

June 26

I went to bed with Bergson last night, to find out what he said about **time**. At some point I switched to *Heidegger*⁷⁶ whom I find even more enlightening as far as **time** is concerned. Before I fell asleep last night I zapped through the TV cable channels, and landed on one of the ‘Karate Kid’ movies (I think it was the second or the third). I was watching it for a few minutes, when I suddenly understood something about the eastern mind. A standard motive in most ‘Ninja movies’ is that the (good) master always tries to avoid a fight. He knows (as well as the audience) that he can easily defeat the bad guys, but the master’s fighting skills are inseparable from his philosophy, his values, and he never fights unless it is absolutely necessary; Unless it is immoral **not** to fight. The master is often willing to be humiliated and laughed at, but still won’t fight, until his life (and more often, some other innocent life) is seriously threatened. I always had great sympathy for this attitude, but always understood it as a basic **moral value**, a manifestation of the absolute morality of the hero of the story.

Watching the movie, (with Gaya, as always, in my mind) I suddenly realized that the Karate master had (and in general, **has**) her point of view. He knows that **it his him**. He takes the bad guys as just an unpleasant aspect of **himself**; They are **his** experience, not an **external evil**. He does not want to fight (himself), create destruction and death (within himself). He does not mind being humiliated (as it is **by himself**). He cannot be insulted (by himself). He knows that he cannot lose the fight (unless he happens to have enough of this world, which happens to most of us sooner or later). There is no question of ‘who will win’: It his **him** who wins and **him** who loses anyway. The important thing is who

⁷⁶ As the name of his great book indicates,¹¹¹ Heidegger considered **time** a concept of major importance: On the same level as **being** itself. For him, the time coordinate was something **completely** different from **space**, which (for him, like Bergson) was just an artificial product of conceptualization. Like Bergson, he considered time (the subjective kind) to be an irreducible, primitive concept.

I already mentioned, that Heidegger understood the essence of being as **care**: *Sorge*. This care has three moments, or ‘directions’: (1) ‘**Towardness**’ (*Sich vorweg*, or ‘**Zu**’), representing the human *telos*, its intentionality towards the **future**; (2) ‘**Withinness**’ (*Schon sein* or ‘**Auf**’), representing the human circumstances, its awareness of the **past**; (3) ‘**Byness**’ (*Sein bei* or ‘**Bei**’), representing the human context, its surroundings of the **present**. In those three respects we **care**, ‘exceed our limits’, extend **out** of ourselves (‘*extatic modes*’). Time is the **mode** in which we live: The three extatic directions ‘build’, so to speak, the temporal domain of past, present and future. The things we know, or are, or care for, are of three ‘kinds’: ‘Pastly’ things (like **memories**), ‘presently’ things (which we understand as **occurring**) and ‘futurely’ things (which are our plans, wishes and fears).

The human situation consists of the ‘projection’ of these modes of ‘care’, to constantly ‘reconstruct’ our ‘regular’ past, present and future: a different, ‘inferior’ kind of time: time of **things**, not of *Dasein*. Heidegger distinguishes, in each of these ‘directions’, a ‘right’ way and a ‘wrong’ way of being: (1) Actively caring for the future, making plans, **vs.** just waiting for it; (2) Living the **moment** (another Heideggerian concept, meaning the moment of authentic exercise of free will) **vs.** passing the time, or ‘killing time’; (3) Redescribing one’s past, taking interest in one’s own history, **vs.** forgetting it. The minute I was born and the minute in which I will die are **not** one event that is already over and another that did not yet arrive. They are both here, in us: They mark our **borders**, our ‘two ends’ (to use a spatial metaphor).

plays the villain and who plays the hero. The master, playing the part of the hero, acts like one; and as such, he cannot lose, because he acted like a hero. He has no fear; just compassion for the poor adversary. When the master has no more choice, because he is faced with one of those unpleasant moments in one's life when a choice between two evils is in order, he **chooses**: He decides that the least evil would be to save the life of the innocent victim, while sacrificing the life of the villain. So he fights, and has no doubt whatsoever regarding the outcome, whereas he made the **right** decision. The complete confidence he has, is in itself a determining factor in the fight. He is cool, calm, focused, and he wins. It could not be otherwise, whereas the villain, as well as the victim and the whole surroundings anyway depend on the master for their existence: They are **his** experiences, his representations, his **reality**. I lay in bed, looking at the little Chinese guy (or was it Korean?), and could almost feel the quiet confidence he had, of not **being able** to lose, after he was compelled by the circumstances to engage in the crucial fight.

How could anything be **wrong**, if you are doing the **right** thing? The only source of wrong is the immoral action (or lack of it). When you **do** something wrong, it has a tendency to complicate: You have to cover up, from others, but especially from yourself: You start doing and thinking things designed to **justify** your wrong action. If you are lucky, your conscience bothers you; You feel **bad** for what you did. If you are lucky enough to have the chance, you try to make amends; You try to somehow **pay** for what you did. Not so much to improve on the situation of the damaged party, as to free **yourself** from the heavy burden of having been **bad**. Socrates was laughed at (and misunderstood to the present day) when he said that punishing a criminal is **only**, and completely, to the benefit of the criminal; That the **worst** punishment that could be inflicted on the criminal, is **not** to punish him. Sounds absurd, but how true! God did not punish Cain for the murder of his brother. He did **precisely** the opposite: He **marked** him, and warned the small population of the world (including animals) **not to touch him**. The worst punishment, by far, that could be inflicted on Cain, was **to let him live**. And the longer his life, the longer the punishment. Had God killed him right after the murder, Cain would not have been punished for his terrible act at all! God achieved a dual goal in keeping him alive: He gave him a (long) life sentence (in the role of the first and greatest villain in the world), while supplying humanity with a (literally) living example of **crime**.

It is summertime in Edam. No more clouds, just a friendly warm sun. I am dreaming regularly, but decided not to bore you with my dreaming bulletins. If something **startling** happens, I will let you know. I am starting to miss home, although I have not (nearly) had enough of Gaya. I still have almost a week. I met her at breakfast, and told her about my Ninja revelation. She laughed but said nothing. I asked: "Let me see if your theory about humor works: What was **funny**?" Gaya laughed again: "I hope this was a rhetorical

° Heidegger rejected the common conception of time, by which **we**, our consciousness, **move** along the time axis. He maintained, that such a conception renders everything inexistent: The past already passed, the future is not yet here; Neither **are**. And the present, before we have a chance to say anything about it, falls out of existence. Heidegger took **being** as fixed, 'stationary', so to speak. it is the **world**, the 'story', that moves: We keep rewriting our **past**, as well as the future. It is the framework by which we grasp ourselves.

question. Did you do your homework?" She was starting to act like a high school teacher; I wasn't sure I liked it. I said: "I tried, but failed". Gaya softened up. She said: "You know, you can **ignore** me if you want. I am not forcing myself. It is an age-old question, who is to blame for the student's failure: The teacher or the pupil. Even Plato failed to solve this question." I wondered at her explicit confession of being my **teacher**. I said: "Is it true what they say in the east, that it is the *Guru* who finds the pupil, and not the other way around?" She answered like a shrink: "What do **you** think?" She was smiling, so the question was, of course, rhetoric: No doubt **she** found me. I said: "Following your teachings, I would say that I **summoned** you. So in a way, it is the pupil who is the **cause** of the encounter. Besides, the question is wrongly phrased in the first place: There is no sense in asking 'who finds whom?', **objectively**. I have **my** point of view, **the** point of view of **the** pupil; I was emphasizing the **the** deliberately; "And from this point of view, which is the only one, **I** found **you**." Gaya did not praise me for my deep understanding, instead, she focused on my way of speaking: "You keep using the phrase 'point of view'. You make it seem as if it is just a question of your **angle**, of the **place** from which you observe. It may be misleading. You may be understood as saying that different people have different points of view of **the** reality." I was aware of that. I said: "I know; But the alternative is unintelligible. It is next to impossible to explain, to understand. This is why solipsists were always laughed at by most. How can I speak to someone, and explain to him that he does not **independently** exist? It is so self-refuting! By engaging in the conversation, I already **accept** the very thing I deny: Objectivity!" Gaya nodded in agreement. "It **is** a major problem: *On what we cannot speak, we must remain silent.*⁷⁷ But there is a trick. When trying to convey this idea to someone, instead of claiming that **I** am alone, I claim that **he** is alone. I adopt **his** language, if I can, and **join him** in what you call '**his** point of view'. After having done that, after 'joining his world', I show him how everybody **else**, particularly **myself**, are dependent on **him**. I make **him** the center. This cannot be done in **writing**, because I have to gain his confidence as someone who speaks his language, who understands him and is understood by him. This is why Socrates didn't write a single line. You are in for a great disappointment, if you think you can transfer all this to a hard document. You will not be understood. Nobody was." With this I strongly disagreed: "You are **wrong**. I am not writing this for the general public. I am writing it for my **friends**, including close relatives. These are people who not only speak my language, but already have the required confidence in my sanity and motivation." She retreated: "In this case I agree. All the others also had a close circle that understood; In different languages, in different eras." I carried on my attack: "And I also disagree **in general**. Who was the last philosopher who offered a complete system, in writing, that was phrased in non-technical jargon? After Plato, I mean. Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, all had

⁷⁷ **Ineffability** has nothing to do with mysticism, contrary to common opinion. Something is ineffable if it undermines the very presupposition of effability; the pre-condition to the employment of language. Language **requires** an objectivist premise: A **something** that **is** discussed. Discourse is **social**, it involves more than one conceptual scheme. So some premise of shared context is required. It doesn't make this premise some kind of 'eminent truth', but it still is a condition to engage in the language game. Arguing for Solipsism does not cohere with the presuppositions required for **arguing**. That is why solipsism is impossible to defend, and the reason Wittgenstein¹¹² kept quiet about it.

systems. I don't think they understood **less** than I do. But they were all academics. Their environment was academic. Their **ordinary** language was professional jargon. The ones that spoke the same jargon, understood. **My** ordinary language is much more **ordinary** than any of them. That is why I am writing two texts at once. I think my ideas are **grounded** in logical considerations, and my footnotes provide the **credibility**, so I won't be considered another mystic lunatic. But the stuff I am writing for my friends could be understood by anyone. Maybe the logicians will say I have a point in the footnotes, and this will draw attention to the ordinary language text, make it worth the effort of trying to understand it."

We started to talk about **time**⁷⁸ as soon as we embarked on our walk. I said: "I found more in Heidegger than in Bergson." "Tell me" she said. "They manage to explain 'time' in general. Particularly its importance, its primitiveness. But I couldn't find an explanation for the simple, day-to-day phenomenon of 'passing time'. For example: We met in the dining room about half an hour ago. Let me rephrase it into subjectivist language: **I** met you in the dining room half an hour ago. I am **now** in the present. I have memories from half an hour ago, and memories from a minute ago, and I have various beliefs regarding the connections between the two. How is this distinction created? Both Heidegger and Bergson have two separate notions of time: Objective, scientific time, which they consider a convenient fiction, and **real**, human, subjective time, where human authentic **will** is manifested. The second kind is still vague to me, and it does not explain to me how the 'regular', objective time-difference between **now** and half an hour ago was constituted." Gaya listened carefully, and then replied: "Let us see. You are **used** to the passage of time. I mean, your *worldview* has a whole bunch of rules that are constantly in operation. For example, you consider it completely impossible that the time now would be the same time as it was when we had breakfast." I asked her to continue. "Had you **not**

⁷⁸ One of the few recent attempts to address the issue of **time** is what is known as *McTaggart's* paradox.¹¹³ He (also) distinguished between two separate 'time-series': (1) Series 'A', characterized by the concepts 'past', 'present', 'future', 'now', 'tomorrow' etc. This is the subjective, intuitive notion of time. (2) Series 'B' is characterized by the concepts 'earlier than', 'later than', 'simultaneous with'. The paradox is based on the following two claims: (1) Series A is more **basic** than series B; (2) The use of series A in science leads to contradiction and infinite regress. Moreover, although series A is clearly more basic, series B is **irreducible** to series A. McTaggart's conclusion: Time is an illusion.

So far so good. McTaggart had not said anything that Bergson and Heidegger didn't know. What is interesting, is some claims made by distinguished thinkers (including Quine), that series A is the one that is reducible to B. In other words, that A is **not really** more basic than B, contrary to our basic intuitions. This is not the place to elaborate on the details of the proposed reduction; But the problem centers on defining the **present** in terms of series B. There is no escape from admitting the **subjectivity** of the present, be it conceived as simultaneous with a **mental act** or a reflexive **utterance** of some speaker.

Here is my view regarding the McTaggart paradox: I believe McTaggart's analysis to be valid, although not **paradoxical**. Why should either series be reducible to the other? Because both are denoted by the same English word? Because they seem related? 'Time A' and 'time B' are as different in nature as is **pain** from **gravity** (although gravity can cause pain, if one falls). It is a clear case of a category mistake. One is a very subjective concept, like 'love', 'fear' or (the sensation of) **red**, and the other a scientific concept, like 'atom', 'force' or 'wave length'.

assumed that, your whole *worldview* would collapse. You **want** time to pass, because it keeps your beloved world intact. You **could** stop it, of course. If it is **not** beloved. You could jump off a bridge. But, for some reason, it is beloved. It is your world, it has 'rules of operation', and you don't want to lose it. So the first thing we established is that the prime reason for the fact that thirty five minutes have passed since you met me at breakfast, is your **choice**. Your **will** that this **should** be the case. Now, suppose you don't want to **stop** it, just make time pass **quicker**, or **slower**. When would you want that?"

She got right down to business. Either she had a great analytic mind, (In case she was doing this for the first time), or she knew the answers, and just systematically led me to them. I cooperated: "When I am having a really pleasant time, I want it to pass slowly. Like when I sat by the church." Gaya took another step: "And? What happened? You don't wear a watch, but you sat there as long as you **wanted**, right? When you got up, it wasn't because time was up. It was because you didn't **want** to sit there any more, right?" I agreed. she continued: "Now, let us suppose that you had a meeting, and you didn't have all the time you **needed**, to enjoy what you were doing. Suppose you were meeting **me** at, say, ten thirty, and you only had ten minutes to sit there by the church, if you didn't want to be late. What would the situation be then?" I thought for a moment, and replied: "First of all, I wouldn't know. I don't wear a watch. I took it off several months ago, because it somehow felt wrong to be governed by a little instrument on my wrist. Come to think of it, I haven't been late once since I did this. Just because I don't wear a watch, I take wider margins. I always have an extra fifteen minutes. So it is very unlikely that the situation you described would happen. If I had a meeting with you, I would not have gone to watch the sunset. Maybe it is a kind of **care**: If I want to be both spontaneous **and** responsible, I don't put myself in such situations of conflict. Still, it could happen. But I'm starting to see your point: You say I **could** stretch time, even if I was in a hurry; Only there would be a price to pay; A **moral** price: I would be late." Gaya continued: "Not so fast. First let us examine the other case: You want time to pass more quickly; to 'shrink', so to speak. What do you do then?" I laughed: "I go to sleep". Gaya lightened up by this answer: "Wise move. But let us say you are sitting in an airport, and your flight is delayed. You

◦ An **objective subdomain** shared by (at least two) speakers is composed, basically, of just two **kinds** of things (properties that are **objects**): Of **rules** (mostly 'laws of nature') and of **past events**. The first kind (rules) is none of our concern here in the discussion of time, and will therefore be ignored (although I hope to address it later on). I wish to concentrate on what constitutes the **bulk** of any shared context, any objective subdomain. It has already been established and reiterated, that language **requires** such an objective subdomain, a shared, fixed **context**. A group of things that **cannot change**, so that everyone would be able to speak about them without them changing meaning in the middle of the conversation. The fixed, unchanging beliefs that are shared by everyone are the facts of the past. These facts are **constituted** as unchangeable, for the benefit of effective communication. It is **agreed** that the past cannot change, because 'the past' is a general name for everything in the objective subdomain that cannot change any more. A speaker (such as Dummett¹⁴) that will have the nerve to claim that the past may be changed (not our view, or interpretation of it. **The** events themselves) will not be taken seriously, because such a claim undermines an extremely important constitutive premise: that there **is** a certain subset of things that will not change any more. It provides the speakers with a clear, solid base to construct their (shared) world on. "The past" is the **hard** facts of reality, the unquestionable, undebateable part. There may of course be debates regarding **what** the events of the past were, but it is agreed that what **is** in the past, remains like it is forever.

cannot go to sleep. You are not tired enough to sleep on a bench. You'd like time to **fly**, but it doesn't. Why?" I identified with the situation. It happened to me more than once. I said: "Now the concept of **boredom** enters the picture. If I wasn't a person who gets bored, I wouldn't want time to pass quicker. But sometimes it is the mirror image of the preceding case: When I am **suffering**, I want it to end quickly." Gaya seemed puzzled: "Let me see: You mean your suffering is somehow externally regulated to last for a specific period? Give me an example." I searched my mind, then found one: "The dentist. He has a clock on the wall, and I know it usually takes twenty minutes. And it hurts." "Fine. What is **bad** about this pain?" Again a moral question entered the discussion. First **responsibility** and now **bad**. What didn't I like about pain? What is **really** the problem with pain? Particularly with the dentists, where the pain does not **signal** a problem, but marks its **solution!** I had no answer. "I don't know." Gaya said: "I don't want to divert the discussion to **pain**, although it is an interesting topic. Let us remain with the dentist. You could easily 'shrink' the time, solve your problem: You could simply leave the chair. There would be consequences to pay, naturally, due to the specific structure of your world, in which evading **this** pain will cause **more** pain in the future.⁷⁹ But you could still solve the particular problem and shrink the time."

Gaya went on: "So you can **stretch** time, sit by the church for as long as you want, and you can also **shrink** it, by just leaving the dentist's chair. What you seem **not** to be able to do, is to control the little arms on the face of the clock. But these arms are certainly not **time**. No one claims that they are. It is an instrument, designed to help people do various things. Do things simultaneously. Coordinate their appointments. Like 'we shall meet at the oak tree when the sun is highest in the sky'. You have no reason to want to affect the movement of the little arms. On the contrary: You do **not** wish to mess up everybody's appointments. It is your subjective feeling that you want to affect, and you clearly **can!** I think that Bergson's and Heidegger's distinction between the two 'kinds' of time was a bit misleading to you. In **your** vocabulary, It is **private** time and **social** time. Social time is part of the objective world; A concept that is an important tool in communication. It is **posited** for this purpose, just as you posit 'the law of gravity' almost a century after Einstein. Forget about this concept. It is clear and well defined. What you find mysterious is the *Duree*, Bergson's concept I suggested you read about. It is a **feeling**, a subjective

⁷⁹ And what, then, is the **future**? It is everything that is left, besides the past. The present can be safely disregarded, because it is so insignificantly 'thin', practically inaccessible. The **future** is the contents of the objective subdomain, for which it is **agreed** (amongst speakers) that it **may** change. The future is the 'space' in which the lingual conventions **allow** us to exercise our freedom, to make our choices. I may say: "I **will** write a book", or "a book **will** be written", although no speaker knows the book I am talking about. My use of the future tense explains to the community of speakers that **although** they do not have a corresponding object, they may safely add it to **their** subdomain, because it is something that is **allowed** to happen: A change in the world which is **permitted**. The **tenses** language contains are required to make the distinction between the **factual** (things the community of speakers **forces** into every speaker's subdomain), hence not subject to human will, and the **possible**: subject to will and intention. It is here important not to mix this notion of 'possible' with usage such as 'It is possible that Plato had a beard'. This second kind of possibility is not subject to anybody's will. No one can retroactively grow a beard on Plato's face. This second usage of 'possible' is not **ontic**, but **epistemic**. These two meanings of 'possible' are clearly distinct.

feeling; One that cannot be shared. Some of your **moments** are good, some are bad. They are not **long** moments, neither are they **short** moments. They are just moments. They become 'long' or 'short' only when something **interferes**; if something is **wrong**: Either if you didn't have **enough**, or you had **too much**. In order to understand *Duree*, you must first understand how it is that you have too much, or not enough. These are situations to **avoid**."

We were making real progress. We sat down on a bench facing a thousand cows. I wanted more: "You mean that the pain by the dentists is also a question of responsibility, just as the case with our ten-thirty meeting? That I have a moral obligation to do something, so I **voluntarily** endure the twenty minutes by the dentists, or shorten my pleasure of watching the sun set?" "Yes" she said. "To preserve **both** your *worldview* and your morality. Your **moments** are as long or as short as you **want** them to be. It is better to say that they 'have no length'. The standard *meter* in Paris that is the standard for measuring lengths **has no length**. It is absurd to say that it is one meter long, because it **defines** what 'one meter long' means. *Duree* cannot be measured in units of time. It is just a **moment**. Every isolated conscious experience you have is exactly one **moment** long. You may also say that it lasted ten minutes, but this would only be a way to **communicate** with someone, because you cannot share your *Duree* with someone else. You need to relate to concepts that you **share** with him." "But **you are now** talking about it! about *Duree*, about a **moment**." "But you **realize** that it is just **your** moment we are talking about, not **an objective** moment. The word 'moment' is a really interesting word: It survived the objectivist plague: It is completely undefined (regarding its **length**, at least), yet widely used. Incidentally, you were right to bring up **boredom**. Another sad side-effect of objectivism: You sit at the airport, having a **moment**. Why do you want to do something else? **Who said** that you need to do something else? Only if you are in a **strange** world, in someone **else's** world, you can feel bored. If you realize that you are **at home**, in your own world, boredom is impossible." After a moment's pause, she added: "Unless you have a dirty conscious. Then you want to **forget**. You want to do something distracting. Sometimes this is what boredom is all about. I can almost **guarantee** that you have seen the last of **boredom**."^o

I was **very** content. I felt it was a really significant lesson. And she prepared it in advance, no doubt. She specifically ordered me to read; gave me a home assignment. I decided to **stretch** this long moment as much as **morality** would permit. I said: "Tell me more about

^o I meant no disrespect for **Dummett** (whom I greatly admire) in saying that he had the nerve to claim that the past can be changed. On the contrary: His anti realism (regarding many things, **including** the past) is a view I strongly sympathize with. Dummett addresses this issue in two brilliant articles: *Bringing about the past*¹¹⁵ and *Can an effect precede its cause*¹¹⁶. His point being, that there is no **logical** constraint on affecting changes to past events. In fact, it has been done. It is done all the time. This is what **historians** do. It is usually disguised as 'opinion' or 'interpretation' or 'analysis', but in the cases they manage to **convince the public**, to the extent of affecting the literature and encyclopedias, They did precisely what Dummett claims can be done: They changed the past; They changed the contents of the community's objective subdomain. (The same thing happens with **rules** or **laws of nature**: Scientific 'revolutions' change these laws 'retroactively', affecting a change in everybody's objective world. More about rules later).

moments.” She willingly continued: “Heidegger thought that a **moment** was when **freedom** is carried out; When **care** is exercised. What Kirkegaard meant by ‘moment’ is: ‘A burst of **eternity** into the flow of time’. I have a slightly different conception; a different **articulation**, because I definitely mean the same thing. I prefer to think of a **moment** as the **gap** between two conscious choices, two **decisions**. In mean ‘decision’ in a moral sense. Some people are like automatons: They hardly ever decide. They are like **objects**, manipulated by circumstance. They have very ‘long’, blurred gaps between the few conscious decisions they do make. A **moment** is a **gap**, a *Duree*. A decision is a **point**, an instance. A decision marks the end of one **moment** and the beginning of the next. When you **decided** to sit on the bench by the church the other evening, it was a conscious moral decision. It marked the beginning of the **moment** you called ‘magic’. Then, at some point, you made another decision, another choice: You decided to leave. This marked the **end** of this moment. Even if you lit a cigarette in the middle, it didn’t break your **moment**, because it was not a conscious, moral decision. But if you consciously thought of lighting a cigarette, weighing the moral implications, You would have had **two** moments there on the bench: The decision to light (or not to) marking the end of one and the beginning of the other. What the wise always preach for, is for **all**, or at least most of one’s decisions to be moral, conscious ones, not automatic: Ones that mark the borders of **moments**. A young private in a battle field may have ten separate moments in one **minute**. A chairman of a large corporation, on the other hand, may have (meaningless, practically unconscious) moments that last days, or weeks. You should read more *Existentialists*.⁸⁰ They have a good understanding of **time**, although they are poor **speakers**.”

I decided to follow up on another topic that came up before: “And how about **sleep**? It apparently serves as a sort of ‘time machine’: I **decide** to go to sleep, thus marking the beginning of a moment, and the next thing I know, I **decide** to get up (in the morning).” Gaya smiled: “Or **not** to. Yes. I agree. Every **sleep** is such a gap, a moment. Unless you wake up in the middle, and squeeze in another decision.” I thought of the other night, waking up several times, paying attention to my dreams. I said: “But **why** do I need to go to sleep? Why do I **decide** to go to sleep?” Gaya replied: “There are two answers. First, your *worldview* has the concept of ‘sleep’ as something which fits in the picture: Living things need **rest**. So you comply by the rules of your own world. But there is another, maybe ‘deeper’ explanation: Sleeping is a sort of ‘trick’: You keep your world ‘running’ without personally supervising it. It is tiring, exercising **care** all the time; Keeping your world in motion. The development of the ingenious concept of **objective** time, the use of mechanical **motion** to measure this objective abstract entity, enables a person to take a break. **Not** to be there, and yet enable his world to go on spinning. You ‘set it’, and it can run by itself, for short periods. Sometimes for longer periods, as in cases of a long coma. Only then, there is the danger of waking up to something quite alien, of course.”

⁸⁰ The way I understand the term ‘Existentialism’, the view presented here is clearly existentialist. The terms **Care**, **Duree**, **Authenticity**, and many others are all part of existentialist jargon. It is a great pity that their writing is often so obscure. But then again, how clear can they be, when they undermine the basic premise of **objectivity**.

She was patiently waiting for my next question. She must have decided to let this go on for as long as I **chose**. She had this way of **explaining** and **demonstrating** at the same time. Naturally, I thought of **dreams** again. Dreams **happen** during a **moment** of sleep. What is their significance? I asked. Gaya smiled. “Am I having a *Deja vu* or have we been through **dreams** already?” I smiled back: “That was before you so nicely explained **sleep**. Besides, now that you brought it up, you might also explain the phenomenon of *Deja vu*.”⁸¹ Gaya sighed: “What will happen when you run out of questions?” I replied without hesitation: “I will start **answering** them, like you.” She had nothing to say to that, so she complied: “Describe to me the feeling of *Deja vu*.” I said: “What’s there to describe? A situation seems **familiar**, although it is not a memory.” “Nicely put” she started; “You feel you’ve ‘been there before’, right?” She didn’t wait for an answer; “What is this ‘**there**’? **Where** have you been before? In the **situation**, right? It is a sort of **reoccurrence of a situation**. Now, what is a **situation**?” This time she expected me to reply. “A feeling? The state of my world?” I tried. She had a forgiving smile: “A **moment**. We just discussed that. It is a similar **moment**. But in what **way** can moments be **similar**? When you have the feeling of *Deja vu*, you are suddenly forced to **pay attention**. Even if you were not particularly conscious, the feeling **makes you** conscious. It is as if you are telling yourself: ‘Pay attention! You’ve seen this before! Right?’ I had to agree, but asked her to say more. She continued: “It is, of course, **wrong** to ignore it. It is significant. I believe it is simply a **point of decision**, one in which it is **right** for you to

⁸¹ The phenomenon of **Deja vu** is similar to that of **dreams** in the relative disregard it receives from philosophical circles. At most, it is left to the attention of psychology and cognitive science. It is an inherently subjective feeling, unmeasureable, hence not a convenient subject matter of science. So it is forgotten in the twilight zone between science and non-science. The failure of the prevailing metaphysical paradigm to explain these phenomena (and many others) acts as evidence for the need to replace **realism** with a better explanation.

I believe **Deja vu** is a case of an **unconceptualized memory**. Memories must be conceptualized; To be remembered, an experience must have a **place** in the network of beliefs that is my *worldview*. The memory cannot just ‘hang’ there by itself. It has relations with other concepts (beliefs and properties). Even extraordinary events have a context to which they belong; their ‘environment’ in my conceptual scheme. When something happens which fits **completely** with my system (e.g., the sun rises) there is no reason for me to remember it: It “was there” to begin with. When it is, in a sense “new” (e.g., the streets of Edam), new concepts are formed, having their particular place in the total network. The big church in Edam is a new concept, with relations to old concepts (‘church’, ‘big’ etc.) and to other new concepts (the street it is on). Still, some parts of my system I call ‘beliefs’, and others ‘memories’. They are both properties, but ‘beliefs’ belong to the genus ‘generalized’, while ‘memories’ to ‘particular’. The distinction is clearer when we view ‘memories’ as something that may be forgotten, and ‘beliefs’ as something that are not. Memories are the ‘end-nodes’ of the system: They do not include any other property. The particular memory of a tree I noticed on my walk, is **included** by many other concepts, but includes none. If I lose it (forget it), No **other** concepts will be lost. ‘Particular’ concepts (memories) do not support **other** concepts in the system. They are just **supported** by others. If I lose a memory, my *worldview* remains intact. If I happen to lose a generalized concept, a **belief**, my *worldview* will be damaged, because all concepts included in it will be lost as well.

decide something. A kind of reflex, reminding you that you neglected to pay attention, to care for something that is somehow associated with the scene you are experiencing.^o

I was thinking about this morning's conversation the whole day. Everything seemed to support Gaya's story. For example, the fact that children have a different subjective feeling of time: For them, a month is a much **longer** period than for an adult. Children have **more moments**. They are not restrained by as many **external** rules, laws and constraints. They spontaneously choose and decide, sometimes once a minute. Having more moments results in a subjective feeling of a 'long time'. Routine, on the other hand, in which not many decisions are required, makes time **fly**. This is also the reason, why the first few days in a new place, in new circumstances, always seem like a longer period than the last days in the same place: My first week in Edam seemed like eternity, while this, last week simply flies by: In the first days I constantly **decided**: Eat here, eat there; Walk here, walk there; I tried a variety of alternatives, checked out nice locations. I don't do this anymore. I already know the place; I am in a **routine**, making much less decisions, have less **moments**. So time seems to pass much more quickly. Some people feel that their life 'simply flew by', and before they noticed, it is almost over. Those people simply refrained from choosing, from making (real, authentic, free) decisions; They had very few **moments**. For me, the last two years of my life seem like three life-spans.

After dinner I went to watch the sunset again. I've become addicted to sunsets. This time I didn't go to the spot by the church; I knew better than trying to duplicate a magic moment. I went to create a new one. I exercised **care**: dressed warm and took my sun glasses. I went around the village, on the pathway on the perimeter. I spotted an appropriate bench, on the west side (obviously), that was facing a huge meadow, stretching for a hundred and eighty degrees, on both directions. I had about twenty minutes before the sun would touch the horizon (about two inches). This time of day is rightfully called 'the magic hour', as nature is getting ready to go to sleep. It was a success. I enjoyed it a lot. The panoramic flat view was astonishing. It was completely still and yet there was life everywhere: a large variety of birds, ducks, geese, frogs, cows,

^o But some experiences are not even conceptualized: I am not **conscious** of having the experience. I am walking in the streets of Edam, I hear a dog bark behind me, but I do not conceptualize it. The experience of the particular bark does not get **connected** to any other concept in my system. It is possible, that it will be conceptualized an hour later: If someone will say to me: Remember the dog that barked behind you? The bark will immediately become conceptualized: It will become a **memory**, a member in my conceptual scheme. The mystery lies in the status of the bark in the interim period: The hour that passed between the experience and the question (and consequent conceptualization). I have no clear explanation to this mystery, although I suspect that it has to do with the fact that the 'one hour' is **itself** just a part of the system, as outlined in the discussion about **time**.

Nevertheless, if we assume the possibility of 'detached' concepts in the system (like the bark, before it was conceptualized), properties that, although included in the system have no relations with any others (except, of course, F and G), then we would have absolutely no **access** to them. Their 'isolation' will make them impossible to reach. In other words, **nothing would bring them up**, as they are not **associated** with anything. A further speculation may lead us to assume, that we may, **by accident**, come across this 'isolated concept' again. We would not **remember** it, whereas it has no relation with any other concept; But it is still **there**; Hence the odd feeling of Déjà vu: "I **know** it, but it connects with nothing".

sheep, and millions of insects, who were very careful not to bother me. The soft red light of the setting sun painted everything in magnificent colors, and the scenery had an accented three dimensional effect, probably because of the special lighting. I was completely alone. You might think that many people would be attracted to a scene like this. But most everyone takes it for granted, or has 'more serious' business to attend to. I didn't. I thought that if Disney world offered an attraction like this, a kind of **virtual reality**⁸² ride that gave a perfect **illusion** of what I was experiencing, people would come from all over the world for it. I know I would. Sunsets and beautiful views are like air and water: It is all around, so hardly anyone recognizes their **value**. Virtual reality is considered a technology that will change the world, while all it does is **imitate** it. Why go for the **virtual** when you could go for **reality**? A lady and a dog were approaching. I watched them get closer, their long shadows reaching me long before they did. The dog was running forward. It ran **to me**, wagging its tail. It stood on its hind legs, putting both its paws on my thigh. I smiled and stroke him gently. It was wagging its tail, looking really happy. Something of Gaya must be rubbing off me. I stayed on the bench until the sun was gone. Then I **decided** to end the **moment** and start a new one. I started walking again, and completed a full circle around the little village. Although I was already through with today's writing, I decided to convert my raw, unconceptualized impressions into **memories**, and turned my computer on again, to connect my mental representations with the rest of my conceptual scheme. I didn't want to **forget** them, or to let them get lost in my crowded *worldview*, **disconnected** from the rest of me. Good night.

⁸² Virtual reality is bound to significantly affect the prevailing metaphysical paradigm (namely, **realism**). 'Cyber space' is quickly becoming **reality**, and soon people will argue if a certain virtual reality experience or phenomenon was **really** there (in the VR space) or not. The obvious meaning of the frequent term **really**, or '**really** really' will evaporate, while exposing the contextual nature of **every** such 'really'.