

Existentialism

Author(s): Maximilian Beck

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I would insist that the two problems are inseparable and continually overlap. It is not my intention to treat Being *qua* Being as a mere class. Being *qua* Being has a structure of its own. But in so far as the cosmos has being, the structure of that being can be approached through it. It is my intention in later papers to indicate how this occurs. The *eidōs* (in my system) transcends the perceptual and even the conceptual. Through it we can arrive at the solution of the ontological problem.

LOUIS O. KATTSOFF.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA.

EXISTENTIALISM*

The anthropocentric movement in science is characterized by the practical meaning given to science. It ceases to be knowledge for the sake of knowledge. To modern ears sentences like the following sound strange: Asked for what end man was born, Anaxagoras answered: "In order to look at the sun, the moon, and the sky" (Diogenes Laertius, II, 10). Or, "Deum et animam scire cupio. Nihilne plus? Nihil omino" (St. Augustine, *Soliloquy*, 1, 7). "I want to recognize God and Soul; nothing more? Nothing else at all." This kind of knowledge for its own sake has been more and more replaced in modern times by knowledge which finds its only justification in its practical expedience—as formulated by Francis Bacon in sentences like, "Physici est naturam operando vincere" (It is the task of the physicist to conquer nature by action.) Or, "Quantum scimus tantum possumus" (As much as we know as powerful we are).

Finally, the exclusively practical attitude of man leads to a utilitarianism which considers even man himself to be nothing but a useful instrument in the service of society.

All these movements started very hopeful; they visualized a very happy, peaceful, and moral mankind as the result of endeavors which tried to restrain man from wasting his energies in the adoration and knowledge of, and the practical effort for something other than man himself.

As a matter of fact, however, this anthropocentric movement brought to maturity the very opposite results. There were no ends left for which to live. Knowledge was interpreted as a childish game whose illusionary character was merely hidden by certain universally accepted rules of game. Descartes' nightmare of living in a world which was merely a dream was

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fulfilled. Man reacted with self-irony, romanticism, and even with despair and suicide.

Even the basic principles of science were gradually abolished. Today none of the principles are acknowledged which were decisive for modern science in its beginning: Objectivity and constancy of space, time, matter, figures and geometry, and causality are denied. What mathematics and science are speaking about is not the object of concrete awareness and insight. Their axioms are neither evident in themselves, nor have they objective validity; they are merely "postulates." In other words, modern science is more abstract and more a matter of plain arbitrariness than medieval Scholasticism. And as to the practical results—the more power over nature men have achieved, the less are they able to use it for happiness, and for the establishing of a peaceful and moral relationship among them. Instead of being relieved from hardship, they become breathlessly hunted tools themselves, and are threatened by mutual self-destruction and slavery.

The natural reaction to such a depreciation of the value of world, life, and man himself has been manifested by attempts of various kinds of escape. Escape—where into? Escape into a vague infinity, into a pseudo-absolutism.

Existentialism or existential philosophy is the reaction to all those attempts. It is the extreme attempt to find a meaning in the existence of modern man whose philosophy and science *originated* in the will to make himself, through knowledge, the master of the world, and whose philosophy and science have ended in a complete nihilism, just because he succeeded so extremely well in making himself the master of the world that nothing was left, besides himself, to give him an end to live for. Theoretically, man has become the *conditio sine qua non* of all reality and value—and he despairs just because of that. He tries to overcome this despair, by getting rid of his autocratic self, practically as well as ideologically.

This desperate attempt of the modern man to escape from himself into a vague infiniteness because of the denial of absolute ends beyond his own person, has been mistaken by existential philosophy as the very contrary of what it is, namely, as assertion of substantial *absoluteness* and as an attempt to escape from himself into secure stability. At the same time, existential philosophy tries to establish an absolute end of man's existence on the very ground of his consciously and voluntarily affirmed *finiteness*. But, in doing so, existential philosophy only repeats, in an exaggerated manner, the basic error of modern man, namely, that of making himself, as a finite being, the end, correlative subject and even the origin of the entire world. The result is obvious. After God was swallowed up in the world, according to modern philosophy and science, and after this

world was swallowed by consciousness and man, the existential philosophy now dissolves man himself.

Existentialism started with Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Both considered real knowledge as rooted in a passionate personal existence which manifests man's inescapable finiteness; all essential knowledge they say is not a disinterested apprehension of objective matters of fact, but a subjective or partial decision. Man should not direct his life intelligently according to objective aspects or through cautious calculation of universal possibilities, but he must try to realize his own, very individual and never definable finiteness, always running the risk of wrecking his life in the attempt to transcend the limits of his finiteness; yet this is the only way of real self-realization. Unless one does this, one does not really "exist," which means that one is not really *oneself*, but represents merely the impersonal mass or the general public ("publicum"), in whose clichés one thinks, feels, wills, acts, and feels at ease. In his drama, "Peer Gynt," Henrik Ibsen depicted a man who lives a relatively comfortable life by avoiding or winding himself around all obstacles, but who thus escapes all opportunities of realizing himself by boldly *going through* the obstacles. In the end it seems as if he had not existed at all. Life has not left its stamp upon him and he is, therefore, to be melted down again by Death, called the "button-maker," who equalizes all.

The man who really "exists," the counterpart to Peer Gynt, has been drawn by Ibsen in "Brand." Brand, a minister, is, through his sincere search for God, without pity for himself. Erring, he transcends the limits of his own existence. God, whom he imagines a merciless judge, has it revealed to him not until in his last hour, that "God is *Deus caritatis*." Nevertheless, such an existence has stamped Brand's personality; he cannot be melted down, not even by death.

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche agree that man must be thrust into ultimate solitariness as the best condition for his self-realization or "existence." They deny reason and intellect lest man be deceived by an illusory communicableness of truth. They demand an heroic attitude of asceticism in order to prevent man from attaching himself to something outside himself instead of continuing his effort of self-realization.

Nietzsche and Kierkegaard disagree, however, decidedly on the answer to the question of the last origin and meaning of human existence. For Nietzsche there is neither an origin nor an end of it. "God is dead," means "God is only an illusion which has been overcome." Man stands by himself and for himself. Human existence has no meaning, but man himself must give meaning to it. He has to create himself according to his own design. He is even literally, the real creator of himself; for, since time is a circle, *der Ring der ewigen Wiederkunft*—an endless circularity or

return of all historic events—brings him back again and again. Thus man is able to decide on and create his *origin* by determining and creating his *future*! His actions now belong to the chain of causes which bring (and brought) him about again and again.

Man as his own creator: that is, indeed, the ultimate consequence of the emancipation from God; it is the last step towards madness. Nietzsche's insanity is the logically necessary consequence of Nietzsche's philosophy.

Nietzsche tried with all his power to evade this consequence. At first he was terrified by that view of an endless circularity of the same things. Then he tried to make a religion of salvation out of it. This, however, was nothing but the old escape from the senseless marking of time into the violent drunkenness of the merely aesthetic view of man. The moral antagonism against *nature* is condemned, and replaced by an antagonism against the *majority*, the common man, in favor of an aristocratic minority valued aesthetically. Man is seen solely as a biological phenomenon, in the categories of the Dionysiac *élan* of the *dancing life*. Human existence is but a pleasant game, without meaning beyond itself. It is the Pagan view of man which contradicts the Christian view of human existence; the latter emphasizes the eternal meaning of the temporal—historical—events, just because of the uniqueness implied in their irreversibility. The ever-returning is the essentially antimoral and anti-Christian view; it is so radically anti-Christian that the symbol of this "dancing eternity," a snake which bites its own tail, became for Christianity the symbol of *atheism*. Such a view condemns history and every human decision and action to absolute senselessness. Today we begin to understand why that view and all its implications, such as the eternity of world and matter, were so bitterly attacked in the theological discussions of the first Christian centuries. The reason for its repudiation was more than its contradiction to the Bible: man's dignity was at stake.

One of the main reasons for Nietzsche's existentialism was the contempt which he felt because the doctrines of modern philosophers did not agree with their way of life. How little he himself succeeded in adjusting his way of life to his doctrines can be seen from the following confession: "Man hat gut reden von aller Art Immoralität: aber sie aushalten können! Zum Beispiel würde ich ein gebrochenes Wort oder gar einen Mord nicht aushalten."¹

All his efforts to give meaning to man's existence by the denial of God and by confining man to his very finiteness end in an absolute dissolution of the Ego (in plain process) and of Nietzsche's own personality. In 1888, just before the outbreak of his insanity, Nietzsche wrote one of the

¹ "It is very easy to *talk* about all kinds of immorality, but to stand it! I could, for instance, not stand a broken word let alone a murder" (W.W. 12, 224).

most deeply moving poems of world literature "Zwischen Raubvögeln": "zwischen zwei Nichtsen eingekrümmt ein Fragezeichen," "zwischen hundert Spiegeln vor dir selber falsch," "in eigenen Stricken gewürgt, Selbsterkenner, Selbsthenker."² He had not removed the nihilism of modern man pushed it to its extreme.

Kierkegaard's attempt to save man by stressing his concrete finiteness disagrees fundamentally with Nietzsche's view in so far as his emphasis on man's finiteness is not at the expense of the existence of God, but on the contrary is conditioned by and contrasted with God's powerful reality and infinity. Standing on the ground of the Christian tradition, he succeeds in clarifying and justifying the absolute meaning of man's finite existence. He uncovers the deep meaning and the testifying experience which underlies the facts which Kierkegaard calls *paradox* and Tertullian calls *absurdum*. The eternal and absolute God has been incarnated in one fragile historic man. Eternity occurs in an historic event. Eternity occurs in the resolute decision of the moment. Something absolute can be decided by a happening in time. Contrary to Hegel's "Das Ganze ist die Wahrheit," one can say, "Das Einzelne, Endliche ist die ganze Wahrheit." Accordingly, the common man who fulfills his simple and finite duties realizes the rich fulness of the *qualitative infinite* better than a Faust or Don Juan who exhausts himself in the *quantitative* accumulation of endless possibilities which are all meaningless because they do not lead on toward the deep and essence of his own being. In this way Kierkegaard opposes the *immediate* absoluteness of every single person to Hegel's tendency to attribute meaning to a single man solely through his part in the totality of all other beings *mediated* to each other in the absolute process of *Weltgeschichte*. In *Stages* he demonstrates the superiority of the moral restriction over libertinism by showing that the common experience of a loyal husband, attached during a lifetime to one wife, is even richer than that of a Don Juan who never escapes the boring repetitions of a merely sensual life.

It was the devaluation of man into a mere part and tool of the state, nation, and other powers, related to universal history, which induced Kierkegaard to revolt against Hegel and it was a revolt which had its origin in Christian insight. And it was, moreover, the Christian insight in the Divine in every single man, *in spite* of his finiteness, which enabled Kierkegaard to demand for man an existence in social communion with others as his fellow brothers, though he considered solitude the best means

² "Among birds of prey." Nietzsche finds himself "squeezed between two nothings, an interrogation mark," "among a hundred mirrors, false to himself," "strangled by his own ropes, self-knower, self-hangman."

of self-realization. Men should meet and love each other as real and individual persons instead of trying to escape from themselves into the irresponsible anonymity and shallowness of "social life."

Kierkegaard is the only existentialist who succeeded, but this he did solely because and in so far as he kept the deeper understanding of that moral, personalistic, activist, and realistic view of Christianity whose abandonment by modern thinkers has, gradually and inevitably, led to modern nihilism.

In speaking of existentialism, it is usual to think solely of Jaspers and Heidegger, and to consider their philosophy as the beginning of a revolutionary new era of thinking. Contrary to such a view, we hold that Jaspers and Heidegger push the errors of modern science and philosophy to their extremes, misunderstand the traditional philosophy which they are fighting against, and even misunderstand the philosophies of Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Schelling upon whose philosophy they have built their own.³ What is new in their achievements is the fact that they extend nihilism even into the basic *concepts* of Being, God, Truth, Knowledge, World, Man, and Value. This means that they not only deny, outside or inside of man, a something which gives aim and value to his existence, but they also try to convince us that the very meaning of God, Truth, Knowledge, World, Man, and Value is failure, frustration, or nothingness.

And they try to convince us, further, that the meaning of human existence lies in the conscious facing and willing bringing about of that failure, frustration, and nothingness. Nietzsche had removed the aim or end of human and worldly existence from something beyond it to that very existence itself which is seen as Dionysiac joy of dancing life in ever-returning circles.

But while Nietzsche excluded death from life and took it as something purely foreign which comes into life, manifesting itself as "Geist der Schwere" or weariness, Jaspers and Heidegger hold death to be the most essential element of life itself. In Nietzsche's view, life is a jubilant joy of dance, because it leads, as fruit, to the germ, that is the beginning. It makes sense to interpret life in this way as joyful, although it has no aim or end beyond itself. Real existence, interpreted in this way as dancing life, has not-being as a contrast outside of itself; it is jubilant self-realization and self-maintenance *against* nothingness.⁴ Now Jaspers and Hei-

³ Cf. my "Referat und Kritik von Heideggers 'Sein und Zeit,'" *Philosophische Hefte*, 1928, 1, and "Kritik der Schelling-Jaspers-Heideggerschen Ontologie," *Philosophische Hefte*, 1934.

⁴ Concerning the similarity of this view with that of Whitman, confer my paper on "Walt Whitman's Intuition of Reality," *Ethics*, vol. LIII, no. 1.

degger try to give death and nothingness an indirectly positive meaning in a similar way; but they cannot succeed, because, in their view, death and nothingness are essentials of life and real existence itself instead of being in contrast with them.⁵

The decisive point is, moreover, that Jaspers and Heidegger dissolve even existence and being itself into nothingness by interpreting it as *being* only in so far as it *vanishes*; which with Jaspers is called *transcendence*, and with Heidegger *temporality*.

In other words, being is perverted into not-being, and not-being is perverted into being. How do Jaspers and Heidegger proceed to make this perversion plausible? They say that our natural concept of being is a very naive one; it confuses the illusory, static, constant, or stable character of corporeal things, called substances (as contrasted with their perceptible movements and changes of quality) *with being proper*. Since science has taught us that there are no static "substances" at all, but only flux and becoming, that concept of being is not only too narrow to be applied to incorporeal things like a living being, a soul or a spirit, but it has completely lost its real meaning.

Such a view, however, misinterprets the true meaning of the natural concept of being. First of all, this natural concept implies being in the sense of *being true*; it means the timeless validity of a true proposition. A proposition can be timelessly true, even if its content concerns temporal change and movement. An eternal truth does not mean the temporal duration, through the endless sum of all times, of that content which is true. Also a transitory phenomenon—for instance, the fact that I write here now—is eternally true. It does not become untrue when I have stopped writing, for the proposition "I write here now this and this" did not imply that I shall continue writing throughout eternity. Also a transitory becoming—is.

That timeless meaning of *validity*, and not that of a static duration, is implied also in the traditional Aristotelian ontology and logic. The true being, therefore, the perfect being for this tradition is God. God, however, is thought of as *actus purus* and life, and, thus, as the extreme opposite of corporeal or material things, the more so as these are held to be static or dead. This view contradicts radically any interpretation of the traditional concept of being as having its prototype in the illusion of a corporeal static form.

Another misinterpretation of the natural concept of being confuses being with being-an-object-of-consciousness or with representing solely the correlation between the recognizing subject and recognized object, without

⁵ Consequently the negative mood of *anxiety*, because of the possibility of not-being, becomes the basic mood of human existence in Heidegger's view.

being *anything* beyond or independent of this relation. This confusion originated in certain sophismata of the German idealism. Their starting-point was some self-evident tautologies such as: nothing can be *recognized* unless being recognized; or, nothing can be object (of knowledge), except for a (recognizing) subject. These self-evident sentences have been, imperceptibly, confused with the following sentences: nothing can *exist*, unless it is recognized; or, nothing can be a subject unless being an object for a recognizing subject. In other words, the self-evident fact that it is impossible for anybody to get knowledge and evidence of any really existing thing, unless he becomes conscious of it—this fact has been confused with the following: The real existence of something means *only* being an object of consciousness or knowledge. In this way, the natural concept of real existence and truth has been perverted into the contrary, namely, into falsehood, fiction, and illusion, that is, into a dependence upon mere subjectivity.

It is this perversion which has dominated philosophy since Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer; it is very much alive in Dilthey, Neo-Kantianism, and the later phenomenology, and it culminates in Heidegger's interpretation of givenness or being present (*Gegebenheit* or *Vorhandenheit*). The natural concept of being implies givenness or objectivity in the sense of being independent of subjectivity. For Heidegger, however, "Vorhandenheit" is nothing but the correlate to a theoretical attitude of man which represents a "deficient modus" of a practical attitude. Things of our world seem to occur to us as objects with their own power: "vorhanden," that means being given to us independent of us. But that happens solely because of life-stream which connects us with them in our proper existence has been cut off and grown congealed. We exist properly (*eigentlich*) or really in our passions, needs, and actions, in our mutual dependence upon other beings, and in being engaged in practical relationship with them. What they appear to be objectively, for instance, houses, streets, and pens, if we consider them theoretically, is only what they *are* through our foregoing practical relationship with them, for instance, dwelling, walking, and writing. All genuine knowledge is thus a practical one, defined by Heidegger as *care* ("Sorge"), implying an immediate *understanding* of the mutual interdependence of ourselves and other beings as alike finite.⁶

Historicalness (*Geschichtlichkeit*) essentially characterizes us as well as the world in which we live. That means, everything is seen by us or occurs to us as shaped by the pattern of the historic situation and tradition into which we are "thrown" (*geworfen*) by chance at birth. Nobody

⁶ For this practical understanding is adjustment of us to other beings and vice versa. And this implies the knowledge of mutual dependence. We are pushed, through practical contact with beings, to the limits of our and other beings.

ever lives in *the* world, but only in *his* world, which is altogether the world of his time⁷ and his nation; this determines all he wishes, aims at, wills, does, and plans (*entwirft*): he is "geworfener Entwurf."

The existential task of everybody is now according to Heidegger to realize himself as an individual in his own world by restricting the impersonal thinking, willing, doing in the historical and general pattern, into which he is "thrown," in favor of a personal determination and view. In a way one is reminded of the Neo-Kantian concept of being positing knowledge as the determination of the undetermined ("Bestimmung des Unbestimmten").

Human existence oscillates between two poles, both representing *nothingness*, although of opposite value. On the one side stands the impersonal or anonymous "one" (*das "man"*) which lacks definite contents and decision, living in vague possibilities and avoiding going to the limits of his own being, which are identified with death. Living in the vague generality of possibilities, one does not "exist" at all. On the other, the positive side, stands the individual or proper Ego which is interpreted as resolutely running forward toward his death, that is, exhausting the limits of his own being. For death does not stand at the end of one's being, but within; death *is* finiteness, and the latter is identified with the positive definiteness and contents of concrete life. The impersonal one lives in the *extensive* duration of time. The proper Ego, however, lives in an *intensive* "temporality," in which his past, present, and future *coincide* in the so-called *momentary* existence, having the duration zero. This proper existence, again, is nothingness, but it is a positive one, because, in resolutely seizing it, in running forward to his own death-limits, the entire real and positive content of a man's existence is at once realized *and* understood.⁸

I hope the reader has been feeling very uneasy, while reading all these bold confusions. The obscure language of Heidegger and Jaspers has, indeed, its essential reason in this kind of confusion. They try to reduce

⁷ In this way the supremacy of history over science and nature has already been established by Dilthey. Notice that even the physical world in which we are living through our imagination, is shaped by the pattern of popularized science. It has as little objective reality as the Kosmos of mythological thinking.

⁸ In so far as genuine *knowledge* is rooted in this momentary coincidence of man's past, present, and future, one is tempted to think of Bergson's theory of Intuition, exemplified by the picture of an elastic ribbon, snapping back; one also thinks of Schelling's concept of knowledge as recollection (*Erinnerung-Verinnerlichung*) and reannexation through the mind of what this mind itself has been or created in the state of self-alienation (as nature or world): *Verausserlichung-Gewesenheit*. (On the naiveté implied in that view, and on Heidegger's wrong application of Schelling's philosophy of divine existence and knowledge to that of man, compare my "Kritik der Schelling-Jaspers-Heideggerschen Ontologie" in *Philosophische Hefte*, Prag, 1934. See particularly chapters XIII, XIV, XV.)

all evidently distinct and static *contents* to different happenings of a dynamic flux; time and space, man and world, ego and community, individual and universal, limits (identified with the contents within them) and vagueness (identified with possibility), finiteness and death—they are all for Jaspers and Heidegger not different quiddities or qualities, which have or acquire or lose realization, but they *are* different ways of realization itself. Spinoza's sentence "Omnis determinatio est negatio" has been elaborated by Hegel in his dialectical system; but Jaspers and Heidegger try to show, so to speak empirically, by anthropological analyses, that being itself *is* that dialectic, seen in concrete finiteness: beingness is interpreted as the denial of all distinct beings and contents, as transcendence, or as *being through disappearance*. This means, with Jaspers, that not only real existence, but even ideal existence is nothingness. Not only reality (that means *that* something exists) is held to be nothingness but also the autonomous differences of contents, or *what* and *how* things are, their essences or *naturae* are explained as being, *ultimately*, nothingness.

Of the many mistakes implied in this view we want to mention merely the following:

(1) A complete misunderstanding of the character of *possibility* as applied to universals by traditional philosophy. It is not vagueness nor lack of precision, but on the contrary, all the universals are subject to the evident necessity which rules all the connections among them. Thus, possibility means solely the extent of the various special cases which are precisely determined by the higher *genus*. An angle in a triangle can possibly be of various different sizes, but cannot be larger than one hundred and eighty degrees, and in every single case its size is mutually determined by the size of the other two angles.

That misinterpretation of the possibility of universals is, of course, connected with the Bergsonian denial of the static and distinct contents as a whole, a denial which is the commonplace attitude of our "dynamic" age. Nobody seems to realize that Plato's discovery of ideas was made in conscious opposition to the Heraclitean flux; it was an attempt to make clear that all quiddities or qualities have a kind of absolute existence which is implied in their *quid-being* or *how-being* itself, and therefore independent of any mode of existence they can acquire or lose.⁹ It is erroneous to say that Plato's discovery has been disproved by modern

⁹ Even if ideas (essences, *naturae*) would not have any existence outside of consciousness—even then the necessary connection between them (*Wesensbeziehungen*), would have objective and absolute validity, for they would evidently be rooted in these contents themselves instead of being produced by any psychical forces. This view contradicts radically that of Empiricism which interprets the lawfulness of nature in terms of certain additional mythical "forces of nature," *beyond* the manifest qualities of things themselves. Modern irrationalism arises out of this empiricist view and not from Platonism which is not mystical at all.

science; we are just beginning to understand what Plato and the Middle Ages in their discussion of universals really meant.

(2) There is in Jaspers' and Heidegger's philosophy a complete misunderstanding of the human *individual*. An individual man is not a way of realization of the universal "man," but is himself a "universal," a *natura*, an essence. I am already an individual because of *what* I am; I am *essentially* distinct from all other beings in the world; I do not exist merely as a consequence of some realization; my uniqueness is a qualitative one. It is not something I owe to my unique place in space and time, as Schopenhauer defines the principium individuationis.

(3) The phenomenon of *knowledge* has nothing to do with any kind of subjectivity or practical relationship between man and other beings. Nor can it be explained by any mode of being. Knowledge is possible only for a spiritual subject which is by its very nature capable of recognition. All subjectivity—the acts of the psychical ego—exist; they and the appearances and the various aspects of the same thing from different standpoints all belong also to the sphere of *objectively existing reality* which can be recognized by the spirit. In the act of recognition man is not a finite being, but a Spirit, merely limited and determined by the psychical ego and the temporal and spatial place of the body to which he is *attached*. All the limitations and failures of knowledge are to be ascribed to the finiteness of man as the point of view to which the Spirit, as embodied in man, is *factually* bound. Since man is essentially a spiritual being, and since Spirit is by its own nature absolute—the Divine *in* man—finiteness cannot be considered to be the essence of man.¹⁰ It is also a mistake, of course, to ignore the traditional differentiation made between Spirit, Soul (psychical Ego), and Body. This *qualitative differentiation* has been rejected by some because it has been misinterpreted as *existential separation*. But no philosopher who has thus distinguished that "trinity" in man has denied his personal unity. There is nothing mystical in this view. Even in the case of a corporeal thing the properties may differ from each other, and yet they are not considered separate, but rather to constitute the real unity of a thing.

(4) In Jaspers' and Heidegger's view, *value* is, of course, a subjectivistic affair, something for psychological and anthropological analysis. Looking for the solution of the problem of what reality is, they stumble over it without seeing it. That *realization* itself is the principle of value, that "Ens et bonum convertuntur" is certainly, in their view, merely a dictum of a very abstract philosophy—although the intuition of the identity of

¹⁰ It seems to me that Professor Romero's polemic against Heidegger (page 3 of his paper *Transcendencia y Valor*, published in no. 92 of the *Revista Sur*) is summed up in this objection to the view of man as essentially a finite being.

value and plain realization is common to *homines religiosi, metaphysici*, poets, and artists. It is in radical contradiction with those philosophies which identify being with care, burden, transcendence, failure, or frustration.

The absurdities of existentialism, representing a deadlock in modern philosophy, demonstrate the urgent need for a new understanding of problems which have been thrown merely by misinterpretations into the cabinet of curiosities.

During the Renaissance, modern philosophy went back to the Pagan Greek philosophy, using it as a midwife in order to get a new start—forward. I do not see any reason why we should not, analogously, go back today to the Christian tradition which identified being with goodness and perfection, and which looked upon man as embodying a spiritual dignity, responding through Reason and Freedom, Religion and Morality, to the call of God. It is the only way to reconcile philosophy once again with the deepest conviction of every man.

MAXIMILIAN BECK.

WILSON COLLEGE.

EXTRACTO

El existencialismo pone la significación absoluta en la finitud humana, oponiendo la pasión al conocimiento abstracto, y restringiendo la acción a los objetivos condicionados histórica y personalmente. Kierkegaard establece la significación absoluta de la finitud humana sólo indirectamente, considerándola como la encarnación “paradójica” de Dios, y acentuando la significación absoluta y externa de la decisión humana, por razón de la irreparabilidad sujeta al irrevocable flujo del tiempo. El entencionalismo de Kierkegaard descubre de nuevo el verdadero significado del cristianismo, y se sirve de él como base de un conocimiento nuevo de la vida y la filosofía.

En la noción de Nietzsche, de Jaspers, y de Heidegger, se sigue la tendencia antropocéntrica de los tiempos modernos hasta sus consecuencias absurdas. Estos valúan la finitud humana absoluta y directamente en sí. Derivan el concepto de un absoluto sin fin y estático, de una noción precientífica de “substancias” corpóreas, estáticas, y permanentes. Nietzsche opone a esto una noción estética y pagana, considerando a la vida y al tiempo como una “circularidad danzante” que permite al hombre crearse a sí mismo en el sentido literario. Jaspers y Heidegger extablecen el nihilismo absoluto por medio de la conversión del ser propio en el no ser, y de la nada en el ser propio.