior to the interior, to simply accepting and listening.”⁴² This may sound easier than what is required in the course of redirection (attending to implicit processes and structures), since there is no obvious activity involved. Being idle and inactive suggests itself to be effortless and easy. But the difficulty arises out of the fact, that such an attitude is nearly non-existent within everyday cognition. The normal human life is supposed to be progressing, which demands mental and physical activity. In a nutshell, life is supposed to be a struggle. Thus, to adopt the attitude of letting-go is non-habitual and difficult for most people. Nevertheless, at least one form of everyday behaviour exists that resembles the attitude of letting-go, namely waiting. This analogy is highlighted by the authors of “On becoming aware” as well.

40 Gallagher & Zahavi 2008, p. 25

41 Depraz 2003, p. 40

42 Depraz 2003, p. 31

“Thus your waiting has to be focused and open, possibly empty of content for a time, without any immediate discrimination [...]”⁴³ Like waiting, letting-go implies that one cannot do anything to skip or quicken it. Hence, it may get easily boring, especially since it does not have a clear goal that would restrict it. In opposition to the everyday kind of waiting, letting-go is not targeted at something. It is like waiting for nothing. This lack of certain fulfilment is the most inconvenient aspect in the process of becoming aware. The thinking person, who typically seeks for an answer voluntarily, is in this case expected to do nothing but to wait for nothing. S/he is situated in an unusual and open-ended period, without any explicit or distinct knowledge and no need to think or do something. The person has to give up control and surrender to the natural occurrence of events. Therefore, it may require substantial training to get acquainted with this empty period and overcome the temptation to end it deliberately. The described process of epoché is essentially infinite, since it is a circle and in addition hermeneutic. But how does the actual process conclude?

Intuitive Evidence

Basically, the conclusion of this process only permits two different possibilities: a successful versus an unsuccessful one. When the attitude of suspension cannot longer be maintained, the cycle is broken and the person relapses into the natural attitude and his/her former mindset. If the person abides suspension throughout the process and accomplishes the acts of redirection and letting-go successfully, a sudden and overwhelming flash of intuitive evidence should fulfil the process. “An immediate and direct giving of evidence hits you like a lightning-bolt of sudden clarity. On the cognitive plane, the lightning-bolt is the 'Ah-hah!' or 'Eureka!' when you make an unexpected discovery of a clear and distinct truth; on the affective plane, it is the sudden feeling of a profound justice of quasi-aesthetic success, often accompanied by an emotion of joy or even jubilation.”⁴⁴ Interestingly, the occurrence of intuitive evidence is characterized by two unified aspects: a cognitive and an affective. After an undefined time of empty waiting, the distinct and clear insight suddenly springs from the pre-reflective level of mind-world-interrelation. This event cannot be predicted or subjectively achieved, since the person is bound to receptive waiting. Therefore, the intuitive evidence totally overwhelms the person, which results in a radical transformation of his/her mindset. This is accompanied by extraordinary positive emotions and surprise. Per definition, this process must end surprisingly, since the subject does not do, know or want anything. All competence is laid down and the *things* are left to their own resources. “Lived phenomenally as direct experience, without intermediaries, the intuiting act has no direct precursor that is able to prepare you for the emergence of a lived content as novel, as breaking the continuity of your

43 Depraz 2003, p. 37

44 Depraz 2003, p. 52

experience, your vision of the world. Intuiting is thus both *discontinuous* and *novel*.”⁴⁵ Since the intuitive fulfilment is not mediated by rational and conscious processes whatsoever, this mode of thought can be seen as a royal way to innovative ideas. Nevertheless, these kind of *intuitive innovations* are not out of the blue. They emanate from the sphere of pre-reflective experience, which implicitly pervades conscious activity all the time. Hence, phenomenological the notion of intuitive evidence is in accordance with Peschl's concept of “Emergent Innovation”.⁴⁶ Characterizing intuitive evidence as non-mediated, discontinuous and novel, it becomes obvious why it is accompanied by extraordinary positive emotions. Although it demands a lot of patient training from the thinking person, it is by no means a subjective achievement. As this is not a wilful, algorithmic and goal-oriented process, it is not bound to yield appropriate or even any results. “[...] we can describe the intuitive act as involuntary, since you cannot directly bring about either its accomplishment or its results. Rather, you can only create the conditions for it: this is the meaning of the decision you take in practising the *epoche*.”⁴⁷ But if the process does succeed (*glückt*) the intuitive insight is holistic, thus transforming the person's self-conception amidst the totality of being (world), due to its existential dimension (which will be discussed in the course of the next chapter). Therefore, intuitive fulfilment is comparable with an unexpected luck: surprising, unpredictable (novel) and you have not purposefully made an effort to receive it. Such events are among the most joyful experiences in life.

2.3 The existential extension: Theory U and Triple – loop learning

Although “On becoming aware” is a fruitful and innovative book, the interdisciplinary research cooperation with P. Vermersch and N. Depraz could not be perpetuated and this topic wasn't pursued, since F. Varela died before the publication. But what has happened since then? Fortunately, their investigations inspired other scientists in related fields, who adopted their theory and refined it according to their own provenance. Two specific examples are the theories of Otto Scharmer, a Senior Lecturer at the MIT and the founding chair of the Presencing Institute, and of Markus Peschl, a Cognitive Scientist from Vienna.

In the course of his project “Dialogue on Leadership”, O. Scharmer conducted an interview with F. Varela (in the year 2000) about their theory (“The three gestures of becoming aware”). Hence, he developed his concept of “presencing” in conjunction with the concept of “self-transcendent

⁴⁵ Depraz 2003, p. 48

⁴⁶ cf. Peschl & Fundneider 2008, p. 6: “Instead of imposing external and/or inadequate patterns or 'wild ideas' to the object of innovation Emergent Innovation tries to respect and at the same time explore and develop the most radical and unforeseen potentialities of the (profound understanding of the) core/essence of what is already there. In other words, it explores the space of *what is present in a latent manner* and what wants to emerge. In this sense emergent innovation is a kind of “*radical innovation from within*”.”

⁴⁷ Depraz 2003, p. 48

knowledge”. “The term presencing means to use your highest Self as a vehicle for sensing, embodying, and enacting emerging futures.”⁴⁸ The second concept is introduced as the correlative knowledge dimension. “This kind of knowledge can be thought of as *tacit knowledge prior to its embodiment*, or 'self-transcending' knowledge.”⁴⁹ Presencing identifies the side of the knowing person and self-transcendent knowledge the side of the known content. This constitutes the core of a future-oriented epistemological framework for organizational learning and leadership, since Scharmer originally worked in the field of Economics, in particular Knowledge Management. 2007, after intensive research work he publishes the book “Theory U: Leading from the future as it Emerges. The Social Technology of Presencing.”⁵⁰ On the basis of his earlier papers he developed a full-blown theory (which I will analyse later) and appropriate social technologies for its implementation.

M. Peschl, who has a constructivist background, interprets the process of becoming aware from a different viewpoint. He incorporates the act of becoming aware into “a constructivist framework for *modes of knowing* and *modes of coming to know* [...]”⁵¹, which understands “learning/teaching as a process of socio-epistemological engineering.”⁵² Initially Peschl creates a model that exclusively remains within epistemological boundaries, which he coins “double loop learning”⁵³. In 2007, he develops this model further to “Triple-loop learning” in reference to “On becoming aware” and “Theory U”. “[...] *'triple-loop learning'*; it opens up a perspective on how the domain of rational knowledge and wisdom/mystical could grow closer together. It is concerned with the question of *profound change* (and [radical] innovation) not only in the domain of knowledge, but also in the domain of personality or *individual cultivation*.”⁵⁴ It takes into account that double-loop (and comparable) learning strategies remain within a rational, thus functional notion of knowledge, which does not allow for a meaningful understanding of wisdom or creative process like art. Mere mechanistic analysis and rational reflection do not suffice for truly creative and innovative ideas, since this will always result in an optimization of the past. A real breakthrough needs an artistic spirit, which goes beyond rational boundaries exploring the unthought or even unthinkable. Hence, “if one is interested in profound change a *new level*, implying a new dynamics, has to be introduced; profound change does not only happen in the cognitive domain, but touches a more fundamental level – an *existential* level that includes the person and his/her attitudes, values,

48 Scharmer 2000, p. 4

49 Scharmer 2001, p. 3

50 Scharmer 2007

51 Peschl 2006, p. 1

52 Peschl 2006, p. 1

53 cf. Peschl 2006

54 Peschl 2007, p. 1/2

habitus, etc.”⁵⁵ To overcome the epistemological limits of double-loop learning Peschl includes the learning person(s) in the reflective cycle. In accordance with this existential shift, he creates the notion of “Emergent Innovation” and “Enabling Spaces”.⁵⁶ The triple-loop learning cycle describes the personal side of this knowledge process. Emergent innovation denominates the quality of knowledge – the known, whereas the situatedness and embeddedness of this process is labelled by the term “Enabling Spaces”.

After this brief introduction of two theoretical successors of “On becoming aware”, I am going to examine them with respect to the original model. The goal of this historical consideration is not a full-blown analysis, but rather the identification of their noteworthiness in comparison with their precursor. Although the research by Depraz, Varela and Vermersch is an interdisciplinary inquiry, the phenomenological methodology by Edmund Husserl has pride of place within their theoretical framework. They explicitly state that “[...] each of us has drawn from Phenomenology the concepts providing the general orientation for the present work [...]”.⁵⁷ Husserl's philosophy is highly influenced by logic and is methodically as well as thematically situated on an epistemological level.⁵⁸ On the other hand, the authors integrate the spiritual tradition of mindfulness/awareness meditation (shamatha), which is deeply rooted in the ontological dimension of human being. “We will not understand anything important about the tradition of mindfulness/awareness, if we remain in an intellectual apprehension of it, even if such a means of access is not excluded. The essential strength of such a tradition resides in a diagnosis that consists in *nothing a non-knowing* in human life, which no doubt reminds us of the Heideggerian version of the access to the reduction.”⁵⁹ Their third theoretical background, introspective psychology, remains in the epistemic realm as well. This trinity results in a model, which points at the existential dimension of the innovative-contemplative thought process, but lacks in a sufficient investigation of it. In their notion of letting-go, the subjective attitude is totally different, diametrically opposed, to the normal, or rather “natural” attitude as well as to the precedent steps of suspension and redirection. Nevertheless, they interpret

55 Peschl 2007, p. 3

56 cf. Peschl & Wiltchnig 2008, p. 3: “Dieser Prozess der *Emergenten Innovation* ist in sogenannte ‘*Enabling Spaces*’ eingebettet, welche in erster Linie dazu dienen, die für diese Wissensprozesse notwendigen Randbedingungen zur Verfügung zu stellen und diese dadurch zu *ermöglichen*. Die gewählte Metapher beinhaltet in *space* ein multidimensionales Raumverständnis und weist in der Doppelbedeutung von *enabling* als Verb ‘ermöglichen’ und Adjektiv ‘ermöglichend’ auf das Wechselspiel zwischen aktivem Gestalten solcher Umgebungen und den Wirkungen durch Ort und Setting hin.

57 Depraz 2003, p. 169

58 cf. Von Hermann 2004, p.17/18: “Durch die in den ‘Ideen’ (1913) vollzogene Bestimmung des phänomenologischen Sehens als transzendente Methode der Epoché und Reduktion, sowie mit der Ansetzung des transzendentalen Bewußtseinslebens als des eigentlichen phänomenologischen Forschungsfeldes hat sich Husserl entschieden in die neuzeitliche Überlieferung der Bewußtseinsphilosophie und des transzendentalen Idealismus gestellt, und zwar mit dem Anspruch, diese Überlieferung von ihren phänomenologisch unausgewiesenen Elementen zu befreien und sie wie nie zuvor zu radikalieren. [...] Damit ist betont, daß das durchgehende Thema der Husserlschen Phänomenologie die *Bewußtseinserlebnisse* sind.”

59 Depraz 2003, p. 209

it as cognitive performance of the subject, without discussing the ontological transformation taking place. They have left this task for subsequent researchers, who embraced their offer. As already touched upon above, it is the major contribution of both, Peschl and Scharmer, to highlight and analyse the existential dimension of this process. Since, the second part of this thesis is centred on the ontological aspect too; it is necessary and fruitful to look at their findings in detail, by addressing the question how the existential dimension appears in Scharmer's and Peschl's theories.

As the name suggests, Scharmer's model can be represented as an U-shaped curve. It actually comprises of two complimentary processes – the downward and the upward leading half – connected at the bottommost point. The downward half represents the stepwise degradation of traditional modes of thinking, whereas the upward half illustrates the gradual emergence of a ground-breaking idea. The turning point equates to the existential dimension disclosed by letting-go, where the innovative idea comes to the fore. Accordingly, he terms the transition into presencing “letting-go” and the transition out of it “letting-come”.⁶⁰ In between lies the stage of presencing, where the existential transformation and flashes of insight take place. “Presencing, the blending of *sensing* and *presence*, means to connect with the Source of the highest future possibility and to bring it into the now. [...] In that state we step into our real being, who we really are, our authentic self. Presencing is a movement where we approach our *self from the emerging future*.”⁶¹ The first important aspect of this compound is its temporal direction towards the (emerging) future, which is primarily perceived as possibility. This is comparable with a Heideggerian description of the future as “possibility playground” (Möglichkeitsspielraum)⁶². The second important element in this definition is the (authentic) self. Beside a short sentence, I could not find a proper definition of it, but obviously he tries to overcome the “worldless” subjective standpoint – connected with the objective reality via its mind and senses – as inspired by Descartes (see above).⁶³ With respect to phenomenology, one could say that the “Source of the highest future possibility”, is comparable to the realm of pre-reflective self-conception where the world-mind-unity is not yet broken. Surely, the

60 Scharmer 2000, p. 18: “The third inflection point is about letting go. [...] Without surrendering there can be no presencing. [...] The fourth turning point is mentioned by Varela above as a part of letting go. Although closely connected with letting go, the gesture of letting come points in a different direction. The switch here is from *emptiness* and *surrender* to *quicken*ing and *crystallizing* the emerging new.” This differentiation or duplication is a necessary step to accomplish structural consistency in a U-shaped model, although I am not sure that this matches with the factual experience. Surely, the notion of intuitive evidence, does exhibit a different quality as letting-come.

61 Scharmer 2007, p. 163

62 The cited paragraph has a note to a passage in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, where he defines the ontological status of human being (*Dasein*) as essentially future-oriented.

63 cf. Scharmer 2007, p. 164: “The capital-S Self.’ By this, Ray (Michael Ray, Chief Operating Officer at Orchid Underwriters; note by author) said, he means one’s highest self, the self that transcends pettiness and signifies our ‘best future possibility’. My interpretation regarding his overcoming of subject-object-dualism is based on the following statement by Prof. Eleanor Rosch (University of California, Berkeley), cited four pages later:” Mind and world are not separate. Since the subjective and objective aspects of experience arise together as different poles of the same act of cognition (are part of the same informational field) they are already joined at their inception.”

most astonishing point in this definition is the relation between the Self and the future, which seems to be double inverted. Here, the future precedes the present, which is an inversion of the common time conception where the present follows the past and the future follows the present. Moreover, the presencing person approaches his/her Self *from* the future. It seems that the person accomplishes the transformation into his/her primordial being – the Self – by converting the future into the presence. A profound interpretation of this unusual temporality still requires substantial preparations and will be the conclusion of this thesis. At this stage I just want to point out that the so-called Self is situated at a peculiar mode of presence. In the citation above, Scharmer coins this kind of primordial presence “now”.

However, from Peschl's point of view it was Scharmer's primary achievement to disclose the existential realm for the exploration of innovative thought-processes. “The interesting point in the context of the U-theory concerns the fact that it does not suffice to remain solely in the domain of knowledge, but that it is necessary to ‘step down’ in the *existential* domain in order to end up in such an intimate relationship with the environment. That is the domain where the epistemological and ontological seem to collapse and where the domain of *wisdom* is touched [...]”⁶⁴ In general, Peschl defines knowledge as embedded in a framework of reference, implicit structures which afford the particular meaning of any specific explicit or explicable knowledge.⁶⁵ Therefore, the existential domain is identified as the most fundamental, all-embracing framework of reference, which lends meaning and structure to all possible kinds of knowledge (explicit, tacit, not yet embodied). “Similarly to the case of double-loop learning, we discover that the whole intellectual framework, the whole domain of knowledge and representation, our sets of premises, assumptions, etc. are *embedded* in a more fundamental domain (see Figure 1): the domain which could be described as ‘the self’ – that is, the level where I am myself in an *existential* sense.”⁶⁶ The triple-loop learning strategy exceeds double-loop learning, insofar as it contemplates the ontological conditions that give rise to any individual and social epistemological realm. Looking at knowledge from an ontological perspective immediately reveals that it always conjoins a personal and an interpersonal dimension (at least). For this reason the triple-loop learning strategy cannot be defined as double-loop learning plus the reflecting individual. The incorporation of the reflecting person into the thought-process demarcates not a quantitative but rather a qualitative difference between double-loop and triple-loop learning, since the whole is more than the sum of its parts. In accord with presencing and letting-go, Peschl identifies an ontological transformation as well. Triple-loop

64 Peschl 2007, p. 8

65 cf. Peschl 2006, p. 10: “In general, knowledge always has to be seen as being embedded in and pre-structured by a particular *framework of reference*. Knowledge, receives its meaning and structures from this framework of reference.”

66 Peschl 2007, p. 3

learning enables a state by which “*profound change* on an existential level may emerge. Both the environmental and the cognitive dynamics may mutually 'unlock' each other's potentials. The change does not have its cause from some external source or influence, but from inside the participating systems and their potentials coupling into a joint system.”⁶⁷ As before, this level is based on a world-mind-unity, which goes hand in hand with an overcoming of Cartesian Dualism. In the context of “On becoming aware” this is the realm of pre-discursive and pre-reflective consciousness, which must be intuitively accessed via the steps of suspension, redirection and letting-go. In Scharmer's “Theory U” this is the domain of the Self, which is accessible if an attitude of presencing is reached. It has become clear, that this level disables any kind of subjective activity or thought-processes, and hence obliges the person towards an attitude of receptive waiting and openness. Although, this is pushing the limits of Constructivism, it has been approved by Peschl as well.⁶⁸

2.4 Conclusion

The overview provided in this chapter, introduced the three models in question in terms of their historical development – from the philosophical precursor up to the most recent varieties. Edmund Husserl, who was unsatisfied with the validity of human cognition in general, invented a radically different way of philosophical thinking, by what he founded Phenomenology as new discipline. About hundred years later, Depraz, Varela and Vermersch tied in with his methodological considerations by using the phenomenological framework as main source for their interdisciplinary investigation of the first-person perspective. By virtue of combining the phenomenological reduction, with psychological introspection and mindfulness meditation, they accomplished an astonishing result. Their study revealed that the process of becoming aware of one's implicit realm of personal experience comprises of three distinct, yet interrelated, cognitive steps. With regard to Husserl's theory they identified two additional sub-steps. Peschl and Scharmer, two scientists interested in innovative thought processes, took up their model and merged it with their respective research. Although coming from rather different scientific backgrounds both successfully developed a model of innovative thinking, incorporating the findings by Depraz, Varela and Vermersch into their own disciplines. I have shown above (cf. Section 2.3) that both models agree upon an existential involvement of the thinking person, taking place during the third and final step of the innovative thought process. As a matter of fact, this final step already existed in the model by

⁶⁷ Peschl 2007, p. 8

⁶⁸ Peschl 2007, p. 7/8: “From a constructivist perspective it 'plays with fire': it walks on the borderline between (weak) realism and constructivism. [...] In other words, it gives back some 'epistemological rights' to the world in the sense of respecting its 'active' role in the process of knowledge generation. The goal is *not* to resurrect realism, but to *find and establish a new balance* between the two poles of cognitive activity and projection on the one hand and the influence of the dynamics and structure of the environment (on the constructive activities) on the other hand [...]”

Depraz, Varela and Vermersch, though they fell short of pursuing its existential meaning.

In summary, this introductory chapter has shown that these three exemplary models are historically related. Furthermore, my overview suggests two things, which can be inferred from their consecutive development. Firstly, that their similarities do not arise from their historical connection, but rather convey a common meaning, since they are situated in different research fields. In other words, that it was possible for Scharmer and Peschl to adopt the model of Depraz, Varela and Vermersch successfully requires all three of them investigate the same thought process. Thus, the second conclusion of this chapter is the fact that the human mind holds a general and unique thought process, involving the thinking person existentially, which is able to yield radically innovative ideas. These two conclusions, which are based on the correlation of the three models, are the working hypotheses for the subsequent chapter. Thus the overall goal of the next chapter is to scrutinize the degree of identicalness among the three models.

3. Synoptic analysis of the Thought – process Structure

It was the purpose of the preceding chapter to give a historical overview of the three models regarding innovative-contemplative thinking, which I choose as illustrative examples. Thereby, it became clear how these three theories developed thematically, taking into account their epistemological and ontological interrelations. In this chapter, I reflect on the same theoretical corpus once again, but from a fundamentally different perspective. Now the main question is, if there is a general structure within the innovative-contemplative thought process, what underlies its different practical and theoretical variations? In order to answer that, I am going to analyse the process structure of becoming aware (Depraz, Varela, Vermersch), Theory U (Scharmer) and Triple-loop learning (Peschl) synoptically. A synoptic analysis is defined as a summarizing and contrasting overview and comparison of homogeneous data or texts.⁶⁹ With respect to the unique process they want to describe, these theories are located on a comparable epistemological level. Moreover, they exhibit a high degree of commonality due to their historical relations. Nevertheless, each of them views it from a certain perspective and interprets it against a certain background, which is why a separate proof of their homogeneity regarding structure and sense is a necessary prerequisite for a feasible and meaningful synopsis. The entire process structure of becoming aware has already been discussed above (cf. section 2.2), for this reason it is used as the formal reference frame in this enterprise. By a gradual comparison with Theory U and Triple-loop learning, the similarities and differences between them are revealed. Via a subsequent reflection on their common steps in terms of their epistemological implications and effects, I will be able to prove or falsify the hypothesis that they are based on a unique process. Provided that there is one single process underlying all three theoretical models, it must have a unique structure which is present in all its variants. Furthermore it is required that the essential steps bear a similar meaning, which can be inferred on the basis of their effects. Since the contingent and variable aspects should be excluded in the course of this analysis, it should solely yield the necessary and sufficient structure of the innovative-contemplative thought process as such, which bears the sense and meaning of it. Thus, it provides an opportunity for a philosophical reflection to detect its constituent parts and ontological framework with respect to their procedural dynamics. This is the content of the second part of this thesis.

3.1 Threefold Structure – 4 different levels

Previous to a step-by-step synopsis of the three descriptive models, it is necessary to compare them in their entirety, due to the fact that it is not assured that they actually exhibit the same structure at

69 cf. <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synopse>

all. Only if this holistic analysis reveals that they have a similar amount and order of comparable steps, will a synoptic analysis be justified. In this context comparable means that it exhibits similar epistemological implications and effects. In other words, a step is comparable or common, if it connects equivalent cognitive levels. In case these three models are really base on a unique thought process, the subsequent chapters are addressing each step separately, for a closer comparison of its content, meaning and dynamics.

The cognitive process of becoming aware consists of three essential steps: 1) suspension, 2) redirection and 3) letting-go. It commences from the so-called natural attitude and concludes with a sudden revelation of intuitive evidence. Suspension, redirection and letting-go constitute a circular process, in which suspension is regenerated in the course of redirection and letting-go. The process can continue for various rotations, implying that it does not necessarily conclude with a flash of intuitive evidence. Moreover, the actual process is not bound to the clear order of its theoretical model, as would be the case for an algorithmic process. The thinking person may fall back into suspension or redirection, without terminating the process. Summing up, the pragmatic model of becoming aware is a primarily ordered, three-fold and circular process which leads from the usual and commonplace way of thinking to a unique and radically different kind of cognition, i.e. knowledge. So far, the three steps are primarily identified as cognitive acts or gestures which are performed by the thinking person (cf. section 2.2). On closer examination, each one of them is accompanied by a shift from one cognitive realm to another. With each of these mental acts a certain kind of cognitive quality or level is abandoned whereby a new one is disclosed. They do not describe an unbroken consecutive sequence, but rather disclose corresponding cognitive modes, which bear specific epistemological qualities. The logical reason for the existence of these mental levels in-between the cognitive activities (suspension, redirection, letting-go) is the following: If no specific cognitive transformation would take place in the course of each step, the whole process would solely require a single action. Thus, the fact that three distinct and different actions constitute this process implies that each one of them is linked to a specific shift in cognition.

Theory U

Scharmer explicitly allows for these qualities in his model (see Figure 2), wherefore I keep with his work in properly introducing them. Scharmer's theory initiates from a similar cognitive state as the natural attitude which he terms "downloading". "Cognition on this level means to re-enact one's old mental models and habits of thought."⁷⁰ Similar to the natural attitude, downloading lacks critical reflection and questioning, which means it is totally unqualified for in depth learning processes and

⁷⁰ Scharmer 2000, p. 11

understanding, which could result in radical innovative ideas. “All deeper and more profound cognition and knowledge creation requires the *suspension* of this habitual judgement [...]”⁷¹ To overcome downloading Scharmer designates the act of suspension as well, which leads to his second cognitive level called “seeing”. “When we stop downloading we move into the state of seeing. Our perception becomes more acute, and we become aware of the reality we are up against.”⁷² The level of seeing enables one to perceive well-known things differently, thus become aware of unrecognised features or unthought possibilities, but the quality of attention is still directed towards external things and their relations. In other words, the ontological distinction between world and mind has not yet been abandoned, which happens not until the next step in Scharmer's theory called redirection (cf. Depraz 2003). Redirection transforms seeing into “sensing”. “When moving from seeing to sensing, perception begins to happen *from the whole field*. [...] It's about closing the feedback loop between people's experience of reality ('what the system is doing to us') and their sense of participation in the whole cycle of experience.”⁷³ In the cognitive mode of sensing, the subject-object-difference is overcome, which means that their unity is experienced. In other words, one realizes that experience basically is a unity between an experiencing subject and the experienced world. Yet another quality comes into play at Scharmer's final stage presencing – reached via the step of letting-go (cf. Depraz 2003). At the level of presencing the experience of unity – the unity of experience – remains, but one's awareness is directed towards not yet manifested future possibilities (cf. above p. 19). At the level of presencing the bottom-most point of Scharmer's U-shaped model is reached, which designates its reversal point. In addition, the complete model consists of a symmetrically upward-going half.⁷⁴ Although it is a constitutive part of Scharmer's theory, it cannot be included into my synoptic analysis, due to the fact that there is neither an equivalent structure in the model of Depraz, Varela and Vermersch, nor in the model of Peschl.

Triple-loop Learning

The final candidate for my analysis is the constructivist model of Peschl, which has to show structural analogy as well, to be included in a meaningful synopsis. Also his model is three-fold, consisting of three nested loops between the cognitive subject and his/her cognizable world. The

71 Scharmer 2000, p. 11

72 Scharmer 2007, p. 129

73 Scharmer 2007, p. 143

74 cf. Peschl 2007, p. 5: “One can describe that process as a U-shaped curve that is realized in a series of states: the left branch going down the 'U' focuses on issues of *observation*, perception, *sensing*, discovery of patterns of thought and cognition, and on how to leave these patterns behind oneself in order to be cognitively and emotionally 'prepared' for profound change. At the bottom one finds him-/herself in the state of presencing: it can be characterized as a condition of high receptivity and openness as a state where radically new knowledge/change can emerge. The upward branch deals with issues concerning the *realization*, prototyping, and embodying these changes in the (external or internal) environment.”

innermost loop is embedded in the second one, which is embedded in the third and outermost loop (see Figure 3). These loops depict the epistemic relationships between world and subject, highlighting its learning potentiality. In other words, Peschl's model is not primarily concerned with different types of knowledge, but with “the modes of how these types of knowing come about. This question concerns the domain of strategies of knowledge construction/creation and learning.”⁷⁵ As starting point, Peschl identifies a rather superficial but very common manner of cognition, he terms “mapping”. “From a rather naïve and unreflective perspective, learning is considered to be a process of *downloading* or *mapping knowledge* from a source: one aspect of a phenomenon is transferred into the student's memory/knowledge in a *linear process of mapping*.”⁷⁶ This is similar to the cognitive realm of downloading or the natural attitude, viewed from a teacher's perspective. Not until the subsequent step/level called “single-loop learning” does the constructivist approach come into play. “Knowledge is not predetermined, but has to be *constructed in an active process of personal/individual and collective construction*.”⁷⁷ If a person realizes that knowledge about the world does not consist of indubitable facts but rather depends on heterogeneous situated construction processes, all hitherto trusted knowledge will be put into question. Such a sceptical attitude is the core meaning of suspension. This results in the cognitive possibility to perceive the world and think about it from new and unthought perspectives, as identified for seeing. At the subsequent step/level of “double-loop learning” a fundamental epistemological shift takes place. “This second (outer) feedback loop takes into consideration that any kind of knowledge is always based on assumptions, premises, or a paradigm (Kuhn 1970). [...] Knowledge receives its meaning and structures from this framework of reference. Thus, *understanding* of a phenomenon can only be reached if this framework is taken into account [...]”⁷⁸ At this level, one not only takes into account that cognition is an (inter-)subjective construction process but also that this process is embedded in one's socio-epistemological frame conditions. These conditions limit and shape the cognitive space wherein (inter-)personal optimization processes usually take place. By introducing the second feedback loop the same epistemological transformation as in redirection or sensing arises – the experiential unity of the cognitive subject with his/her world is reached. This happens due to the fact that the reflected framework of reference called world, basically equates to (inter-)subjective cognitive conditions called ego. Not until the next step/level of triple-loop-learning, the awareness of unity remains intellectual. “While classical learning strategies focus on changes in the domain of knowledge and the intellect, the triple-loop approach also includes changes on the existential level

75 Peschl 2006, p. 9

76 Peschl 2006, p. 9

77 Peschl 2006, p. 9

78 Peschl 2006, p. 10

and in the domain of the 'will/heart'.⁷⁹ It has already been discussed in section 2.3 that the existential involvement in the case of triple-loop learning is equivalent to presencing. Thus, they share a similar experience of ontological dependency, due to an attitude of patient openness towards an emergent future.

To sum up, the structural steps and levels of all three models in question appear to be really equivalent in order as well as meaning. The innovative-contemplative thought process initiates at a habitual level of unconsidered knowledge reproduction. By suspending one's habitual strategies, categorize, patterns, opinions, etc. one liberates him-/herself and reaches the first level where change/learning takes place. This level discloses the possibility to perceive known objects within a different perspective. The second step is a re-orientation of one's attention towards one's self. One realizes that the meaning of an object does not primarily depend on the world it is embedded in, since the world is finally an appearance as well. The third and final step of this process is not merely a rational activity which can be identified by epistemic terms, but rather the acquisition of a certain attitude involving the whole person. One has to let go of all kinds of wishes, imaginations and other future-oriented aspects of one's individuality, to be touched by an ontological awareness of the subject-world unity. The traditional active-passive relation is reversed at this deepest level of awareness, which implies that one must not do anything – just wait! Only if one does overcome the temptation to intervene in the flow of experience, which would immediately be shaped by his/her knowledge and wishes, unthought conceptions or opinions, a really innovative idea is enabled to emerge.

Since, it turned out that the meaning of the four cognitive levels is equivalent for the three exemplary models; I can go on with the synoptic analysis of each step with respect to the cognitive modes it relates.

3.2 Suspension – from Downloading to Seeing

The act of suspension converts Downloading into seeing. Thus, a holistic understanding of this first step comprises of three questions: Where does the transition emanate from? How does the conversion process take place? And where does the transition lead to? This section is an attempt to answer them in the respective order.

3.2.1 Downloading

The first step as well as the entire process initiates from the cognitive level of downloading, the natural attitude or mapping. This is the cognitive level, which is mostly applied during one's day-to-

⁷⁹ Peschl 2007, p. 3

day life and positive sciences. “This realistic assumption is so fundamental and deeply rooted that it is not only accepted by the positive sciences, it even permeates our daily pre-theoretical life, for which reason Husserl called it the *natural attitude*.”⁸⁰ It is characterized by an all-embracing blind trust about the existence of the world as an external material reality. The reality comprises of distinct objects, which exhibit certain features and interactions. The subjective mind exists separately and antagonistic to it. The mind has direct and unrestrained access to everything that is “out there”, thus it perceives the objects as clear and distinct entities. This assumption implies that the reality only has to be discovered by the means of cognition or science. Neither the existence of the external reality, nor of the mind, nor of their relationship is ever questioned. Peschl points out that this cognitive level relies on a realistic positivism, due to the fact that the cognitive relationship is linear and one-sided.⁸¹ Knowledge about the world coincides with the existing reality, which means that all knowledge is positive knowledge. Everything that is not yet known just has to be discovered and what can't be discovered (known) does not exist. Knowledge comprises of clear and distinct facts about external independent objects, which means that it is of static and accumulative nature. Therefore, learning processes are nothing more than downloading or mapping objective facts one-to-one on the cognitive structures of the learning subject. Thereby, they transform into internal representations which obtain their meaning by a direct reference to the external object. Not only that “the level of understanding is not necessarily very high”⁸² but also the level of mental flexibility, knowledge changes and innovations remains rather low. The knowledge structures at this level form a self-contained system, since no reflection about the formation or even meaning of it takes place. The only changes arise out of an uptake of novel facts and their storage in memory, or a disposal of old one's (forgetting). Therefore, habitual cognitive processes and perspectives are applied again and again to all kinds of changes in the external reality. “What we do is often based on habitual patterns of action and thought. A familiar stimulus triggers a familiar response.”⁸³ This implies that changes are solely recognized as consequences from past causes or otherwise the habitual response would not appear appropriate. In addition, this cognitive level does not permit surprise, since the future per se is predetermined by subjective expectations, which are based on one's hitherto gathered knowledge. For such a person, the future must appear more or less predictable lacking in the possibility for surprise. It is comparable to shopping with a prepared shopping list. There will be no surprising goods in the trolley. This is a rather efficient way of thinking (as the example shows), which is why it is widespread in everyday situations and sciences.

80 Gallagher & Zahavi 2008, p. 22

81 cf. Peschl 2006, p. 9: “Epistemologically speaking, this approach to learning/teaching is implicitly based on a *realistic perspective* following a rather *static notion of knowledge* [...]”

82 Peschl 2006, p. 9

83 Scharmer 2007, p. 119

Now, it is clear from where the innovative-contemplative thought process initiates – the level of downloading – but its actual origin has not yet been touched. Thus, it is necessary to begin the analysis of the transition process at its beginning: how can suspension emanate from the level of downloading? This question might seem trivial; since one could answer that a cognitive process has to begin by means of a subjective decision. But it forfeits its triviality by considering that the respective subject resides at the cognitive level of downloading. Since this enclosed cognitive realm is not suspended painlessly and voluntarily, an extraordinary event has to mark the beginning of this process.⁸⁴ Something has to strike a chord in the person residing at the level of downloading, in order that s/he is galvanized. According to Depraz, Varela and Vermersch “the initial phase of suspension can begin in three basic ways.”⁸⁵ Firstly, a non-personal event can trigger the process. Secondly, it is possible that another person gives the advice to break with one's natural attitude and finally, one can initiate the suspension on its own. “These three possibilities of jump-starting the suspension are not mutually exclusive, but can support each other: they are simply worldly, intersubjective or individual motivations to suspend your realist prejudice.”⁸⁶ The authors are aware of the fact that this cognitive process is by no means causal and account for this peculiarity via a more suitable specification of these eliciting events – termed aids. “An aid is neither an apriori, nor a contingent condition. It makes its contribution to the reduction. Without it, the reduction could not take place and yet, even with the aid, there can be no apriori guarantee that a reduction will take place.”⁸⁷ Although the aids of suspension take place in all three ontological spheres, it always has to happen to a certain person. Since all three possibilities share this singular aspect, it seems to be crucial for the initiation to succeed. Thus, I will deal with the subjective side prior to discussing the different aids of this mutual origin. Thereby, the subsequent discussion of the three different aids will gain in clarity and precision.

3.2.2 Suspension

The beginning of suspension essentially relies on the epistemological susceptibility offered by a cognitive subject. “The reduction is born of an awareness of the dogmatism concealed in presupposed positions which go unquestioned.”⁸⁸ Therefore, it cannot commence if the subject is totally locked, perceives everything as beyond all question and nothing affects it directly. A certain degree of receptivity or openness must already exist in the mindset of a subject, so that this process can be elicited. On the other hand, an inconsistency with one's beliefs shows up and can be

84 Depraz 2003, p. 197: “The reduction is not an exercise that the subject would operate willingly, of his own accord, and in a spontaneous fashion. Of his own accord, such a subject would remain with, or would return much more naturally to, the daily course of his familiar activities and of his most comfortable thinking.”

85 Depraz 2003, p. 26

86 Depraz 2003, p. 26

87 Depraz 2003, p. 200

88 Depraz 2003, p. 185

perceived solely in connection to them. “In science, as in the playing card experiment, novelty emerges only with difficulty, manifested by resistance, against a background provided by expectation.”⁸⁹ By referring to the playing card experiment, Kuhn highlights that this is a common cognitive structure playing a role for all kind of knowledge changes (and not just scientific research). Thereby a circular situation is reached: the anomaly expectation discrepancy is necessary to reveal an anomaly, which relegates to the static background of beliefs.⁹⁰ How can this circularity possibly be solved? The most reasonable solution I see is to assume that the innovative-contemplative thought process is essential for human cognition. This implies that nobody solely remains in the mode of downloading, is absolutely encapsulated in his own mindset and cocksure of themselves. The reader will likely agree that this is a more realistic point of departure. Nevertheless, the “phenomenological ethic runs profoundly counter to nature.”⁹¹ It is an “anti-natural” way of thinking, nobody lives in total, all-embracing ignorance and everyone acquires a certain degree of relativity and scepticism regarding the world and one's knowledge about it. This indicates that the reduction/suspension is not at all in opposition to the nature of human cognition, but a hyperbolic version of such a fundamental cognitive process that it remains usually hidden? Here, I would like to recall that the same authors, who identify it as “anti-natural”, claim that it “is a human act that is so basic that it is quite independent of the contexts in which one becomes aware of one's own conscious activity.”⁹² Thanks to this cognitive capacity, people actually can start to *think* about what is going and not just perceive something and respond to it accordingly. Suspension opens up a cognitive distance between one's experience and one's consciousness, which enables a conscious awareness of one's own experience. Although, the kind of suspension required for this model is an extraordinary version of it, the underlying cognitive capacity is the condition for the possibility of human consciousness. Without this capacity people would only be able to detect an external stimulus, categorize it and respond accordingly – in a mechanistic, predetermined way. Thanks to the distance between experience and consciousness, human cognition fundamentally involves a mental scope of possibility. This is exactly the space which is expanded by the act of suspension. If suspension (and innovative thinking) is a common cognitive capacity, then it can be learned and improved by everyone. Depraz, Varela and Vermersch agree that “we are certainly equipped with all

89 Kuhn 1996, p. 64

90 A closely related (if not the same) circularity with respect to the beginning of suspension is also noticed and presented by Depraz, Varela and Vermersch: “To speak of an *initial* phase of a suspension means we're going to have to deal with an issue that's been with us all along. This 'initialization' or beginning of *epoche* has already taken place, yet at the same time, it's produced as if it were new each time. [...] But as a result it's not possible to describe the reflecting act other than by having put it into practice. This has several consequences: you find yourself in a provisional circle of having to describe an act entirely by putting it into practice; the question of beginning is hidden in its radical character by the fact that the beginning has already taken place for whoever sets out to describe this very conduct.”

91 Depraz 2003, p. 197

92 Depraz 2003, p. 15

the cognitive functions which allow us to develop this reflecting activity, since it is a matter of nothing more than what is at the basis of becoming aware; this doesn't involve inventing, but only identifying the relevant cognitive gestures and exercising them assiduously."⁹³ Because of its non-habitual form it is surely not easy and might require long and hard training. In particular, due to the fact that it does not yield any direct results or obvious changes, but marks just the beginning of the innovative-contemplative thought process. From this it follows, first of all that nobody has to begin suspension from scratch, without any experience in it whatsoever. Secondly, that everyone has the ability to train and improve in innovative thinking, starting off with suspension. Thirdly, that sedulous practice is a necessary prerequisite for a continuous improvement. "We stake our claim here: if reduction means anything, it means that, with proper training, it can become part and parcel of a human life."⁹⁴ Hence, the conclusion is reached that the circularity discovered above (p. 29/30) is self-contained solely from the point of view of merely theoretical terms. But with respect to the factual circumstances, it is always already entered by human beings and enables the circular process of becoming aware to take place.

Inter-subjective initiation

Now, coming back to the other side of initiating suspension, what can be derived from the intermediate discussion for an understanding of the three different aids? Since it is a learning process, the most promising initiation capacity should rely on the inter-subjective domain, which is stressed by Depraz et al. under the designation of "mediation" by a "second-person". Simply because every learning process is facilitated by teacher, a mediator enables suspension and thereby innovative thinking all the more, due to its non-habitual nature. "It would be very easy to get lost, to no longer know if you have or have not had such an experience. Can you just jump right on in and start going on your own? All our experience suggests not."⁹⁵ Nevertheless, this mediation happens via a teacher in an inter-subjective setting, an old-fashioned student teacher relationship does not suffice to aid this process properly. An ordinary teacher would give abstracted, thus objective instructions and similar feedback. The evaluation of the student's knowledge primarily happens according to general conditions. In this example the idiosyncratic quality of the student's knowledge is mostly overlooked, which is why it does not account for the extraordinary learning process at hand – based on personal experience. "Learning to practice reflecting activity is learning to practice the relation to yourself, learning to listen to yourself, learning the letting-go which supposes the

93 Depraz 2003, p. 100; also cf. Heidegger 1968, p. 3/4: "Man can think in the sense that he possesses the possibility to do so. This possibility alone, however, is no guarantee to us that we are capable of thinking. [...] In order to be capable of thinking, we need to learn it first."

94 Depraz 2003, p. 99

95 Depraz 2003, p. 103/4

acceptance of non-immediate fulfilment that often follows the gesture of suspension. [...] the practice of attending to your subjective experience is going to implicate your entire person.”⁹⁶ To overcome this insurmountable difference, the authors suggest a novel kind of teacher-learner relationship, wherein the teacher does not have the epistemological status of a third-person but of a second-person. “Rather, a second-person position is an *exchange between situated individuals* focusing on a specific experiential content developed from a first-person position. The second-person position is thus typically instantiated in a tutor or guide, someone who has more training in or exposure to a certain domain, and who tries to help the expression and validation of someone else.”⁹⁷ On the one hand, it does not have the immediate access to experience, since it is solely reserved for the first-person. On the other hand, the second-person comes much closer to the level of experience than the third-person, who is an opposed observer of an objective reality. The second-person is situated in-between the first- and third-person positions. It participates in both of them and relies on a totally peculiar quality. *Mutatis mutandis*, the second-person possesses a similar experiential realm as the first-person, which enables an empathic understanding going beyond a mere comprehension of facts. Since s/he has to be an expert in the process of becoming aware, s/he knows about the problems and difficulties in this process from his/her own first-person experience, thus a second-person mediator can empathetically understand and aid the thinking person. A third-person observer would neither understand the first-person reports properly, nor could s/he give an adequate advice, since his/her knowledge does not have its source in his/her own experience but has been acquired by abstract, objective means. Certainly, an experienced mediator is an appropriate way to evoke suspension (the innovative-contemplative thought process), nevertheless willingness and trust are necessary requirements on the side of the experiencing person. “First, no mediation is possible with a little *trust*, a little willingness to think another person is competent enough to set up a learning situation.”⁹⁸ Second, it is critical for a successful mediation, that it is not blind trust but rather of a critical nature. If the experiencing person strictly implements the mediator's advice, s/he does not really improve the awareness of his/her experience, but rather obeys a ready-made script. Thereby, the person partially remains in the mode of downloading. Furthermore, it is a difficult task for the mediator to guide the process and simultaneously leave its development totally open, with as little preformation as possible.

External initiation

If the ontological position encountered at the deepest level of this process (presencing) – a weak

96 Depraz 2003, p. 101

97 Depraz 2003, p. 81; also cf. Buber Martin: *Ich und Du* (1995) and Lévinas Emmanuel (1997): *Zwischen uns – Versuche über das Denken an den anderen*

98 Depraz 2003, p. 105

realism – is taken seriously right from the start, the worldly event would have pride of place for evoking the act of suspension. “Such a motivation remains external to the subject or, at least, its initial impulse corresponds to nothing like an autodetermination, even if later on something is made out of this exteriority, a feeling of strangeness or of suffering which represents the auto-affective interiorisation of it. A motivation of this kind therefore implies a sort of passivity on the part of the self-affected subject.”⁹⁹ Such events are of existential significance for the experiencing person and pull the rug out from under him/her. The usual world-view suddenly collapses, so that the hitherto existing world loses its meaning totally. This means that the suspension takes place involuntary and free from subjective control. It happens unexpectedly, swiftly and is of an all-embracing nature. This kind of full-blown suspension is the theoretical ideal for the whole process, but very hard (or maybe impossible) to reach via apprenticeship and mediation. When the person is virtually forced into suspension, s/he will feel uncanny, helpless and frightened, since this affective dimension goes hand in hand with an unexpected and unavoidable deprivation of all sense and meaning. The existential dimension usually involved in the last step of this process (letting-go), already comes into play at the level of suspension if it is evoked by an external event. Since the evidence of all hitherto taken for granted facts is put into question, one is inevitably confronted with his/her own existence. The worldly possessions, society and knowledge cannot keep one's ground anymore, wherefore the person suddenly relies on another source of sense. The sole possibility left is to focus on oneself – one's own, authentic realm of present experience and being. “[...] it is a matter of trying as hard as possible to stick to experience, to focus on it and to join with it with a view to intensifying it, that is, to unearthing from it all its potentialities, all its sedimented meaning.”¹⁰⁰ An example is Scharmer's description of how he witnessed his family house burning down (with his parents inside of it).¹⁰¹ In this special case, neither the suspension nor the whole process of innovative thinking are a matter of training, since the underlying cognitive capacity is exhausted at one go. This implies that the person does not acquire the capability to provoke suspension voluntarily. Thus, it is not only impracticable due to ethical issues, but also because it cannot easily be repeated and the conditions are absolutely uncontrollable.

Internal initiation

The third and final source for evoking the act of suspension lies in the person itself. This is comparable to the Cartesian method of hyperbolic doubt, in which “the ego is delivered over to itself, without any other resources than itself.”¹⁰² Taking up such “an existential situation of radical

99 Depraz 2003, p. 197

100 Depraz 2003, p. 196

101 Scharmer 2007, p. 23 ff. (Chapter 1 – Facing the Fire)

102 Depraz 2003, p. 193

and absolute solitude”¹⁰³ is highly problematic with respect to the circularity discovered at the beginning of this section (cf. above). Since the level of downloading is an enclosed and self-contained cognitive realm, it can by no means be overcome by a subject that is disconnected from its worldly or social embeddedness. It is exactly this total encapsulation characterizing downloading, which I debunked as a theoretical abstraction diverging from the factual situation of an embedded and inter-subjective subjectivity. From an ontological point of view, the experience of social and worldly alterity is absolutely necessary for the innovative-contemplative thought process to commence. If the subject would be deprived of it, it would be trapped on the level of downloading forever. Nevertheless, the abandonment of all social and worldly embeddedness and situatedness is the main characteristic for the step of suspension, because only through this can the thinking subject attain a confrontation with its own experience. But although it is critical for the transition itself, one has to be either advised to implement it or some worldly event forces him/her into this process. After the subject has managed to get into the cognitive process of suspension – by worldly or inter-subjective aid – at first there is not much happening. “But what is funny about suspension is that when many people do that nothing much happens. They do it, and then nothing happens. [...] Why? Because the whole point is that after suspension you have to tolerate that nothing is happening. Staying with it is the key.”¹⁰⁴

3.2.3 Seeing

It has been mentioned above that the term seeing was coined by Scharmer to determine the cognitive level reached via suspension. By liberating one's mind from all habitual cognitive patterns, which predetermine one's usual perception of the world and thus the knowledge about it, one can actually look at the things in a different light. By this open-minded way of thinking one does not only perceive the things differently, but also more impartially. Since one's experience of something is not pre-formed by one's prior knowledge, the thing can appear uninfluenced. Peschl's model of innovative-contemplative thinking contains an analogous cognitive level, which is intimately connected with his equivalent of suspension (single-loop learning). “From this perspective it becomes clear that these processes are mathematically equivalent with processes of *optimization*, i.e., we search for an optimum in an already pre-structured space (of solutions). What we do in single-loop learning is structurally equivalent with these level-(ii) processes of redesigning and adaptation.”¹⁰⁵ Thus, I would like to take a closer look at the characterization of single-loop learning to improve an understanding of the cognitive processes taking place on this level. The single-loop learning process is characterized by a “continuous interaction and feedback between the

103 Depraz 2003, p. 193

104 Varela 2000, p. 4

105 Peschl 2007, p. 4

dynamics of the cognitive system's knowledge and cognitive structure and its external and internal environment.”¹⁰⁶ One realizes that his/her knowledge arises out of a dynamic relation with the world, whereby one's knowledge is perceived as dependent and changeable as well. If the subject realizes that neither the things nor its knowledge about them are independent of its cognitive structures, it is enabled to voluntarily adapt its cognitive system according to the present situation. As a result, the perception and understanding of something are improved. The driving force of this cognitive (re-)construction is a trial and error method, which is why Peschl compares it to an optimization process. “The goal is to continually adapt the structures of knowledge in a feedback loop until an '*epistemological homeostasis*'/fit between knowledge, externalized behaviour, and environmental dynamics has been reached (cf. also von Glasersfeld's concept of functional fitness, von Glasersfeld 1989, 1995).”¹⁰⁷ It is important to highlight, that an optimization process per definition requires a pre-given framework of reference – situational context – which it is embedded in. Thus, this level does not permit a total transformation of one's cognitive dynamics, but only to improve them until an optimal solution for the present situation is found. This is the structural explanation for Scharmer's psychological statement that “our perception becomes more acute, and we become aware of the reality we are up against.”¹⁰⁸ Another interesting psychological observation he points out is the subject's “connection to wonder”, taking place on the level of seeing. “Wonder is about noticing that there is a world beyond our patterns of downloading. Wonder can be thought of as the seed from which the U process grows. Without the capacity for wonder, we will most likely remain stuck in the prison of our mental constructs.”¹⁰⁹ Since things appear differently and exhibit features never recognized before, the “seeing subject” will most likely be taken aback. Realizing that one's perception and the perceived world are not as self-evident and unambiguous as usually believed may even be a shock at first. One will most likely wonder about his/her own stubbornness and narrow-mindedness, which guided his/her cognition for such a long time. It is comparable to someone's confrontation with a different culture. During a trip to a foreign country one perceives many things and habits that differ substantially from one's own. If this culture is not too alien (like a tribe) it will centre on similar things but they are used, treated, perceived and evaluated differently than in the visitor's home country. At first, the visitor usually experiences a cultural shock due to the different way of life and thinking s/he is witnessing. The experience at the level of seeing is rather similar but with respect to one's own home. Thus, one will most likely be taken aback by realizing the ambiguity and strangeness in one's own habitual environment. From that it follows that the cultivation of seeing in one's everyday cognition will lead to an awareness of

106 Peschl 2006, p. 9

107 Peschl 2006, p. 9

108 Scharmer 2007, p. 129

109 Scharmer 2007, p. 133/4

a permanently changing environment going hand in hand with changes in one's cognitive structures. This enables the realization of different and ambiguous knowledge about the “same thing”. This makes it possible, to favour the most suitable explanation or solution.

3.3 Redirection – from Seeing to Sensing

The same three questions asked in the case of suspension apply to the second cognitive act called redirection: Where does it emanate from? How does the transition take place? And where does it lead to? The step of redirection originates in the cognitive level of seeing and transforms it into sensing. Since seeing has been dealt with in the course of the preceding section, I will proceed with the discussion of redirection now.

3.3.1 Redirection

In the beginning, I would like to highlight once more that it is crucial for the act of redirection to be performed after a successful accomplishment of suspension. “Suspension will lead to very early emerging events, contents, patterns, gestures, whatever. Then you can actually redirect your attention to them. That's where the new is.”¹¹⁰ Varela clearly states that the act of redirection is only meaningful in connection with suspension. Otherwise it would merely be an act of psychological reflection, which is directed towards one's habitual mental structures and content. Recapitulating that the prior suspension of one's hitherto cognitive structures and content is a necessary prerequisite for the initiation of redirection in opposition to a mere psychological reflection.

Attentional shift

As mentioned in section 2.2 (cf. above), the act of redirection is about a shift of attention away from the “external” world towards one's “internal” mental realm. Since the meaning of this is not at all trivial, it is necessary to discuss it in more detail. The sense of redirection is based on the preliminary assumption, that humans are essentially embedded and situated beings – living, acting and thinking within and about a world. The world is naturally perceived and recognized as an external space, which ranges from one's bodily and sensual borders to the external borders of the universe. All kinds of different things exist in this (in-) finite space, from stars to apples on the one hand, which interact according to their physical properties. On the other hand it is inhabited by living creatures namely bacteria, fungi, plants, animals and fellow human beings. One perceives and recognizes these external things and creatures (or their effects) via one's senses and nervous system.

¹¹⁰ Varela 2000, p. 5; also cf. Depraz 2003, p. 45: “The methodological pre-requisite means, as we said, suspending your actions in the world. In effect, when you are first starting out, you cannot perform the reflecting act while you're doing something else. In other words, you have to do nothing in a quite literal sense: you just have to stay and pay attention. Why? Because doing something in the world is going to grab your attention very powerfully and distract you from turning your attention around toward your inner life.

And the physical body enables to move in and to interact with the external reality. Since the whole human life takes place within and in relation to the external world, one's cognition is usually directed towards it. This is grasped by the fundamental concept of intentionality (or aboutness) discussed above. Turning away from the habitual “playground” of one's cognitive activity is already accomplished by the act of suspension. Thus, the pivotal question is whereupon one directs his/her attention via the step of redirection?

Intra-subjective duplication

In the course of redirection, one strives to focus on his/her own “internal” mental realm. “First you change the *direction* of attention, which tunes out the spectacle of the world, so you can return to the interior world. In other words, you substitute an *apperceptive act* for perception.”¹¹¹ The crucial point in this argumentation is that the redirecting subject becomes the observer of itself. This implies that a split or duplication of the thinking subject happens during redirection. “The structure of reflection which is at the centre of the reduction in its psychological form implies in consequence a *duplication* between the reflected ego and the reflecting ego: this doubling might be seen as analogous to the split opened up by the transcendental reduction between the natural ego and the transcendental ego.”¹¹² The most obvious and prominent example of such an intra-subjective split happens during the cognitive act of retrospection, when one recalls and reflects on his/her own memory content.¹¹³ Nevertheless, the structure of retrospection is fundamentally different from the one of redirection. First of all retrospection is aimed at an explicit content and furthermore it is about something that happened in the past. In contrast, redirection is focused on implicit conditions and processes, which permanently accompany the explicit cognitive activity. To do justice to these specific characteristics of redirection, Depraz et al. propose that the cognitive capacity of imagination is of utmost importance for this step. “Imagination introduces an extreme distortion into the identity of the self, to the point that it makes it possible to live the self-alteration constitutive of the reductive knowledge in the present – in one's imaginary present (Depraz 1995: §21). [...] Supplementing a deficient memory, fiction enables one to live, in the present, this altering break in the self which alone structures the conversion of attitude.”¹¹⁴ Although imagination seems suitable to provide the cognitive possibility for the specific kind of self-monitoring involved in redirection, it would be advantageous to provide compelling evidence for this hypothesis.

111 Depraz 2003, p. 31; also cf. above p. 14 ff.

112 Depraz 2003, p. 188

113 cf. Depraz 2003, p. 194: “We will therefore make use of the experience of that alteration of the self with regard to itself, constitutive of memory, however rarely this may be experienced in the moment in which it is lived – which therefore means that it is always lived out in a differed retrospection. Memory is the privileged cognitive organ of that radical experience of self-alteration which lies at the root of the reductive operation (Depraz 1995: §19).”

114 Depraz 2003, p. 195

However, the subject-matter brought into attentional focus via redirection is clearly identified – the implicit realm of one's personal experience.

The implicit realm of cognition

For the authors of “On becoming aware” (in accordance with Phenomenology as well as Constructivism) all human cognitive activity is embedded in underlying implicit processes. These implicit mental processes (which should not be reduced to neuronal processes, since this would be a categorical misconception) are permanently at work and give rise to the emergence of explicit content in the realm of consciousness. “Among all these acts of consciousness which remain in a condition of immanence, there lives, unperceived, a form of pre-reflexivity on the basis of which consciousness is able to perceive its very self at work.”¹¹⁵ Usually, one's conscious activity is preoccupied with rather superficial content concerning worldly things and events, which can be easily made explicit because the human mind is habituated to it. If the explicit knowledge and categories have preliminarily been suspended, one's conscious attention is prepared for a free and open-minded receptivity. Now, it is possible to remain directed towards external things and events, thereby perceiving them more accurately – this is the level of seeing. Or one can redirect his/her unbiased attention towards the personal realm of implicit cognitive processes, which are constantly proceeding. “It is the idea that normally the habitual thing is that one should redirect attention outward. Redirect it to what is emerging as an object, as a content, which has its own intentionality. The point about redirection is that you reverse that. You keep it within, but toward the source, toward the source of the mental process rather than the object.”¹¹⁶ By the source of the mental process, Varela means the usually implicit cognitive structures underlying the explicit cognitive states, since he brings it in opposition to objects. It has already been shown above that Peschl's double-loop learning model is equivalent to the step of redirection. And indeed, he also characterizes the framework of reference getting involved by this step as implicit. “This implies that we do not have a conscious experience of these premises, assumptions, etc. on which our thinking and constructing is implicitly based.”¹¹⁷ The crucial question is what the thinking person achieves by focusing his/her attention on the implicit mental processes which give rise to one's explicit conscious states?

115 Depraz 2003, p. 2; also cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 31: “What is it that is to be called “phenomenon” in a distinctive sense? What is it that by its very essence becomes the *necessary* theme when we indicate something *explicitly*? Manifestly it is something that does *not* show itself initially and for the most part, something that is *concealed*, in contrast to what initially and for the most part does show itself. But at the same time it is something that essentially belongs to what initially and for the most part shows itself, indeed in such a way that it constitutes its meaning and ground.”; also cf. Glasersfeld 2000, p. 17: “Grundlegend ist die These, daß wir die Welt, die wir erleben, unwillkürlich aufbauen, weil wir nicht darauf achten – und dann freilich nicht wissen –, wie wir es tun. Diese Unwissenheit ist alles andere als notwendig.”

116 Varela 2000, p. 6

117 Peschl 2007, p. 2

3.3.2 Sensing

The central point about shifting the attentional focus on one's implicit cognitive processes and structures is that the thinking person thereby gets included into the innovative-contemplative thought process. “When this shift happens, the boundary between observer and observed collapses and the observer begins to see the system from a profoundly different view: a view that includes himself as part of the system that is being observed. The system is no longer something that's out there (“what they are doing to us”), it's also something in here (“look what we are doing to us”).”¹¹⁸ Primarily, Scharmer remarks that the clear distinction between perceiving subject and perceived object is abandoned at the level of sensing – the redirecting person is included into the thought process. Moreover, one's attention is not directed towards a distinct and individual object, but embraces a holistic perspective. Instead of attending to a specific thing or event, one's attention is focused on a system in its entirety. Peschl identifies similar characteristics on his equivalent level called reframing. He states, that “reframing is about taking the observer's position seriously (e.g., Maturana 1991; Glasersfeld 1995) in the sense that one reflectively steps out of his/her own experiences and tries to look at the situation as a whole in a reflective act (e.g. Glasersfeld 1989).”¹¹⁹ These points indicate that sensing is fundamentally different from the usual mode of rational thinking, which is object oriented, analytic and causal. Under reference to Henri Bortoft (an independent researcher on physics and the philosophy of science) Scharmer highlights that the perception and understanding of wholeness in the case of sensing is extraordinary. “Bortoft distinguishes between two types of wholeness: the *counterfeit whole* and the *authentic whole*. Both notions of wholeness are based, he said, on different faculties of cognition.”¹²⁰ The counterfeit whole relates to the usual mode of rational cognition. Directly, the rational mind just recognizes distinct objects. Via a second step of abstraction, a certain diversity of primarily singular objects are interlinked. Thereby they turn from individual objects to causally related parts of a comprehensive system. Again, the synthesized system can and is recognized as an object, but on a higher level. This approach to wholeness – the counterfeit wholeness – resembles a structuralist mindset. An understanding of the whole is reached by an analysis of its constituent elements and their interrelations. The contrasting notion of an authentic whole corresponds with the cognitive mode at the level of seeing, to which Bortoft referred as “intuitive mind” during an interview with Scharmer (Dialogue on Leadership). “The intuitive mind, he continued, 'operates by moving right into the concrete parts' in order to encounter the whole – that is, by diving right into the concrete experience

118 Scharmer 2007, p. 147

119 Peschl 2007, p. 4

120 Scharmer 2007, p. 158

of the particulars.”¹²¹ This intuitive cognitive mode lacks the step of abstraction and thus directly recognizes the whole. The concrete parts are recognized simultaneously with the wholeness, since they do not appear as distinct objects. As a result the whole is not understood as a second-order object, due to the fact that it does not comprise objects in the first place.¹²² The fact that this mode of cognition is not analytic or rational but rather intuitive, already hints at the third characteristic (beside (1) the amalgamation of perceiver and perceived (2) the authentic wholeness) of seeing pointed out by Scharmer, termed “Opening the heart”. “Opening the heart means accessing and activating the deeper levels of our emotional perception. Listening with the heart literally means using the heart and our capacity for appreciation and love as an organ of perception. At this point, we can actually see with the heart.”¹²³ This may sound unscientific or esoteric as an isolated statement, but in the context of the previous analysis, it can be interpreted in a reasonable manner. Of course, the heart is not the physiological organ of perception or cognition, although it was perceived as the mental organ until modern age. Nowadays, there is scientific consensus that rational and emotional cognition are based on neuronal activity. Nevertheless, the heart is still widely used as a metaphor to express emotional events. Thus, the meaning of Scharmer's statement is that a non-rational, intuitive mode of perceiving and understanding (which may be called emotional) comes into play at the level of seeing, taking into consideration that the subject-object-difference has been abandoned. Any rational understanding relies on explicit content referring to distinct objects. As soon as conscious attention is directed towards implicit processes and structures, there are neither distinct objects nor explicit content to recognize. The epistemological collapse evoked by redirection demands an intuitive, holistic mode of cognition from the thinking person. Otherwise, it would not be possible to appropriately approach implicit conditions and convert them into explicit knowledge.

Bearing in mind the characteristics of seeing, it is much easier to understand the innovative capacity of this cognitive level. Primarily, the thinking person becomes aware of the fact that the appearance of something *as* something always depends on the respective framework, situation or world. Secondly, that this framework is not a predetermined and external reality, but depends on the cognitive conditions of the perceiving person (I referred to these cognitive conditions as implicit structures and processes). By accessing these implicit conditions, one obtains an understanding of the factors determining his/her relation to the situation/world and the respective appearance of it. At this point, it may be the cognitive ability called imagination that enables one to tinker with these conditions, thereby recreating the nature of the particular framework. Nevertheless, my description

121 Scharmer 2007, p. 158

122 cf. Scharmer 2007, p.158: “Bortoft claims that we cannot know the whole in the same way than we know a thing.”, also cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 3: “We can conclude only that 'being' is not something like a being.”

123 Scharmer 2007, p. 149

is rather analytic and rational. It has been shown that this is an intuitive process. Thus, it is not comparable to the deliberate manipulation of certain variables or features constituting the situation/world. Recognizing an authentic whole prohibits any kind of decomposition. The intuitive mind at the level of seeing is in such a close relationship with the phenomenon that it sees the wood and the trees simultaneously and even-handedly. The “decision” for an altered nature of the situation or world is not based on reasons, but on a deeper insight going hand in hand with an emotional realization.

3.4 Letting-go – from Sensing to Presencing

The final step in the process of innovative-contemplative thinking once again comprises of three aspects. It arises from the cognitive level of sensing, which has already been treated. Thus, I will go on with discussing the transformative cognitive step called letting-go. This results in the existential level of presencing, whereby reaching the completion of this analysis.

3.4.1 Letting-go

It has been shown above (cf. section 2.2) that letting-go is complementary to the preceding step of redirection. The attentional focus on one's own implicit mental conditions is maintained (as well as the open-mindedness accomplished via suspension), but the quality of attention changes from active to passive. “With the third phase of *epoche*, acceptance, the very *quality* of your attention changes tenor: you move from that sort of active intentionality which *looks for* the interior, to a 'passive' *acceptance*, a *letting-arrive*. Yet this acceptance is passive only in name, for it is eminently an action.”¹²⁴ This description explicitly demands a paradoxical attitude – an involuntary activity. Normally, people do something, make an effort and spend time for the sake of an intended purpose. Humans usually take voluntary decisions in favour of a certain goal and the means of reaching it. Since this is the common and all-embracing mode of thought in modern western society, one's present decisions are based on expectations, which result from one's former decisions. Even the memories are absorbed by supporting the will in making goal-oriented, optimized decisions.¹²⁵ Therefore, nearly all our rational activity and conscious experience is presupposed by subjective expectations, i.e. an extrapolation of the subjectively determined past. These totally wilful thought-processes are highly effective ways to cope with everyday issues and scientific problems. But why are they absolutely improper for the practice of becoming aware? The answer is as easy as it is grave: it is meaningless to become aware of something explicitly anticipated. Ontologically

¹²⁴ Depraz 2003, p. 37

¹²⁵ For a detailed, historical discussion of the subjective mode of thought in modern western society, please cf.: Martin Heidegger: *Der europäische Nihilismus in Nietzsche II* (GA 6.2), Vittorio Klostermann GmbH, Frankfurt am Main. A briefer summary of this lecture can be found in Wolfgang Hörleinsberger: *Denken als Danken*, Diplomarbeit 2010, Universität Wien

speaking, implicit processes and structures cannot be revealed via cognitive activity. Since the subject-object-difference has been overcome, nothing exists for the intentional mind to hold on to and no-thing can possibly be wanted or reached. Empirical investigations confirm that, “in all cases, the introduction of a pre-discursive component makes the repeated practising of letting-go non-paradoxical.”¹²⁶ Adopting an attitude of passive receptivity is the only way to enable implicit conditions to become explicit on their own terms. Active searching, will power or any other varieties of “subjective force” would just hinder or even prevent implicit conditions to manifestation within the sphere of explicit consciousness. On the basis of that, it is possible to understand why the practice of letting-go can be active as well as passive at the same time. Activity and passivity are meaningful categories only in the context of an explicit subject-object-difference. One can just be active or passive in relation to an object. Since the appropriate relation to one's implicit being involves neither a subject nor an object, the distinction between active and passive is meaningless. Waiting for noting is the only suitable “practice” to reach the final level of presencing. It may take from seconds to days or even a whole lifetime – nobody knows in advance.

3.4.2 Presencing

If someone has successfully mastered the steps of suspension, redirection and letting-go, s/he finally reaches the most fundamental level of innovative-contemplative thinking, which involves his/her existential constitution – the Self. Although it goes beyond mere cognitive processes it is of utmost importance for one's intellectual capacities, since “this domain is rather the foundation on which all other epistemological processes are embedded.”¹²⁷ By reaching this level, really fundamental changes and innovations are made possible. The extraordinary power of innovative-contemplative thinking relies on the involvement of the existential domain, which does not come into play until presencing. “The key difference is that sensing shifts the place of perception to the current whole while presencing shifts the place of perception to the *source* of an emerging future whole – to a future possibility that is seeking to emerge.”¹²⁸ According to Scharmer, the quintessence of presencing is its attentional connectivity with the emerging future possibilities. But how can one shift his attention towards something that does not yet exist, especially if one is a mutual part of it? Ontologically, the wholeness of mind and world remains, whereas its quality is reversed via the step of letting-go. The subjective control is abandoned in favour of a permissive receptivity, which implies an experience of dependency. “Being in a state of receptivity always means being in a relatively passive role which brings about a higher chance of being (epistemologically and

126 Depraz 2003, p. 40

127 Peschl 2007, p. 7

128 Scharmer 2007, p. 163

existentially) hurt.”¹²⁹ In the case of presencing, one really faces an existential dependency, since the usual epistemological framework – providing certainty – has been questioned and abandoned. The apparent security achieved via planning or statistically predicting the future is left behind, for which reason it demarcates an ontological boarder which can by no means be crossed. “Of course, this process can cause existential fear in some cases, [...]”¹³⁰ but the key is to engage deeper and deeper into this experience, which should finally open out into an existential and intellectual transformation. By enduring this difficult period of existential fear one will realize that his/her being does not depend on him/her and that trying to control it is a pointless and unnecessary endeavour. You are neither in charge of your birth nor of your death, which means that being is actually a gift. Everybody knows that, but experiencing it is a totally different and rare event. From an ontological perspective, this seems to be the crucial point of presencing whereby the essential transformation takes place. Reaching it is most likely to be painful, but passing it will be wonderful. It is painful or frightening for the following two reasons: Firstly, one has to leave something behind, let a part of his/her personality go and eventually fade away. Secondly, one cannot know what his/her transformed self will be like. Scharmer metaphorically terms this transformation “going through the eye of the needle”. “When you pass through the eye of the needle – the threshold at which everything that isn't essential must go – [...]; you begin to see from a different direction, you begin to move toward your self *from* the future.”¹³¹ After the infliction point is passed, presencing becomes a wonderful and beautiful experience, since one has realized more of his/her innermost self, which is usually hidden below layers of social norms and demands. “In each of these instances we see the same fundamental happening: the arrival, the beginning birth, and the coming into being of a new self, the essential or the authentic self that connects us with who we really are.”¹³² A similar experience of self-awareness and existential transformation constitutes the essence of Peschl's concept termed “individual cultivation” reached by the process of triple-loop-learning.¹³³ Obviously, presencing has a great deal in common with the phenomenological concept of “intuitive evidence”, which is characterized as surprising, novel, involuntary, dynamic and accompanied by positive emotions, a feeling of profound justice and quasi-aesthetic success.¹³⁴ All three models emphasize that this final stage in the innovative-contemplative thought process exceeds the rational domain. Thus, the question remains: what cognitive changes arise from this existential transformation?

129 Peschl 2007, p. 6

130 Peschl 2007, p. 5

131 Scharmer 2007, p. 185

132 Scharmer 2007, p. 187

133 cf. Peschl 2007, p. 2 ff.

134 cf. Depraz 2003, p. 48 ff.

The epistemological implications correlate with the ontological experience of presencing. The awareness of an ontological dependence brings forth an equivalent awareness on the intellectual level. One realizes that his/her cognitive processes do not simply construct his/her personal appearance of the world, but likewise depend on the worldly conditions. The environmental dynamics give rise to epistemological structures, which reciprocally unfold their meaning and vice versa. By recognizing this, one will approach phenomena more respectfully and attentively. “In other words, due to the high level of receptiveness and attention it is possible to 'catch the wave' of the environmental dynamics and 'surf' it in a process of smooth and intimate interaction between the cognitive and environmental dynamics.”¹³⁵ Realizing and enduring one's ontological and epistemological dependence, enables one to distinguish between worldly and cognitive conditions, which results in a mutual rapprochement, since most (or all) of the activity is usually and wrongly accredited to cognition. Thus, the phenomena are unlocked without the usual subjective preformation. Of course, this is not an immediate shift from black to white, but an ongoing process.¹³⁶ However, this establishes a harmonic interrelation of mind and world (unity), which fosters the implicit dynamics on both sides and enables their emergence. “In other words, both the cognitive system and the environmental structures are fully and actively involved in this process and enter into a dynamic of mutual triggering, co-construction, co-creation, respecting, and mutually bringing each other into a state of unfolding and blossoming.”¹³⁷

3.5 Conclusion

The first part of this chapter consisted in an overall comparison of the three descriptive models in terms of their structure. The goal of this comparison was to distinguish between the common and the particular steps and levels of these models, in order to identify a general structure, underlying them. The comparison revealed that three different steps in between four specific cognitive levels are present in all three models. In accordance with the hypothesis that the general structure of these models illustrates the innovative-contemplative thought process, I continued with a synoptic analysis of each step and level. Methodologically, this means that my investigation of each step or level incorporated all three models at once. Regarding the steps, I compared the required practice in terms of its epistemological or/and ontological effects. The analysis of the four levels centred on the cognitive scope as well as the epistemological or/and ontological framework. Thereby, I was able to demonstrate that each step and level is characterised by a fundamental meaning, which holds true for each particular model.

135 Peschl 2007, p. 6

136 Depraz 2003, p. 50: “In other terms, intuitive evidence is less a result or a product than an act and a *process of coming forth*.”

137 Peschl 2007, p. 8

The process initiates on the level of downloading (Scharmer), which is equivalent to the natural attitude (Depraz) and mapping (Peschl), since all three concepts refer to an uncritical manner of thinking in terms of objective knowledge that lacks in personal experience. The first step is called suspension (Scharmer, Depraz) or single-loop-learning, which generally consists in questioning the clearness of objective knowledge, by realizing its dependence on contextual (external) conditions. The resulting level called seeing makes use of this critical attitude towards the appearance of the world, in order to look at things in a different light. The subsequent called redirection (Scharmer, Depraz) or double-loop learning (Peschl) is characterised by taking into account that the appearance of the world fundamentally depends on the subjective perspective. In consideration of the fact that on the following cognitive level coined sensing, one not only looks at things in a different light but also from a different point of view, it's obvious why one's cognitive space is free of preconceptions. Thus, the final step called letting-go (Scharmer, Depraz) or triple-loop learning (Peschl), concerns the ontological level. By finally loosen one's existential preconditions, like goals, wishes, fears, hopes, etc., one really clears the way for absolutely unpredictable and surprising thoughts to appear. Presencing (Scharmer) or intuitive evidence (Depraz), is generally described as flash of inspiration, changing not only one's way of thinking, but also the person itself.

4. Overview of the main concepts of Martin Heidegger

4.1 Introduction

So far it has become clear that the epistemological meaning of this process is to approach the implicit dimension of one's personal experience. Each step diminishes the apparent certainty of objective knowledge; in order that one's primordial experience can come to the fore. Thus, the pending question is what ontological processes accompany the cognitive changes during innovative-contemplative thinking? From the fact that all epistemological events are embedded in ontological circumstances follows that there exists an ontological equivalent to each step and level of the innovative-contemplative thought process. Therefore, my working hypothesis is that the ontological dimension of the innovative-contemplative thought process is similarly structured as the epistemological process. The primary goal of following analysis (chapter 5) is to identify the ontological steps and stages of this structure. Based on these findings I am going to perform an ontological reflection at the end of each section. The purpose of this reflection is to improve the understanding of the ontological of the ontological circumstances, giving rise to the cognitive process.

I decided to use the work of Martin Heidegger as “theoretical substrate” of this ontological analysis, for the following reasons. Firstly, he is a scholar of Edmund Husserl, who has been shown to be the philosophical source for the epistemological model of the innovative-contemplative thought process, which is why his theory closely related to Husserl's. Secondly, in comparison with Husserl, the work of Heidegger addresses the ontological conditions of human cognition, whereas Husserl's approach remains mainly epistemological. Thirdly, Heidegger's deliberations, especially the later ones, incorporate a great deal of eastern and pre-metaphysical philosophy, for which reason they match with the final step of letting-go, since it based on mindfulness meditation. And last but not least, Heidegger was an innovative thinker himself. The fundamental aim of his thinking was to overcome the boundaries of western metaphysics (which explains why he resorted to pre-metaphysical and eastern sources of knowledge) in order to establish a radically different way of thinking.

4.2 Dasein – the human condition according to Heidegger

With his ground-breaking book “Being and Time” (BT) published in 1927, Martin Heidegger challenged the entire history of occidental philosophy and tried to overcome it at once. His central claim is that occidental philosophy, which has its seeds in the era of ancient Greece (Plato and Aristotle), has misconceived its most fundamental notion – Being. “Do we in our time have an

answer to the question of what we really mean by the word 'being'? Not at all. So it is fitting that we should raise anew the question of the meaning of being.”¹³⁸ At first, this may sound like an exclusive philosophical or rather ontological problem, bearing a significant relation to everyday life or even other sciences. But, in consideration of the fact that all kinds of human activity, mental or physical, takes place in a constitutive relation to something (beings), this philosophical shortcoming becomes a fundamental problem. Everything people encounter or deal with is primarily understood *as something*. Even when one comes across something for the first time, s/he perceives it *as something unknown* – one always knows what something is, in other words s/he understands its being. This basic principle of human cognition has been mentioned in connection with Husserl (cf. above p. 8/9) under the designation of intentionality. And also for Heidegger “*this average and vague understanding of being is a fact.*”¹³⁹ For Heidegger, the problem is based on the philosophical failure to allow for the understanding of being, which is the fundamental fact of human existence, in terms of an appropriate theory concerning the meaning of being. Therefore, the traditional self-conceptions of the human nature as animal rationale, as subject or as creature in God's own likeness are inadequate.¹⁴⁰ With respect to his enterprise to discover the meaning of being as such, Heidegger redefines the nature of human being in a more fundamental way, which he coins “Dasein”. “Thus to work out the question of being means to make a being – he who questions – transparent in its being.[...] This being which we ourselves in each case are and which includes inquiry among the possibilities of its being we formulate terminologically as Da-sein.”¹⁴¹ The fundamental analysis of its ontological structure forms the first part of BT, which is the textual basis for my representation within this chapter. Although it does not have a direct correlation to the first part of this thesis, it is a necessary preparation for any understanding of Heidegger's theories, since the concept of Dasein is the cornerstone of his renewed version of ontology – fundamental ontology.

4.2 Dasein exists as Being-in-the-world

The crucial point in overcoming an established metaphysical position is to reinvent the essence of human being. By redefining the human nature as “Dasein”, Heidegger breaks with the traditional framework of ontology, which strictly separates between essence (essentia) and existence

138 Heidegger 1996, p. 1

139 Heidegger 1996, p. 4

140 Heidegger 1996, p. 46: “The sources which are relevant for traditional anthropology the Greek definition and the theological guideline-indicate that, over and above the attempt to determine the essence of 'human being' as a being, the question of its being has remained forgotten; rather, this being is understood as something 'self-evident' in the sense of the *objective* presence of other created things.”

141 Heidegger 1996, p. 6; also cf. Dastur 1992, p. 171: “But to inquire about the meaning of Being does not consist in looking for what lies behind Being, but in questioning Being itself in so far it is included in the comprehensibility of Dasein. For ‘meaning’ is an existential of Dasein and not a property of a being [...]”

(*existentia*). Traditionally the essence tells *what* something is, whereas the existence tells *that* something is. Throughout traditional philosophy (metaphysics), being is defined as the being *of* beings. This means that being as such has never been considered, since the essence attracted all our attention. Metaphysics is primarily directed towards beings and reaches a definition of being via a subsequent step of abstraction. As a result, the existence of something – its being – is defined as presence. “Ontologically, *existentia* means *objective presence* [*Vorhandenheit*], a kind of being which is essentially inappropriate to characterize the being which has the character of *Da-sein*.”

The existential essence of Dasein

Due to the fact that Dasein understands that it is, it fundamentally differs from all other beings like stones, plants or animals. “It is proper to this being that it be disclosed to itself with and through its being. *Understanding of being is itself a determination of being of Da-sein.*”¹⁴² For Heidegger, this constitutive relation to its own being is the essence of Dasein, which he terms existence. “We shall call the very being to which *Da-sein* can relate in one way or another, and somehow always does relate, existence [*Existenz*].”¹⁴³ ¹⁴⁴ The awareness of its own being – self-awareness – implies that Dasein is concerned about it. “*Da-sein* is a being that does not simply occur among other beings. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that in its being this being is concerned *about* its very being.”¹⁴⁵ From this it follows that Dasein is neither an object nor a subject. It can never be assigned to a certain category and its characteristics are not comparable to determinable features. The self-relatedness of Dasein to its own being means that it is intrinsically dynamic. “*Da-sein* is my own, to be always in this or that way. [...] *Da-sein* is always its possibility. [...] And because *Da-sein* is always essentially its possibility, it *can* 'choose' itself in its being, it can win itself, it can lose itself, or it can never and only 'apparently' win itself.”¹⁴⁶ That Dasein permanently faces the choice of winning or losing itself, correlates with its two equi-primordial modes of being: *authenticity* and *inauthenticity*. It is important to keep in mind that these modes of being depend on the facts that Dasein is in each case my own (which Heidegger terms “mineness”) and that its essence is a

142 Heidegger 1996, p. 10

143 Heidegger 1996, p. 10; also cf. Von Herrmann 2003, p. 8: “Das Wesen des Daseins bestimmt sich nicht aus dem 'ist' des nichtdaseinsmäßigen Seienden, sondern aus dem 'bin', d.h. der Existenz. Die Existenz zeichnet eine eigene Weise von 'Wesen' für das Dasein vor. Das Wesen des Daseins liegt darin, 'daß es je sein Sein als seiniges zu sein hat'.

144 Heidegger 1996, p. 39; also cf. Pöggeler 1992, 279/280: “Metaphysics asks: what is Being? It inquires after the Being of beings. It orients itself toward the beings which it finds in the ‘world’ and can thus represent them. Metaphysical thinking is, from the very beginning, representational (*vorstellendes*) thinking. It therefore has the temporal structure of a pure making-something-present. Beings, understood as that which actually is, are interpreted in terms of presence, ‘i.e. they are conceived as presence (*ousia*)’ (SZ 26).”

145 Heidegger 1996, p. 10

146 Heidegger 1996, p. 40; also cf. Von Herrmann 2003, p. 9: “Das Dasein ist als Existenz 'Möglichkeit' in einem zweifach-einigen Sinn: zum einen im Sinne der Existenzmöglichkeit, in der Dasein seine jeweilige Bestimmtheit hat, zum anderen im Sinne der Vollzugsmöglichkeiten.”

recursive relation to its own existence. The permanent choice between authenticity and inauthenticity is Dasein's existential possibility, which should not be confused with the manifold possibilities of everyday life to do this or that (a detailed analysis of these existential possibilities can be found in chapter 5).

Being-in-the-world

Due to its existence, Dasein cannot be treated as something that just occurs within the world. Through existence, its own being is revealed to Dasein at once with the being of beings in all.¹⁴⁷ Existence becomes manifest as the basic constitution of Dasein, which Heidegger coins “Being-in-the-world”. “For this reason Heidegger’s phenomenology in *Being and Time* begins with the thesis: the first determination of consciousness must be the relation to the world. [...] The contemporary subject is in *Being and Time* radically redefined by this fundamental openness to the world as the dimension of openness. It is nothing other than the ‘there’ for the appearing of this dimension, that is, ‘Dasein’ as ‘being-in-the-world’.”¹⁴⁸ That the primordial constitution of Dasein is its interrelation with the world may seem obvious or even trivial. And exactly due to its obviousness, Heidegger claims that this most fundamental characteristic of human being has been constantly overlooked in the course of its investigation. “What is ontically nearest and familiar is ontologically the farthest, unrecognized and constantly overlooked in its ontological significance.”¹⁴⁹ In consideration of the fact that the subject's basic constitution is its relation to an object – aboutness or intentionality – the novelty and severity of Heidegger's characteristic becomes clear. Since traditional metaphysics determine the subject via its opposition to an object, the totality of beings comprises of manifold material objects and the thinking subject (*ego cogito*). Thus, the “world” must be re-constructed in a second step as the sum of all objects, an all-embracing “hyper”-object. This directly results in a worldless [*weltloses*] subject, trapped in the immanence of its own consciousness.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, it implies that the fundamental building blocks of meaning are the innerworldly objects, or rather their mental representations. Heidegger claims that the reason for this ontology is the preliminary assumption of the human essence as cognitive being, as *ego cogito* (cf. section 5.1). Since it is Heidegger's attempt to investigate the human being on the basis of its existence (as Dasein) and not

147 cf. Herrmann 2004, p. 21: “Die im Da das Da-seins erblickte Erschlossenheit von Sein ist *Erschlossenheit von Sein-überhaupt des Seienden im Ganzen in der selbsthaft-existenzialen Erschlossenheit des Menschen*. In der existenzial offengehaltenen Erschlossenheit von Sein-überhaupt ist das Seiende im Ganzen offenbar. Der Mensch existiert als in seiner Existenz aufgeschlossenes Seiendes in der Aufgeschlossenheit von Sein-überhaupt. Allein in diesem Sinne existiert er als Da-sein.“

148 Held 1992, p. 312; also cf. Kiverstein 2011, p.19: “The term ‘being-in-the-world’ designates the defining feature of our existence that we are at home in the world, and we know how to find our way about in it.”

149 Heidegger 1996, p. 41

150 cf. Held 1992, p. 306: “Thus philosophy is only able to take refuge in the immanence of a consciousness which is, in the first instance, cut off from the world. And then there arises the classical problem of modern epistemology, how such a world-less consciousness is able to transcend itself toward the world.”

on the basis of its cognition, he is eager to abandon all possible preconceptions. “At the beginning of the analysis, Da-sein is precisely not to be interpreted in the differentiation of a particular existence; rather, to be uncovered in the indifferent way in which it is initially and for the most part. [...] We call this everyday indifference of Da-sein *averageness*.”¹⁵¹ Giving pride of place to the indifferent mode human existence – averageness – Heidegger turns the metaphysical understanding of the human being upside-down. Dasein's relation to the world becomes its primary constitution, within which the appearance and manifestation of objects takes place. Thus, meaning does not rely on objects or their subjective representations, but arises out of Dasein's relation to its world. “We always find ourselves already situated in a meaningful world. The situations we encounter in this world are ones that always already matter to us in definite ways.”¹⁵² But since there is no world without objects, their understanding usually happens as a mutual correlation. “Thus the understanding of being that belongs to Da-sein just as originally implies the understanding of something like “world” and the understanding of the being of beings accessible within the world.”¹⁵³ In terms of one's practical embodied engagement, the world is primary to the innerworldly objects. In other words, the pragmatic usage of objects and tools is based on an implicit disclosedness of the situational horizon in which they are embedded.

The compound expression being-in-the-world comprises of three theoretically separable aspects, permitting a separate analysis of each part, although they form a unitary phenomenon. These aspects are 1) the ontological structure of the world and the idea of worldliness as such; 2) the ontological constitution of Being-in as such; and 3) the “who” that is in the world as average Dasein.¹⁵⁴ The first point is discussed in the subsequent section 4.2. The second point is treated in section 4.3. The third aspect could be treated in the course of this chapter as well, but since it is a constitutive part of my subsequent analysis (and I would like to avoid too much repetition), it is treated in the context of chapter 5.

4.3 The Constitution of the World

The world is ontologically distinct from innerworldly beings, for which reason the latter should not be at the basis of an analysis of the former. Hence, Heidegger seeks to disclose the phenomenon of the world through its direct relation to Dasein. “‘World’ is ontologically not a determination of *those* beings which Da-sein essentially is *not*, but rather a characteristic of Da-sein itself.”¹⁵⁵ The pivotal question is, how is the world constituted as a characteristic of Dasein? In order to answer this

151 Heidegger 1996, p. 41

152 Kiverstein 2011, p. 6

153 Heidegger 1996, p. 11

154 cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 50

155 Heidegger 1996, p. 60

question in an unprejudiced and original way, Heidegger investigates the world in terms of Dasein's averageness. Thus, the subject-matter of his analysis is Dasein's nearby environment, which he calls the "surrounding world" [*Umwelt*].¹⁵⁶ Average Dasein is in a permanent association [*Umgang*] with its surrounding world, therein appear manifold innerworldly beings. The primary mode of Dasein's association with its surrounding world is its everyday practice and not a theoretical or scientific attitude. "However, as we showed, the nearest kind of association is not mere perceptual cognition, but, rather, a handling, using, and taking care of things which has its own kind of 'knowledge'."¹⁵⁷ The primary appearance of the innerworldly beings is a practical or tacit one, corresponding to Dasein's practical approach. "We shall call the beings encountered in taking care *useful things*."¹⁵⁸ Heidegger distinguishes the appearance of innerworldly beings as useful things [*Zeug*], from their appearance as mere things – objects. Objects are encountered in the course of a theoretical observation, dissociated from their situational context, which defines their being as objective presence [*Vorhandenheit*]. By contrast, useful things are always contextually situated, which implies that they appear in reference to other useful things. "There always belongs to the being of a useful thing a totality of useful things in which this useful thing can be what it is. A useful thing is essentially 'something in order to ...'."¹⁵⁹ A useful thing always has a certain usage, which depends on the situational context in which it appears. The context is structured as a manifold of references between useful things. The usage is the general being of useful things, which Heidegger coins "handiness". "We shall call the useful thing's kind of being in which it reveals itself by itself *handiness*."¹⁶⁰ Handiness and objective presence are mutually exclusive modes of being. Either something appears and accordingly is encountered in its handiness or in its objective presence. If something is encountered in its objective presence, it explicitly appears as something – as an object that exhibits certain features. If something is encountered in its handiness, it appears as something useful for something else – as a reference – which does not rely on explicit content.¹⁶¹ Heidegger points out that the original transformation from handiness to objective presence happens, if its handling is defective. "Something is unusable. This means that the constitutive reference of the in-order-to to a what-for has been disturbed. [...] But in a *disturbance of reference* – in being unusable for ... – the reference becomes explicit."¹⁶² By losing its usability something appears as merely

156 cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 62: "The nearest world of everyday Da-sein is the *surrounding world*."

157 Heidegger 1996, p. 63; also cf. Herrmann 2004, p. 55: "Der *besorgende Zugang*, der sowohl das zutunhabende als auch das theoretisch-erkennende Besorgen einschließt, ist Heideggers terminologische Bezeichnung für das existentielle, d.h. in der Existenz gründende Verhältnis des Daseins zum innerweltlichen Seienden."

158 Heidegger 1996, p. 64

159 Heidegger 1996, p. 64

160 Heidegger 1996, p. 65

161 cf. Ratcliffe 2011, p. 137: "A properly functioning tool, when skillfully used, *disappears* into the activity. It is not understood in an explicit way by some standoffish subject who gazes upon it."

162 Heidegger 1996, p. 70

present, which takes place as a conversion of implicit to explicit understanding. Without a disturbance of the usability, the referential character of something and the totality of references, remain intact. In order to relate the referential character of useful things to the existence of Dasein, Heidegger asks about the meaning of reference. Since “Beings are discovered with regard to the fact that they are referred, as those beings which they are, to something. They are relevant together with something else. The character of being of things at hand is relevance.”¹⁶³ From Dasein's point of view, the meaning of useful things is their relevance. Since useful things are exclusively encountered as embedded in a totality of references their relevance relies on this embeddedness as well. “*Which* relevance things at hand have is prefigured in terms of the total relevance.”¹⁶⁴ The total relevance is a prior, implicitly disclosed horizon which constitutes the relevant appearance of useful things. So far, the total relevance forms a self-contained structure, which lacks an ontological grounding that would lend meaning to it. On what could the total relevance of the disclosed surrounding world rest? For Heidegger, this cardinal point is Dasein's existence. “The total relevance itself, however, ultimately leads back to a what-for which *no longer* has relevance, [...]”. The primary ‘what-for’ is a for-the-sake-of-which. But the for-the-sake-of-which always concerns the being of Da-sein which is essentially concerned about this being itself in its being.”¹⁶⁵ This explains how the world is constituted as a characteristic of Dasein's averageness as being-in-the-world. On the basis of this it possible to deduce why the world is previously unlocked as the implicit horizon which enables innerworldly beings to be understood in their relevance. Dasein's primordial concern about, and understanding of, its own existence discloses a respective preliminary constitution of the world, since Dasein exists as being-in-the-world. Due to these reciprocal horizons of implicit awareness, beings are encountered as relevant for the being of Dasein. “That *within* which Da-sein understands itself beforehand in the mode of self-reference is that *for which* it lets beings be encountered beforehand. As *that for which one lets beings be encountered in the kind of being of relevance, the wherein of self-referential understanding is the phenomenon of world.* And the structure of that to which Da-sein is referred is what constitutes the *worldliness* of the world.”¹⁶⁶

163 Heidegger 1996, p. 78

164 Heidegger 1996, p. 78

165 Heidegger 1996, p. 78

166 Heidegger 1996, p. 80/81; also cf. Von Herrmann 2004, p. 58: “Die jeweilige Bewandnisganzheit ist vom Dasein insofern vorverstanden, als sie mit dem jeweiligen Worumwillen, auf das es sich entworfen hat, aufgeschlossen ist in der Erschlossenheit, *in der* und *als* welche das Dasein existiert. Die existente Aufgeschlossenheit seines Worumwillen in der wesenhaften Verklammerung mit der Bewandnisganzheit bildet jenes Offene, in dessen Offenheit das Dasein das Zeug in seiner Bewandnis freigibt. Die Welt, in der sich Zeug als Innerweltliches zeigt, ist die mit dem Worumwillen des Daseins verklammerte Bewandnisganzheit.”

4.4 Being-in as such: Attunement, Understanding, Discourse

By the expression “being-in” Heidegger designates the primordial relation of Dasein with its world. In a first step I am going to discuss the general meaning of this expression, whereas the intrinsic structure of this relationship will be explained during a subsequent analysis of its constituent aspects – attunement, understanding and discourse.

4.4.1 Being-in

The being-in of Dasein does not express a spatial relation. Dasein is not in the world like I am in the room or the milk in the fridge. Spatial relations can only be applied to beings that can be understood as objectively present. If something appears in its objective presence, spatial relations traditionally apply as categories. Since, neither the being of Dasein nor of the world consists in their objective presence, neither of them can be characterized via categories. To characterize the aspects of Dasein qua existence, Heidegger coins the term “existentials”. “Because these explications are defined in terms of existentiality, we shall call the characteristics of being of Da-sein *existentials*. They are to be sharply delimited from the determinations of being of those beings unlike Da-sein which we call *categories*.”¹⁶⁷ Being-in is such an existential – a characteristic of Dasein's existence – implying that it cannot be defined via *genus proximum et differentiam specificam*. Thus Heidegger introduces its meaning via an etymological approach. “In' stems from *innan-*, to live, *habitare*, to dwell. 'An' means I am used to, familiar with, I take care of something. [...] Being as the infinitive of 'I am': that is, understood as an existential, means to dwell near ... , to be familiar with.... *Being-in is thus the formal existential expression of the being of Da-sein* which has the essential constitution of being-in-the-world.”¹⁶⁸ Obviously, the term being-in denominates the existence of Dasein. This existence is basically a primordial familiarity with the world. Dasein is not just located in the world, but rather dwells or resides in it. Thereby, Heidegger undermines once and for all a dualistic ontology. Being-in is the fundamental mode of Dasein's existence. By doubting the existence of the world, or suspending one's knowledge about it, this fundamental familiarity cannot be abandoned. Being-in is the condition of the possibility for such thought experiments on a cognitive level. “Da-sein is never 'initially' a sort of a being which is free from being-in, but which at times is in the mood to take up a 'relation' to the world. This taking up of relations to the world is possible only because, as being-in-the-world, Da-sein is as it is.”¹⁶⁹

In chapter 5 of BT, Heidegger accomplishes a structural analysis of the ontological constitution of

167 Heidegger 1996, p. 42

168 Heidegger 1996, p. 51; also cf. Kiverstein 2011, p. 19: “‘Being-in’ characterizes the relation that humans stand in the world, but the ‘in’ is not to be understood in terms of ‘containment’ – humans nor not ‘in’ the world in the sense that one entity is inside another when the second contains the first.”

169 Heidegger 1996, p. 54

being-in. For this purpose he reveals this phenomenon in a different light. “The being which is essentially constituted by being-in-the-world is itself always its 'there.' [...] This being bears in its ownmost being the character of not being closed. The expression 'there' means this essential disclosedness. Through disclosedness this being (Da-sein) is 'there' for itself together with the Dasein of the world.”¹⁷⁰ Heidegger redefines or rather refines being-in as disclosedness of being. This circumstance is couched explicitly in the term Da-sein. The disclosedness is three-fold in nature and comprises of three constitutive aspects. “However, disclosedness is the basic character of Da-sein in accordance with which it is its there. Disclosedness is constituted by attunement, understanding, and discourse, and pertains equiprimordially to the world, being-in, and the self.”¹⁷¹ For a comprehensive understanding of Dasein as being-in-the-world it is necessary to move on with a discussion of the existential constitution of disclosedness.

4.4.2 Attunement

“What we indicate *ontologically* with the term *attunement* is *ontically* what is most familiar and an everyday kind of thing: mood, being in a mood.”¹⁷² Heidegger invents the term “attunement” [*Befindlichkeit*] to distinguish this existential phenomenon from the scientifically investigated mental capacity of mood or emotions¹⁷³. His reference to the experienced phenomenon is not phrased as comparative but as superlative, since he claims that “Da-sein is always already in a mood.”¹⁷⁴ Via attunement Dasein becomes permanently aware of its existence in actuality, which is not at its own disposal. “In being in a mood, Da-sein is always already disclosed in accordance with its mood as that being to which Da-sein was delivered over in its being as the being which it, existing, has to be.”¹⁷⁵ Dasein never had the choice to be or not to be – it just has to be! Heidegger coins the fact 'that it is,' the thrownness of this being into its there; [...].”¹⁷⁶ Thus, it always behaves in the face of its own existence. In attunement Dasein becomes aware of this behaviour. This kind of awareness is not explicit, since this would characterize an emotion, but rather implicit. Interestingly, Heidegger claims that this awareness reveals for the most part avoidance. Dasein usually turns away from its thrownness, neglecting it. “*Attunement discloses Da-sein in its*

170 Heidegger 1996, p. 125; also cf. Von Herrmann 2004, p. 21: “Das 'Da' hat die ontologische Bedeutung der Erschlossenheit, und zwar der Erschlossenheit des existenzialen Seins des Menschen im Wesenszusammenhang mit der Erschlossenheit von Sein-überhaupt. Erschlossenheit als Aufgeschlossenheit und Gelichtetheit meint nicht etwas, was zum Sein außerdem, als Eigenschaft, noch hinzukäme. In der Erschlossenheit sieht Heidegger das *Wesenhafte des Seins selbst*.”

171 Heidegger 1996, p. 203

172 Heidegger 1996, p. 126

173 Heidegger 1996, p. 130/131: “What has not been noted is the fact that the fundamental ontological interpretation of the affects has hardly been able to take one step worthy of mention since Aristotle. On the contrary, the affects and feelings fall thematically under the psychic phenomena, functioning as a third class of these, mostly along with representational thinking and willing. They sink to the level of accompanying phenomena.”

174 Heidegger 1996, p. 126

175 Heidegger 1996, p. 127

176 Heidegger 1996, p. 127

thrownness, initially and for the most part in the mode of an evasive turning away.”¹⁷⁷ This is a main reason for Dasein's average mode of being termed “falling prey” (cf. section 5.1). Since Dasein exists as being-in-the-world, attunement does not exclusively disclose the thrown existence of Dasein, but simultaneously the world and their interrelation. “It is a fundamental existential mode of being of the *equiprimordial disclosedness* of world, being-there-with, and existence because this disclosure itself is essentially being-in-the-world.”¹⁷⁸ This means that Dasein's primordial understanding of the world happens in terms of its attunement or mood. The mood reveals the world in a respective atmosphere. Since the things appear within and in relation to the world, their appearance relies on the respective mood of its disclosedness. As a result, the primary way in which Dasein encounters (useful) things takes place on the implicit level of affectivity. “Letting things be encountered in a circumspect heedful way has – we can see this now more precisely in terms of attunement – the character of being affected or moved.”¹⁷⁹ If one is in a good mood, the things appear in a better light than usual. Since this phenomenon is rooted in the disclosedness of the world, or rather one's existence as being-in-the-world, everything feels better than usual. And if one is in a terrible mood, e.g. due to the death of a close friend, everything appears to be terrible. Even objectively lucky things, like winning in the lottery, will not appear pleasant in such a mood. Everyone who has tried to cheer someone up who is in a bad mood knows that this is a nearly futile enterprise. For the most part such attempts are mere distractions from the terrible mood, but immediately afterwards the mood is back, since it has never been gone. These examples suggest that the mood is not at Dasein's disposal. The mood is neither the result of one's cognitive activity, nor is it the consequence of an external cause. Both variants would imply that it could be voluntarily changed; either by a rationalization or manipulation of the circumstances. The mood discloses being-in-the-world as a whole, because it arises out of this wholeness. “Mood assails. It comes neither from 'without' nor from 'within,' but rises from being-in-the-world itself as a mode of that being.”¹⁸⁰ I would like to give the emotional state of love as an illustrative example for this. Everyone who has ever tried voluntarily to fall out of love or to fall in love knows what a hopeless attempt this is. This powerlessness regarding one's emotional state is a general aspect of man's existence, since it is closely related with Dasein's dependency on being. The pre-discursive disclosedness in attunement is the primordial way how Dasein becomes aware of being. “The fact that Being is not at our disposal holds sway over man as his ‘dispositionality’ (Befindlichkeit). This

177 Heidegger 1996, p. 128

178 Heidegger 1996, p. 129; also cf. Henry 1992, p. 354: “[...] affectivity is not merely taken as a power of revelation in the ordinary sense of the word, a power of revealing something, this or that thing, but precisely *the power of revealing to us that which reveals all things, namely, the world itself as such, as identical to Nothingness.*”

179 Heidegger 1996, p. 129; also cf. Ratcliffe 2011, p. 152: “Heidegger claims that we invariably find ourselves in the world through some mood [Stimmung] or other, and that mood constitutes a sense of the significance of things, a background orientation that shapes all experience, thought and activity.”

180 Heidegger 1996, p. 129

reveals the fact that man finds himself (sich befinden) within the totality of all beings.”¹⁸¹

4.4.2 Understanding

The second constitutive aspect for Dasein's disclosedness (Da-) is called understanding. Since it is equiprimordial with attunement, “understanding is always attuned.”¹⁸² Although rational understanding may be accompanied by feelings as well Heidegger means understanding as existential and not as cognitive capacity. This existential mode of understanding has implicitly been encountered in the course of the analysis of world and worldliness (cf. section 4.2). Understanding discloses the totality of relevance [Bewandtnisganzheit] in its significance for the for-the-sake-of-which (Dasein). This means that understanding comprises Dasein as well as the world, which means that it encompasses the phenomenon of being-in-the-world in its entirety.¹⁸³ This characteristic applies to attunement as well, but what is the difference? The difference is that attunement reveals Dasein in its facticity – that it is and has to be – whereas understanding discloses Dasein in its possibility. “The mode of being of Da-sein as a potentiality of being lies existentially in understanding. Da-sein is not something objectively present which then has as in addition the ability to do something, but is rather primarily being-possible. Da-sein is always what it can be and how it is its possibility.”¹⁸⁴ That Dasein is its possibility, is fundamentally different from the traditional notion of possibility, which is defined with respect to reality as a contingent, not yet reality. The existential possibility of Dasein relies on its thrownness. Once Dasein is thrown into its being, it has to choose or lose itself as long as it exists. Each moment it walks on the crossroad between authenticity or inauthenticity.¹⁸⁵ The existence of Dasein gains its significance through the always already disclosed possibility. From this does not follow that Dasein is fully determined or understood on the basis of its present possibility, since the possibility at hand relies on the thrownness and existence so far, thus the world is permanently included as well. However, Dasein permanently has to seize this or that opportunity. If one decides to do absolutely nothing, s/he seizes a certain possibility, because the remaining possibilities come undone. Through existential understanding, the horizon of possibility for which Dasein exists, is disclosed. “Understanding is the being of such a potentiality of being which is never still outstanding as something not yet objectively present, but as something essentially never objectively present, is together with the

181 Pöggeler 1992, p. 284/5; also cf. Henry 1992, p. 359: “The revelation of existence to itself is ontologically homogeneous with the revelation of the world; the power of affectivity whether it be understood as the power of revealing existence or of the revealing the world is the same, it is the power of transcendence.”

182 Heidegger 1996, p. 134

183 cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 134: “The disclosure of understanding, as that of the for-the-sake-of-which and of significance, is equiprimordially concerned with complete being-in-the-world. Significance is that for which world as such is disclosed.”

184 Heidegger 1996, p. 134

185 cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 135: “But this means that Da-sein is a being-possible entrusted to itself, *thrown possibility* throughout. Da-sein is the possibility of being free *for* its ownmost potentiality of being.

being of Da-sein in the sense of existence. [...] As this understanding, it "knows" *what* is going on, that is, what its potentiality of being is."¹⁸⁶ But why does understanding mean essentially disclosing possibilities of existence with respect to the world? "Because understanding in itself has the existential structure which we call *project*. It projects the being of Da-sein upon its for-the-sake-of-which just as primordially as upon significance as the worldliness of its actual world."¹⁸⁷ The fact that understanding projects the being of Dasein upon its factual possibility has nothing to do with planning, which is a conscious activity and involves explicit content. Disclosedness relies upon the fact that Dasein always already is *and* remains its possibility, until the impossibility of all possibility – death. If it would be possible to reach one's projected possibility, the moment this happens Dasein would become a static something and objectively present. But since Dasein exists, its being is primordially characterized as openness, which prohibits a total explication. "Because of the kind of being which is constituted by the existential of projecting, Da-sein is constantly 'more' than it actually is, [...]."¹⁸⁸ Thrownness and project are complementary as well as attunement and understanding. "Finding oneself in a world is a matter of being situated in or 'thrown' into a context where things matter in different kinds of way, such as being 'useful', 'obstructive' or 'threatening'. Against this backdrop of 'thrownness' [*Geworfenheit*], one pursues or 'projects' oneself only towards certain concrete possibilities."¹⁸⁹ Together, thrownness and project constitute the disclosedness of Dasein as being-in-the-world, wherein a manifold of concrete possibilities is opened up.

Interpretation

So far, the analysis of Dasein's existential understanding as projecting is only partially explaining our familiar mode of understanding in terms of explicit content, since an essential step has not yet been touched. Dasein's understanding does not solely remain on the level of possibility, but it develops further. Heidegger terms this development "interpretation". "In interpretation understanding appropriates what it has understood in an understanding way. In interpretation understanding does not become something different, but rather itself."¹⁹⁰ On the existential level, understanding does not result from interpretation, but interpretation is based on understanding. Through interpretation the previously projected possibility becomes explicit. Embedded in the implicit total relevance, useful things are disclosed in-order-to – in their possible relevance. Via subsequent interpretation, their relevance becomes explicit and they appear *as something for*. "What

186 Heidegger 1996, p. 135

187 Heidegger 1996, p. 136

188 Heidegger 1996, p. 136; also cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 138: "Being is understood in the project, but not ontologically grasped."

189 Ratcliffe 2011, p. 148

190 Heidegger 1996, p. 139; also cf. Von Herrmann 1992, p. 313: "And interpretation understood existentially is essentially the unfolding and laying out of what is projected in advance in a *projecting understanding*."

has been circumspectly interpreted with regard to its in-order-to as such, what has been *explicitly* understood, has the structure of *something as something*. [...] The 'as' constitutes the structure of the explicitness of what is understood; it constitutes the interpretation.”¹⁹¹ Nevertheless, Heidegger highlights that this kind of explicitness is not yet a propositional one. Interpretation still remains within the referential structure of the total relevance, which means that the interpreted possibilities still appears interrelated with the context of significance. Another transformation is required in order to grasp something as propositional content. Via a consecutive step, a single possibility of interpretation is explicated in the form of a statement. The statement captures something as an object, which implies that it is encountered in its objective presence. By this propositional step, the particular object is set apart from its referential context. “The as-structure of interpretation has undergone a modification. The 'as' no longer reaches out into a totality of relevance in its function of appropriating what is understood. The 'as' is forced back to the uniform level of what is merely objectively present.”¹⁹² Thus, Heidegger distinguishes between the as-structure on the level of interpretation, which he coins existential-hermeneutical, and the as-structure on the level of statement, which he terms apophantical.¹⁹³ Since interpretation remains situated in the total relevance, it explicates the things with respect to their always already understood significance. This means that things are primordially projected in terms of their possibilities with respect to a certain contextual background – the world – which pre-structures the way of understanding. Heidegger terms the fact that interpretation relies on an always already understood contextual horizon “fore-having”. Furthermore, Dasein's interpretation of something requires a certain perspective, which determines its respective relation to the referential context. Heidegger terms this perspective in which interpretation takes place “foresight”. Finally, interpretation approximates at first implicitly understood things in the face of a certain conceptuality, which Heidegger calls “fore-conception”. Existential interpretation is based on these three aspects, which means that they are actually structures of understanding.¹⁹⁴ However, interpretation (as well as understanding) does not solely concern the world, but rather the whole being-in-the-world, wherefore the existence of Dasein must be taken into account as well. The interpretation of something as something in reference to Dasein as for-the-sake-of-which, results in the phenomenon called meaning [*Sinn*]. “When with the being of Da-sein innerworldly beings are discovered, that is, have come to be understood, we say that they have *meaning*.”¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, meaning is not the result of understanding, but rather it's enabling.

191 Heidegger 1996, p. 139/40

192 Heidegger 1996, p. 148

193 cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 148: “We call primordial the 'as' of circumspect interpretation that understands (hermeneia), the existential-hermeneutical 'as' in distinction from the apophantical 'as' of the statement.”

194 cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 141: “The interpretation of something as something is essentially grounded in fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception.”

195 Heidegger 1996, p. 141/2

Thus, meaning is the “existential framework of the disclosedness belonging to understanding”¹⁹⁶ that is made explicit in the course of interpretation. This implies that meaning is like an implicit meshwork, woven of fore-having, foresight and fore-conception, which bears the whole process of understanding. “*Meaning, structured by fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception, is the upon which of the project in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something.*”¹⁹⁷ It is like the intersection between fore-having, foresight and fore-conception, forming the target point for the project. So the meaning results of Dasein's thrownness and is at first a possible meaning or rather meanings. Through interpretation, Dasein explicates the fore-structure, thereby approaching a possible meaning, thus highlighting it. Since meaning is the possibility of every project, Dasein approaches itself. “Only Da-sein 'has' meaning in that the disclosedness of being-in-the-world can be 'fulfilled' through the beings discoverable in it. *Thus only Da-sein can be meaningful or meaningless.*”¹⁹⁸

4.4.3 Discourse

Discourse [*Rede*] is the final constitutive aspect of Dasein's disclosedness, which is equiprimordial with existential understanding and attunement. Since language is based on discourse, these concepts are not identical, but rather denominate two complimentary halves of a single phenomenon.¹⁹⁹ Language is the manner in which discourse is explicitly expressed. Discourse is situated on the same implicit level as understanding and mood. Understanding is always already attuned, and importantly also pre-propositionally structured prior to interpretation. This structure is provided by discourse, which is why Heidegger calls it “articulation”. “Discourse is the articulation of intelligibility. Thus it already lies at the basis of interpretation and statement.”²⁰⁰ Via the steps of interpretation and statement, the primordially articulated intelligibility of discourse is converted into the explicit meaning of language. The total relevance or significance disclosed via attuned understanding “*is put into words [kommt zu Wort].*”²⁰¹ Usually words are perceived as originally empty symbols that receive their meaning by reference to meaningful objects or representations of objects. From Heidegger's point of view, the words approach the meaning, which is already implicitly disclosed. Furthermore, he states that discourse comprises of three essential aspects. “Its constitutive factors are: what discourse is about (what is discussed), what is said as such,

196 Heidegger 1996, p. 142

197 Heidegger 1996, p. 142

198 Heidegger 1996, p. 142; also cf. Pöggeler 1992, p. 290: “The meaning, i.e., the truth and openness of Being, 'is' only in the *Da* (i.e., there) of Dasein, which is nothing other than a realm of openness. The question of the meaning of Being and the question concerning Dasein's being-understanding aim, even though from different directions, at the same central point, in which the meaning of Being and Dasein's being-understanding are one.”

199 cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 150: “*The existential-ontological foundation of language is discourse.*”

200 Heidegger 1996, p. 150

201 Heidegger 1996, p. 151

communication, and making known.”²⁰² Although language possesses similar characteristics, these are existential constituents of discourse as well. A proper understanding of discourse requires that they be perceived as a unified whole. Since discourse articulates the attuned understanding of being-in-the-world, it necessarily correlates with it. Being-in-the-world is always “about something”, namely the existence of Dasein, which is projected upon the world in understanding. This intelligibility of the world enables beings to appear in terms of Dasein's existence. By means of discourse, the meaning of these beings becomes expressed in words – what is said as such. Since being-in-the-world is always already shared with other existing beings (cf. BT chapter 4), it is fundamentally for Dasein to make itself known by sharing its own understanding. Thereby, two or more existing beings enter into a common disclosedness. In order that discourse can take place, another fundamental aspect comes into play – hearing. “Listening to ... is the existential being-open of Da-sein as being-with for the other. [...] Da-sein hears because it understands.” Again, Dasein does not understand because it hears something, but rather Dasein hears something because it always already understands. Verbal communication succeeds only on the basis of a common understanding, a shared being-in-the-world. Dasein never hears meaningless noises which are subsequently associated with meaning. But the shared meaning, understood on the basis of a common being-in-the-world, is articulated and put into words via discourse. This becomes particularly obvious in consideration of non-verbal sounds. “‘Initially’ we never hear noises and complexes of sound, but the creaking wagon, the motorcycle. We hear the column on the march, the north wind, the woodpecker tapping, the crackling fire. [...] Essentially understanding, Dasein is initially together with what is understood.”²⁰³ This does not mean that Heidegger denies that there are physical sounds of a certain wavelength and frequency, which can be measured. On the contrary, the being of such physical sound relies on the understanding of Dasein as well, but modified by a reduced self-understanding as individual subject. On the everyday level of being-in-the-world, one never encounters physical stimuli, but always meaningful phenomena. Thus, the phenomenon of hearing is not appropriately understood in terms of a physical description. The same holds true for the phenomenon of language. An appropriate understanding of language should be based on the existential constitution of Dasein as being-in-the-world together with other beings of such kind. “The human being shows himself as a being who speaks. This does not mean that the possibility of vocal utterance belongs to him, but that this being is in the mode of discovering world and Da-sein itself.”²⁰⁴

These three aspects – attunement, understanding and discourse – constitute the existential

202 Heidegger 1996, p. 152

203 Heidegger 1996, p. 153

204 Heidegger 1996, p. 155

disclosedness of Dasein, its being-in. The attentive reader will have noticed that I have leapfrogged two more constitutive aspects of Dasein as being-in-the-world, namely “falling prey” and the “who” that usually exists in the world as Dasein. In a later chapter of BT, Heidegger characterizes the total constitution of Dasein as “being-ahead-of-oneself-already-in (the world) as being-together-with (innerworldly beings encountered). This being fills in the significance of the term *care*, which is used in a purely ontological and existential way.”²⁰⁵ For a profound understanding of this definition, the aspect of falling prey in relation to the “who”, which exists as average Dasein, would be necessary. Since the final characterization of Dasein's being as care is essential and I use it in the following chapter, it is necessary to introduce it briefly. Care is Heidegger's term for the totality of Dasein's being, which comprises of the aspects called thrownness, projecting and falling prey. With respect to my hitherto explanation, it can be characterized in correlation to disclosedness. The thrownness of a particular Dasein is disclosed via a certain attunement. Its particular project is disclosed by a respective understanding and interpretation. Falling prey is the usual way of being-in-the-world, wherein each Dasein exists initially and for the most part. Its meaning is articulated by a specific mode of discourse, in connection with the “who”, which exists as average Dasein. Falling prey, the “who” and its kind of disclosedness are discussed in detail during the subsequent chapter. Since these aspects are fundamental for the constitution of care, I will get back to this term after the required constituents are explained (cf. section 5.2).

205 Heidegger 1996, p. 180

5. The Temporality of Thinking

This chapter contains the core of the thesis at hand. The following explanations required a substantial period of research and contemplation. I performed an overall analysis of Heidegger's work bearing in mind the process structure of innovative-contemplative thinking as presented in the first part of this thesis. The aim of this investigation was to reveal the ontological dynamics that correlate with the mainly cognitive structures of the innovative-contemplative thought process. Since the epistemological scope of the innovative-contemplative thought process is vast, it is impossible to cover all the steps and stages on the basis of BT. Therefore, this chapter comprises of aspects from the “early” as well as the “late” Heidegger. What I discovered is an ontologically correlative structure that contains the same amount of stages and steps. For the sake of providing an opportunity for a direct comparison between the epistemological and the ontological processes, this chapter is structured similarly to chapter 3. Thereby, I hope to facilitate the reader's understanding of this thesis.

5.1 Destruction of History – From Nihilism to Inauthenticity

For Heidegger, the present age demarcates the final stage in the history of occidental philosophy, determining the ontological and epistemological conditions of mankind. Thus, the usual ways of being and thinking nowadays take place on the basis of this framework, which Heidegger terms “nihilism”. This is the ontological equivalent of downloading, from which the process emanates. The first ontological step is called “Deconstruction”, which denominates Heidegger's equivalent to suspension. It results in the average mode of Dasein's existence, which Heidegger terms “inauthenticity”.

5.1.1 Nihilism

Heidegger claims that the occidental philosophical tradition is essentially metaphysics. Therefore, metaphysics is neither a philosophical discipline among others like ethics, aesthetics or epistemology, nor the fundamental position of a certain philosopher like the metaphysics of Kant, Hegel or Aristotle. Rather, he understands metaphysics as the fundamental relationship between men and being. “In what follows, metaphysics is thought as the truth of what is as such in its entirety, and not as the doctrine of any particular thinker.”²⁰⁶ He considers the relation between men and being (truth) as the basis on which the entire world- and self-conception relies upon. “Metaphysics grounds an age, in that through a specific interpretation of what is and through a

206 Heidegger 1977, p. 54

specific comprehension of truth it gives to that age the basis upon which it is essentially formed.”²⁰⁷ This implies that metaphysics is not about eternal, supernatural, a priori principles. But it undergoes a historical development that mirrors the respective nature of truth. Obviously, Heidegger considers the whole occidental philosophy as the historical development of a single most fundamental principle, since he denominates it exclusively as metaphysics. With reference to Nietzsche, he coins the essence of metaphysics “nihilism”. “Nihilism is a historical movement, and not just any view or doctrine advocated by someone or other. Nihilism moves history after the manner of a fundamental ongoing event that is scarcely recognized in the destining of the Western peoples. [...] Nihilism, thought in its essence, is, rather, the fundamental movement of the history of the West.”²⁰⁸ Thus, it's necessary to ask what the essence of the traditional metaphysics is, which Heidegger terms nihilism?

The rise of western metaphysics

Metaphysics began in ancient Greece with the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. The central question, which pervades metaphysics throughout, asks for the being of beings. “Western-European thinking, in keeping with the guiding question τί τὸ ὄν , what is the particular being in its Being?, proceeds from beings to Being. Thinking ascends from the former to the latter.”²⁰⁹ This means that metaphysics has never asked for being in itself. Metaphysical thinking always remains directed towards beings (entities) and seeks to understand being in a transcendental step of abstraction. Thereby, the concept of being was determined as the most universal, indefinable and self-evident.²¹⁰ Thus, it became superfluous to inquire about the being of beings further, which has resulted in an increasing abandonment of being ever since. Step by step, being is buried in oblivion, whereas the orientation towards present beings (beings at hand) is propagated. At the beginning of the modern age this one-sided ontology transformed into an extreme version via the philosophy of Rene Descartes. “With Descartes begins the completion and consummation of Western metaphysics.”²¹¹ Finally, the philosophy of Nietzsche exhausts the entire possibilities of metaphysical thinking by turning the platonic division between the transient and the eternal realm of being upside-down. “Through the overturning of metaphysics accomplished by Nietzsche, there remains for metaphysics nothing but a turning aside into its own inessentiality and disarray.”²¹² Thus, nihilism

207 Heidegger 1977, p. 115

208 Heidegger 1977, p. 62

209 Heidegger 1968, p. 222

210 cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 1 ff. (§ 1)

211 Heidegger 1977, p. 140

212 Heidegger 1977, p. 53; also cf. Pöggeler 1992, p. 292: “Metaphysics represents beings in their Being, but in this representation it relates them to subjectivity. This subjectivism, which was present from the very beginning in metaphysics, finds its radical completion in Nietzsche, who made the will to power the *essentia* of all beings. Metaphysics thinks Being as perpetual presence: metaphysics reaches its completion when Nietzsche determines the

denominates the historical progression within western philosophy of losing sight of being, until even its absence is forgotten – the full-blown nihilism. Since an analysis of the entire progression of nihilism, starting with ancient Greece, definitely goes beyond the scope of this section, I restrict it to the final stage of metaphysical nihilism – the modern age. Moreover, the ontological framework of the modern age matches with the level of downloading, since it determines the present way of thinking.

Nihilism as the essence of western metaphysics

According to Heidegger a metaphysical position comprises of the following four essential aspects:

- “1. The manner and mode in which man is man, i.e., is himself; the manner of the coming to presence [*Wesensart*] of selfhood, which is not at all synonymous with I-ness, but rather is determined out of the relation to Being as such
2. The interpretation of the coming to presence [*Wesensauslegung*] of the Being of whatever is
3. The delineation of the coming to presence [*Wesensentwurf*] of truth
4. The sense in which, in any given instance, man is measure”²¹³

It is the philosophy of Rene Descartes (cf. above) that constitutes and determines the metaphysical position of modern age. Thus, an investigation of his thinking in terms of these four aspects is the next logical step. Descartes searched for a new indubitable fundament of truth (*fundamentum absolutum inconcussum veritatis*), to abandon the Christian revelatory truth, which he found in the cognitive ego (*ego cogito*). “The ego cogito (ergo) sum. The something certain is a principle that declares that, simultaneously (conjointly and lasting an equal length of time) with man's thinking, man himself is indubitably co-present, which means now is given to himself. Thinking is representing, setting before, is a representing relation to what is represented (*idea as perceptio*).”²¹⁴ In the modern age, the essence of cognition is representing or perception [*Vorstellen*]. Perception derives from the Latin term “*percipere*” that means to lay hold of something. Representational thinking lays hold on the perceived beings and places them before the thinking ego. Additionally, the ego is co-present within in this cognitive relation. Thereby, man assures itself of itself – its own presence. “The subiectum, the fundamental certainty, is the being-represented-together-with – made secure at any time – of representing man together with the entity represented, whether something human or non-human, i.e., together with the objective.”²¹⁵ The self-determination as a

existentia of beings to be the eternal recurrence of the same.

213 cf. Heidegger 1977, p. 145

214 Heidegger 1977, p. 149

215 Heidegger 1977, p. 150

subject goes hand in hand with the determination of perceived beings as objects. The totality of beings is split into an exclusive subject and a manifold of represented objects. Subjectivity and objectivity are interdependent concepts. Through representational thinking they belong together. “That which is, is no longer that which presences; it is rather that which, in representing, is first set over against, that which stands fixedly over against, which has the character of object [das Gegenständliche]. Representing is making-stand-over-against, an objectifying that goes forward and masters.”²¹⁶ Representational thinking not only assures the subject of itself, but also secures the innerworldly beings as represented objects. Everything that is perceived by a subject, thus objectified, is not recognized in its essence, but rather its essence is through the subjective perception. By defining the subject as *fundamentum absolutum inconcussum veritatis*, it replaces the absolute being of Christian revelatory truth, which grounded the totality of beings until then. Via representational thinking it determines the being of all beings, because it is the only indubitable and certain being. The subject disposes of the object's objectivity. Only beings that can be objectified by the subject are indubitable and therefore *are*. Everything else is not. Therefore, the subject has become the measure of truth. Only what the subject is sure about is true. Sure is what can be perceived certainly. This means that the meaning of truth in modern age is certainty. The certainty of the represented objects depends on the underlying certainty of the subjectum. “Hence liberation from the revelational certainty of salvation had to be intrinsically a freeing to a certainty [Gewissheit] in which man makes secure for himself the true as the known of his own knowing [Wissens]. That was possible only through self-liberating man's guaranteeing for himself the certainty of the knowable.”²¹⁷

Summing up the first three points shows that since Descartes man has conceived its being as subjectivity and the beings of all other beings as objectivity. This mutually constitutive dichotomy depends on the certainty provided by representational thinking. Thus, the question remains of how representational thinking reaches certainty, respectively the sense in which man is the measure of being? Heidegger claims that the certainty in representational thinking is based on its calculating nature. For him, it is not by accident that mathematics determines true knowledge in the modern age, but rather representational thinking necessarily is mathematical. “This making secure must be a calculating, for calculability alone guarantees being certain in advance, and firmly and constantly, of that which is to be represented.”²¹⁸ Representational thinking requires an object on which it can

216 Heidegger 1977, p. 150

217 Heidegger 1977, p. 148; also cf. Ijsseling 1992, p. 388: “Philosophy is, above all since Descartes, a seeking after security, after certainty, a safe-keeping. Truth then becomes the complete certainty of self-knowing knowledge. This understanding of truth is characteristic of modern times and so it is also not accidental that modern philosophy begins with doubt and no longer with wonder and moreover with a view to transforming this doubt into certainty as soon as possible.”

218 Heidegger 1977, p. 149

certainly count. Since calculation always infers uncertain knowledge from already certain knowledge, it enables an indubitable progression into the realm of objects. Thus, the gain in knowledge is predictable and small. The predictability of the objectified world is fundamentally necessary for the certainty of the subject. Nevertheless, its mathematical nature enables representational thinking to unlock a boundless sphere of influence, since it reveals the world in a unitary way. Every object can and must be scaled and numerically expressed. Everything that cannot be scaled cannot be objectified by representational thinking. The power of the subject over the being of beings (objects) thereby becomes illimitable. “But nothing can elude this objectification that remains at the same time the decision concerning what must be allowed to count as an object. To the essence of the subjectivity of the subjectum and to the essence of man as subject belongs the unconditional delimiting forth [*Entschränkung*] of the realm of possible objectification and the right to decide regarding objectification.”²¹⁹

An example: modern science

There are numerous examples of this metaphysical position, which is why I choose to illustrate it through one of the finest and most prominent of them – modern science. Heidegger claims that modern science is in essence research. Thus, he asks “in what does the essence of research consist?”²²⁰ Scientific research takes place within a preliminary projection of its field of investigation, which is comprehended as theory (or paradigm). This preconception of the area of study is precisely defined and in accordance with a certain perspective. The essence of man is differently predefined in psychology, sociology, biology economics or jurisprudence. “Every science is, as research, grounded upon the projection of a circumscribed object-sphere and is therefore necessarily a science of individualized character. [...] Specialization is not the consequence but the foundation of the progress of all research.”²²¹ Based on this already secured and objectified knowledge, research envisages an “undiscovered” and not yet objectified subject-matter via a hypothesis. The novel hypothesis prepares a secured, anticipated and small step “forward”. The conversion of the anticipated subject-matter into objectified knowledge – the representation of the envisaged being as an object – happens via methodology. Although many different methods exist within each field of research, there general procedure relies on a single methodology – explanation. “Methodology, through which a sphere of objects comes into representation, has the character of clarifying on the basis of what is clear – of explanation. Explanation is always twofold. It accounts for an unknown by means of a known, and at the same

219 Heidegger 1977, p. 151

220 Heidegger 1977, p. 118

221 Heidegger 1977, p. 123

time it verifies that known by means of that unknown.”²²² Whenever science takes place as research, it is based on a certain methodology, which generally mirrors the mathematical nature of representative thinking. Methodology becomes manifest, either as an experiment in the context of natural science, or as source criticism in the framework of humanities.²²³ The methodology ensures the reproducibility of the experiment (independent of time and place) or the common confirmability of the sources – the objectivity of the acquired knowledge. Importantly, the subject deploys its unrestrained influence on the being of research objects through methodology. “The method prescribes *what* is to be considered a valid object of knowing and *how* this object is to be known. Beings themselves do not provide the pattern for access to them. Rather, method forces beings to show themselves according to method’s instructions.”²²⁴ Thus, the subject provides a common basis for all kinds of objective knowledge, be it psychological, sociological, biological or other. As a result of methodological research, the various research perspectives and respective knowledge fields can be synthesized into a unitary and common system – the worldview. “Hence world picture [*Weltbild*, note by author], when understood essentially, does not mean a picture of the world but the world conceived and grasped as picture. What is, in its entirety, is now taken in such a way that it first is in being and only is in being to the extent that it is set up by man, who represents and sets forth.”²²⁵ To perceive the world as a picture characterizes the subjective self-determination of man in the modern age. The knowledge of it is commonly accessible and reproducible. Therefore, it is certain, static and accumulative.²²⁶ Finally, this objective worldview is not limited to the present situation that directly attracts the subject’s attention. By means of scientific research, the subjective control stretches out over the past as well as the future. “Research has disposal over anything that is when it can either calculate it in its future course in advance or verify a calculation about it as past. Nature, in being calculated in advance, and history, in being historio-graphically verified as past, become, as it were, ‘set in place’ [*gestellt*]. Nature and history become the objects of a representing that explains. Such representing counts on nature and takes account of history.”²²⁷ Thus, the subject is an overarching being that objectifies the past, the present and the future simultaneously, thereby constituting its own essence accordingly.

222 Heidegger 1977, p. 120/1; also cf. Gaadamer 1992, p. 20/1: “It is, so to speak, the moral of this method that small, even if modest, steps are to be preferred, provided only that they are absolutely controllable and certain.

223 cf. Heidegger 1977, p. 122: “Source criticism in the historical humanistic sciences corresponds to experiment in physical research.”

224 Von Herrmann 1992, p. 322/3

225 Heidegger 1977, p. 129/30

226 A paradigm-shift does not take place within scientific research, since it is a fundamental reflection on and revision of its own field of research and principles, which requires taking up an external position. As such, this is not the perspective of a researcher but rather a “philosophical perspective”. What Heidegger describes corresponds to the progress within “normal science” (cf. Kuhn 1996)

227 Heidegger 1977, p. 126/127

Reflection

As Dasein, man is thrown into his/her factual being (cf. section 4.2) which essentially is of an historical nature. As an existing being, Dasein takes over its thrownness as an existential projection. “In its factual being Da-sein always is as and 'what' it already was. Whether explicitly or not, it is its past. [...] Da-sein 'is' its past in the manner of *its* being which, roughly expressed, on each occasion 'occurs' out of its future.”²²⁸ The present history of man is determined by the metaphysical nihilism (described in the preceding section), which implies that man's primordial relation to being has fallen into oblivion. Turning away from being simultaneously results in the neglect of Dasein. This means that man's implicit primordial constitution as being-in-the-world has become replaced by the subject-object dichotomy. As exclusive subject man stands in contrast to the objective world, which is why man permanently has to assure him/herself of its world in retrospection via an abstract reconstruction – representative thinking. The crucial point is that this objective relation to the world is a self-contained and self-supporting system. Thus one's ontological condition as subject is resumed without reflection. “The tradition that hereby gains dominance makes what it 'transmits' so little accessible that initially and for the most part it covers it over instead. What has been handed down it hands over to obviousness; [...]. The tradition even makes us forget such a provenance altogether.”²²⁹ In the preceding section it has become obvious that the prevalent ontological framework has direct influence on the epistemological sphere – the mode of thinking. For the most part, thinking takes place as the calculating representation of objects and is institutionalized as research. Thus, understanding of being nowadays does not rely upon man's primordial existence as Dasein, but has become a “product” of his/her own self-consciousness. Exactly the same issue prevails on the cognitive level called downloading (cf. section 3.3.1). Due to the fact that the realm of rational understanding and explanation has been dissociated from one's implicit experience, which arises from one's primary embeddedness into the world, an abstract system of interrelated facts (and gaps) has developed. Therefore, it is possible to acquire knowledge via a process of downloading, which, for the most part, lacks in personal engagement and experience with subject-matter. Furthermore, even the development of new ideas is a rational prediction (hypothesis), which is essentially based on the realm of confirmed and abstract knowledge. Subsequent experiments certainly carry a degree of potential surprise and novelty, but they are usually rather restricted as well, since their power depends on the subjective control of the situation at hand. What the preceding discussion of Heidegger's theory contributed, was to question downloading as the predominant cognitive mode, by revealing its dependence on two thousand five hundred years of metaphysical tradition. The fact that Dasein exists historically results in an always already

228 Heidegger 1996, p. 17

229 Heidegger 1996, p. 19

ontologically entanglement of man in the metaphysical position of his/her time, which predefines his/her mode of thinking as epistemological tradition. Since the epistemological tradition is adopted without any kind of re-examination, the primordial meaning of words is buried in oblivion. Thus, words became confused concepts, receiving their meaning from their referential relation to objects, which exclusively depends on the calculating subject. Heidegger claims that within this rigorous and one-sided conceptual framework, contemplative thinking cannot take place.

5.1.2 Destruction

The question I am addressing in this section is how this ontological circumstance, which is historically determined, can be overcome by the individual person? For Heidegger, the first logical step towards contemplative thinking is to take up a fundamentally different position with respect to one's ontological history – metaphysics. He coins this step “destruction”, which he presents in the introduction of BT (§ 6). “We understand this task as the deconstructing of the traditional content of ancient ontology which is to be carried out along the *guidelines of the question of being*. This deconstructing is based upon the original experiences in which the first and subsequently guiding determinations of being were gained.”²³⁰ Since Dasein exists historically, destruction differs substantially from suspension, although both are directed towards the past. Suspension totally abandons historicity, which is why it remains on an epistemological level. By taking the historical constitution of human existence into account, destruction achieves an ontological transformation. “Since thought is placed in a primordial relationship to temporality and historicity, this investigation can reach a ground only there, where it always already is, i.e., in history. Since there can be no radically new beginning on the basis of ‘the things themselves’ (Husserl), Heidegger himself introduces the destruction of metaphysics, the return to the primordial historical, into phenomenology.”²³¹ For Heidegger, the first step to overcome metaphysics is not to turn away from it, but rather to turn towards it. To step out of the metaphysical ontology, requires first of all to step into it, namely in an explicit and contemplative manner. Of course, the destruction of metaphysics is carried out as a cognitive process. Initially, the examination of occidental metaphysics is an examination of the history of thinking. “It consists in becoming conscious of the concepts which one employs to think. Where do such concepts come from? What do they contain? What is unintended and unconscious in such concepts [...]? In other words, it is a question of reopening the way from the concept to the word, so that thinking speaks once again.”²³² Nevertheless, this

230 Heidegger 1996, p. 20

231 Pöggeler 1992, p. 284

232 Gadamer 1992, p. 22; also cf. Ijsseling 1992, p. 393: “Heidegger has frequently repeated that this destruction will not bury the past in oblivion and that it is not a negation or condemnation of the past to oblivion. It is a critical taking apart of concepts which were handed down and, in the first instance, necessarily applied and, at the same

seemingly epistemological process is at once an ontological one. Since the relation of man to being becomes manifest in man's respective manner of thinking, the history of thinking mirrors the history of being. Therefore, the destruction of metaphysics is supposed to lead back to man's primordial relation to being, thereby renewing its questionableness. As the history of metaphysics is essentially nihilistic, it is not possible to encounter being therein explicitly, but rather implicitly as the "un-thought". "What is unthought in a thinker's thought is not a lack inherent in his thought. What is unthought is there in each case only as the un-thought. The more original the thinking, the richer will be what is unthought in it. The unthought is the greatest gift that thinking can bestow."²³³ This statement highlights a crucial point. Namely that a new way of thinking cannot primarily arise out of a reflection on the explicit metaphysical history. The renewed beginning of thinking must be based on the un-thought, which is implicitly present throughout the history of metaphysics. As nihilism, occidental metaphysics has turned its back on being throughout, but how exactly being remains unthought undergoes a historical development. Heidegger claims that it is necessary to contemplate the manner in which the unthought "appears" in metaphysics temporally backwards in order to encounter the source of nihilism. He considers a "decision" between being and beings as the source of metaphysics as nihilism, which took place in the philosophy of ancient Greece. An originally understanding of this "decision" enables the foundation of a renewed way of thinking. Through an understanding of this source, the meaning of being becomes questionable anew. Since this renewal happens nowadays, it is necessary to retrieve [*wieder – holen*] what has remained unthought in the beginning of metaphysics and ever since. Obviously, this technical term does not match with its usual meaning. Any usual retrieval retrieves an explicit content. But the unthought is neither explicit, nor contentful. "Rather '*retrieval*' here means to let the *same*, the uniqueness of being, become a distress *again* – and that means *thus from a more originary truth*. '*Again*' here says precisely '*totally other*'."²³⁴ This indicates that what is to be retrieved is not a historical matter of fact, which serves as the basis for a new beginning today. The unthought is always already "present in its absence" (nowadays even more than earlier). Thus, the destruction of its history and its retrieval are not about bridging a certain time span. Retrieval is not about bringing something back again, but rather about raising the awareness of being anew. The crucial point for destruction and retrieval is the renewal of man's relation to being, implying the renewal of man's existence.²³⁵ In a first step, this "simply" requires us to become aware of the present "happening of being" in its absence again. By an originary understanding of the awareness of being in ancient Greece, man should become aware of his/her actual and consequential understanding of being.

time, it is a regression to the sources from which they were drawn."

233 Heidegger 1968, p. 76

234 Heidegger 1999, p. 51

235 cf. Heidegger 1999, p. 34: "As mindfulness of being, philosophy is necessarily self-mindfulness."

Reflection

The analysis of destruction has revealed two essential characteristics. Firstly, it aims at overcoming subjectivity, in order to reawaken man's existential constitution as being-in-the-world. This is totally in line with the epistemological meaning of the first step in the process of innovative-contemplative thinking, suspension. By bracketing the entire explicit knowledge about the world, suspension calls objectivity as such into question. Since every object depends on a subject, it likewise questions the ontological position of man in terms of its subjectivity. The second central characteristic of destruction is its temporal orientation towards the past. This is not explicitly highlighted in the case of suspension, nevertheless it holds true for it as well. Since one's present state of knowledge obviously consists of knowledge acquired in the past, suspension is implicitly directed at the hitherto development of one's current mindset and its content. The fundamental difference between suspension and destruction is that former can be practised as a thought experiment without inclusion of one's personal situation, since it does not necessarily take into account for the ontological embeddedness of knowledge. But the latter is per definition dedicated to one's present being. Therefore, suspension is identified as a single act of bracketing one's state of knowledge, whereas destruction requires an ongoing successive examination [Auseinandersetzung] with man's ontological history.

5.1.3 Inauthenticity

It has been shown that Dasein's factual existence is historically constituted. For Heidegger, the entire history of occidental metaphysics as nihilism becomes manifest in the historicity of the factual Dasein. In the modern age, Dasein appears as the exclusive subject. To liberate oneself from this ontological and epistemological predetermination, deconstructing this historical development is the initial step. Thereby, man changes the relation to his/her own ontological history as a subject. Nevertheless, it has been shown that the temporality of the subject spans the presence and the future as well. Thus, the next logical step is to inquire about the constitution of subjectivity with respect to its presence. Since man exists initially and for the most part in the temporal mode of presence, it is equivalent to the question of “who” exists as average and everyday Dasein.

Substantiality

Traditionally, this question is answered in line with the concept of substantiality. “Substantiality is the ontological clue for the determination of beings in terms of whom the question of the who is answered. Da-sein is tacitly conceived in advance as objective presence.”²³⁶ Substantiality is based on the metaphysical determination of being through beings as objective presence. An entity

236 Heidegger 1996, p. 108

comprises of an invariable substance (essence) and variable features (accidents). The substance is essential and persists unchanged throughout the entire presence of something, whereas the accidents are non-essential, temporally changing characteristics. Substantiality provides the basis for the accidental features. Thus, metaphysically the who of man is determined as the invariant substance underlying his manifold features and accompanying all his acts. “The who is answered in terms of the I itself, the 'subject', the 'self'. The who is what maintains itself in the changes throughout its modes of behaviour and experiences as something identical and is, thus, related to this multiplicity.”²³⁷ Determining the human essence as primarily self-enclosed subjectivity, results in isolation from the world as well as from other subjects that are encountered within the world. This ontological gap has to be bridged by hindsight, which implies many epistemological problems. Heidegger avoids this gap from the outset by defining the essence of Dasein as its existence. The factual Dasein exists as being-in-the-world, for which reason he inquires the who in terms of it as well. “Initially and for the most part, Da-sein is taken in by its world. This mode of being, being absorbed in the world, and thus being-in which underlies it, essentially determine the phenomenon which we shall now pursue with the question: *Who* is it who is in the everydayness of Da-sein?”²³⁸ I have shown above (cf. section 4.3) that Dasein's existential disclosedness (being-in) comprises of three fundamental aspects – attunement, understanding and discourse.

Falling prey

Moreover, a fourth constitutive aspect has been briefly sketched, specifying the average and everyday existence of Dasein, called “falling prey”. The previous quotation already indicates this “existential attitude” and highlights it as the source of Dasein's average who. “As an authentic potentiality for being a self, Da-sein has initially always already fallen away from itself and fallen prey to the 'world.’”²³⁹ Although, the being of each Dasein is basically its own and thus it is concerned about it as factually existing being-in-the-world, Dasein is initially and for the most part concerned with its world and innerworldly beings. In the course of its existence as being-in-the-world, the existence itself is usually neglected, since Dasein is completely absorbed in the world. Although it may sound pejorative, falling prey to the world is neither a negative characteristic nor is it a categorical feature of Dasein. Its existence becomes manifest as this worldly entanglement, thereby implying the possibility of an authentic being towards itself. “Falling prey reveals an *essential*, ontological structure of Da-sein itself. Far from determining its nocturnal side, it constitutes all of its days in their everydayness.”²⁴⁰

237 Heidegger 1996, p. 108

238 Heidegger 1996, p. 107

239 Heidegger 1996, p. 164

240 Heidegger 1996, p. 167

The they

Since the average and everyday Dasein falls prey to the world, it is initially and for the most part not itself (the I), but rather the “they”. “This absorption in ... mostly has the character of being lost in the publicness [*Öffentlichkeit*; note by author] of the they.”²⁴¹ In the light of our nowadays individualistic tendency this conclusion seems far-fetched or even wrong. But for Heidegger the pursuit of individualizing difference and the merging into the they are not mutually exclusive. Rather, the differentiation from others is a constitutive aspect of the they, which he coins “distantiality”. “Existentially expressed, being-with-one-another has the character of *distantiality*.”²⁴² But why is everyone so concerned about his/her individuality – to be above average? Because it is in the nature of the they to arrange for averageness. The they establishes and sustains a framework of common public values, norms and objectives. In order that this framework remains as steady and general as possible, it is necessary to thoroughly control its limits and immediately suppress defections and exceptions. “Overnight, everything primordial is flattened down as something long since known. [...] Every mystery loses its power. The care of averageness reveals, in turn, an essential tendency of Da-sein, which we call the *levelling down* of all possibilities of being.”²⁴³ The publicness of the they comprises of these three elements – distantiality, averageness and levelling down [*Einebnung*]. It is neither a feature nor a superordinate of Dasein, but an essential element of Dasein's ontological condition.²⁴⁴ Since it governs the existence of Dasein initially and for the most part, it always already provides a common intelligibility of being and Dasein itself. Thus, it excuses Dasein from its ontological decision to take responsibility for its relation to being and its own existence. “The self of everyday Da-sein is the *they-self* which we distinguish from the *authentic self*, the self which has explicitly grasped itself. [...] If *Da-sein* is familiar with itself as the they-self, this also means that the they prescribes the nearest interpretation of the world and of being-in-the-world.”²⁴⁵ This implies that the disclosedness of Dasein is not independent of the who that exists as average Dasein. In the context of Dasein's inauthentic existence as they-self, the existential elements of disclosedness – attunement, understanding and discourse – undergo a modification. Discourse becomes manifest as “idle talk”, attunement as “curiosity” and understanding as “ambiguity”.

Idle talk

Idle talk is in accordance with the average intelligibility and interpretation of the they. Since

241 Heidegger 1996, p. 164

242 Heidegger 1996, p. 118

243 Heidegger 1996, p. 119

244 cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 121: “The they is an existential and belongs as a primordial phenomenon to the positive constitution of Da-sein.”

245 Heidegger 1996, p. 121

average Dasein is situated within this common reference framework, the understanding and interpretation of everyday communication – idle talk – is preformed and secured. The significance of idle talk takes place through the common and average intelligibility of the they, which is why it has lost its primordial relation to being, whereon depends its authentic sense [*Sinn*]. “Idle talk is the possibility of understanding everything without any previous appropriation of the matter. [...] Idle talk, which everyone can snatch up, not only divests us of the task of genuine understanding, but develops an indifferent intelligibility for which nothing is closed off any longer.”²⁴⁶ The dissociation of idle talk to what is spoken about – its groundlessness – results in an insensibility for the subject-matter. On the basis of this superficial intelligibility, idle talk seemingly gains an all-embracing area of influence. In fact, the opposite is the case. As a result of its groundlessness, idle talk has lost at any rate an appropriate meaning and understanding, thus, inhibits Dasein's primordial relation to being and its own existence. “Ontologically, this means that when Da-sein maintains itself in idle talk, it is – as being-in-the-world – cut off from the primary and primordially genuine relations of being toward the world, toward *Mitda-sein*, toward being-in itself.”²⁴⁷

Curiosity

Idle talk is closely connected with the average manifestation of attunement, coined curiosity. Here, this term denotes an existential phenomenon and not a psychological feature. By curiosity, Heidegger means the everyday way to uncover the world, which is based on the traditional priority of seeing in man's approach and understanding of the world. “Care turns into taking care of possibilities, resting and staying to see the 'world' only its *outward appearance*. Da-sein seeks distance solely to bring it near in its outward appearance.”²⁴⁸ Curiosity is in opposition to the primordial taking care of useful things, which discloses the world in its significance. It is an uninvolved attitude of viewing the world that implies an ontological distance between observer and observed. The ontological distance results in an epistemologically approximation that has lost its primordial meaning. As a result of this superficial understanding, curiosity is always on the move – it always seeks for something new and all new. “It seeks novelty only to leap from it again to another novelty. The care of seeing is not concerned with comprehending and knowingly being in the truth, but with possibilities of abandoning itself to the world.”²⁴⁹ Although leisure and contemplation are likewise based on a rest from taking care of things, curiosity is fundamentally different in terms of profoundness. Curiosity is to restlessly see-saw, whereas leisure and contemplation are dwelling on a particular phenomenon. Whatever is the latest and most important

246 Heidegger 1996, p. 158

247 Heidegger 1996, p. 159

248 Heidegger 1996, p. 161

249 Heidegger 1996, p. 161

thing to be curious about arises out of Dasein's average intelligibility and becomes manifest through idle talk. "Idle talk also controls the ways in which one may be curious. It says what one is to have read and seen. The being everywhere and nowhere of curiosity is entrusted to idle talk."²⁵⁰ Idle talk and curiosity make everything for everyone accessible in the same manner. Hence, average Dasein seems to live an active and self-fulfilling life.

Ambiguity

The seemingly fulfilling lifestyle based on idle talk and curiosity results in the third aspect of the inauthentic Dasein, namely ambiguity. Due to the all-embracing influence of Dasein's averageness, it "can soon no longer decide what is disclosed in genuine understanding and what is not."²⁵¹ In confusion of the authentic understanding of being and the inauthentic average interpretation, Dasein becomes even more uprooted. The ambiguity of understanding not only concerns the immediate accessible world "but it has already established itself in understanding as a potentiality for being, and in the way Da-sein projects itself and presents itself with possibilities."²⁵² Thereby projection becomes for the average Dasein even more important and real than what actually takes place at present. The curiosity of the they is directed at plans and future possibilities. But if these anticipations actually eventuate, their significance disappears. Due to ambiguity, the public interest is already ahead of it in curiosity and idle talk. "In their ambiguity, curiosity and idle talk make sure that what is done in a genuine and new way is outdated as soon as it emerges before the public."²⁵³ In such a way, idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity form a self-contained circularity that keeps the average Dasein busy in its falling prey to the world and thereby relieve it from deciding in favour of its own existence.

Reflection

For the most part man exists in the state of inauthenticity, which becomes manifest as an impersonal manner of being oneself that Heidegger coins the they-self. As explicate in the course of this section, the ontological mode called they is constituted by idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity. These are public modifications of the three primordial aspects of Dasein's disclosedness – discourse, attunement and understanding. The detachment of one's existential being at the level of inauthenticity is still prevalent, due to the reason that Heidegger regards it as fundamentally interrelated with nihilism. That the history of western metaphysics is essentially nihilism and that man exists initially and for the most part in the mode of inauthenticity are mutually dependent

250 Heidegger 1996, p. 161

251 Heidegger 1996, p. 162

252 Heidegger 1996, p. 162

253 Heidegger 1996, p. 163

phenomena. Nevertheless, inauthenticity can be treated as the ontological counterpart of the cognitive level of seeing, if nihilism is theoretically subtracted. This means to take into account that one has already performed deconstruction, which raised his/her awareness of the fact that his current situation as inauthentic being is historically determined. In other words, one has come to realize that his position as a wordless subject in opposition to a objective world is not a pre-given fact. In this case, the person would be able to critically reflect the validity of so-called objective knowledge. This is similar to what happens at the level of seeing, due to prior suspension. Thus the question is what else can be inferred from the characteristics of inauthenticity for the level of seeing? The most evident aspect of inauthenticity is that its occurrence is based on the social and interpersonal dimension of man's nature. The individual mindset on this level is still strongly determined by the public intelligibility. For the cognitive mode of seeing this implicates that although one has rendered it possible to perceive things in a different light, the various appearances of the world do not yet arise from one's own experience. One's cognitive scope has definitely extended, nevertheless its boundaries are determined by the they.

5.2 Resoluteness – From Inauthenticity to Authenticity

This section is based on the second part of BT. This step in man's ontological transformation arises out of the existential constitution called inauthenticity, which is explained in the preceding chapter. Thus, I continue with an analysis of the actual transition, which Heidegger coins “resoluteness”. As a result, man reaches an existential constitution that is diametrically opposed to inauthenticity, namely authenticity. This step is as well a transformation of Dasein's entire existence, yet with regard to its present constitution.

5.2.1 Resoluteness

Inauthenticity and authenticity are two opposite sides of a single phenomenon – the existence of Dasein – which underlies both. Initially and for the most part, Dasein exists as an inauthentic they-self, falling prey to its world and society. Thus, the authentic way in which Dasein exists as self, must be understood in relation to its average way of being as an existential modification of the they. Heidegger asks: “What does this modification imply, and what are the ontological conditions of its possibility?”²⁵⁴ It has been shown above (section 4.3) that factual Dasein exists as potentiality. For the inauthentic Dasein, its possibilities are predetermined by the average and all-embracing intelligibility of the they-self. Thereby, Dasein is absolved from responsibility for its ownmost possibility. The they has always already decided about it. Therefore, Heidegger claims that the central point for regaining authenticity is the retrieval of this existential decision. “This must be

254 Heidegger 1996, p. 247

accomplished by making up for not choosing. But making up for not choosing signifies choosing to make this choice-deciding for a potentiality-of-being, and making this decision from one's own self. In choosing to make this choice, Da-sein *makes possible*, first and foremost, its authentic potentiality-of-being.”²⁵⁵ However, the possibility of this neglected decision is not easily recognizable for the average Dasein, since it is lost in the public worldview. First of all, it has to discover this existential possibility, its existence as potentiality-of-being itself, before Dasein can regain its authentic being.

The call of conscience

Heidegger claims “that this potentiality is attested by that which, in the everyday interpretation of itself, Dasein is familiar to us as the 'voice of conscience.’”²⁵⁶ Conscience provides evidence of Dasein's potentiality for being itself – its authenticity – within the average intelligibility of the they. As an existential phenomenon, conscience intimates something to Dasein. “Conscience gives us 'something' to understand, it discloses.”²⁵⁷ Its essence is calling. Thus it is a form of discourse.²⁵⁸ Every discourse comprises of three elements: an emitter, a recipient and a message. In this case the recipient is the easiest constituent to identify. The recipient of this call is “evidently Da-sein itself.”²⁵⁹ Yet, in this case Dasein exists as they-self. This cannot be the appropriate recipient of the call of existential conscience, since the average intelligibility of the they would not be able to hear it. Hence, the proper and exclusive recipient of this call is the self. “Because only the *self* of the they-self is summoned and made to hear, the *they* collapses.”²⁶⁰ Heidegger identifies the call of conscience as summoning [*Aufruf*]. This call is not primarily the transmission of information, but rather a request. It requests a certain response from Dasein– the decision to become itself. This is just a preliminary characterization of the message, namely its intention. Its content will be addressed after clarification of the emitter. The emitter cannot be someone else other than Dasein, because this discourse does not take place in the public understanding of the they. Therefore, emitter and recipient seem to be identical. Yes and no. This is ontically correct, but an ontologically insufficient conclusion, since Dasein is differently as recipient than as emitter. “The call is precisely something that we ourselves have neither planned nor prepared for nor wilfully brought about. 'It' calls, against our expectations and even against our will. On the other hand, the call without doubt does not come from someone else who is with me in the world. The call comes from me, and yet

255 Heidegger 1996, p. 248

256 Heidegger 1996, p. 248

257 Heidegger 1996, p. 249

258 cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 249: “A more penetrating analysis of conscience reveals it as a *call*. Calling is a mode of discourse.”

259 Heidegger 1996, p. 252

260 Heidegger 1996, p. 252

over me.”²⁶¹ Obviously Dasein exists in a “chimeric” way since it is emitter and recipient at the same time (cf. section 3.4). The self takes care of its own existence as thrown being-in-the-world, by projecting itself as idiosyncratic possibility. Since, thrownness appears without reason, implying a relation to nothingness, Dasein usually turns away from it(-self) by falling prey to the world as they-self. Thus, the authentic self summons the inauthentic they-self through the call of conscience. “Conscience reveals itself as the call of care: the caller is Da-sein, anxious in thrownness (in its already-being-in ...) about its potentiality-of-being. The one summoned is also Da-sein, called forth to its ownmost potentiality-of-being (its being-ahead-of-itself ...). And what is called forth by the summons is Da-sein, out of falling prey to the they (already-being-together-with-the-world-taken-care-of ...).”²⁶² This constellation already points at the meaning of this call. First of all, it does not communicate explicit information which could be incorporated into the intelligibility of the they. Rather, it unlocks the self for the disclosedness of the they-self. It has been shown above (cf. section 4.3) that Dasein's disclosedness takes place on an implicit level, yet reveals something to Dasein's existential understanding. In this case, the call of conscience reveals Dasein's primordial existence.

Guilt – the message of conscience

Since every discourse and meaning relies upon the respective understanding, it raises the question of what the summoned Dasein understands. “The calling back in which conscience calls forth gives Da-sein to understand that Da-sein itself – as the null ground of its null project, standing in the possibility of its being – must bring itself back to itself from its lostness in the they, and this means that it is *guilty*.”²⁶³ For Heidegger, the existential meaning of the call of conscience is guilt. He highlights that the various interpretations of conscience agree upon the fact that it essentially conveys guiltiness.²⁶⁴ The ordinary interpretations of guilt always determine it in terms of a social context, implying a certain kind of normativity. One becomes guilty by breaking or not following the respective rules, thereby causing a “deficit” in his/her relationship to the others. The primordial meaning of a deficit is a “not”. Thus, Heidegger identifies causality and negativity as the two main characteristics of guiltiness. On the basis of this general interpretation he defines his existential notion of guilt as “being-the-ground for a being which is determined by a not – that is, *being the-ground of a nullity*.”²⁶⁵ This means that Dasein's guilt is not caused by an inadequate action, but is at the bottom of its being. Since Dasein's has to exist as a thrown projection [*geworfener Entwurf*], it always already assumes its thrownness – authentically or inauthentically – by projecting itself

261 Heidegger 1996, p. 254

262 Heidegger 1996, p. 256

263 Heidegger 1996, p. 264

264 cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 258: “All interpretations and experiences of conscience agree that the 'voice' of conscience somehow speaks of 'guilt.'”

265 Heidegger 1996, p. 261

towards possibilities. Dasein can never take possession of its thrownness. Hence it is impossible to gain an ontological foundation for its own existence. Its existence remains forever pervaded by a nullity. There is no other reason [*Grund*] in Dasein's existence than to exist, which means that the constant struggle for a definite grounding is essentially bottomless. "In the structure of thrownness as well as in that of the project, essentially lies a nullity. And it is the ground for the possibility of the nullity of *inauthentic* Da-sein in its falling prey which it always already actually is factically. *Care itself is in its essence thoroughly permeated with nullity.*"²⁶⁶ So Dasein is not guilty of this or that, but it *is* guilty. That is why its authentic existence is a burden, from which it turns away by falling prey. The call of conscience is summoning Dasein to accept its primordial guilt and to exist in and out of an awareness of it. Existential conscience does not reveal that Dasein has become guilty of an inauthentic being, but that Dasein is ontologically guilty and thus should accept it and exist accordingly.

Listening

As long as Dasein exists as they-self, the call of conscience persists. The possibility of turning away from its own existence, presupposes an awareness of it. Therefore, the critical point is an appropriate understanding of this call on the part of the recipient – the self. "When Da-sein understandingly lets itself be called forth to this possibility, this includes its *becoming free* for the call: its readiness for the potentiality-of-being summoned. Understanding the call, *Da-sein listens to its ownmost possibility of existence*. It has chosen itself."²⁶⁷ The understanding of this call has nothing in common with the acknowledgement of information. Listening to existential conscience, does not at first establish an understanding of guiltiness, followed by an existential decision to retrieve oneself from the entanglement into the they. The choice of listening to this call is the decision to assume responsibility for one's own existence. "*Understanding the summons* means: *wanting to have a conscience.*"²⁶⁸ By the conscientious decision of Dasein to take care of its own existence as possibility, the self is retrieved from the averageness of the they. In essence, this choice of listening is a form of Dasein's primordial disclosedness, since it implies an understanding of its own existence. More precisely, it is the authentic form of Dasein's disclosedness, which Heidegger coins "resoluteness". "We shall call the eminent, authentic disclosedness attested in Da-sein itself by its conscience – the *reticent projecting oneself upon one's ownmost being-guilty which is ready for Angst – resoluteness.*"²⁶⁹ As existential modification of Dasein's disclosedness, resoluteness comprises of a peculiar understanding, discourse and mood. The understanding reveals Dasein's

266 Heidegger 1996, p. 263

267 Heidegger 1996, p. 265

268 Heidegger 1996, p. 265

269 Heidegger 1996, p. 273

existential guiltiness. Since the call of conscience is opposed to the idle talk of the they, it silently summons Dasein to become still. Thus, the appropriate understanding of this discourse is characterized as reticence. And since wanting to have conscience, liberates Dasein from its entanglement into the they, it becomes singularized. Only through this existential separation it can really see and grasp its ownmost existence as possibility. Nevertheless, this necessary solitude is rather difficult to sustain. It is accompanied by the fundamental mood of Angst, since it reveals Dasein in its uncanniness as a result of its ontological nullity. In opposition to inauthenticity, Heidegger coins the wholeness of this primordial disclosedness “authenticity”, which is reached through resoluteness.

Reflection

In terms of their structure and practice, resoluteness and redirection are equivalent. Both concepts refer to an act of turning one's attention away from the external world. Instead of it, one is supposed to focusing on the internal realm of personal experience. The obvious reason for this attentional shift is that it is necessary to concentrate on one's implicit realm of personal experience, in order to become aware of it. Simultaneously, the innovative-contemplative thought process is shielded from the external sensual impressions, which would permanently distract it. On the basis of the ontological analysis it is now possible to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of this step. The analysis has shown, that the engagement with the external world, which has to be momentarily intercepted, does not primarily consist in sensual perception, but rather in the public intelligibility that offers objective knowledge, meaning, goals and questions. However, the most important discovery is, that this cognitive process is not just a general capability among humans, but actually a necessary practice to fulfil one's “existential duty” as a human being. Due to the uniqueness of each and every person, it is by no means justified to adopt common goals, ideas and opinions as the meaning of one's existence. It is absolutely necessary to practice redirection, in order to discover one's individual meaning, goals, ideas and opinions. For the epistemological level of innovative-contemplative thinking can be inferred that everyone actually should be creative to a certain extend. This does not mean that everybody has to invent extraordinary things or concepts, in order to live a fulfilling life. What it means is that nobody should fully adopt the common ways of thought, but should rather seek the development of his/her own mindset based on the unique existential circumstances.

5.2.2 Authenticity

Via the step of resoluteness, Dasein accepts the ontological responsibility for its ownmost existence. Thereby it liberates itself from the inauthentic mode of being as they-self, and simultaneously

releases its authentic mode of being as self. The previous section shows how this transformation from inauthenticity to authenticity takes place. It is the purpose of this section to discuss the ontological circumstances of an authentic being. It has been mentioned above that Heidegger characterizes the overall being of Dasein as care. This means that resoluteness results in an essential transformation of care. “*But resoluteness is only the authenticity of care itself, cared for in care and possible as care.*”²⁷⁰ Thus, a profound understanding of Dasein's authenticity is basically an analysis of the authentic constitution of care. It has been shown that care comprises of thrownness, projecting and falling prey. Dasein is always already thrown in a world, wherein innerworldly beings are encountered. Initially and for the most part it falls prey to its world, which implies that the average (self-)understanding relies on the world and the beings disclosed therein. Finally, its factual existence takes place as possibility, for which reason Dasein is always already ahead of itself. That Dasein is essentially its possibility is the most fundamental aspect of care, since it directly arises out of its primordial existence. “The primary factor of care, 'being ahead of itself,' however, means that Da-sein always exists for the sake of itself. 'As long as it is,' up until its end, it is related to its potentiality-of-being.”²⁷¹ Thus it frames the two other aspects, thrownness and falling prey, accordingly. Thrownness limits the horizon of possibilities each Dasein can and has to be. Thrown into a certain place and time – a certain situation – the respective Dasein has to choose its being from a finite number of possibilities. At each point in Dasein's being its own past and the history of mankind (cf. section 5.1) always already determines its possibility to be. The respective Dasein permanently undertakes its thrownness by projecting it towards a limited horizon of upcoming possibilities to be this or that. How this ongoing transition takes place in each case depends on Dasein's relation to its own existence. Either the projected possibilities are predetermined by its entanglement into the world and its publicity, or they arise out of its authentic responsibility for its own existence. It is important to notice, that Dasein's possibilities to be are fundamentally different from subjective planes, wishes or other forms of explicit intellectual activity. These possible projections form the implicit ontological framework of Dasein's existence and become primarily manifest as the ongoing “execution” [*Vollzug*] of Dasein's existence – inauthentically or authentically. In the inauthentic case, the possibilities are provided by the intelligibility of the they. But how do they form in the authentic case?

The anticipation of death

In the case of authenticity, the realm of possibilities exclusively results from Dasein's care for its own being, which means that its limitation is totally different from the inauthentic case.

270 Heidegger 1996, p. 277

271 Heidegger 1996, p. 219

Inauthentically, this realm is framed by social, ethical and epistemological norms of the particular they. In authenticity, the shape of this realm emanates from an awareness of the ontological boundaries of Dasein's being – its own death. For an inauthentic understanding, death appears as a remote future event that demarcates the end of life. The they turns its back on it, neglects it, tries to ease it off and thereby forget about it. On the contrary, Heidegger's ontological interpretation shows the fundamental significance of death as a phenomenon of life. “The ending that we have in view when we speak of death, does not signify a being-at-an-end of Da-sein, but rather a *being toward the end* of this being. Death is a way to be that Dasein takes over as soon as it is. 'As soon as a human being is born, he is old enough to die right away.’”²⁷² Heidegger identifies death as the most primordial possibility of being there is within the existence of each Dasein. Ontologically, the important question is not when life ends, but rather how this ending takes place in the course of life? Death, as a phenomenon of life, is a constant possibility which demarcates the impossibility of all other possibilities. The persistent presence of this final possibility is an essential fact of the being of Dasein. Heidegger's extensive ontological analysis of death results in the following definition: “*As the end of Da-sein, death is the ownmost, nonrelational, certain, and, as such, indefinite and not to be bypassed possibility of Da-sein.*”²⁷³ Ownmost, since nobody can relieve someone else of dying, which implies that everyone has to die his own death. Nonrelational, since death is a phenomenon that does not befall one as a social being, but rather totally singularizes. It is always my death that happens to me, also if several people die simultaneously in the course of an accident. My death and its meaning for me cannot be shared with others, although it can happen that several people die simultaneously due to the same reason. Of course it's certain, but not because one experiences the deaths of other people. One is always already implicitly sure about his/her own death, like one is sure about his own birth, without remembering it. On the other hand, its moment of occurrence is totally indefinite and remains it until the end. That it cannot be bypassed [*unüberholbar*] means that it definitely concludes all other possibilities of Dasein. In death, the being of Dasein comes to an end, which implies that there is no subsequent possibility left. The crucial point for an authentic mode of being is to face death within life as its most primordial possibility, instead of turning away from it, whereby perceiving it solely as annihilation. “On the contrary, if being-toward-death has to disclose understandingly the possibility which we have characterized as *such*, then in such being-toward-death this possibility must not be weakened, it must be understood *as possibility*, cultivated *as possibility*, and *endured as possibility* in our relation to it.”²⁷⁴ Obviously, the authentic way of being-ahead-of-oneself (projecting) is a being-toward-

272 Heidegger 1996, p. 228

273 Heidegger 1996, p. 239

274 Heidegger 1996, p. 241

death. Death is the ontological target point of Dasein's authentic being, which thereby becomes present in the form of one's most fundamental possibility. Heidegger terms this authentic attitude towards death, as the most fundamental possibility of being, "anticipation" [*vorlaufen*].²⁷⁵ Via anticipation, Dasein really realizes that its authentic existence is the being of its ownmost possibility. In the face of death, one becomes aware that s/he has to be his/her possibility, which liberates one's understanding from the entanglement into the average intelligibility of the they. "Becoming free *for* one's own death in anticipation frees one from one's lostness in chance possibilities urging themselves upon us, so that the factual possibilities lying before the possibility not-to-be-bypassed can first be authentically understood and chosen."²⁷⁶ The awareness of one's death transforms the meaning of all the precedent possibilities, which means the meaning of Dasein's entire being. Heidegger claims that the anticipation of death enables one to grasp one's being in its entirety which arouses an explicit understanding of its nothingness and thereby one's guilt. Returning to the initial step of resoluteness, it now becomes clear how it is intertwined with anticipation. In resoluteness, each Dasein decides to anticipate and to endure one's own death. Resoluteness becomes authentic in connection with anticipation. "Resoluteness becomes authentically what it can be as *being-toward-the-end-that-understands*, that is, as anticipation of death."²⁷⁷ Via the anticipation of death, resoluteness becomes the primordial form of disclosedness, leading to an understanding of one's nothingness and guilt. Yet, every kind of understanding is accompanied by a specific attunement (cf. section 4.1). The attunement which brings one face to face with one's death, thereby disclosing the authentic mode of being oneself, is Angst [*anxiety*].

Angst

Heidegger's famous analysis of Angst, which I am going to briefly sketch out, can be found in paragraph 40 of BT. He accomplishes a characterization of this fundamental mood in comparison with fear. Both phenomena exhibit a tripartite structure, like every form of attunement. Attunement essentially comprises of a "what", a "why" and the affect itself.²⁷⁸ Fear essentially is caused by a certain innerworldly being, which seems threatening. What is feared is this threatening being. What fear is about, is the being of Dasein, since it cares for its own existence. Based on the fact that Dasein exists, something can be feared. The fear itself is a form of disclosedness, implying that it is accompanied by an implicit understanding and applies to the surrounding world. In fear, the

275 cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 242: "Terminologically, we shall formulate this being toward possibility as *anticipation of this possibility*."

276 Heidegger 1996, p. 243/4

277 Heidegger 1996, p. 282

278 cf. Heidegger 1996, p. 131: "The phenomenon of fear can be considered in three aspects. We shall analyze what we are afraid of, fearing, and why we are afraid. These possible aspects of fear are not accidental; they belong together. With them, the structure of attunement as such comes to the fore."

surrounding world is already disclosed as threatening, so that something threatening can appear within and out of this implicit intelligibility. In a nutshell, Dasein fears a distinct being, which appears within the context of an already threatening world, due to the fact that it fears about its own existence.²⁷⁹ The existential mood of Angst is fundamentally different from fear, due to the fact that the “why” is identically with the “what”. For both aspects, Angst is about Dasein as being-in-the-world. “That *about which* Angst is anxious reveals itself as that *for which* it is anxious: being-in-the-world.”²⁸⁰ This means that Angst is not caused by a distinct innerworldly being, but rather by the world itself. How is it possible that the world as such becomes frightening? In Angst, Dasein comes face to face with the world – the totality of beings. At the same time, any specific innerworldly being loses its significance. The surrounding framework of significance, wherein Dasein is usually embedded and entangled, collapses. “The world has the character of complete insignificance. In Angst we do not encounter this or that thing which, as threatening, could be relevant.”²⁸¹ Since the average significance of the world that manifests as network of referentially related innerworldly beings collapses. Hence, the “backside” of the world comes to the fore – its worldliness. This “backside” usually remains unnoticed due to its fundamental familiarity. That Dasein always already is in a world is such a fundamental issue, that Dasein is initially and for the most part exclusively concerned with the innerworldly beings that appear against the background its worldliness. It has been shown above (cf. section 4.2), that the worldliness of the world is an existential of Dasein as being-in-the-world. This means that Angst places Dasein in the face of its own existence (and vice versa), since no-thing else is of any meaning. “The insignificance of the world disclosed in *Angst* reveals the nullity of what can be taken care of, that is, the impossibility of projecting oneself upon a potentiality-of-being primarily based upon what is taken care of. But the revelation of this impossibility means to let the possibility of an authentic potentiality-of-being shine forth.”²⁸² Via the mood of Angst, Dasein realizes an implicit understanding of its being as potentiality, which it has to be – its thrown projection. Since this potentiality is limited by facticity and death, it is pervaded by a nothingness that brings Angst about. One's own being essentially lacks causes [*Gründe*] as well as goals. Nevertheless, the realization and persistence of Angst is basically a positive state. Heidegger's analysis shows that it is Dasein's primordial way to an authentic being. The anticipation of one's own death reveals one's existential finiteness [*Endlichkeit*]. In my opinion, an authentic confrontation with one's finiteness expresses the positive

279 cf. Heidegger 1996, § 30

280 Heidegger 1996, p. 176; also cf. Henry 1992, p. 359: “It is in this ontologically radical sense that the *Worum* of anxiety is identical to its *Wovor*, insofar as it itself takes place as a *Wovor*, as a mode of transcendence.”

281 Heidegger 1996, p. 174

282 Heidegger 1996, p. 315; also cf. Henry 1992, p. 357: “To the extent that it is handed over to the world, existence is first of all handed over to itself; this is precisely what reveals to it its anxiety; this anxiety brings existence face to face with itself, it reveals it to itself, it reveals to it the fact of its existence and at the same time what it is, i.e. its Being handed over to itself as Being handed over to the world.”

side of nothingness. Finiteness renders all kinds of general, abstract and external understanding meaningless. At the same time, it pervades one's individual (authentic) potentialities with profound meaning. I am convinced that Angst does not only disclose one's nothingness and guilt, but simultaneously one's finiteness and uniqueness. The authentic anticipation of one's death (Angst) likewise bears an awareness of one's nothingness as well as one's uniqueness. Maybe which one of them prevails depends on the "degree of authenticity"? For a totally rational and abstract mind, which can only acknowledge something of categorical (any specimen of a certain class) or absolute being, something that merely exists as limited potentiality exclusively appears as nullity. On the contrary, for a contemplative mind in the state of total authenticity, uniqueness happens to be the most fundamental form of meaning. Since every form of understanding is attuned, the awareness and realization of this authentic meaning not only involves Angst, but rather an equally profound mood of joy. "Together with the sober *Angst* that brings us before our individualized potentiality-of-being, goes the unshakable joy in this possibility."²⁸³

Reflection

At this point it may not be obvious in how far the transition from inauthenticity to authenticity concerns the ontological dimension of presence and not the future, since authenticity is obviously about anticipation, possibilities and death. Usually these concepts have an intrinsic temporal orientation towards the future. But in consideration of the fact that Heidegger's basic differentiation between inauthentic and authentic disclosedness applies to time as well, this riddle can be solved. Inauthentically, the future unidirectionally follows the present, implying that later events must be the consequence of earlier ones (which are perceived as cause). Authentically, the "future" (as well as the "past") takes place in the "present", since time is not independent of Dasein but rather of fundamental significance for its being. Heidegger coins the primordial unity of future, presence and past, temporality, which, as the meaning of being, is disclosed through the existence of Dasein. "We call the unified phenomenon of the future that makes present in the process of having-been *temporality*. [...] *Temporality reveals itself as the meaning of authentic care*."²⁸⁴ By anticipatory resoluteness, the authentic form of care is reached, which rests its meaning upon temporality. Since Dasein's being is primordially potentiality, the future is the primary aspect of authentic temporality. "*The primary phenomenon of primordial and authentic temporality is the future*."²⁸⁵ Anticipatory resoluteness allows for this structure of temporality, thereby reaching an authentic being. Nevertheless, this shift in awareness does not primarily affect the future but the presence. "In resoluteness, the present is not only brought back from the dispersion in what is taken care of

283 Heidegger 1996, p. 286

284 Heidegger 1996, p. 300

285 Heidegger 1996, p. 303

nearest at hand, but is held in the future and having-been. We call the *present* that is held in authentic temporality, and is thus *authentic*, the *Moment*.²⁸⁶ Inauthentically, Dasein is immersed in the world with respect to its every changing presence (cf. curiosity). By anticipatory resoluteness, Dasein centres on its ownmost future, especially its ultimate limit, which likewise affects its own past (thrownness). Building a bridge to the first part of this thesis, it is an “ontological shift in attention” away from the external world towards the internal realm of oneself, which Heidegger would call a shift away from the world towards being-in-the-world. Since Heidegger shows that the world inauthentically appears in its presence, whereas being-in-the-world authentically takes place as future-oriented care, this step liberates oneself from the uniform and omni-present constitution of inauthentic subjectivity for the sake of an authentic presence which anticipates its future.

5.3 Letting-be – From Authenticity to Releasement

Corresponding to the first part of this thesis, this chapter presents the final step in Heidegger's ontological transformation. I refer to the transition from authenticity to releasement as letting-be. This is a merely analytical separation from releasement introduced for the sake of clarity. Since Heidegger's phenomenology is essentially hermeneutic, the path and the goal of thinking constitute a circular relation. Thus, under the heading of letting-be I discuss what this transition implies on the side of the thinker. And under the heading of releasement, I discuss what it implies for the relation between man and being, or the origin of thoughts.

The main reference for this chapter is a dialogue written about 15 years after BT, named “Conversation on a country path”.²⁸⁷ Unfortunately, only a part of it is translated into English, which has been published together with a memorial address to the composer Conradin Kreutzer, where Heidegger talks about releasement for the first time, entitled “Discourse on thinking”.²⁸⁸ Since Heidegger's thinking underwent a fundamental transformation during those fifteen years, the concept of releasement goes beyond the framework of BT. Thus the change in his philosophy requires a brief introduction. Generally, this transformation is called “turn” [*Kehre*], since it totally inverts the ontological relation of man to being. This means that all subjective leftovers still present in BT are overcome, by the insight that Being originally brings about the nature of man as responsiveness at its behest. Thus, the relation between man and being, which becomes manifest as ontology, depends more on Being than on man. “To be sure, the fundamental ontology of Being and Time thinks through the historicity of Dasein, its existing in the possibilities of being-in-the-world, comprehended either as appropriate or inappropriate. But what is left unthought in this

286 Heidegger 1996, p. 311

287 cf. Heidegger Martin: *Feldweg-Gespräche*, Vittorio Klostermann GmbH, Frankfurt am Main, 1995 (GA77)

288 Martin Heidegger 1966

ontology is the historicity of the disclosure of being as a whole.”²⁸⁹ In BT, the historical transformation of ontology (nihilism; cf. section 5.1), occurs exclusively on the basis of changes in man's self-perception. After “the turn”, Heidegger comprehends Dasein's thrownness, as thrown into existence by Being. Thus, the transformation of ontology is primarily perceived as changes in the disclosure of Being itself. The historical development of occidental metaphysics, as the relation between man and being, no longer depends on the historicity of man, but rather on the historicity of Being. Thereby, the reciprocal dimension of human disclosedness is understood as the “receptive field” wherein Being becomes manifest. In other words, the general enterprise of Heidegger's philosophy remains the same as in BT, but his methodology changes. Throughout his thinking, he views it as the primary task of philosophy to understand the nature of Being, on the basis of an investigation of the nature of man.²⁹⁰ Thus, the difference between BT and his later writings relies on his characterization of man's nature. “In Being and Time this character is understood as the transcendental structure of experience. But in the Memorial Address and the Conversation, as in the other later works, this character is understood quite differently. [...] It is conceived as the way in which man is involved immediately and directly in Being.”²⁹¹ Again, the basic difference is that in BT the relationship between man and Being still relies upon man. In Heidegger's later work this relation is grounded on Being itself.²⁹² It is the purpose of this section to explore how this primordial grounding of man in Being takes place, thus I hope that this introduction suffices for a basic understanding of the difference between the ontological framework of BT and the so-called later Heidegger.

5.3.1 Letting-be

The final step in Heidegger's conception of the innovative-contemplative thought process comprises of two reciprocal dynamics. On the one hand, it requires a form of desistance [*Ablassen, Loslassen*], which is comparable to the attitude of letting-go (cf. section 3.5). On the other hand it is characterized by an attitude of openness to get involved [*Einlassen*]. “Gefordert wird ein Zweifaches: ein faktisches Loslassen des Bemühens, sich etwas vorstellen zu wollen und das Sicheinlassen des Geistes auf die Negativität, mit der man dann konfrontiert ist. Ein solcher Denkschritt kann nur mit der ganzen Existenz, d.h. im gesammelten Dasein vollzogen werden.”²⁹³

289 Von Hermann 1992, p. 321

290 cf. Heidegger 1966, p. 19 ff.

291 Heidegger 1966, p. 21/2

292 This turn in Heidegger's characterization of man's nature is the reason for changes in his terminology, which becomes quite extraordinary. The difficulty consists in the fact, that occidental languages mirror man's subjective prevalence. Thus, in his later writings he fumbles for appropriate words to express the shift in emphasis in the favour of Being, which results in a style and terminology that is difficult to understand immediately.

293 Wagner 1997, p. 76; also cf. Heidegger 1966, p. 26: “In consequence, for example, Heidegger speaks of two aspects or releasement, the first of which is being released *from*, and the second, authentic releasement, may be described as

Will – the last refuge of subjectivity

Through the first aspect the stepwise liberation from the subjective mode of thinking is completed, thus overcoming subjectivity altogether. Heidegger conceives the essence of modern subjectivity as willing, in conjunction with the metaphysical understanding of being as will.²⁹⁴ This version of Subjectivity is expressed via representational thinking, which determines the represented object on the basis of man's willing (cf. section 5.1). Thus, to reach the state of releasement requires one to overcome the metaphysics of will entirely. “*Scientist*: [...] You want a non-willing in the sense of a renouncing of willing, so that through this we may release, or at least prepare to release, ourselves to the sought-for essence of a thinking that is not a willing.”²⁹⁵ It may seem like the abandonment of representational thinking is achieved by a deliberate decision, whereby reaching a way of thinking that is essentially different from willing. For the transition from inauthenticity to authenticity, this is the case. In resoluteness, one deliberately wants to have conscience by listening to its call. Likewise, the step of redirection is based on a subjective decision to shift one's attention from the world towards oneself. In contrast, the final step of innovative-contemplative thinking can never be taken by means of subjectivity. This is why Heidegger adds the following specification. “*Scholar*: So far as we can wean ourselves from willing, we contribute to the awakening of releasement. *Teacher*: Say rather, to keeping awake for releasement.”²⁹⁶ This highlights two characteristics of the non-willing that finally renounces the metaphysical domain of will. Firstly, that the state of releasement can neither be evoked by means of subjectivity or any other ontological state of man. It's constitution essentially involves something that goes beyond man's sphere of influence. Secondly, that the total relinquishment of will is not a singular, instantaneous and binary decision between will or releasement, but rather a ongoing process of weaning. “Das Ablassen kann nur als Weg, nicht als einmaliger Akt praktiziert werden.”²⁹⁷ A part of this way has been covered by the two preceding transitions, still involving subjective volition. The final transition to releasement requires and enables the total relinquishment of will, which can be characterized as weaning off, since it can never be achieved deliberately. For a concrete illustration of this process I would like to compare it with a more common process, namely the dehabituating from drugs.²⁹⁸ People who have smoked many cigarettes for a long time are so accustomed to smoking, that they are unable to imagine their

being released to.”

294 cf. Heidegger 1968, p.91/2: “To modern metaphysics, the Being of beings appears as will. But inasmuch as man, because of his nature as the thinking animal and by virtue of forming ideas, is related to beings in their Being, is thereby related to Being, and is thus determined by Being therefore man's being, in keeping with this relatedness of Being (which now means, of the will) to human nature, must emphatically appear as a willing.”

295 Heidegger 1966, p. 59/60

296 Heidegger 1966, p. 60/1

297 Wagner 1997, p. 84

298 This example should not suggest that subjectivity and a drug addiction are isomorphic, or that subjectivity is something negative, but mutatis mutandis dehabituating illustrates the process of weaning off subjectivity rather comprehensibly.

life without it. I think the same applies to subjectivity. In modern western society, one permanently faces cultural forms of subjectivity (for example language) from birth onwards, whereby s/he becomes totally accustomed to it. Starting the rejection is an extraordinarily difficult step, which requires help from a second person. Abiding by it is an arduous task as well, which is often accompanied by drawbacks and can be substantially facilitated by external help and guidance. Moreover, this example shows that the process of weaning is an indefinite process. A smoker will always remain jeopardized falling prey to restart smoking. The fundamental difference between weaning off an addiction and weaning off subjectivity is that the first one is aiming at subjective volition, which is to a certain degree necessary for the successful dehabituating from drugs. To a certain degree, since I am convinced that conception of dehabituating as an act that exclusively relies on will power is misguided. Of course, initially, one's voluntary denial of the drug is necessary, as it was for the first steps in the process of innovative-contemplative thinking to voluntarily abandon subjectivity. Nevertheless, it is actually not the drug – the objects – which the addicted person seeks to overcome, but it's his/her addiction, which is an aspect of one's personality. It seems like the dehabituating process has to begin by a deliberate denial of the drug, but it cannot successfully conclude in this way. The mere denial of the drug is like an attack, which means that it's still motivated by the opponent. To overcome an addiction completely implies a transformation of one's own personality, so that the drug is neither wanted nor rejected. “Von sich ablassen heißt konkret: von dem ablassen, was ich will und was ich nicht will. Dies umfaßt Vorlieben und Abneigungen, positive und negative Wertungen, Begierden und Abscheu. Ablassen heißt jedoch nicht ablehnen oder gar abdrängen. Es heißt nur, daß diesen Bestrebungen, wo sie auftauchen, nicht nachgegangen und nachgegeben werden soll.”²⁹⁹ This fact exactly demarcates the difference between this and the two preceding steps in innovative-contemplative thinking. Deconstruction (suspension) and resoluteness (redirection), are both directed at something and simultaneously turned away from something opposite. Both are based on the dichotomy between good and bad, appetite and distaste, which implies the involvement of will. Letting-be (letting-go) goes beyond this dichotomy, thereby overcoming will and subjectivity totally (but not for good).

Groundless Waiting

It is the question, how this can be achieved? What kind of concrete way does Heidegger suggest to take this step appropriately and successfully? The answer centres around the second constitutive aspect of letting-be, which has already been characterized as an attitude of openness to get involved [*Einlassen*] (cf. above). Heidegger conceives the final step towards releasement in a practice without activity, namely waiting. Primarily, proper waiting means to be at rest without doing

299 Wagner 1997, p. 83

anything. While waiting for the bus, one could smoke a cigarette or read a book, but these are merely forms of distraction, which inhibit waiting. While waiting for a beloved person, one could think about the upcoming reunion, thus experiencing pleasant anticipation. Yet, Heidegger's crucial point is that the proper kind of waiting for releasement is only partially comparable to the normal, everyday kind of waiting, since it lacks in an awaited object – it's groundless. “*Teacher*: Waiting, all right; but never awaiting, for awaiting already links itself with re-presenting and what is re-presented. *Scholar*: Waiting, however, lets go of that; or rather I should say that waiting lets representing entirely along. It really has no object.”³⁰⁰ In the introduction by John M. Anderson, this difference between awaiting something and waiting is interpreted as waiting *for* and waiting *upon*. “The different prepositions are intended to refer in the case of 'for' to subjective human expectations of some sort, but in the case of 'upon' to what is, if given, a gift.”³⁰¹ In groundless waiting man leaves open what his/her waiting is about, which means that man waits for nothing, and thus becomes finally released from the ontological framework of subjectivity and representative thinking. Simultaneously and steadily, man is permitted [*zugelassen*] to the realm of releasement. Obviously, waiting (for this transition) is Heidegger's sequel to resoluteness.³⁰² Thereby, the anxious endurance of one's ownmost finiteness opens out into the steadfastness of calm waiting. Angst for one's own existence, experienced in the face of death, expresses the care for oneself, which relies upon the final residual of subjectivity. To be anxious about one's nothingness, and thus the meaning of one's being, results from the feeling that its meaning is due to one's activity. In the face of death all voluntary activity seems to be in vain. Through waiting, the self-awareness involving activity is laid at rest, since it goes beyond the ontological dichotomies of the will. Groundless waiting reaches another kind of meaning, which goes beyond subjective parameters. Hence, it is equally misleading to characterize waiting as a form of passivity. “*Scientist*: Then releasement lies – if we may use the word lie – beyond the distinction between activity and passivity . . . *Scholar*: . . . because releasement does not belong to the domain of the will.”³⁰³ Waiting transforms the duality of activity and passivity (domain of the will) into a primordial calmness, which takes place as a release of Angst. “Im Warten wandelt sich die Angst zur Gelassenheit. Für das Verständnis der Gelassenheit ist dies von nicht geringer Bedeutung, sie als eine verwandelte Angst zu begreifen, sie sich nicht am Abgrund der Endlichkeit entlang– und vorbeimanövriert, sondern in ihm gewesen ist.”³⁰⁴

300 Heidegger 1966, p. 68

301 Heidegger 1966, p. 23

302 cf. Wagner 1997, p. 97: “Die Angst ist es, die den Menschen für den Bezug zu seinem Wesen öffnet, nämlich durch 'das Offene'. Dies offenbart sich dem Wartenden. Die Angst kann ihn nicht in diesen Bezug bringen, so, daß er sich auf ihn einlassen kann, sie eröffnet ihm aber die Möglichkeit hierfür. Diese wird im Warten ergriffen, weil 'das Warten in das Offene selbst sich einläßt.’”

303 Heidegger 1966, p. 61

304 Wagner 1997, p. 98

Reflection

The final ontological step is called letting-be. Already this denomination suggests a high degree of similarity with its cognitive equivalent called letting-go. As a matter of fact, it actually goes beyond conceptual resemblance. This section has shown that the crucial point to master this ontological step is groundless waiting. In the case of the epistemological model, exactly the same “practice” is required from the thinking person. One reason for this total uniformity of the epistemological and ontological model is, that at this stage the process of innovative-contemplative thinking penetrates the existential dimension. Another reason is that both concepts have their seeds in eastern philosophy. Again, the actual contribution of the ontological analysis to the cognitive model is meaning. Heidegger's theory provides is an answer to the question, why this step consists in groundless waiting, which is mostly missing in the case of the epistemological description. Although groundless waiting is per definition useless, it is the adequate way to overcome subjectivity for good. Since the extensions of one's subjectivity towards the past and the presence have already been abandoned during deconstruction and resoluteness, only the future horizon of one's subjectivity remains. Metaphorically speaking, it spans like a mental arch from the present to the subjective goals, wishes, etc. By giving up these subjective toeholds, the arch collapses, whereby one's subjective standpoint is finally overcome. The relinquishment of one's future-oriented mental states is tantamount to laying the remaining dimension of one's subjectivity at rest. Thus, the reason for groundless waiting is its intrinsic power to escape the ontological domain of the will – the last but strongest refuge of subjectivity.

5.3.2 Releasement

Since the manner of being and thinking disclosed at the final ontological stage of the innovative-contemplative thought process, called releasement, is fundamentally different from the usual subjective experience, it is important to clarify its “subject-matter”. The first hint of this can be found in the citation above (301). It is stated that its result must be gift, which means that it needs a donor and has to be received appropriately. Nevertheless, it cannot consist in a subjective idea about this or that object, since the subjective standpoint does not meet ground in the realm of releasement. Thus, the final section will deal with the following questions: 1) In what could this unusual gift consist? 2) Who or what is its donor? 3) And how does the thinking person receive it appropriately?

The Gift of innovative-contemplative Thinking and its Donor

In citation 233 (cf. above), Heidegger clearly states that the greatest gift that thinking can receive (and give) is the unthought. And in his famous lecture entitled “What is called thinking?” he identifies the essential feature of this gift. “This gift, which gives to us what is most thought-

provoking, is the true endowment that keeps itself concealed in our essential nature.”³⁰⁵ The unthought is of particular importance for thinking, since it is most-thought provoking hence it is its primordial “subject-matter”. The unthought is not something that has not yet been thought of, because it requires more brain or intellectual power than any other kind of thought. The un-thought lies beyond the horizon of representational thinking and forms the basis of it. “*Teacher*: What is evident of the horizon, then, is but the side facing us of an openness which surrounds us; an openness which is filled with views of the appearances of what to our re-presenting are objects.”³⁰⁶ In “conversation on a country path”, Heidegger coins the other side of the horizon (which denotes the world-view of representational thinking) “the region”. Actually, it is equivalent to Being, yet allegorizing its essential openness. Furthermore, he uses the verb “regioning” and the antiquated German word “Gegnet”, translated as that-which-regions, to express its inherent dynamic.³⁰⁷ The essential dynamic of openness is its opening. Before being able to receive the gift of the region, which would be its regioning, man has to get into the appropriate relationship to this openness. To come up to this primordial openness, is the primary task of the innovative-contemplative thought process. “Thus we may observe first that meditative thinking is an opening of man to something, as is emphasized by calling such thinking releasement.”³⁰⁸ In the state of releasement, man arrives in the openness of the region, wherein s/he always already belongs to. The horizon and the region are two sides of the same coin. It appears as a horizon in view of objects, whereas the direct relation to it – releasement – reveals it as a region.³⁰⁹ But in releasement, man is not donor but the receiver of this relation, since s/he has given up subjective control and has become open for whatever wants to emerge. “*Scholar*: If authentic releasement is to be the proper relation to that-which-regions, and if this relation is determined solely by what it is related to, then authentic releasement must be based upon that-which-regions, and must have received from it movement toward it.”³¹⁰ Thus, in releasement man receives the gift of his/her openness for Being, from the openness of Being itself, which intrinsically is an opening (donor). For Heidegger, this mutual correlation between the openness of man and the openness of being is the essence of man's nature as a thinking being.

305 Heidegger 1968, p. 126

306 Heidegger 1966, p. 65

307cf. Heidegger 1966, p. 27: “In the Conversation, however, Heidegger does not use the word *Being*; but in order to stress an inherent openness and activity of Being, he uses the word *region* and its cognates instead. That is, a region is open; moreover, it is possible to designate a region as inherently dynamic by using the phrase *that-which-regions*, and, even further, to use the verb *regioning* to express this activity directly.”

308 Heidegger 1966, p. 28

309 cf. Wagner 1997, p. 111: “Der Begriff der 'Gegend' löst den Begriff des 'Horizontes' ab. Was zuvor als Resultat perspektivischer Sicht dem Betrachter entgegentrat als seine 'Aussicht' (39G1), soll nun als das in eigener Weite Daliegende und sich Darbietende gekennzeichnet werden, eben als 'Gegend'.”

310 Heidegger 1966, p. 73; also cf. Wagner 1997, p.140: “Das Signum eines ursprünglichen Bezogenseins ist, daß es nicht von uns erdacht oder hergestellt sein darf, daß es aus sich entspringen und sich von sich aus einstellen muß. Erfahrbar wird dies im Warten, wo der Mensch sich seiner Aktivität entschlägt und sich einzig dem aussetzt, was sich von sich aus zeigen und eröffnen muß.”

Nevertheless, man's nature solely appears as constituted by Being and totally depending on it. The answer to the still remaining question, how man should appropriately embrace this gift, will balance this correlation.

Innovative-contemplative thinking as thanking

The best and most appropriate way to embrace a gift is to be thankful for it. In this case it is a very special gift, namely man's nature itself. "But the highest and really most lasting gift given to us is always our essential nature, with which we are gifted in such a way that we are what we are only through it. That is why we owe thanks for this endowment, first and unceasingly."³¹¹ But how can man appropriately thank the opening of Being for the amazing gift of thought and thereby his nature. How can Being possibly be rewarded for this gift, or rather how is it possible to reward Being at all? Obviously, it is impossible to hand something back to Being. Thus, Heidegger conceives that the only and appropriate thanks for this gift is to use it – to think of Being. "How can we give thanks for endowment, the gift of being able to think what is most thought-provoking, more fittingly than by giving thought to the most thought-provoking? The supreme thanks, then, would be thinking?"³¹² On the one hand, the opening of the openness brings forth man's nature as an openness, and on the other hand it requires the opening of man's openness to come about. Releasement is based upon that-which-regions, and that-which-regions relies on releasement to show itself. "Clearly, such thinking is more than an instance of such development; it also serves to receive the development."³¹³ The nature of man is not just a gift of Being, but a "mirror" of it as well. Originally, man receives the gift of thought not to turn away from Being, but to approach and stay as close as possible to it. The more one gives oneself over to Being, the more one abandons oneself to Being, the closer s/he belongs to its own nature. Since, this is what happens in the course of innovative-contemplative thinking, releasement unveils man's primordial nature as the disclosure of the region. "As in-dwelling, meditative thinking expresses the requirement of becoming true for that-which-regions. Through in-dwelling, man is able to express a resolve for truth."³¹⁴ In the context of the region, Heidegger replaces thanks for in-dwelling to accentuate the topological character. It is remarkably that in both cases man's receptivity does not change the gift, or rather is selfsame. To the gift of thought the appropriate response is thinking. To the rise of releasement, the appropriate response is to dwell in the region. The essence of both examples is persistence. Releasement does not get calmer by wishing, looking or waiting for something. The only possibility to get deeper released into releasement is patience.

311 Heidegger 1968, p. 142

312 Heidegger 1968 p. 143

313 Heidegger 1966, p. 31

314 Heidegger 1966, p. 31

Reflection

Finally, it is necessary to consider the meaning of this ontological transformation from authenticity towards releasement in relation to the epistemological transition from sensing to presencing. Both steps exhibit equivalent characteristics. In a nutshell, they aim to overcome the sphere of the will by adopting an attitude of patient waiting, which resembles an open receptivity that lies beyond the distinction between activity and passivity. In terms of epistemology, it requires the abandonment of one's wishes, plans and goals – all intellectual forms to control and predict the developments in the future. The contrasting juxtaposition to Heidegger's ontological analysis of this step shows that it involves and transforms the whole person. Nevertheless, the ontological result of this transition is relatively clear. “Heidegger löst die Zeit von ihrer Fixierung auf die Zahl und kehrt zugleich unser Verhältnis zur Zeit um: nicht wir geben der Zeit eine Ordnung, aus ihr selbst kommt jene Ordnung die allein sein Erscheinen und sein Vergehen anweist.”³¹⁵ The final overcoming of subjectivity in releasement or presencing implies that free reign is given to the phenomena. Subjective thinking no longer determines the appearance of things and the world, since it cannot serve as the framework of reference anymore. Therefore, the course of the world is left to its own devices, including the released person. Being aware of one's own phenomenality means neither to live and think in terms of the future, nor the past, nor the presence, but rather to dwell in the permanent transformation of the everlasting moment. “Presencing happens when our perception begins to connect to the source of our emerging future. The boundaries between three types of presence collapse: the presence of the past (current field), the presence of the future (the emerging field of the future), and the presence of one's authentic Self. When this co-presence, or merging of the three types of presence, begins to resonate, we experience a profound shift, a change of the place from which we operate.”³¹⁶

315 Wagner 1997, p. 119

316 Scharmer 2007, p. 165

6. Conclusion

Summa summarum, it has been the purpose of my thesis to investigate the structure of the innovative-contemplative thought process in terms of its ontological foundations. To accomplish this overall goal, it was necessary to perform three consecutive subtasks. First, I conducted a synoptic analysis of three related models concerning this thought process in the field of Cognitive Science, or rather Knowledge and Innovation Management. Thereby I was able to excavate the underlying common structure of this epistemological process, and to already highlight its ontological circumstances. The resulting model served as a template for a successful analysis of Martin Heidegger's philosophy, who was concerned with the ontological framework of thinking throughout his career (beside other things). Successfully, since I have been able to discover an equivalent ontological structure in Heidegger's philosophy. The third part consisted of reciprocal comparisons of the newly-discovered ontological structure with the epistemological structure from the first part. Thus, the ontological meaning of the structure of innovative contemplative thinking was unveiled by drawing conclusions from the ontological level about the epistemic level.

My synoptic analysis revealed that the general structure of this thought process comprises of three cognitive steps, which lead from the prevalent mode of cognition called downloading to a primordial meditative mode of thought termed presencing. In the course of my analysis of Heidegger's philosophy I discovered three similar ontological steps, leading from an ontological state similar to downloading to an ontological state similar to presencing. Following the main consulted authors, I termed the consecutive cognitive steps suspension, redirection and letting-go, and their ontological equivalents destruction, resoluteness and letting-be. In-between these steps (cognitive and ontological) are further cognitive and ontological levels, implying that each step leads from one cognitive or ontological level to the next. Suspension transforms downloading into seeing, and destruction leads from nihilism to inauthenticity. Via redirection, the state of seeing is converted into sensing. The ontological equivalent is the transformation of inauthenticity into authenticity through resoluteness. Finally, sensing is turned into presencing by adopting the attitude called letting-go. Ontologically, authenticity is converted into releasement via the attitude of letting-be.

The thesis at hand demonstrates that these ontological steps and levels are basically tantamount to their cognitive equivalent, which implies that they are describing one and the same process – innovative-contemplative thinking. But since the ontological perspective is a fundamentally different from the epistemological perspective, they result in a different description and meaning of this process, although their structure is similar. Nevertheless, or rather therefore, it is possible and meaningful to draw conclusions from the ontological analysis about the meaning of the cognitive

process. Through this comparison I reached the following conclusion. The ontological meaning of the innovative-contemplative thought process is a gradual liberation from subjectivity. At the level of downloading/nihilism one's being is completely absorbed into the subjective standpoint. The full-blown subjectivity bestrides the past, the present and the future, linearising and controlling the time for the sake of its constitution and intrinsic order. Via the step of suspension/destruction one does not solely bracket one's precious knowledge and cognitive patterns, but rather abandons the part of subjectivity spanning the past. The step of redirection/resoluteness is a shift of attention away from the world towards oneself. The ontological analysis has shown that this step shakes off the social norms, expectations and activities, which constitute the present form of subjectivity, through anticipation of one's own death. The last step of letting-go/-be actually appears similar in terms of ontology as well as epistemology, since it involves and finally changes the whole person (and not just his/her thoughts). An attitude of empty waiting (for nothing) is its fundamental characteristic, which abandons the part of subjectivity spanning the future by means of the subjective will. After subjectivity is completely overcome, a fundamentally different kind of being and thinking unfolds, wherein the appearance of things does not depend on the framework of subjectivity anymore. The time parameter of subjective time, wherein the appearance of things is determined and controlled, is replaced by a "temporality of the moment", embracing whatever is coming about on its own terms.

As a result of this ontological transformation, totally different and innovative ideas are much more likely to come about than within the rigorous framework of subjectivity, due to its fundamental unprepossessed openness (empty waiting for nothing). Nevertheless, innovative thoughts and ways of thinking are actually not the direct result, or rather meaning, of innovative-contemplative thinking. This work demonstrates that the primary meaning of this process is a transformation of the thinker's being – the ontological framework of thinking. Certainly, this will result in radically different ways of perception and thinking, nevertheless these innovative impressions and ideas are derivative phenomena compared to the transformation of one's being. This likewise is the explanation of the introductory claim that innovative-contemplative thinking is not a cognitive process in the traditional sense (cf. section 1.1). It does not necessarily yield an (innovative) idea, due to the fact that it is more a profound personality change than a mere cognitive change. The cognitive change is embedded in the ontological transformation, which suggests identifying innovative-contemplative thinking as an *epistemic-ontological process*. It is initiated with the voluntary decision to overcome the sphere of one's own will. At first, this is accomplished through mere cognitive activity. But the structure of the task itself demands that the epistemic activity is step by step replaced by ontological events, whose occurrence depend on unlearning, or weaning oneself off, the will. Having said this, it would be a worthwhile and necessary enterprise to investigate the

interplay of personality and cognition (or ontological and epistemic constitution of man) in detail, in order to understand the effects of personality changes on particular cognitive processes.

7. Summary

Since ground-breaking ideas have become of utmost importance for our knowledge driven society, scientists from several disciplines have recently started to investigate the cognitive process underlying innovative thinking and successfully developed a variety of models describing this process. I selected three related models (“Becoming aware”, “Theory U”, “Triple-loop learning”) as background for my analysis. Although their common subject-matter is the process of innovative-contemplative thinking, they are situated in different fields of research. Their peculiarity is the involvement of the thinking person on an existential level. Since these models are basically methodological descriptions, situated on an epistemological plane, they lack in a profound theoretical understanding of the ontological foundation of this process. Thus, it was the purpose of this thesis to identify the ontological dimension of innovative-contemplative thinking, in order to improve the comprehension of its meaning. To achieve this goal, I had to take three methodological steps. At first, it was necessary to perform a synoptic analysis of the exemplary models, with the objective of determining the constitutive structure of this process. By distinguishing between the common (essential) and the particular (dispensable) steps, it turned out that the process of innovative-contemplative thinking comprises of four mental levels, which are connected by three cognitive steps. Subsequently, I investigated the ontological theory of Martin Heidegger, with regard to the core structure found via the synoptic analysis. In the course of this enquiry I was able to identify four ontological levels connected by three existential steps, in accord with the methodological model. Finally, these findings were used to reflect on their meaning for the epistemological levels and steps. Thereby, I came to the conclusion that the primordial meaning accompanying the cognitive process of innovative-contemplative thinking is a stepwise transformation of one’s ontological status. One’s subjectivity, which stretches across all three temporal dimensions (past, present and future), is deconstructed and finally replaced by a primordial mode of existence, which Heidegger calls *Dasein*. This existential stage enables highly innovative ideas to come to the fore, since the thinking person is liberated entirely from prevalent subjective norms and boundaries. As a result, one’s ownmost existential situation has become the primary medium of thinking and source of knowledge, which is radically different from ordinary ways of thinking. Therefore, the ontological meaning of the innovative-contemplative thought process consists in a step by step deconstruction of the temporally constituted subjective status, in order to reach man’s primordial way of being itself.

Zusammenfassung

Da wegweisende Einfälle in unserer "Wissensgesellschaft" allerhöchste Bedeutung erlangten, haben Wissenschaftler unterschiedlicher Disziplinen kürzlich begonnen den kognitiven Prozess innovativen Denkens zu erforschen und erfolgreich verschiedene descriptive Modelle dieses Prozesses entwickelt. Daraus selektierte ich drei verwandte Modelle ("Becoming aware", "Theory U", "Triple-loop learning") als Grundlage und Ausgangspunkt dieser Arbeit. Obwohl es sich bei ihrem gemeinsamen Gegenstand um den Prozess innovative-kontemplativen Denkens handelt, stammen sie aus unterschiedlichen Disziplinen. Da diese Modelle im Wesentlichen methodische Beschreibungen darstellen, sich also auf einer epistemologischen Ebene befinden, mangelt es ihnen an einem grundlegenden theoretischen Verständnis des ontologischen Fundaments dieses Prozesses. Daher war es die Ziel dieser Arbeit die ontologische Dimension des innovative-kontemplativen Denkenprozesses zu entdecken, um dadurch das Verständnis seiner Bedeutung zu verbessern. Um diese Aufgabe zu erfüllen musste ich drei methodische Schritte anwenden. Eingangs war es notwendig eine synoptische Analyse der drei exemplarischen Modelle durchzuführen, mit dem Ziel die konstitutive Struktur dieses Prozesses zu bestimmen. Aufgrund der Unterscheidung der gemeinsamen (wesentlichen) von den besonderen (kontingenten) Schritten, stellte sich heraus, dass die grundlegende Struktur des innovative-kontemplativen Denkprozesses aus vier geistigen Ebenen und drei dazwischenliegenden kognitiven Schritten besteht. Anschließend untersuchte ich die Ontologie Martin Heidegger's, hinsichtlich der durch die synoptische Analyse gefundenen Grundstruktur. Im Zuge dieser Untersuchung entdeckte ich sowohl vier vergleichbare Ebenen als auch drei vergleichbare Schritte, in einem ontologischen Bedeutungszusammenhang. Schließlich benutzte ich diese Ergebnisse, um eine ontologische Reflexion hinsichtlich ihrer Bedeutung für die epistemologischen Ebenen und Schritte anzustellen. Dadurch kam ich zu der Erkenntnis, dass der innovative-kontemplativen Denkprozesses eine schrittweise Transformation des ontologischen Status bedeutet. Die Subjektivität, welche sich über alle drei zeitlichen Dimensionen (Vergangenheit, Gegenwart, Zukunft) erstreckt, wird abgebaut und schließlich durch eine ursprüngliche Seinsweise ersetzt, die Heidegger Dasein nennt. Dieses existentielle Stadium ermöglicht hoch-innovative Einfälle, da man von den Grenzen und Vorgängen der Subjektivität befreit ist. Gleichzeitig werden die eigenen Existenzbedingungen zur Quelle des Denkens, was einen radikalen Unterschied bedeutet. Also besteht die ontologische Bedeutung innovative-contemplativer Denkprozesse in einer schrittweisen Dekonstruktion des zeitliche, konstituierten Subjekts, um dadurch zu erreichen, dass sich dem jeweiligen Menschen die ursprünglichen Möglichkeiten seiner Existenz eröffnen.

8. Figures

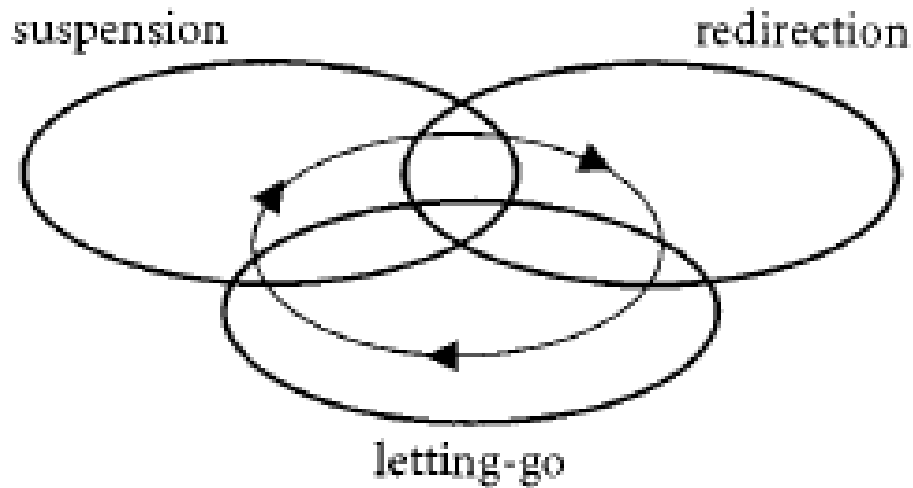


Figure 1: The three principle phases of epoche, according to Depraz, Varela and Vermersch. Source: Depraz 2003

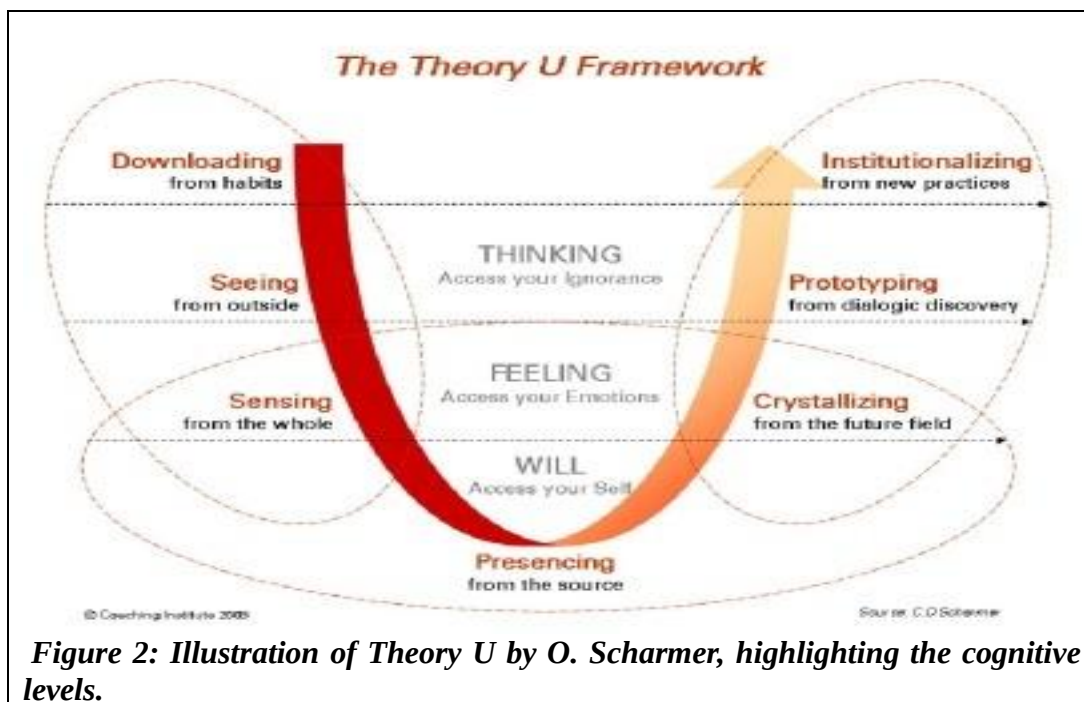


Figure 2: Illustration of Theory U by O. Scharmer, highlighting the cognitive levels.

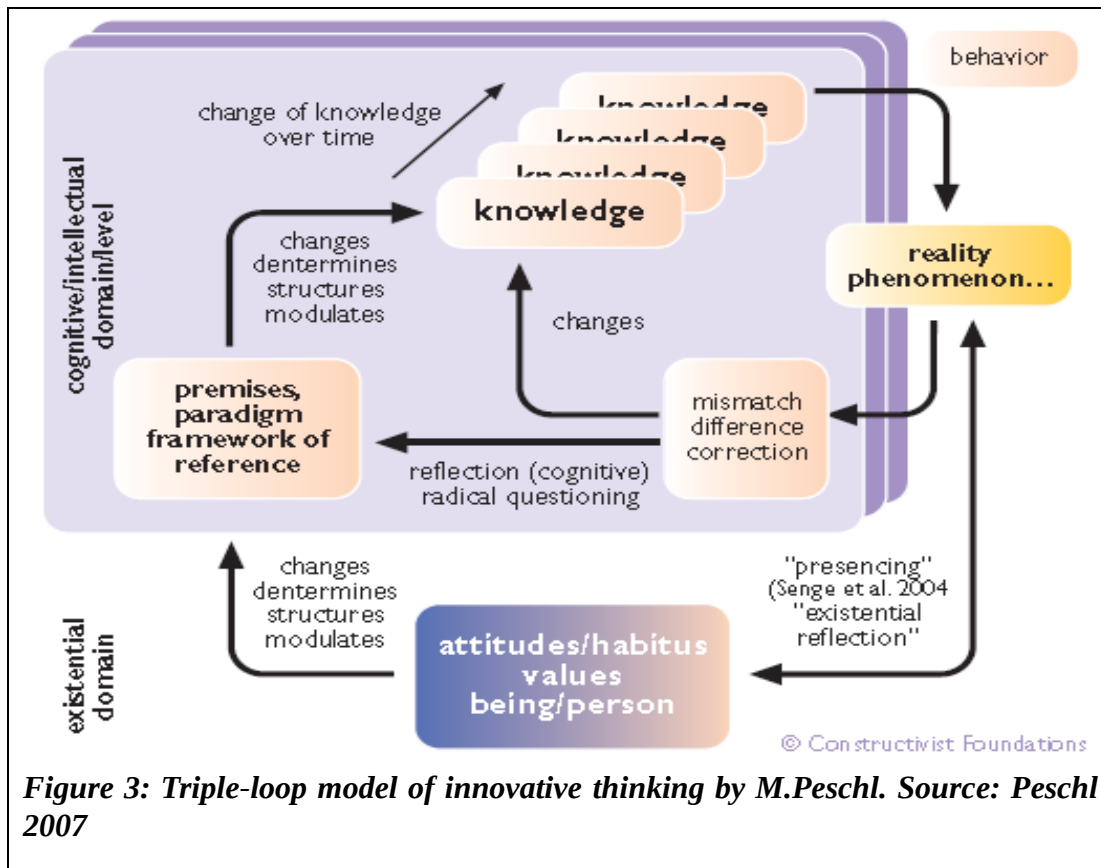


Figure 3: Triple-loop model of innovative thinking by M.Peschl. Source: Peschl 2007

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