

Issues in Hermeneutic Phenomenology

V.C. Thomas

Abstract

Reflections on Some Issues concerning Hermeneutics

This paper studies briefly three major issues concerning hermeneutics: Hermeneutic Circle, Hermeneutics of Being, Dasein and equipment and finally the Hermeneutics of Division 1 and Division 2 of *Being and Time*. In passing, it also looks into hermeneutics of language and hermeneutics of truth. The elucidation of hermeneutics which began in the early Greek thinking, reaches its theological and epistemological culmination in the writings of Schleiermacher. However, in Heidegger, it becomes ontological, assuming the form of hermeneutic phenomenology which deals with man's everyday existence. The diagram, indicating hermeneutic circle, shows the forward and backward movement of understanding, stating that hermeneutic circle is not a vicious or a closed circle rather it is an open-ended circle, showing a movement from implication to explication and further implication and still further explication. In the context of the discussion of the Hermeneutics of Division 1 and Division 2 of *Being and Time*, which draws inspiration from Dr R. Sundara Rajan, it is pointed out that there are not only differences between them but there are also a number of similarities between them.

1. Hermeneutic Circle

Any question, for that matter any enquiry, implies a certain presupposition. The answer is disclosed partially at least in our thoughtful questions. This might appear unclear or even circular. Although it is seemingly circular, it is not a vicious circle and not even a closed circle. In fact, it is only a genuine circle. It involves a certain relatedness between "backward and forward" (Heidegger,

1962d). Presupposing is “taking a look beforehand” (Heidegger, 1962c). The best place to start our learning process is our everyday ordinary encounter with the things, i.e., how things are in their ordinary everydayness. Although it is a good starting point, it is provisional. Fore-having, fore-sight and fore-grasping are the conditions under which phenomenological, hermeneutical interpretation operates. All interpretations move within the framework of structure of understanding and pre-understanding. And for this reason, an interpretation is not presuppositionless. Interpretation operates within the limits of the understanding and pre-understanding.

An average understanding of hermeneutic circle is present in our everyday assertions. For example, we often say that asking a question is knowing something of the answer. It appears that such an assertion apparently has the character of circularity. But what kind of circle is it? It is not a vicious circle; it is not even a closed circle, not even a spiral circle. But then what kind of circularity is it? Unlike any of those circles, this is a circle which indicates forward and backward movements which constantly discloses onward march of hermeneutic process. It is a persistently constantly continuous and a never-ending process of implication-explication-implication, further explication and still further implication chain. This deepens, enriches, improves, enhance and augments our understanding. The hermeneutic circle is an expression of existential fore-structure of understanding, demanding that we enter into the circle so as to expound and amplify our understanding of it. Because Heidegger works in the domain of hermeneutic phenomenology and because phenomenology in general demands a transcendental reference, Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology of fore-understanding demand, that we refer it constantly to what shows itself from itself. What it means is this. Only when Dasein projects itself to existence, can it expound hermeneutic phenomenology. For Heidegger

hermeneutic circle is not a contingent feature of understanding but rather an essential feature of Dasein's being-in-the-world. Heidegger writes in *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1962b), "The circle of understanding belongs to the structure of meaning and the latter phenomenon is rooted in the existential constitution of Dasein, i.e., in its understanding which interprets. An entity for which being-the-world its Being itself is an issue, has ontology a circular structure".
(check the text)

Let me indicate the hermeneutic circle by a diagram.

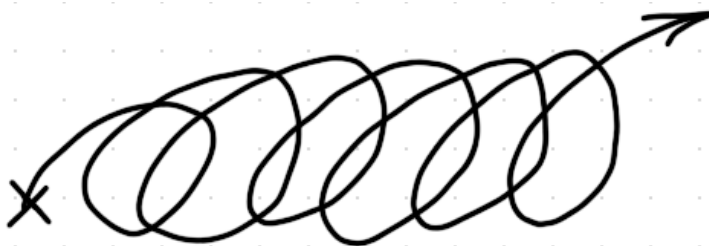


Figure 1: Hermeneutics Circle

In this diagram, each line cuts the other. It is a forward and backward cutting of the lines. What it means is that the present moves towards the future, through the past, i.e., by cutting the past. In it there is a forward and backward movement, forward movement to the future and backward movement to the past, both movements taking place through the present. It is a constant, continuous and persistent movement.

What this diagram shows is hermeneutic process moves in a circular fashion. What it means is that that which we seek to understand explicitly is always already minimally or implicitly understood. But it is only in so far as we get into hermeneutic circle in the right way that understanding can be said to be primordial. Hermeneutic circle is an existential ontological circle, indicating Dasein's existential

ontological status. Understanding is not following a procedure, correct or incorrect, but by discovering the relationship between parts and the whole. This being the case, hermeneutic does not discover anything radically new, for the new, that is to be discovered, is already vaguely, in an obscure manner, is contained in what is to be discovered and is rooted in what has already been understood.

The meaningfulness of such a statement can be shown from every kind of scientific discovery. Every new knowledge is built upon what was previously known, as an advance on what was already known. From that point of view, there cannot be an absolutely new starting point of any knowledge. For example, can we say that the three laws of Newton or the principles of atoms discovered by J. J. Thomson were absolutely new positions? Heidegger would say no; there is no absolute starting point of any knowledge. True, those theories were not existing as the theory of gravitational force or as exact principles of atoms prior to their discoveries. However, they were existing as some vague hypothesis or blurred postulates which captured the academic curiosity and scholarly imagination of those great minds. In other words, they were existing as some kind of scientific phenomena. As for Newton, all that he studied in natural science and mathematics, all the literature that he read, studied and reflected upon constituted the so-called pre-understanding. For his current understanding of gravitational force. Similarly, for Thompson, as well. In fact, I would even say that even the philosophical literature and scientific hypothesis, which deny the composition of atoms also account for pre-understanding as they enable one to reflect more on these issues. Einstein's premises, insofar as they were a further understanding of Newton's theories, do not have an absolutely starting point either. So is a case with the results of Large Hadron Collider Experiments, insofar as they are a further study of atoms. All knowledge is by way of a give and take, by way of implicit-

explicit-implicit-explicit chain relation. This is what is said by saying that all knowledge follows hermeneutics circle.

But this cycle of understanding is not orbital or vicious. It is not a closed or spiral circle. It is an open circle, accepting and synthesizing what had already been understood with what is yet to be understood. It is as an open-ended circle which is constantly moving forward and backward after having absorbed what has already been understood, naming it as what is pre-understood. Hermeneutics circle, therefore, is totally temporal. Its temporality is such that the past, i.e., pre-understanding, can become futural and at other times, the present can become the past and present or the past together with the present can move towards the future. And, in this movement from the past to the present and from the present to the past, transformation and enrichment take place. In Heidegger's language what it means is that pre-understanding becomes understanding and understanding, when there is a possibility of further understanding, can move forward to a higher plane and become a pre- understanding. The forward movement and transformation are never ending process with regard to any knowledge. What is understood is articulated and enunciated in pre-understanding and it is further re-enunciated in the next stage of understanding. And that which is understood in pre-understanding is further re-articulated and expressed the next stage of understanding. It all means that hermeneutic circle demonstrates the existential fore-structure of the process of knowing and understanding by Dasein. What is hidden in the circle is an existential possibility of all knowledge. Hermeneutics circle elucidates the ontology of understanding Heidegger's intuition in elaborating the hermeneutic circle is to return to the origin of Dasein's understanding of Being by way of fundamental ontology. Hermeneutic circle indicates the relationship of backward and forward movement, a movement from understanding to pre-understanding to further understanding, thus moving to a higher

plane of understanding, which is ever present in all our understanding.

2. Hermeneutics of Language

Hermeneutic is the art or the process of signifying mutual and interdependent relationship between understanding and interpretation, rooted in human finitude, expressed linguistically. We, humans, are involved in the historically situated task of understanding and interpreting the world through language. Language is the medium of hermeneutic experience and it is the avenue for the operation of understanding and interpretation. Language is the locus of our communication with each other. Our search for words and expressions in language is, in fact, our search for ourselves. Philosophy is a dialogue and a dialogue, from the Platonic view point, conducts itself. Following this insight of Greek philosophy and following the footsteps of the great masters like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc. Heidegger adapts this by saying that language speaks itself. And from that point, we need to say that the current treatment of language in linguistics and comparative literature need deconstruction.

Hermeneutic phenomenology points out that we exist in our everyday relationships with others, through family and friends. In this relationship, language has a prominent role to play for understanding of each other is possible only through language. Accurate description and precise narration are not the purpose of language. Language is for dialogue, for interpretative activities in general, for communication with each other. Our language is socially, culturally, historically and in several other ways mediated. From the perspective of Dasein's existence, every experience is to be understood in terms of language. Experiencing, or more precisely the articulating of experiencing, is through interpretative function of language. Experiencing is formed through interpretative endeavour.

And, our interpretation is based on the concrete use of language. And, the culmination of Heidegger's concern for the relationship between Being and language is expressed in the assertion that language is the house of Being. The consummation of understanding takes place only by means of language. In fact, a text, which plays a dominant role in hermeneutic phenomenology is the text given in a language. The meaning of everything as a text is derived from the primary sense of the text. While Heidegger designates the modern logic oriented or logic-based language as technical and scientific comprehension of language, he would say that his own view of language is speculative and ontological experience of language. Heidegger's views on language are extremely complex and rich and it can be seen that throughout his life language was one of his major concerns.

3.Truth in the hermeneutic context

Truth in the hermeneutic context is neither an objective declaration, nor a matter of verification and confirmation. Truth is an interpretative construct. In fact, it is examining the truth worthiness, i.e., credibility, of the researchers' interpretative experience. In the hermeneutical phenomenological interpretation, our aim is to discover the essential meaning of being-in-the-world. At any single stage of interpretation, we do not get truth in its fullness or totality. At each and every moment, we grasp truth partially; at no moment of time, the totality of truth can be disclosed. Truth has an evolutionary and disclosive character for every generation and each era which reflects upon truth of a particular time or experience will have something new to say. Every moment of interpretation renews and reviews truth but partially. It means the revelation of truth is a continuous process. Truth reveals itself in the interpretative context. In so far as interpreting is a continuous process, the revelation of truth is also an unending exercise. It is an ongoing procedure.

Heidegger considered truth to be a-Lethia, the uncovering of what is hidden.

4. Three Kinds of Hermeneutics

Dasein is an entity like every other entity. Yet, it is different from all other entities. All entities except Dasein are ontic. And, Dasein alone is ontico-ontological. Despite its ontic character, Dasein is ontological because Dasein has a close and cherished relation to Being. Dasein is a mode of Being. Dasein is the domain in which or at which Being reveals itself most appropriately, most befittingly. Consider the following example. The playground is the proper location for a player to reveal his capabilities. The classroom is the domain for a teacher to reveal the best of his characteristics. Similarly, the hospital is the right venue for a physician to show his abilities most fittingly. Similarly, Being also requires a region, a domain to reveal itself most appropriately and that realm is Dasein. Dasein is capable of making Being reveal itself, its characteristics because Dasein is capable of questioning Being, interrogate Being, enquire into Being. And, it is this questioning, inquisitive attitude and the challenging orientation which forces Being to reveal itself to Dasein more clearly and lucidly. Unfortunately, entities are unable to question Being, because they are silent, and their mute character keeps them away from questioning Being and because of it they remain perpetually ontic.

However, Dasein, because of its close relation to Being shines forth brightly and vividly and the proximity to Being is demonstrated by inclination to question, interrogate Being. Dasein's questioning of Being reveals its proximity to Being. It is like a bright and intelligent student questioning his trusted teacher to get more and more answers on the subject to clarify doubts and to understand the subject better and such questioning amplifies the closeness of the student to the teacher. Similarly, Being and Dasein. Being shines brightly and

radiantly to Dasein on account of the proximate relation of Dasein to Being. However, the mute and dumb character of entities do not give a chance to Being to reveal itself to them. Yet, because they are entities, and entities are a mode of Being, Being is the ground of their to be and therefore, Being reveals itself to entities but very vaguely and obscurely. I would say that a certain amount of theology is involved in this position of Heidegger. Nature reveals God in a very clumsy and hazy manner. On the other hand, saints also reveal God. The manifestation of God in the life of a saint is very bright and illuminating on account of the closeness of God to saints and vice versa. Not only that, God makes himself known to saints very radiantly, saints also manifest God very brilliantly.

Because we talked about Being, Dasein and entities, I am of the opinion that we need to speak about the hermeneutics in relation to all these three: hermeneutics of Being, hermeneutics of Dasein and, finally, hermeneutics of entities. However, in my opinion there are no mere entities, i.e., no pure and simple entities in Heidegger's philosophy. Entities per se are only a limiting case in Heidegger. Entities which are in relation to Dasein, which are in the world of Dasein are equipment. An entity to be an entity per se cannot be in Dasein's world. Hence, there is always a transition from equipment to entities and back. Dasein's capacity to assign meanings to equipment also comes to the fore here. This means that I need to make a little correction to my previous position and now say now that there is hermeneutics of Being, hermeneutics of Dasein and hermeneutics of equipment.

- a) Hermeneutics of Being: From Heidegger's perspective, hermeneutics is a project or a process of understanding and interpretation of Being. And, it is also the method of fundamental ontology. As a method of fundamental ontology, it thematizes Dasein. Understanding in Heidegger is seeing that which shows itself from itself. It means understanding is seeing

or grasping Being. Phenomenologically, interpreting is making Being manifest. Dasein, making itself manifest to itself, takes place as interpreting. It is unfolding the project of phenomenological hermeneutics, i.e., the process of phenomenological interpretation. Hence, phenomenological interpreting is primarily an interpretation of Being and hence it is the hermeneutic of Being. This method or process for interpretation clearly indicates the intimate relationship between Being and Dasein in so far as Dasein is the **Da** (there), of (**Sein**) Being, i.e., the there, i.e., Dasein, is the domain where Being reveals itself most appropriately.

- b) Hermeneutics of Dasein: Dasein can interpret the meaning of Being only in so far as Dasein has understood itself with regard to its existence. This is the primary form of interpretation. However, Dasein can interpret itself only by having an implicit understanding of Being, on account of the close relationship between Dasein and Being. Hermeneutic phenomenology is a movement from that which is implicit to what is explicit. Dasein's explicit hermeneutical interpretation of itself springs from an implicit understanding Being. This to-and-fro movement from Being to Dasein and from Dasein to Being indicates a hermeneutics circle. In an earlier context it was said that Dasein needs to enter into the hermeneutic circle properly to understand and interpret Being.
- c) Hermeneutics of Equipment: I am of the opinion that in hermeneutic phenomenology there are no pure and simple entities. Entities in the world of Dasein are equipment. When an equipment loses its equipmentality or when Dasein is not concerned with an equipment at all, it turns out to be an entity. Hence one needs to speak of a movement from entity to equipment and back depending upon Dasein's relation to it.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ In the light of this distinction Heidegger would say that God is an entity. However, in the light of our very little and minimum grasp of God, can we say that God is an entity, an equipment? An equipment is that which we use while being-in-the world. And, we can discard an entity/ an equipment when we do not use. God is the foundation of existence of a believer. Can we say such things about an equipment/entity? Heidegger refuses to speak of God in his phenomenology.

The effort of Dasein is to make entities reveal Being. An entity as an entity reveals less of Being. However, an entity as an equipment is capable revealing more of Being due to the intervention of Dasein. It means that Dasein not only reveals Being but it also constitutes itself as a window, through which we can have a peep into Being. It means that Dasein not merely transforms entities from their entitative states to the state of being an equipment but also creates opportunities for the revelation of Being by enabling equipment to reveal Being. Equipmentality is an opportunity for an entity to reveal Being in a better way than the entities

5. Hermeneutic of Division 1 and Division 2 of Being and Time

Dr R. Sundara Rajan in his paper “Heidegger's Hermeneutics of Being” (Rajan, 1991), points out that there is a difference between the hermeneutics of Division 1 and Division 2 of *Being and Time* of Heidegger. On the basis of that insight, the following part of this essay is worked out. I have adapted a number of points from Dr Sundara Rajan’s understanding of hermeneutics given in his paper. My attempt in this section of the paper is to bring Dr Sundara Rajan’s understanding of hermeneutics of Division 1 and 2 to its fulfilment and culmination. I also give new titles to hermeneutic of Division 1 and hermeneutic of Division 2 since I believe that the names given by Dr Sundara Rajan are not adequate. I also pointed out that there are not only differences between hermeneutics or Division 1 and Division 2 but there are close similarities and intimate relationship between the two divisions.

Heidegger, in the early part of *Being and Time*, demonstrates that phenomenology is possible only by way of hermeneutic (Heidegger, 1962a). But a close reading of *Being and Time* Division 1 and Division 2 will show that hermeneutics of Division 1 is not the same as the hermeneutics of Division 2. Nowhere in *Being and Times* does Heidegger say that there is a difference between the hermeneutics of

both divisions. He takes it for granted that the reader will make out the differences. Because of his silence on this issue, one can ask oneself a question: Does Heidegger think that the hermeneutic of Division 1 is the same as the hermeneutics of Division 2 or are they different? There is no answer in *Being and Time*. Dr Sundara Rajan speaks only of differences between them. Despite the differences, I am of the opinion that there is close similarities and intimate relationships between the hermeneutics of both divisions.

One characteristic of hermeneutic of Division 1 is that it is not necessarily and logically linked to the hermeneutics of Division 2; it stands by itself. Both of them are different approaches to the problem of hermeneutics of existence. Hermeneutics of Division 1 elucidates Dasein's being-in-the-world expressed through equipmentality. It is hermeneutics of equipment. However, hermeneutic of Division 2 arises and elucidates Dasein's self-understanding by way of anxiety, being-towards-death and encounter with nothingness, leading towards the experience of total finitude. It is the hermeneutic of Dasein's self-disclosure.

One is not an authentic self by birth. Authenticity is arrived at or achieved by means of a process. By birth, one is someone other than an authentic self. Since Heidegger, like Kierkegaard, does not envisage a third possibility, other than authenticity and inauthenticity, I am forced to say that by being born, one is under the sway of them, Das Man, i.e., the inauthentic self. Only by liberating oneself from the Das Man, one can become authentic. To elaborate what is said above a little more clearly, one major problem in Heidegger is that there are only two categories in Heidegger: authenticity and inauthenticity. Heidegger's expression for authenticity is *Eigentlichkeit*, state-of-being-owned. One's personal decisions are those by means of which one owns something. And such an owning, by way of one's decisions, does not have any moral connotations or

ethical implications. Authenticity is the self-disclosure of Dasein, by way of anxiety, being-towards-death, and confrontation with finitude. This disclosure is a process, a task and as such it is not available to Dasein at its birth for Dasein cannot take a decision at that young age with regard to its self-disclosure and is not aware of its being-towards-death. When born, due to social conditions, and cultural situations, one is under the sway of the other, the they. And one needs to liberate oneself from the influence of the they for self-encounter. Heidegger is not concerned with any value judgements or moral affirmations but merely is interested in describing the modes of existence. One cannot say that being under the sway of the other, i.e., inauthenticity, is something morally bad or being authentic is something morally good. Both are equally valid modes of existence. Being under the sway of the other can be a permanent feature. Although we have evidence of inauthentic people becoming authentic in the course of their lives, we have no evidence of people who at one time lived an authentic life later becoming inauthentic¹¹¹.

What these examples indicate is this. If one does not make an attempt to transform one's life, inauthenticity can prevail in one's life and can become a permanent feature of one's existence, i.e., if such a transformation does not take place one can be an inauthentic personality throughout one's life. And hence inauthenticity can stand by itself. Authenticity is only a temporary feature of existence, a superstructure based on the elimination and eradication of inauthenticity. This conversion occurs because the inauthentic individual realizes what is lacking in life, and then moves forward from inauthenticity to authenticity.

¹¹¹Consider for example, we have the story of Maharshi Valmiki who was once a robber and a dacoit. After becoming sadhu, an authentic personality, he did not go back to his former modes of life. So is the case with St Augustine, who had a licentious early life, did not go back to his former ways of living after his conversion. Kierkegaard does not envisage the possibility of an ethical and religious personality becoming an aesthetic individual once again. From the perspective of Kierkegaard, it means that the aesthetical, ethical and religious modes of existence constitute an either/or.

The conclusion that I make from these examples and their analysis is this. The hermeneutic of Division 1, logically speaking, stand by itself. It is in no way dependent on the hermeneutic of Division 2. The reverse is not valid. One needs to liberate and emancipate oneself from the influence of the they, Das Man, to arrive at the state of authenticity and state of being owned. At the same time however it must be pointed out immediately that there is no separation but only a distinction between the two different modes of existence-authenticity and inauthenticity. They are two different kinds of hermeneutics of existence.

Hermeneutics Division 1 examines Dasein's concerned everyday practical world in terms equipment and daily mundane concerns. But the hermeneutic of Division 2 studies modes of self-disclosure of Dasein, expressed in anxiety and finitude culminating in being-towards-death. This leads to an immediate problem. To maintain authenticity and state of being owned, should Dasein remain inactive, without attempting any kind of achievements, not making use of any equipment at all? This may not be possible solution at all. Did not Heidegger make use at least his pen and paper which are also equipment to write down all his philosophy? It only I means that an individual should not become a slave to an equipment, one should not be obsessed with a particular equipment and technology and thereby coming under the sway of the they, Das Man. Rather, one must be able to look back and say to oneself: yes, I use them but if necessity arises, I can exist without them. That is what great men and realized personalities of every nation and every culture teach us.

It may be noted that Dr Sundara Rajan calls hermeneutic of Division 1 Hermeneutic of Everydayness, where as he names the hermeneutics of Division 2 Depth Hermeneutic. In my considered opinion these titles are inadequate since they don't tell us the essentials of what these two hermeneutics stand for and what do they

do. Hence, I give them different titles. While Division 1 gives us a *horizontal understanding* of Dasein, Division 2 explicates a *vertical understanding* of Dasein. Let me examine and elucidate these two titles. However, right at the beginning I need to point out that both these hermeneutics are exemplified in Dasein itself, one in Dasein's authenticity and the other in Dasein's inauthenticity and hence there is no separation between them, we can only distinguish them.

The hermeneutic of Division 2 can be worked out exclusively in terms of Dasein and Dasein's self-disclosure alone. Because it is a hermeneutic which is worked out exclusively in terms of Dasein and Dasein's self-disclosure, it is called vertical hermeneutic. Such a hermeneutic signifies Dasein's internal relation. However, the hermeneutic for Division 1 can be worked out only in terms of the relation of Dasein with others, equipment and the world at large. And, hence, it is called horizontal hermeneutic. It is a kind of hermeneutic where not only Dasein is considered but entities and other Dasein are also taken into consideration. It therefore signifies Dasein's external relations of Dasein. And hence it is called horizontal hermeneutic.

It must be said that hermeneutic of Division 1 is not the same hermeneutic of Division 2. Hermeneutic of Division 1 deals with Dasein's everydayness whereas hermeneutic of Division 2 examines Dasein's self-disclosure and authenticity, manifested in terms of anxiety, being-towards-death and total finitude. And, in relation to it, the hermeneutic of Division 1 is said to be the manifestation of inauthenticity of the Dasein. The inauthentic Dasein, to be precise *Das Man*, does not mean an individual involved in moral failures and or ethical negligence. It only means that he is an individual who does not disclose himself and that he an individual who is very much concerned with worldly affairs. The kind of understanding at Division 1 and Division 2 are transcendental, not in the Kantian or in

the Husserlian sense but in Heideggerian sense of assigning meaning to or recognizing modes of one's existence.

Moreover, the kind of understanding that we have in Division 1 and Division 2 are different. In Division 2, we have explicit fundamental ontological understanding. In relation to it, in Division 1, we have pre-ontological understanding, an implicit understanding, which interprets Dasein's everyday being-in-the world. The fulfilment and culmination of understanding of Division 1 is to be found in hermeneutic of Division 2 since it deals with Dasein's self-understanding and self-disclosure. Understanding of Division 1 is only a stepping stone towards understanding of Division 2. Because Dasein finds its fulfilment in self disclosure and being-towards-death, the hermeneutic of Division 2 does not have any other kind of fulfilment for Dasein is its own fulfilment.

It appears to me that Heidegger would also say that hermeneutic of Division 1 can stand by itself although, in itself, it is inadequate and without fulfilment which can be found only in the hermeneutics of Division 2. Yet, hermeneutic of Division 2 cannot stand by itself. It originates and springs from the hermeneutic for Division 1, or to be precise from the negation and denial of the hermeneutic Division 1. This is because Dasein, while searching for authenticity and self-disclosure, discloses itself as always already in the world. Dasein which is absorbed in the endeavour of self-understanding and self-disclosure, while confronting anxiety and being-towards-death, is always being-in-the-world for whose everyday existence and operations, various kinds of equipment are a must. Every Das Man, i.e., inauthentic Dasein, is always already involved in the hermeneutics of Division 1, because of its character of being-in-the-world. But authenticity which Dasein experiences in anxiety, self-disclosure and being-towards-death are not a cup for everyone. This is because hermeneutics of Division 2 assumes that the individual

has given up his totally blind commitment and uncritical engagement with the essentials of hermeneutic of Division 1. Das Man's existence doesn't proceed towards authenticity, discussed in hermeneutic of Division 2. All are called to authenticity, but only a few choose to be authentic on account of the burden of responsibility of being authentic.

Moreover, I am of the opinion that the two terms authenticity and inauthenticity are not contradictory. In fact, in one sense, they are complementary, i.e., one needs to go through the hermeneutic of Division 1 to arrive at the hermeneutic of Division 2. although one cannot speak of mutual complementarity because, despite the fact hermeneutics of Division 2 is rooted in the hermeneutics of Division 1, the relation cannot be in the reverse order. Remember what Kierkegaard said that in the human realm there are only ambiguities and no contradictions.

Prima facie, it appears to me that from the perspective of Heidegger, hermeneutics Division 1 is self-sufficient. Although this is the case, Heidegger, shortly thereafter, suggests that there is a need to go beyond the hermeneutic of Division 1. This is because phenomenology is a search for personal and subjective meanings; it asks the query: what does it mean to me, to myself? What it means is this: Dasein is in constant search for meanings-subjective and personal. Such a meaning, Dasein cannot find in the world. Such a meaning is possible only in Dasein's confrontation with its own finitude and experience of nothingness. The fulfilment of Dasein's search for meaning occurs when it discovers its own meaning. It means that Dasein's search for meaning of the world must lead to the discovery of the meaning of oneself. And from that point of view Heidegger will not be happy and satisfied with hermeneutic of Division 1 and the hermeneutic of Division 1 must lead to the hermeneutic of Division 2. For the hermeneutic of Division 1 is a

search for meaning of the world and equipmentality whereas the hermeneutics of Division 2 is an inquiry and a search for meaning of oneself. Hence in principle, Heidegger cannot stop with hermeneutic of Division 1, rather it needs to proceed to the hermeneutic of Division 2.

To clarify this, point a little more succinctly, what is lacking in Division 1, which can be found in hermeneutics of Division 2? Hermeneutics of Division 1 is the interpretation of Dasein's everyday existence in terms of equipmentality. It means hermeneutics or Division 1 gives only a functional approach to Dasein. Dasein does not find its fulfilment in equipment for equipment is only for Dasein's worldly existence. Hermeneutic of Division 1 deals with this aspect. But where does Dasein find its fulfilment? Well, the answer is that Dasein finds its fulfilment in coming to terms with itself in its self-disclosure, in accepting whole heartily its finitude and appropriating its being-towards-death. This is self-disclosure. What it all means is that Dasein's self-realisation is permeated by nothingness. In Heidegger nothingness does not mean total absence rather it means an absence permeated by a presence. Let me give an example.

As a child I was very close to my grandfather. He used to take me to the school every day on his bicycle and bring me back daily. In the evenings he used to read short stories to me and he used to take me for a walk. I used to sit with him for the family dinner. When I was not willing to eat the dinner, he used to feed me. I used to sleep next to him, listening to his stories of family life and the villagers. One day in the morning when I was ready to go to school, he told me that he had a little fever and requested me to go to the school with my dad. On that day my dad came to the school in the afternoon and he came to my class accompanied by the school principal. The principal murmured something to the teacher taking the lesson and shortly

thereafter I was asked to follow my dad to home. I asked my father for the reason and also inquired about grandfather's health. He did not respond to me. When I reached home, I realized the reason. My grandfather was dead. I wept bitterly. After sometime his cremation took place. I came home knowing that everything is lost for me. I saw the bicycle which my grandfather used to take me to school. He is no more there. But the bicycle reminds me of his presence. I saw his walking stick and the shoes. He is no more there. But they speak to me about him. When all the family members sat together for dinner, a plate was kept in the place where grandfather used to sit and I sat next to his chair. The empty chair and the plate tell me about my absent grandfather. I slept alone in the bed. I did not want anybody to sleep next to me. My grand-father is no more. But everything reminds me of him. It is this absence permeated by presence is what is called nothingness in Heidegger. In other words, in Heidegger's notion of nothingness is not a total and complete absence. Rather, it is the awareness of the presence of someone now absent. This is what Heidegger has in his mind when he speaks of Being process. In Being process too something appears and disappears. Something disappearing does not totally vanish from consciousness, and it sinks into the depth of consciousness to appear and reappear later on. This is what Husserl tells us in his Time Consciousness Lectures that the when past experiences sink into consciousness, it disappears but does not vanish totally. What it ultimately means is that one need not be existing physically and bodily to make its presence felt. Do we not remember our departed near and dear one's on the day of their death anniversary? Do we not try to live according to the values laid down by them? It all means that an absence is permeated by a presence. It means that (absent) Dasein is now nothing, that Dasein is no more, it is absent, yet it makes its presence felt. For we give meaning to our lives in the light that Dasein. We recognize the meanings given by that Dasein (say my deceased grandfather) and accordingly we assign meanings to our

present existence. This is how I understand and interpret Heidegger's assertion that nothingness is an absence permeated by presence.

What is something significant that stands out here is this. In Husserl it is the transcendental self which is foundation of assigning meanings. The transcendental ego is the fulcrum upon which the world turns around when it concerns meanings. After all, the transcendental self is the most important category in Husserl's phenomenology. Everything gets its meaning from the transcendental ego. All meanings are rooted in the transcendental self. The transcendental ego has the responsibility and also the burden of being the source of all meanings. But Dasein, the transcendental self in Heidegger, is nothing, a nothingness permeated by a presence. It reveals its presence by way of assigning meanings. By stating such a position, Heidegger eliminates a burden from the Dasein, his transcendental self. It means that Dasein is no more the centre of the of the world, as envisaged by Husserl. Heidegger's strong criticism of Descartes, who holds that ego is the centre of the universe, becomes meaningful here. Despite the fact that Dasein is nothing, it assigns meanings since it is a presence. To justify my claim, let me speak of an essential principle of Buddhism given in the Buddhist *anattavada* which says that although there is no self, transmigration is possible, i.e., the absent self is making its presence. So is the case with Heidegger. Despite being nothingness, Dasein makes its presence felt by way of assigning and recognizing meaning to its experiences and to the world at large. It is the aspect of presence that enables Dasein to assign as well as recognize meanings, despite it being nothingness. Nothingness signifies Dasein's abnegation of itself and yet it maintains its presence by way assigning and recognizing meanings. This abnegation indicates that Dasein has eliminated the burden of being a self in the Husserlian sense. The abnegation of self, the elimination of being a self, indicates Dasein's spirituality. The highest point of spirituality, from the perspective of

Indian saints is the elimination of self. It is because of the notion of abnegation of self or Dasein, Professor J.L. Mehta, who knew Heidegger personally well, who visited Heidegger a number of times at his Black Forest Hill residence, says that Heidegger is a rishi in the western garb. It may be noted that in spite his early religious training in a Jesuit institution, despite his regular visits to the Benedictine Monastery in Beuron in Germany, and his lecture to the monks in 1930, on St Augustine, in gratitude for the years of hospitality”, in spite of his demand for a Catholic wedding ceremony and burial service, there does not appear any serious evidence or commitment in Heidegger to Christian religion or to Catholic spirituality. In the context of Heidegger, I use the expression spirituality in the sense of total commitment to Being, the source of existence. A follower of Christian religion will substitute the word God in the place of Being. At the most one can say that Heidegger’s is a secularized religiosity or spirituality since his philosophy is directed not to God but to Being.

Hermeneutic of Division 1 is the pre-ontological hermeneutic of equipment. It is the hermeneutic of everyday implicit existence. However, the hermeneutic of Division 2 is the explicit ontological hermeneutics of fundamental ontology. Hermeneutic of Division 1 begins with the elucidation of everydayness. It is here that Heidegger brings in the examination of equipment. The purpose of elucidating equipment is to demonstrate that our primary and fundamental relation to the world is not one of knowing but one of doing. Our doing something with an equipment indicates a purpose. It means that an equipment is used for meaningful actions. Meaning is inherent in every conscious action. Now, it is to be noted that every meaningful action is a text. A text, from the point of Heidegger, is that which can speak to us. What is spoken to us is its meaningfulness. The meaning of an action is autonomous, in the sense that one and the same action can have different meanings from different perspectives. For example, reading a book. Surely, it is a

meaningful action. One may be reading a book due to curiosity. Another may be reading a book because it is a textbook prescribed by the course-work. A third may be reading a book because he is preparing for a competitive examination. And the fourth is reading the book for leisure and another may be reading a book to while away time. What follows is this: in as much as meaning of a text is open to various interpretations, the meaning of an action is also opened the different kinds of interpretation. It also follows that in as much as a text is world disclosing, an action is also world revealing. When an action is repeated, it becomes a practice. Every practice involves an understanding of oneself, the other and the world. Hermeneutic of division 1 tells us that human practices are ultimately an understanding and interpretation of one's world.

We relate to things and the world through equipment. We express our concern for the world through our actions performed through equipment, which are ready-to-hand. Generalising from here, every action embodies and implies a certain interpretative possibility on account the inbuilt meaning. Every action is self-interpretative for Dasein.

Heidegger's analysis of Division 1 suggests that we can stop our elucidation of Dasein's everydayness with the analysis of Division 1 or it is the understanding of the world. This may be enough for ordinary mortals, i.e., an inauthentic person; not so for Heidegger and any phenomenologically oriented authentic person. They want to go beyond the world and arrive at the self, self-understanding and self-disclosure. And, this is for Heidegger by way of anxiety, being-towards-death, and the encounter with one's finitude. And the awareness of the limitations of hermeneutic of Division 1 provides Dasein an opportunity to go beyond it to hermeneutics of Division 2. Hermeneutic of Division 2 is proposed as the ultimate aim of Dasein to achieve. Hermeneutic of Division 2 is a quest for realising the

fullness of existence. It is to realise the total and complete finitude of existence which is the realization of completeness of existence from the perspective of Heidegger.

Hermeneutics Division 2 shows the futility of everything held in high esteem in everyday life. It also reveals the rootlessness of our mundane life. Yet, without going through the rigmaroles of this ordinary, everyday, mundane existence, one cannot realize its futility and Dasein needs to make a conscientious effort to achieve authenticity as described in hermeneutic of division 2. It is the self-questioning and the ever-inquisitive attitude of Dasein tells Dasein that its existence as per hermeneutic of Division1 is not adequate for its fulfilment of existence. Hermeneutic of Division 1 will tell us that, although this every day, mundane existence is very valuable and precious, the same existence turns out to be futile and meaningless from the perspective of hermeneutic of Division2. When Dasein confronts itself, it realizes its rootlessness, contingencies, meaninglessness and homelessness. From that point of view anxiety has a strategic value and a meaningful design for the conversion of Dasein from hermeneutic of Division 1 to the hermeneutic of Division 2. It means that the pragmatic considerations and matter of fact attitude of Dasein of Division 1 will have to be interpreted in terms of existentiality of Division 2. The specific kind anxiety of each Dasein will have will vary depending upon its individuality, cultural context and historical experience and the like.

I wish to conclude the discussion on the distinction between hermeneutics of Division 1 and Division 2 by making use of an ancient Greek metaphor, the metaphor of the mythological bird, Phoenix. In as much as the new birth of Phoenix is possible only after the destruction and elimination of its old mode of life, the hermeneutic of Division 2 is possible only after the annihilation and termination of the mode of life described in hermeneutic of Division

1. The new life is impossible without the old one which needs to be destroyed and negated to arrive at the new one. So is the case with the hermeneutics of Division 1 and Division 2.

Bibliography

Heidegger, M. (1962a). *Being and Time* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). Harper & Row, Publishers, New York.

Heidegger, M. (1962d). Section 2: The Ontological Priority of the question of Being. In J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson (Trans.), *Being and Time* (p. 28). Harper & Row, Publishers, New York.

Heidegger, M. (1962c). Section 3: The Formal Structure of the question of Being. In J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson (Trans.), *Being and Time* (p. 27). Harper & Row, Publishers, New York.

Heidegger, M. (1962b). Section 32: Understanding and Interpretation. In J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson (Trans.), *Being and Time* (p. 195). Harper & Row, Publishers, New York.

Sundara Rajan, R. (1991). Heidegger's Hermeneutics of Being. *In Studies in Phenomenology, Hermeneutics and Deconstruction* (pp. 27–43). Indian Council of Philosophical Research.

Centre for Phenomenological Studies, Pondicherry