

52. *Everyday Being-toward-Death and the Complete Existential Concept of Death.*

1           Being—toward—the—end was determined in a preliminary existential sketch as being toward one's ownmost nonrelational potentiality-of-being not-to-be-bypassed. Existing being toward this possibility brings itself before the absolute impossibility of existence. Beyond this seemingly empty characteristic of being-toward-death, the concretion of this being revealed itself *in* the mode of everydayness. In accordance with the tendency toward falling prey essential to everydayness, being-toward-death proved to be an evasion of it, an evasion that covers over. Whereas previously our inquiry made the transition from the formal preliminary sketch of the ontological structure of death to the concrete analysis of everyday being-toward-the-end we now wish to reverse the direction and attain the complete existential concept of death with a supplementary interpretation of everyday being-toward-the-end.

2           The explication of everyday being-toward-death stayed with the idle talk of the they: one also dies sometime, but for the time being not yet. Up to now we solely interpreted the "one dies" as such. In the "also sometime, but for the time being not yet," everydayness acknowledges something like a *certainty* of death. Nobody doubts that one dies. But this "not doubting" need not already imply that kind of being-certain that corresponds to the way death—in the sense of the eminent possibility characterized above—enters into Da-sein. Everydayness gets stuck in this ambiguous acknowledgment of the "certainty" of death—in order to weaken the certainty by covering dying over still more and alleviating its own thrownness into death.

3           By its very meaning, this evasive covering over of death can *not* be authentically "certain" of death, and yet it *is*. How does it stand with this "certainty of death"?

4           To be certain of a being means to *hold* it for true as something true. But truth means discoveredness of beings. All discoveredness, however, is ontologically based in the most primordial truth, in the disclosedness of Da-sein." As a being that is disclosed and disclosing, and one that discovers, Da-sein is essentially "in the truth." *But certainty is based in truth or belongs to it equiprimordially.* The expression "certainty," like the expression "truth," has a double meaning. Primordially, truth means the same as being-disclosive as a mode of behavior of Da-sein. From this comes the derivative meaning: disclosedness of beings. Accordingly, certainty is primordially tantamount to being-certain as a kind of being of Da-sein. However, in a derivative significance, any being of which Da-sein can be Certain is also Called Certain."

          One mode of certainty is *conviction*. In conviction, Da-sein lets the testimony of the thing itself that has been discovered (the true thing itself) be the sole determinant for its being toward that thing understandingly. Holding-something-for-true is adequate as a way of keeping oneself in the truth, if it is based on the discovered beings themselves, and as a being toward the beings thus discovered, has become transparent to itself with regard to its appropriateness to them. Something like this is lacking in any arbitrary invention or in the mere "opinion" about a being.

5           The adequacy of holding-for-true is measured by the truth claim to which it belongs. This claim gets its justification from the kind of being of the beings to be disclosed, and from the direction of the disclosure. The kind of truth and, along with it, the certainty, changes with the various kinds of beings, and accords with the leading tendency and scope of the disclosure. Our present considerations are limited to an analysis of being-certain with regard to death; and this being-certain will, in the end, present us with an eminent *certainty of Da-sein*.

6 For the most part, everyday Da-sein covers over its ownmost non-relational possibility of being not-to-be-bypassed. This factual tendency to cover over confirms our thesis that Da-sein, as factual, is in “untruth.”<sup>5</sup> Thus the certainty which belongs to such a covering over of being-toward-death must be an inappropriate way of holding-for-true, and not an uncertainty in the sense of doubting. Inappropriate certainty keeps that of which it is certain covered over. If “one” understands death as an event encountered in the surrounding world, the certainty related to this does not get at being-toward-the-end.

7 They say that it is certain that “death” comes. *They* say it and overlook the fact that, in order to be able to be certain of death, Da-sein itself must always be certain of its ownmost nonrelational potentiality-of-being not-to-be-bypassed. They say that death is certain, and thus entrench in Da-sein the illusion that it is *itself* certain of its own death. And what is the ground of everyday being-certain? Evidently it is not just mutual persuasion. Yet one experiences daily the “dying” of others. Death is an undeniable “fact of experience.”

8 The way in which everyday being-toward-death understands the certainty thus grounded, betrays itself when it tries to “think” about death, even when it does so with critical foresight—that is to say, in an appropriate way. So far as one knows, all human beings “die.” Death is probable to the highest degree for every human being, yet it is not “unconditionally certain. Strictly speaking, “only” an *empirical* certainty may be attributed to death. Such certainty falls short of the highest certainty, the apodictical one, which we attain in certain areas of theoretical knowledge.

9 In this critical determination of the certainty of death and its imminence, what is manifested in the first instance is, once again, the failure to recognize the kind of being of Da-sein and the being-toward-death belonging to it, a failure characteristic of everydayness. *The fact that demise, as an event that occurs, is “only” empirically certain., in no way decides about the certainty of death.* Cases of death may be the factual occasion for the fact that Da-sein initially notices death at all. But, remaining within the empirical certainty which we characterized, Da-sein cannot become certain at all of death as it “is.” Although in the publicness of the they Da-sein seemingly “talks” only of this “empirical” certainty of death, *basically* it does *not* keep exclusively and primarily to those cases of death that merely occur. *Evading its death*, everyday being-toward-the-end is indeed certain of death in another way than it itself would like to realize in purely theoretical considerations. For the most part, everydayness veils this from itself “in another way.” It does not dare to become transparent to itself in this way. We have already characterized the everyday attunement that consists in an air of superiority with regard to the certain “fact” of Death—a superiority that is “anxiously” concerned while seemingly free of *Angst*. In this attunement, everydayness acknowledges a “higher” certainty than the merely empirical one. One *knows* about the certainty of death, and yet “*is*” not really certain about it. The entangled everydayness of Da-sein knows about the certainty of death, and yet avoids being-certain. But in the light of what it evades, thus evasion bears witness phenomenally to the fact that death must be grasped as the ownmost nonrelational, *certain* possibility not-to-be-bypassed.

10 One says that death certainly comes, but not right away. With this “but...” the they denies that death is certain. “Not right away” is not a purely negative statement, but a self-interpretation of the they with which it refers itself to what is initially accessible to Da-sein to take care of. Everydayness penetrates to the urgency of taking care of things, and divests itself of the fetters of a weary, “inactive thinking about death.” Death is postponed to “sometime later,” by relying on the so-called “general opinion.” Thus the they covers over what is peculiar to the certainty of death, *that it is possible in every moment*. Together with the certainty of death goes

the *indefiniteness* of its when. Everyday being-toward-death evades this indefiniteness by making it something definite. But this procedure cannot mean calculating when the demise is due to arrive. Da-sein rather flees from such definiteness. Everyday taking care of things makes definite for itself the indefiniteness of certain death by interposing before it those manageable urgencies and possibilities of the everyday matters nearest to us.

11 But covering over this indefiniteness also covers over certainty. Thus the ownmost character of the possibility of death gets covered over: a possibility that is certain, and yet indefinite, that is, possible at any moment.

12 Now that we have completed our interpretation of the everyday talk of the they about death and the way death enters Da-sein, we have been led to the characteristics of certainty and indefiniteness. The full existential and ontological concept of death can now be defined as follows: *As the end of Da-sein, death is the ownmost nonrelational certain, and, as such, indefinite and not to be bypassed possibility of Da-sein.* As the end of Da-sein, *death is* in the being of this being-toward-its-end.

13 The delineation of the existential structure of being-toward-the-end helps us to develop a kind of being of Da-sein in which it can be *wholly as Da-sein*. The fact that even everyday Da-sein *is* always already *toward* its end, that is, is constantly coming to grips with its own death, even though “fleeting,” shows that this end, which concludes and defines being-whole, is not something which Da-sein ultimately arrives at only in its demise. In Da-sein, existing toward its death, its most extreme not-yet which everything else precedes is always already included. So if one has given an ontologically inappropriate interpretation of the not-yet of Da-sein as something outstanding, any formal inference from this to the lack of totality of Da-sein will be incorrect. *The phenomenon of the not-yet has been taken from the ahead-of-itself no more than the structure of care in general, can it serve as a higher court that would rule against a possible, existent wholeness; indeed, this ahead-of-itself first makes possible such a being-toward-the-end.* The problem of the possible wholeness of the being which we ourselves actually are exists justifiably if care, as the fundamental constitution of Da-sein, “is connected” with death as the most extreme possibility of this being.

14 Yet it remains questionable whether this problem has been as yet adequately developed. Being-toward-death is grounded in care. As thrown being-in-the-world, Da-sein is always already delivered over to its death. Being toward its death, it dies factically and constantly as long as it has not reached its demise. That Da-sein dies factically means at the same time that it has always already decided in this or that way in its being-toward-death. Everyday, entangled evasion of death is an *inauthentic* being toward it. Inauthenticity has possible authenticity as its basis.<sup>6</sup> Inauthenticity characterizes the kind of being in which Da-sein diverts itself and for the most part has always diverted itself, too, but it does not have to do this necessarily and constantly. Because Da-sein exists, it determines itself as the kind of being it is, and it does so always in terms of a possibility which it itself *is* and understands.

15 Can Da-sein *authentically understand* its ownmost, nonrelational, certain possibility not-to-be-bypassed that is, as such, indefinite? That is, can it maintain itself in an authentic being-toward-its-end? As long as this authentic being-toward-death has not been set forth and ontologically determined, there is something essentially lacking in our existential interpretation of being-toward-the-end.

16 Authentic being-toward-death signifies an existentiell possibility of Da-sein. This ontic potentiality-of-being must in its turn be ontologically possible. What are the existential conditions of this possibility? How are they themselves to become accessible?

### 53. *Existential Project of an Authentic Being-toward-Death*

17 Factically, Da-sein maintains itself initially and for the most part in an inauthentic being-toward-death. How is the ontological possibility of an *authentic* being-toward-death to be characterized “objectively,” if, in the end, Da-sein is never authentically related to its end, or if this authentic being must remain concealed from others in accordance with its meaning? Is not the project of the existential possibility of such a questionable existentiell potentiality-of-being a fantastical undertaking? What is needed for such a project to get beyond a merely poetizing, arbitrary construction? Does Da-sein itself provide directives for this project? Can the grounds for its phenomenal justification be taken from Da-sein itself? Can our analysis of Da-sein up to now give us any prescriptions for the ontological task we have now formulated, so that what we have before us can be kept on a secure path?

18 The existential concept of death has been established, and thus we have also established that to which an authentic being-toward-the-end should be able to relate itself. Furthermore, we have also characterized inauthentic being-toward-death and thus we have prescribed how authentic being-toward-death cannot be in a negative way. The existential structure of an authentic being-toward-death must let itself be projected with these positive and prohibitive instructions.

19 Da-sein is constituted by disclosedness, that is, by attuned understanding. *Authentic* being-toward-death cannot *evade* its ownmost non-relational possibility or *cover* it *over* in this flight and *reinterpret* it for the common sense of the they. The existential project of an authentic being-toward-death must thus set forth the factors of such a being which are constitutive for it as an understanding of death—in the sense of being toward this possibility without fleeing it or covering it over. First of all, we must characterize being-toward-death as a being *toward a possibility*, toward an eminent possibility of Da-sein itself. Being toward a possibility, that is, toward something possible, can mean to be out for something possible, as in taking care of its actualization. In the field of things at hand and objectively present, we constantly encounter such possibilities: what is attainable, manageable, viable, and so forth. Being out for something possible and taking care of it has the tendency of *annihilating* the *possibility* of the possible by making it available. The actualization of useful things at hand in taking care of them (producing them, getting them ready, readjusting them, etc.), is, however, always merely relative, in that what has been actualized still has the character of being relevant. Even when actualized, as something actual it remains possible for. . . , it is characterized by an in-order-to. Our present analysis should simply make clear how being out for something and taking care of it, is related to the possible. It does so not in a thematic and theoretical reflection on the possible as possible, or even with regard to its possibility as such, but rather in such a way that it circumspectly looks *away* from the possible to what it is possible for.

20 Evidently being-toward-death, which is now in question, cannot have the character of being out for something and taking care of it with a view toward its actualization. For one thing, death as something possible is not a possible thing at hand or objectively present, but a possibility-of-being of *Da-sein*. Then, however, taking care of the actualization of what is thus possible would have to mean bringing about one’s own demise. Thus Da-sein would

precisely deprive itself of the very ground for an existing being-toward-death.

21        Thus if being-toward-death is not meant as an “actualization” of death, neither can it mean to dwell near the end in its possibility. This kind of behavior would amount to “thinking about death,” thinking about this possibility, how and when it might be actualized. Brooding over death does not completely take away from it its character of possibility. It is always brooded over as something coming, but we weaken it by calculating how to have it at our disposal. As something possible, death is supposed to show as little as possible of its possibility. On the contrary, if being-toward-death has to disclose understandingly the possibility which we have characterized as *such*, then in such being-toward-death this possibility must not be weakened, it must be understood *as possibility*, cultivated *as possibility*, and *endured as possibility* in our relation to it.

22        However, Da-sein relates to something possible in its possibility, by *expecting* it. Anyone who is intent on something possible, may encounter it unimpeded and undiminished in its “whether it comes or not, or whether it comes after all.” But with this phenomenon of expecting has our analysis not reached the same kind of being toward the possible which we already characterized as being out for something and taking care of it? To expect something possible is always to understand and “have” it with regard to whether and when and how it will really be objectively present. Expecting is not only an occasional looking away from the possible to its possible actualization, but essentially a *waiting for that actualization*. Even in expecting, one leaps away from the possible and gets a footing in the real. It is for its reality that what is expected is expected. By the very nature of expecting, the possible is drawn into the real, arising from it and returning to it.

23        But being toward this possibility, as being-toward-death, should relate itself to that *death* so that it reveals itself, in this being and for it, *as possibility*. Terminologically, we shall formulate this being toward possibility as *anticipation of this possibility*. But does not this mode of behavior contain an approach to the possible, and does not its actualization emerge with its nearness? In this kind of coming near, however, one does not tend toward making something real available and taking care of it, but as one comes nearer understandingly, the possibility of the possible only becomes “greater.” *The nearest nearness of being-toward-death as possibility is as far removed as possible from anything real*. The more clearly this possibility is understood, the more purely does understanding penetrate to it *as the possibility of the impossibility of existence in general*. As possibility, death gives Da-sein nothing to “be actualized” and nothing which it itself could *be* as something real. It is the possibility of the impossibility of every mode of behavior toward..., of every way of existing. In running ahead to this possibility, it becomes “greater and greater,” that is, it reveals itself as something which knows no measure at all, no more or less, but means the possibility of the measureless impossibility of existence. Essentially, this possibility offers no support for becoming intent on something, for “spelling out” the real thing that is possible and so forgetting its possibility. As anticipation of possibility, being-toward-death first *makes* this possibility *possible* and sets it free as possibility.

24        Being-toward-death is the anticipation of a potentiality-of-being of *that* being whose kind of being is anticipation itself. In the anticipatory revealing of this potentiality-of-being, Da-sein discloses itself to itself with regard to its most extreme possibility. But to project oneself upon one’s ownmost potentiality of being means to be able to understand oneself in the

being of the being thus revealed: to exist. Anticipation shows itself as the possibility of understanding one's *ownmost* and extreme potentiality-of-being, that is, as the possibility of *authentic existence*. Its ontological constitution must be made visible by setting forth the concrete structure of anticipation of death. How is the phenomenal definition of this structure to be accomplished? Evidently by defining the characteristics of anticipatory disclosure which must belong to it so that it can become the pure understanding of the ownmost nonrelational possibility not-to-be-bypassed which is certain and, as such, indefinite. We must remember that understanding does not primarily mean staring at a meaning, but understanding oneself in the potentiality-of-being that reveals itself in the project.'

25        Death is the *ownmost* possibility of Da-sein. Being toward it discloses to Da-sein its *ownmost* potentiality-of-being in which it is concerned about the being of Da-sein absolutely. Here the fact can become evident to Da-sein that in the eminent possibility of itself it is torn away from the they, that is, anticipation can always already have torn itself away from the they. The understanding of this "ability," however, first reveals its factual lostness in the everydayness of the they-self.

26        The ownmost possibility is *nonrelational*. Anticipation Lets Da-sein understand that it has to take over solely from itself the potentiality-of-being in which it is concerned absolutely about its ownmost being. Death does not just "belong" in an undifferentiated way to one's own Da-sein, hut it *lays claim* on it as something *individual*. The nonrelational character of death understood in anticipation individualizes Da-sein down to itself. This individualizing is a way in which the "there" is disclosed for existence. It reveals the fact that any being-together-with what is taken care of and any being-with the others fails when one's ownmost potentiality-of-being is at stake. Da-sein can *authentically* be *itself* only when it makes that possible of its own accord. But if taking care of things and being concerned fail us, this does not, however, mean at all that these modes of Da-sein have been cut off from its authentic being a self. As essential structures of the constitution of Da-sein they also belong to the condition of the possibility of existence in general. Da-sein is authentically itself only if it projects itself, *as* being-together with things taken care of and concerned being-with..., primarily upon its ownmost potentiality-of-being, rather than upon the possibility of the they-self. Anticipation of its nonrelational possibility forces the being that anticipates into the possibility of taking over its ownmost being of its own accord.

27        The ownmost nonrelational possibility is *not to be bypassed*. Being toward this possibility lets Da-sein understand that the most extreme possibility of existence is imminent, that of giving itself up. But anticipation does not evade the impossibility of bypassing death, as does authentic being-toward-death, but *frees* itself *for* it. Becoming free *for* one's own death in anticipation flees one from one's lostness in chance possibilities urging themselves upon us, so that the factual possibilities lying before the possibility not-to-be-bypassed can first be authentically understood and chosen. Anticipation discloses to existence that. its extreme inmost possibility lies in giving itself up and thus shatters all one's clinging to whatever existence one has reached. In anticipation, Da-sein guards itself against falling back behind itself, or behind the potentiality-for-being that it has understood. It guards against "becoming too old for its victories" (Nietzsche). Free for its ownmost possibilities, that are determined by the *end*, and so understood as *finite*, Da-sein prevents the danger that it may, by its own finite understanding of

existence, fall to recognize that it is getting overtaken by the existence-possibilities of others, or that it may misinterpret these possibilities, thus divesting itself of its ownmost factual existence. As the nonrelational possibility, death individualizes, but only, as the possibility not-to-be-bypassed, in order to make Da-sein as being-with understand the potentialities-of-being of the others. Because anticipation of the possibility not-to-be-bypassed also disclosed all the possibilities lying before it, this anticipation includes the possibility of taking the *whole* of Da-sein in advance in an existentiell way, that is, the possibility of existing as a *whole potentiality-of-being*.

28           The ownmost nonrelational possibility not-to-be-bypassed is *certain*. The mode of *being* certain of it is determined by the truth (disclosedness) corresponding to it. But Da-sein discloses the certain possibility of death as possibility only by making this possibility as its ownmost potentiality-of-being *possible* in anticipating it. The disclosedness of this possibility is grounded in a making possible that anticipates. Holding oneself in this truth, that is, being certain of what has been disclosed, lays claim all the more upon anticipation. The certainty of death cannot be calculated in terms of ascertaining cases of death encountered. This certainty by no means holds itself in the truth of something objectively present. When something objectively present has been discovered, it is encountered most purely by just looking at it and letting it be encountered in itself. Da-sein must first have lost itself in the factual circumstances (this can be one of care's own tasks and possibilities) if it is to gain the pure objectivity, that is, the indifference of apodictic evidence. If being-certain in relation to death does not have this character, that does not mean it is of a lower grade, but that *it does not belong at all to the order of degrees of evidence about things objectively present*.

29           Holding death for true (death *is* always just one's own) shows a different kind of certainty, and is more primordial than any certainty related to beings encountered in the world or to formal objects, for it is certain of being-in-the-world. As such, it claims not only *one* definite kind of behavior of Da-sein, but claims Da-sein in the complete authenticity of its existence. In anticipation, Da-sein can first make certain of its ownmost being in its totality not-to-be-bypassed. Thus, the evidence of the immediate givenness of experiences, of the ego or of Consciousness, necessarily has to lag behind the certainty contained in anticipation. And yet this is not because the kind of apprehension belonging to it is not strict enough, but because at bottom it cannot hold for *true* (disclosed) something that it basically insists upon "having there" as true: namely, the Da-sein which I myself *am* and can be as potentiality-of-being authentically only in anticipation.

30           The ownmost nonrelational possibility not-to-be-bypassed is *indefinite* with regard to its certainty. How does anticipation disclose this character of the eminent possibility of Da-sein? How does understanding, anticipating, project itself upon a definite potentiality-of-being which is constantly possible in such a way that the when in which the absolute impossibility of existence becomes possible remains constantly indefinite? In anticipating the indefinite certainty of death, Da-sein opens itself to a constant *threat* arising from its own there. Being-toward-the-end must hold itself in this very threat, and can so little phase it out that it rather has to cultivate the indefiniteness of the certainty. How is the genuine disclosing of this constant threat existentially possible? All understanding is attuned. Mood brings Da-sein before the thrownness of its "that-it-is-there." *But the attunement which is able to hold open the*

*constant and absolute threat to it self arising from the ownmost individualized being of Da-sein is Angst. In Angst, Da-sein finds itself faced with the nothingness of the possible impossibility of its existence. Angst is anxious about the potentiality-of-being of the being thus determined, and thus discloses the most extreme possibility. Because the anticipation of Da-sein absolutely individualizes and lets it, in this individualizing of itself, become certain of the wholeness of its potentiality-of-being, the fundamental attunement of Angst belongs to this self-understanding of Da-sein in terms of its ground. Being-toward-death is essentially Angst.<sup>1\*</sup> This is attested unmistakably, although “only” indirectly, by being-toward-death as we characterized it., when it distorts Angst into cowardly fear and, in overcoming that fear, only makes known its own cowardliness in the face of Angst.*

31           What is characteristic about authentic, existentially projected being-toward-death can be summarized as follows: *Anticipation reveals to Da-sein its lostness in the they-self and brings it face to face with the possibility to be itself primarily unsupported by concern taking care of things, but to be itself in passionate anxious **freedom** toward death which is free of the illusions of the they, factual, and certain of itself*

32           All relations, belonging to being-toward-death, to the complete content of the most extreme possibility of Da-sein, constitute an anticipation that they combine in revealing, unfolding, and holding fast, as that which makes this possibility possible. The existential project in which anticipation has been delimited, has made visible the *ontological* possibility of an existentiell, authentic being-toward-death. But with this, the possibility then appears of an authentic potentiality-for-being-a-whole—but *only as an ontological possibility*. Of course, our existential project of anticipation stayed with those structures of Da-sein gained earlier and let Da-sein itself, so to speak, project itself upon this possibility, without proffering to Da-sein the “content” of an ideal of existence forced upon it “from the outside.” And yet this existentially “possible” being-toward-death remains, after all, existentiellly a fantastical demand. The ontological possibility of an authentic potentiality-for-being-a-whole of Da-sein means nothing as long as the corresponding ontic potentiality-of-being has not been shown in terms of Da-sein itself. Does Da-sein ever project itself factically into such a being-toward-death? Does it even *demand*, on the basis of its ownmost being, an authentic potentiality of being which is determined by anticipation?

33           Before answering these questions, we must investigate to what extent at *all* and in what way Da-sein *bears witness* to a possible *authenticity* of its existence from its ownmost potentiality-of-being, in such a way that it not only makes this known as *existentiellly* possible, but *demand*s it of itself,

34           The question hovering over us of an authentic wholeness of Da-sein and its existential constitution can be placed on a viable, phenomenal basis only if that question can hold fast to a possible authenticity of its being attested by Da-sein itself. If we succeed in discovering phenomenologically such an attestation and what is attested to in it, the problem arises again of *whether the anticipation of death projected up to now only in its ontological possibility has an essential connection with that authentic potentiality-of being attested to.*

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<sup>1\*</sup> I.e., but not only *Angst* and certainly **not** *Angst* as a mere emotion.