PART I

ZOLLIKON SEMINARS, 1959–1969
This drawing should only illustrate that human existing* in its essential

ground† is never just an object which is present-at-hand; it is certainly not

a self-contained object. Instead, this way of existing consists of “pure,” p. 3

*For Heidegger, existence does not refer to the traditional, metaphysically understood

existential (present-at-handness of something). It refers exclusively to the human

being’s existence as Ek-sistence (the human being’s “standing out” into the truth of

being, i.e., as the “lighting” or “clearing” of being [Lichtung des Seins]). In contrast

to any misunderstanding of the human being as a self-contained “subject” vis-à-vis

“objects,” Ek-sistence literally means standing outside oneself into the open region of

being in which beings can come to presence (the human being as “being-in-the-world,”

“Da-sein”). See ZS 272, 286, 292, etc. Unless otherwise indicated, citations of page

numbers are to the in-text marginal page numbers (hereafter ZS [Zollikoner Seminare]),

which refer to the page numbers of the first German edition.—TRANSLATORS

†For Heidegger, “essence” (Wesen) must not be understood in the traditional, meta-

physical sense of a timeless essentia, i.e., quidditas, but in the verbal sense of

the old Germanic word wesan (to dwell), as the temporal way of unfolding, of a

coming to presence, and as an enduring of the being of something. The essential

ground of human existing is not a first cause, nor any other cause, but rather the

revealing-concealing mystery of being, which grants the human being his Da-sein. See

M. Heidegger, Introduction to Metaphysics, trans. R. Manheim (New York: Doubleday,

1961), p. 59. In the following, we translate “human-ecstatic essence” as “unfolding

essence.”—TRANSLATORS
invisible, intangible capacities for receiving-perceiving [Vernehmen]* what it encounters and what addresses it. In the perspective of the Analytic of Da-sein, all conventional, objectifying representations of a capsule-like psyche, subject, person, ego, or consciousness in psychology and psychopathology must be abandoned in favor of an entirely different understanding. This new view of the basic constitution of human existence may be called Da-sein, or being-in-the-world. Of course, in this context the Da of this Da-sein certainly does not mean what it does in the ordinary sense—a location near an observer. Rather, to exist as Da-sein means to hold open a domain through its capacity to receive-perceive the significance of the things that are given to it [Da-sein] and that address it [Da-sein] by virtue of its own “clearing” [Gelichtetheit]. Human Da-sein as a domain with the capacity for receiving-perceiving is never merely an object present-at-hand. On the contrary, it is not something which can be objectified at all under any circumstances.

January 24 and 28, 1964, at Boss’s Home

Kant writes: “Being is obviously not a real predicate, that is, it is not a concept of something, which could be added to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing of a thing or of certain properties themselves.”

According to Kant, real has nothing to do with what is actual or nonactual, but because of its origin from res, it means accordingly: relating to the nature of a thing; something which can be found in a thing. For instance, the real predicates of a table are: round, hard, heavy, etc., whether the table actually exists or is merely imagined.

In contrast, being is not something that can be found in the nature of a table, even if the table were to be broken down into its smallest parts.

If one elucidates and explicates the term “obvious,” which is not the same as merely using different words for the same thing, it means the same as manifest, or evident, which is derived from evideri—to let oneself

*We translate the German vernehmen with the hyphenated expression “to receive-perceive.” In its existential-ontological meaning vernehmen implies receptivity (Greek voëtiv: to perceive, to understand, to listen in). In a more active, juridical sense, it means that which the judge comes to perceive through the interrogation of witnesses. Vernehmen refers to a phenomenologically immediate, nontheoretical, receptive perceiving. This contrasts with vor-stellen, “to represent,” literally, “setting-before” that which objectifies and reifies.—TRANSLATORS
be seen (ἐναργης, luminously shining; argentum, silver), showing itself from itself.

Therefore, according to Kant, it is obvious that being is not a real predicate. This means that this “not-being-a-real-predicate” simply has to be taken for granted, that is, accepted.

On the whole, “acceptance” has three different meanings.

1. To assume: to expect, to guess, to think of something
2. To be supposed: suppose that . . . , if . . . , then . . . ; to suppose something as a condition, that is, as something which actually is not and cannot be given in itself; acceptance as hypothesis, as suppositio, literally, something to be “put under” an object
3. Acceptance: accepting something that has been given; to keep oneself open for a thing, acceptio

In our context, the second and third meanings of “acceptance” are of special importance.

a. “Acceptance” can be taken to mean suppositio, hypothesis, “placing under.” For example, in Freud’s treatise on the parapraxes,* drives and forces are such suppositions. These supposed drives and forces cause and produce the phenomena. The parapraxes can be explained in such and such a way, that is, their origin can be proved.

b. Acceptance can be taken as accepting something, as a pure and simple receiving-perceiving [Vernehmen] of what shows itself from itself, as the manifest, for instance, the existence of the table in front of us, accepted as that which cannot be proved by suppositions. Or, can you “prove” your own existence as such? That which is accepted by simple receiving-perceiving does not need to be proved. It shows itself. That which is received-perceived is itself the base and the ground [Grund], which founds and supports any assertion about it. Here we are dealing with a plain and simple showing of what is asserted. We get there by simply pointing it out. There is no further need for arguments here.

A strict distinction has to be made between those cases where we must demand and seek proofs and those cases where no proof is needed but where, nevertheless, the highest kind of grounding [Begründung] can be

found. Not every grounding must nor can be a proof, whereas every proof is a kind of grounding.

Aristotle had already said: "For not to know of what things one may demand proof, and of what one may not, argues simply want of education." If we have gained insight into this distinction, it is a sign that we are trained and educated for thinking. Whoever lacks this insight is not trained, nor educated for science.

The two ways of acceptance, supposition and accepting, are not on the same level in rank so that one or the other could be chosen arbitrarily. Rather, each supposition is always already grounded in a certain kind of acceptio. Only when the presence* of something is accepted, can one have suppositions about it.*

That which shows itself, the phenomenon, is what is accepted. There are two kinds of phenomena.

a. Perceptible, existing phenomena are ontic phenomena, for example, the table.

b. Nonsensory, imperceptible phenomena, for example, the existence of something, are ontological phenomena.

The imperceptible, ontological phenomena always already and necessarily show themselves prior to all perceptible phenomena. Before we can perceive a table as this or that table, we must receive-perceive that there is something presencing [Anwesen]. Ontological phenomena, therefore, are primary [in the order of being], but secondary in [the order of] being thought and seen.

With regard to the contrast between the psychodynamic and the Dasein-analytic view of the human being: What is being discussed and decided upon there? The determination of the being of that being,*

---

*We translate Anwesenheit as "presence," Anwesen as "presencing," and das Anwesende as "that which comes to presence."—TRANSLATORS

†Acceptio [Annahme], as the pure acceptance of phenomena, is the ground for scientific supposition, i.e., a hypothesis and theory. According to Heidegger, acceptio is rooted in the projecting [Entwurf] of Da-sein’s existential possibilities. By means of this existential projecting, a domain of things is always already opened up in advance, as for instance in the projecting of Galileo’s scientific worldview. See M. Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 145 ff.; originally published as Sein und Zeit (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1927). All subsequent citations are to the Macquarrie and Robinson translation.—TRANSLATORS

‡In order to ensure the nonsubstantial, yet verbal meaning of this term, Professor Boss suggested "to-be-ness" for Sein. Since this is now commonly known, the translators have elected to stay with the term "being" for Sein.—TRANSLATORS
which we ourselves are. What kind of being [Sein] do we see in advance? According to Freud, in what respect must phenomena take a back seat to [scientific] suppositions? With respect to what we consider to be real and actual: according to Freud, only that which can be explained in terms of psychological, unbroken, causal connections between forces is actual and genuinely actual. As the world renowned, contemporary physicist Max Planck said a few years ago: “Only that which can be measured is real.” In contrast to this, it can be argued: Why can’t there be something real which is not susceptible to exact measurement? Why not sorrow, for example?

Even this kind of supposition, that is, that “real” presupposes unbroken, causal connections, is founded upon an acceptio. It is accepted as self-evident that being is a precalculable, causal relationship. With this supposition, the human being is also posited as an object which can be explained causally.

Two kinds of evidence must be always kept in view.

1. We “see” the existing table. This is ontic evidence.
2. We also “see” [phenomenologically] that existence is not a quality of the table as a table; nevertheless, existence is predicated of the table when we say it is. This is ontological evidence.

We affirm the table’s existence, and we simultaneously deny that existence is one of its qualities. Insofar as this occurs, we obviously have existence in view. We “see” it. We “see” it, but not like we “see” the table. Yet, we are also unable to immediately say what “existence” means here. “Seeing” has a double meaning: optical, sensory sight, and “seeing” in the sense of “insight” [Einsehen].

Therefore, we will call on Kant for help. He says: Being is not a real predicate, yet it is still a predicate. What kind [of predicate]? It is “simply the pure positedness of a thing”—therefore, the positedness [existence] of something which is given (Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [Critique of Pure Reason], A.598, B.626). We posit; we put it. For instance, the table can be procured, encountered; a cabinetmaker produces it.

Positedness: I posit. With the “I,” therefore, the human being comes into play here. Whereby? In perceiving; in seeing the table which exists.

*Here Heidegger refers not to a vague or arbitrary “intuition” in the subjective-psychological sense but to the primordial, immediate grasping (understanding) and apprehending of being, of what is. This “in-sight” is the ontological supposition for any other categorical or sensory intuition. See *Being and Time*, secs. 7, 31; M. Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp. 1–29.—TRANSLATORS*
Does the table exist because I see it? Or can I see it because it exists? Is the existence of the table only a matter for the table itself? But in production it is released away from the human being's action. Released to where? Into existing in its own way, the table shows itself by being used; by the human being's having [something] to do with it. We see that the table exists as a utensil.

How does Dr. R. comport himself to this table here? The table shows itself to him through space. Space is also pervious for the appearance of the table. It is open, free. A wall can be put between the observer and the table. Then space is no longer pervious to seeing the table but is open for building a wall. Without its openness, a wall could not be built between them.

Therefore, the spatiality of this space consists of its being pervious, its being open, and its being a free [realm]. In contrast, the openness itself is not something spatial. The open, the free, is that which appears and shows itself in its own way. We find and situate ourselves in this open [realm], but in a different way than the table.

The table is in its own place and is not simultaneously there where Dr. R. is seated. The table there is present-at-hand [vorhanden], but as a human being Dr. R. is situated in his place on the sofa, and he is also simultaneously at the table. Otherwise, he could not even see the table at all. He is not only at his place and then also at the table, but he is already situated here and here. He is ontologically situated in this space [the room]. We are all in this space. We reach out into the space by relating to this or that. In contrast, the table is not "situated" in space.

The open, the free [realm]—that which is translucent [das Durchscheinende] is not grounded on what is in space. It is the other way around: What is in space is grounded on the open and on the free.*

July 6 and 9, 1964, at Boss's Home

I. July 6, 1964

MARTIN HEIDEGGER: For once we must disregard all science in view of what

*With the terms "the open" and "the free," the later Heidegger referred to the very presence of being [Anwesenheit], which grants the "spatiality" of Da-sein and the derivative, homogeneous "space" which Galileo and Newton determined as nature. See M. Heidegger, Basic Writings, ed. D. Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 384–85, who provided an overall, general introduction and an introduction to each section, and Parmenides, trans. A. Schrawar and R. Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 148–49. Also see Heidegger, Being and Time, secs. 23, 24, 70.—TRANSLATORS
we will now discuss, that is, no use should be made of it now. It must be
asked then in a positive sense: How then should we proceed? We must
learn a new way of thinking—a thinking which was already known to
the ancient Greeks. Returning to the theme of our last meeting, we
ask: Is this the same table which stands before me today?

SEMINAR PARTICIPANT: I remember it differently. It’s really not the same!
It’s been exchanged.

MH: Suppose it is the same [derselbe]. Is it also alike [der gleiche]?*

SP: No, I remember it differently.

MH: In the aide-mémoire [seminar protocol] which lies in front of you,
the expression “pure and simple” is used. How about it?

SP: It has something to do with something simple and plain.

MH: Yes, but is this “acceptance” [hinnehmen] actually so simple? Obviously
not. Direct acceptance is not an absolute certainty. Does it have the
character of certainty at all?

SP: It has a momentary certainty: It is here and now, not absolute.

MH: What characteristic of certainty does direct receiving-perceiving have?

SP: Empirical existence.

MH: It is an actual, but unnecessary existence. This is called assertoric
certainty. This is in contrast to what is called apodictic certainty, for
example, $2 \times 2 = 4$. Apodictic certainty is not absolute either, but it
is necessary. Why isn’t it absolute? . . .

In $2 \times 2 = 4$ “the same as” [=, equals] is presupposed. It is also
presupposed that two always remains identical to itself; therefore, it
is a conditional certainty.

Now, we first described this table, but that is not what interests
us. Only “the table which exists” is of interest to us. We took this
existence for granted in the sense of what is called acceptance. Now,
what does it mean to exist? Being is not a real predicate according to
Kant, but we speak about the table’s existence. What is meant by this
“real”? It indicates relating to the nature of a thing [Sachhaltigkeit]. In
this sense, existence is not real. Nevertheless, we attribute existence

*In contrast to the formal-abstract identity or equality (das Gleiche) of something
(object) with itself, the later Heidegger’s term “sameness” (das Selbe) refers to the
ontological relationship of reciprocal belonging-together [Zusammengehören] of
being and beings in their difference. It points to the self-differentiating, self-giving of
being, called Ereignis (the disclosive appropriating Event of being). See M. Heidegger,
p. 218.—TRANSLATORS
to the table. Existence belongs to it. How does it belong to it? What does existence mean?

SP: The table is in space.

MH: Does this belong to the nature of the thing?

SP: Extension is a property of space.

MH: How?

SP: It has extendedness [Ausgedehntheit]: how high it is; how wide, and so forth. These are its dimensions.

MH: Are extension and dimension different? What is the difference?

SP: Dimension is an arbitrarily selected extension.

MH: How do particular spaces relate to “space”?

SP: Space contains them.

MH: Space is not “the universal” in relation to [particular] spaces, as with trees, for example, as the tree is [the universal] to particular trees. Now, what characterizes this space?

SP: It is space, which is demarcated.

MH: It is a space for living; it contains useful things. There is an orientation to things in space. Things have a special meaning for the people who live there. They are familiar to some [of the people], but strange to others. This space has characteristics other than “space.” How is the table in space now?

SP: It belongs to space; it takes up space.

MH: But how?

SP: It has a shape which limits it according to its space.

MH: Yes. Now you can see how it is with this aide-mémoire, as they call it. What meaningless sentences! That’s why we’re so helpless with this scribbling on paper!

Now, we are asking whether this table would still be here if Dr. R. were no longer here to see it.

SP: Both of them are located in the space, which separates the observer from the table, as well as connects him to it.

MH: Separates? Are you sure? If something is separated, it must have first been connected.

SP: Better to say distant from, removed from.

MH: Distance [in the originary, ontological sense]* has nothing to do with separating and connecting. Now, last time we asked: If we put a wall between the table and Dr. R., [then] is the table still there?

---

*Heidegger distinguishes the ontological meanings of “de-distancing,” “re-moting,” and “de-severing” [Ent-femen] as an existential characteristic of Da-sein’s “being-in-
SP: Then the table is no longer visible to the observer.

MH: But is the table still there?

SP: It’s behind the wall. It’s hidden.

MH: No, not even hidden.

SP: We don’t have an immediate perception [of it], but we can remember and imagine it.

MH: Do you see? It’s not so easy.

SP: For a child or for a primitive man, it wouldn’t be there anymore.

Existence not only consists in its being seen.

MH: Close your eyes. Where is the table now?

SP: Concerning perception, the table is gone—but with [your] eyes closed you can still trip over it.

MH: Yes, that would be a particularly stark perception. Then, is the table only represented in my head?

SP: The table remains in its place, but that’s not absolutely certain. Someone could have taken it away. . . . When I close my eyes, I still have a particular relationship to it. It doesn’t make any difference whether the table is still there.

MH: Let’s assume you close your eyes. When you open them again, is the table gone? What then?

SP: Amazement, disappointment.

MH: What does disappointment mean?

SP: An unfulfilled expectation.

MH: Yes, exactly. Even when your eyes were closed, you were by the table. Dr. R. then perceives the table here from over there. How does this happen? Then where is R.?

SP: Here and there.

MH: R. is here and there at the same time, but the table cannot be here and there at the same time. Only the human being can be here and
there at the same time." The table is in space in a different way than the human being.

SP: R. has a relationship to the table, but the table does not have a relationship to him.

MH: But what about space?

SP: I move in space.

MH: How?

SP: I move myself. The table is moved.

MH: Then, how about this clock? Doesn't it move by itself as well?

SP: No, its hand is moved by people.

MH: It runs by itself.

SP: No, a spring moves it. The spring is made by people.

MH: The spring belongs to the clock. The clock runs. That is part of it.

SP: No, the clock does not move itself, only the hand.

MH: Then the hand. . . . What part of the human being is in space?

SP: The body.

MH: Where are you yourself? I change my position like this. Then, do I only move my body? . . . The table does that too!

SP: Last time we reached the point where we characterized space as the open and as pervious. How does the human being relate to the open now?

MH: Yes, that's the question.

SP: I am not only in space. I orient myself in space.

MH: What does that mean?

SP: I am in space, as far as I comprehend it.

MH: In what way?

SP: Space is open for me, but not for the table.

MH: Space is open through you. And how is it for the table in this case?

SP: Space is not open for the table.

MH: Is space anything at all for the table?

SP: The human being has space present to him. . . . The table was made. The human being has space and has [also] made the table.†

*See M. Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in Basic Writings, pp. 343–64, 335.—TRANSLATORS

†See Heidegger, Being and Time, p. 146.—TRANSLATORS
MH: Can’t the table, which has been made, be in space the same way as the human being? Here “to make” [produce] means “to stand here.” The table has been released away from its relationship to production. The meaning of handicraft and art is that something has been made and can stand on its own. So what does it mean [when I say]: I orient myself in space, but the table does not?

SP: We suppose that the table doesn’t do it.

MH: Doesn’t the table have anything to do with orientation?

SP: The human being can orient himself or herself to it. For example, the table itself is oriented in relation to the four cardinal points of the heavens (N, S, E, W). It has a definite location and has been placed there for Professor H.

MH: It has been arranged in the room. It is oriented according to a way of living. Orientation has something to do with the rising of the sun. Why then not occidentalization?

SP: “Orient” means the rising of the sun and of the light.

MH: With the rising of the sun, it gets light and everything becomes visible. Things shine. In certain burial rites, the face is turned toward the east. Churches are oriented in the same way as well. By the way, when the light is turned off, how is it then with the clearing [Lichtung]? . . . “Clearing” means “to be open.” There is also clearing in darkness. Clearing has nothing to do with light but is derived from “lighten” [unburden]. * Light involves perception. One can still bump into something in the dark. This does not require light, but a clearing. Light—bright. “Light” comes from “lighten,” “to make free.” A clearing in the forest is still there, even when it’s dark. Light presupposes clearing. There can only be brightness where something has been cleared or where something is free for the light. Darkening, taking away the light, does not encroach upon the clearing. The clearing is the presupposition for getting light and dark. It is the free, the open.

SP: What is that—the free, the open?

SP: The free and the open is space. Is it only the free space or the space occupied by the table?

*With the term “lighten,” Heidegger is referring to lightening a load in the sense of clearing away the forest’s thicket. The later Heidegger uses this metaphor to describe Da-sein’s “clearing” [Lichtung]. See Heidegger, Being and Time, p. 135, and “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” in Basic Writings, pp. 373–92.—TRANSLATORS
MH: If space were not free, the table couldn’t be there. Space frees the table. Space is then “occupied,” but that doesn’t mean it’s no longer free.

SP: Then is it the same space as the space of this room?

MH: The room belongs to it. Once more, you see that language is wiser than we think. “Space” comes from “making space” [for]. What does this mean?

SP: “To free” . . . but also “to make space for,” that is, to arrange, to put in place, or on the other hand, to make a place for.

MH: Space has places. To clear away [aufräumen], to make order among things that are not in place. That is something different from simply being present-at-hand [Vorhandensein].

SP: We also speak about “being cleared up” [aufgeräumt] if someone is in a good mood.

MH: Yes, then one is serene [cleared up], free. Are space and clearing identical, or does one presuppose the other? . . . Now, that cannot be decided yet. There can be something else in the clearing: time. We haven’t talked about that yet. Let’s occupy ourselves some more with the difference between free and open, on the one hand, and with something empty, on the other.

SP: Something “empty” means “containing nothing.”

MH: Therefore, not occupied. “Free” also means “not occupied,” but in a different way.

SP: “Free” means “free for something.”

MH: It is able to be occupied. “Empty,” however, means “not occupied.” Space can also remain free, even when it is occupied. Something is empty only because there is the free.

SP: Is it possible then that unoccupied is different from not able to be occupied?

MH: The empty [a void, a vacuum] is the unoccupied free [realm].

SP: The free has a ground [Boden]. Under certain circumstances, the empty does not. You can have a groundless void.

MH: Outer space, for example. Isn’t it able to be occupied? It’s very much occupied indeed. There is no void without the free [realm]. The void is grounded in the free.

*Here the “free” does not refer to psychological “freedom of choice,” but rather to Da-sein’s being exposed into the open region, i.e., being in which beings (and space) can come to presence. See Heidegger, Basic Writings, pp. 129–32, and Being and Time, pp. 145–48, 183.—TRANSLATORS
SP: What is meant here by “ground”? The ground for what?
MH: It is a relation concerning the nature of a thing, not a logical ground [between concepts].
SP: That’s difficult for the students because ground is always understood in the sense of logical conclusions alone. You say: having the nature of a thing [sachhaltig]. But what kind of a thing [Sache] is this?
MH: Thing [as a subject matter] is that with which we are dealing.
SP: I cannot understand the open or the free as a “thing.”
MH: Is “subject matter” only a “thing”?* Indeed, there are nonperceptible subject matters. Space, or $2 \times 2 = 4$, for example. These are subject matters. Here “subject matter” means “something with which we are dealing.”
SP: Then what does being a “subject matter” mean?
MH: A ground for a subject matter means that one subject matter cannot exist without another subject matter. There cannot be a void without the “free.” Free,” that is, “capable of being occupied,” is more original than “void.”
SP: We feel that it could also be stated inversely: There is the “free” only because there is the void [empty].
MH: The difference between ratio essendi and ratio cognoscendi comes into play here. Something empty is the ground for knowing [Erkenntnisgrund] the free, but the free is the ratio essendi [Seinsgrund] for something empty. It is a ground for being, not a [physical] cause.
Then how is the human being in space? Does the human being only occupy space, or am I in space in a different way?
SP: I use my place. I sit.
MH: Does the table sit? What does “it sits” mean?
SP: I can take different positions [verschiedene Haltung] in space... The human being fills up space.
MH: So does the table. ... When I refer to the human being, I am already referring to space too.
SP: The human being and space belong to each other.
MH: How? Space also belongs to the table.
SP: The human being is able to comport [verhalten] himself toward space.
MH: He is always comporting himself [toward something].

*Here Heidegger shifts the meaning of Sache [thing] to Sachverhalt [subject matter].
—TRANSLATORS
SP: Space belongs to the human being’s essential characteristics. I comport myself toward things in space, therefore, also toward space. Space is open to the human being.

MH: For the table too.

SP: I’m already in this space in which I move.

MH: I walk by occupying space. The table does not occupy space in the same way. The human being makes space for himself. He allows space to be. An example: When I move, the horizon recedes. The human being moves within a horizon. This does not only mean to transport one’s body.

SP: Then how is it with an animal?

MH: Again, it is a different relationship toward space. The animal does not speak. The human being is a ζων λογον εχον. The animal does not experience space as space.

SP: What does this “as” mean?*

MH: The animal is acquainted with the ditch it jumps over as a simple matter of fact [Sachverhalt], but not as a concept.

SP: The animal cannot reflect.

MH: Is language so essential? Surely there is also a way of communicating without language.

SP: Language and verbal articulation are confused with each other here.

MH: The human being cannot comport himself in any way without language. Language is not only verbal articulation. Communicatio is only one possibility. “To say” [sagen] originally meant “to show” [zeigen].†

SP: When we talk about “occupying space,” the usual understanding is that we are there, where our body is.

MH: I sit here. I talk with you. I sit opposite the wall. I am related to things in space. The table as a table is not related to other things! To comport oneself to something as something means to speak and to say: I am


†Compare the foundational relations among “understanding,” “interpretation,” and “assertion” [Aussage], which in turn encompass the three phenomena of “pointing out” [Aufzeigen] as prior to mere “representation” [Vorstellung], “predication” [Prädikation], and “communication” [Mitteilung]. See Heidegger, Being and Time, pp. 195–203.—TRANSLATORS
open to space. I can move. I know where something belongs, but I don’t need to view space as space. Without paying attention to it thematically, without being occupied with it, I let space be as the open.

**Conclusion.** All this should only indicate to you that this subject matter is by no means easy. Aristotle said: “For as the eyes of night birds are to the blaze of day, so is the reason in our soul to the things which are by nature most evident of all” (*Metaphysics* II.1.993b9 ff.). That is just how it is with *being*. It’s the most difficult for us to see. As Plato said: When man tries to look into the light, he will be blinded.

You should learn not to be afraid when Aristotle is quoted to you. Aristotle and the ancient Greeks are not “finished” or “outdated.” On the contrary, we have not yet begun to understand them. Science does not really move ahead. It’s walking in place. It’s not easy at all to walk in place!

---

**II. July 9, 1964**

MARTIN HEIDEGGER: The last seminar was rather a failure. However, the difficulty lies in the subject matter itself. As Kant says: The point is to catch a glimpse of *being*. We tried to do this with the example of the table. Nevertheless, the difficulty lies in the subject matter, which is *being* itself. For science the domain of objects is already pregiven. Research goes forward in the same direction in which the respective areas have already been talked about prescientifically. These areas belong to the everyday world. However, it is not the same with *being*. Of course, *being* is also illuminated in advance, but it is not explicitly noticed or reflected upon. Since *being* is not the same as beings, *the difference between beings and being* is the most *fundamental and difficult* [problem]. It is all the more difficult if thinking is determined

*For Heidegger the “ontological difference” between *being* and beings is prior to Western metaphysic’s distinction between *existentia* (that a thing is) and *essentia* (what a thing is). In its unique, temporal-ecstatic ek-sistence, human Da-sein transcends all beings by its understanding of being. According to Heidegger, Western metaphysics has forgotten *being* in favor of beings because of the epochal (historical) withdrawal of *being* itself. Even the metaphysical concept of God as the “supreme being” has been substituted for the question of *being*, which is never asked. See M. Heidegger, “What Is Metaphysics?” in *Basic Writings*, pp. 95–112, 190–242; *Identity and Difference*, pp. 61 f., 128 ff.; Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. P. Emad and K. Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. 145–55, 176–87.—TRANSLATORS*