

THE ENGAGEMENT OF LIVED-IMMEDIACY
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL UNCOVERING
OF THE FIELD OF HUMAN FREEDOM

James Alan Tuedio

"Hearts remote yet not asunder
Distance and no space was seen
So between them love did shine
Either was the other's mine."

-- Goethe

The engagement in lived- immediacy is a "timeless" moment that endures. Lacking all conceptual dimensionality, this experience not only "envelops" the participant, but also leaves him thoroughly suspended beyond the limitations of personality. In short, there is neither time nor an ego. Perhaps you are on a train that is slowly pulling out of the station. You see a face that reaches out, and suddenly you are experiencing

the weird combination of fixity and change, the terrible moment of immobility stamped with eternity in which, passing life at great speed, both the observer and the observed seem frozen in time.¹

Thomas Wolfe continues his description of the experiencing of an engagement in lived- immediacy by reflecting back upon that

one moment of timeless suspension when the land did not move, the train did not move, the slattern in the doorway did not move, he did not move. It was as if God had lifted his baton sharply above the endless orchestration of the seas, and the eternal movement had stopped, suspended in the timeless architecture of the absolute.

Until Phenomenology established itself as a style of thinking for approaching the description of human experiencing, it was presumed, for the most part, that experiences of this kind constituted true immediacy. Emerson, writing in the essay "On Nature," remarks that his engagements in lived- immediacy leave him thoroughly surpassed:

Standing on the bare ground--my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space --all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing [though] I see all.²

And Sartre, remarking in *Being and Nothingness*, has found a similar position being expounded by Rousseau. Describing his pantheistic intuitions as "concrete psychic events in his history," Rousseau claims, according to Sartre,

that on those occasions he melted into the universe, that the world alone was suddenly found present as an absolute presence and unconditioned reality.³

Critiquing this view of "immediate experience," Sartre suggests that we can hardly ignore

this total, isolated presence of the world, its pure "being-there": certainly we admit freely that at this privileged moment there was nothing else but the world. But this does not mean, as Rousseau claims, that there was a fusion of consciousness with the world. (Sartre, p. 177)

Rather, the conceptual distinction between self and other has been spontaneously bracketed from consideration, and thus no perspective is being taken by the self upon that which engages its fascination. There is, consequently, no "detachment" from the object which fascinates, but rather a living side by side where "everything is given at once in a sort of absolute proximity" (Sartre, p. 155). This "lightening intuition without relief" is regarded by Sartre as a calling out to oneself "from the ground of the future" which reveals the spatiality of the world as being "one with the non-positional apprehension by [embodied consciousness] of itself as unextended" (Sartre, p. 179). I am taking no perspective upon this other which engages my fascination, and thus am unable to determine what I am in terms of what I am not: I can, in short, take no perspective upon myself. "There is only "process," only that mode of non-positional awareness, that "pure mode of losing myself in the world," which causes me to become "drunk in" by prepredicative experience (Sartre, p. 259). Engaged by lived-immediacy, consciousness exists its body as the upsurge of perspective which is its fundamental orientation in situation, even as it is simultaneously surpassing its body in calling to itself from the ground of the future. We must suggest, therefore, that the individual who experiences lived-immediacy is caught up in the immediacy. And whether that which "catches" him up is an exquisite art object, a chestnut-root, or a statuesque blond sporting rosy

cheeks, his access to this lived-immediacy is a non-reflective mental turning-towards which lets that which is available for concerned regard "be" in its presentation of itself. For instance, a painter engages lived-immediacy when he allows his creation to reveal its own possibilities. And he can only allow this to happen insofar as he lets these possibilities "show forth" in their own right even as he simultaneously appropriates them as his own possibilities.

Sartre's discussion of authentic sexual relations in Being and Nothingness strives to make a similar point (Sartre, pp. 387-398). Sexual desire, he writes, "is consciousness making itself body." For this reason,

desire is not only the desire of the Other's body; it is -- within the unity of a single act -- the non-thetically lived project of being swallowed up in the body. (Sartre, p. 389)

This desire which is consciousness making itself body thus aims to reduce both myself and my lover to a state of "pure being-there." And this means, on Sartre's account, bringing-to-life the body as flesh. In other words, I no longer stroke my lover, as one might stroke a porcelain vase; rather, I effect a caressful shaping which renders us both touched passivities. We come to live side by side, if only for a moment's timeless expanse, as that "shiver of pleasure" which Sartre terms the "awakening" of consciousness as flesh. And in so doing, we are engaged in relational lived-reciprocity, having transcended not only the limitations of personality, but the objective manifestations of time as well. Each participant in the relation has lost all comprehension of being "looked-at," and the conceptual existing of the body as a point of view has also been undercut. It is almost as if I have actually become my lover, for in this engagement of double reciprocal incarnation I am allowing my lover to show forth the possibilities which constitute the project of her coming-to-be-as-flesh while simultaneously I appropriate these possibilities as my own. In short, as Sartre explicitly remarks (Sartre, p. 390), I aim not to caress my lover, but rather to caress myself with the flesh of my lover. And to the extent that I succeed, my consciousness has come to play upon the surface of my perspective-upon-the-world while simultaneously caressing itself with the touched passivity which is my lover's perspective lived-as-flesh. But I do not actually become my lover, nor does she cease to exist the upsurge of possibilities which define her being-in-the-world. As the poet Rilke has already observed, a literal "togetherness" between two people

is an impossibility, and where it seems, nevertheless, to exist, it is a narrowing . . . which robs either one party or both of his fullest freedom and development. But, once the realization is accepted that even between the closest human beings infinite distances continue to exist, a wonderful living side by side can grow up, [granted] they succeed in loving the distance between which makes it possible for each to see the other whole and against a wide sky!"

One can, on Rilke's account, and Sartre's as well, enter into authentic human relations only by bringing to life the very distance which makes possible the sharing of preconceptual life-space. And bringing this "psychic" distance to life does not involve a conceptual positing of the side-by-sideness which each grows into. Rather, it involves the effectuation of relational lived-reciprocity, which requires a pre-cognitive (and thus pre-conceptual) engagement in lived-immediacy.

Thus far, of course, we have nothing more than a characterization of the structure of an engagement in lived-immediacy. And even this characterization is deficient. Before we have completed this "phenomenology" of lived-immediacy, however, I hope to have made clear not only the essential nature of this pre-thematic mode of experiencing, but equally well the role engagements in lived-immediacy must play in the development of an existential philosophy of freedom. To proceed along these lines, we must introduce and appropriate some Heideggerian concepts which are crucial for understanding the pre-cognitive, "engaging" nature of relational lived-reciprocity. But we must be prepared to move beyond Heidegger, and thus to think his concepts apart from the conceptual limitations of the philosophical framework presented us in Being and Time. After all, Heidegger's concern lies in laying the ontological foundations for posing the Seinsfrage, the question towards Being, whereas our concern is with disclosing the structure of the field of human freedom.

I

One of Heidegger's initial moves in Being and Time aims to undercut the widely held assumption which suggests that I have a "place" only in terms of a central subjective focal-point to which objectified entities are related. For Heidegger, we are first and foremost "Beings-in-the-world:"

When the human being [Dasein] directs himself towards something and grasps it, he does not somehow first get out of an inner sphere in which he has been proximally encapsulated, but his primary kind of Being is such that he is always 'outside' alongside entities which he encounters and which belong to a world already discovered.⁵

When, for instance, I walk into my apartment, I am "at home," not in virtue of my physical proximity to the objects in my living room, but rather in virtue of a kind of "orienting" which carries me out alongside the reference totality constituting "at-homeness." To cite an example, I see the stereo, not as something sitting on the floor across the room, but as an object which is ready to hand, as something usable. Through a "deserverant" act, I am brought closest to the stereo, and am indeed proximally "there" rather than here. This deserverant act, as my primordial encounter with the stereo, reveals an expressive (but non-conceptual) space disclosing the "readiness-to-hand" of the stereo. It is only in virtue of this prethematic disclosure that I come to have a "place," and only then because I have interpreted my "concernful Being-towards" in terms of a desire to relax with some music. In other words, I take my place only insofar as I am implicitly here but proximally there in the world, engaged by the possibilities I allow to show forth (Heidegger, part 1, chapter III).

This notion of "expressive" space (which is also to be found in the early writings of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty) is crucial to the account we are giving of the structure of the engagement in lived-immediacy. For despite its pre-conceptual nature, expressive space accounts for our fundamental orientation in situation. I may have no location in objective space and time, as Merleau-Ponty points out, but I am never without place in the Lebenswelt, for this is the prethematic dimension "in relation to which I am constantly situating myself."⁶ If our fundamental orientation was always in terms of conceptual space, we would find ourselves in no position whatsoever to describe those experiences in which we are spontaneously engaged by lived-immediacy, no way at all to account for the upsurge of that moment when life is held, "like an arrested gesture, in photographic abeyance" (Wolfe, p. 269).

But this is just a beginning, for there are, according to Heidegger, two ways to "exist" expressive space. The most "common" way is to live as "they" live. One is then giving himself over (as One generally does) to those possibilities "presented" him by the way das Man has "publicly interpreted" things. And insofar as you tag along without questioning the everyday context

which engages you, you cannot help but say that something will happen then, that something else must be attended to beforehand, or that something we failed to do on a former occasion must be attended to now. We tend to allow ourselves only so much time, without "determining" the time by any "specific reckoning" (Heidegger, p. 462). And the time we "allow" ourselves is always determined "in terms of those very matters with which one concerns oneself environmentally," the things one does "all day long:"

And the more Dasein is awaitingly absorbed in the object of its concern and forgets itself in not awaiting itself, the more does even the time which it 'allows' itself remain covered up by this way of 'allowing'. When Dasein is 'living along' in an everyday concerned manner, it just never understands itself as running along in a continuously enduring sequence of pure 'nows'. (Heidegger, p. 462)

And so we keep wondering where the time has gone, never having time enough! We are too busy losing ourselves in daily routines, and so we lose our time as well. But this "loss of time" must not be confused with the loss of "time-sensation" which accompanies the engagement in lived-immediacy. When one loses himself amid, or to use the Sartrean expression, "becomes drunk in by," an exquisite painting, he is "authentically" living his time. Far from having "forgotten" himself, he has come back to himself in keeping silent. In short, something happens to change the way the human being responds to his situation. Heidegger calls this "something" a "responding" to "the call of conscience." But before we wade through the dense jungle of Heideggerian metaphor to establish the meaning of this happening, we should first understand that there is not a sudden "flare-up" of conscience, and secondly, that conscience does not "summon us back" from our lostness in the everyday world of das Man. Rather, conscience is more like a "point-energy-source" which emits a wave-length audible only to the human being who "no longer says 'I'."⁷ Locked onto this wave-length, the human being is anticipatory (in calling to itself from the ground of the future) and resolute (in keeping silent). And, of course, by no longer saying, "I," the human being is existing without the "benefit" of his psychological ego. Thus its structure as an I-ness lacks all content, being "defined" in terms of pure function: its structure as a keeping silent (its being-open) determines it to allow possibilities to show forth in their availability; its structure as anticipatory Dasein (its waiting-towards)⁸ determines it to project itself into and beyond possi-

bilities of its own choosing, possibilities which it has allowed to show forth in virtue of its resoluteness. The human being who continually engages situations from the "privileged perspective" of the psychological ego, and thus lives by the dictates of das Man, covers up its authentic mode of existing by listening away to das Man. Such an individual is neither anticipatory nor resolute. Rather, one endeavors to assume a "posture" or "stance" that confronts in an attempt to dominate. You buy a certain automobile because it will "set you up" with the kind of woman who is always fondling its fancy trim in the advertisements; or you endeavor in some other way to project that "proper" image which will guarantee the "best results." But you seldom, if ever, seriously question this "role" you are addicted to. Instead, you just keep "listening away," living in the "refuge" of das Man; and in so doing, you refuse to have yourself. Why? And what prompts you to step back from this absorption in the worldly affairs of das Man? The answer to both of these questions lies in the fact that our being-in-the-world is without foundation. And insofar as we are essentially ungrounded, our "place" is always "in question," always calling out to us from the ground of the future. We are prey to a constant stream of possibilities, and prey as well to anxiety [Angst]. Anxiety brings us face to face with our being-in-the-world; thus it brings us face to face with our thrownness, our already-being-engaged by some context of possibilities. In an attempt to cover up our anxiety, we flee into the taken-for-granted context of das Man, allowing others, "the Nobody [in particular]" (Heidegger, p. 312), to define our place and tell us who we ought to be. We then come to have an image of ourselves as grounded, and our life takes on "new" meaning. But we cannot hide from the disclosure of our Being-possible. When we least expect it, anxiety strikes, and we are brought face to face with that structure of our Being which Heidegger terms "Being-ahead-of-itself" (Heidegger, p. 236). And with anxiety comes the recognition of our "Being-free for the freedom of choosing . . . and taking hold of" our projective authenticity. Of course, we can also choose to resubmerge ourselves in the publicly interpreted realm of das Man. Anxiety, then, brings us face to face with the very issue of our Being: we can either choose to have ourselves, so that we project ourselves upon possibilities of our own choosing; or we can choose to flee ourselves, and step into a role dictated by the societal drama at our disposal. As I will argue in my conclusion, Angst projects the individual into the situation of having to choose between appropriating his freedom or effecting a flight from his freedom. But for now, it is enough to recognize that anxiety prompts the "interruption" of our "listening away," and paves the way for our anticipatory resoluteness. Whether we choose to appropriate or disregard this call to authenticity cannot be an issue here; nor

can the nature of the motivations which lead us to choose one mode of existing over the other. We must only come to see that the engagement in lived-immediacy is dependent upon the authentic mode of existing. This will involve us in a brief characterization of "authentic" temporality.

II

Heidegger's description of the temporality structuring our authentic mode of existing is presented in the following nutshell:

In resoluteness, the Present is not only brought back from distraction with the objects of one's closest concern, but it gets held in the future and in having been. That Present which is held in authentic temporality and which thus is authentic itself, we call the moment of vision. (Heidegger, p. 387)

To unpack this nutshell, we need to see that the moment of vision is, to quote Alphonso Lingis, "a pulse of temporal existence" which "comes into its own, appropriates itself, anticipates its whole future, retains its whole past, [and] is absolutely present."⁹ The moment of vision is not, then, some simple "now-point" caught up in a temporal stream characteristic of the "everyday" concerned attitude. There is, rather, an active synthesis of one's past, present, and future which temporally grounds the human being's fundamental I-ness while authentically disclosing his "ownmost potentiality-for-Being-his-Self" (Heidegger, p. 354). And we see from another passage in Lingis that to live in the authentic Present is quite simply to engage lived-immediacy. For

the time which passes is not only nudged on by the continuous flow of presence; it is also abandoned by a present that stands in itself and no longer flows, cut loose by the force by which the instant closes in upon itself--which closes in upon itself against the emptiness ahead, postponing its expiration. (Lingis, p. 36)

The instant interrupts everyday time-flight. It surprises. Suddenly you are entranced, resolute, "like some creature held captive before the hypnotic rhythm of a reptile's head, the dull, envenomed fascination of its eye."¹⁰ Only, in this instant of surprise, the fascination amounts to a coming-into-one's-own, a coming-back-to-self which is characteristic of the re-

sponse one makes to the "call" of conscience. There is, more specifically, a being-with-own, insofar as the entrancement is a keeping silent. But we know as well that resolute Dasein is anticipatory, insofar as it calls to itself from the ground of the future. And this means that the human being who engages authentic temporality, and consequently, lived-immediacy, is simultaneously making space available for what is Other. Heidegger writes that the human being's "resoluteness towards itself"

is what first makes it possible to let the Others who are with it 'be' in their ownmost potentiality-for-Being, and to co-disclose this potentiality in the solicitude which leaps forth and liberates. When the human being is resolute, it can become the 'conscience' of Others. Only by authentically Being-their-Selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another. (Heidegger, p. 344)

Thus, before we can come to allow the Other who engages us to show forth in his availability--without pre-determining this availability in advance--we must become open to our own Being-possible. We must, as it were, make space available for that which is our own. Only in learning to respond to the Self which we are without having to say, "I," can we authentically be with another. And to authentically be with another amounts to nothing less than engaging the relational belonging which takes its form as a "being-with-other-as-with-own." For authentic being with another presupposes that "wonderful living side by side" which must first surface as a coming-into-one's-own. In other words, I must, to reintroduce the Sartrean metaphor, become a "touched passivity," before I can allow the Other who engages me to show forth, and thus "shape," the possibilities which constitute its ownmost potentiality for being authentic. But this being-with-other-as-with-own is not merely relational belonging characterized by lived-reciprocity. Engaged reciprocity is freedom. This at least is the view of Albert Hofstadter.¹¹ If we come to accept his conception of freedom, we will have set ourselves up to conclude that the engagement in lived-immediacy is the very field of human freedom, for we will have derived his notion of being-with-other-as-with-own from the foundation of our analysis of expressive space, authentic temporality and the fundamental orientation which grounds our authentic being with Others. In turning now to an analysis of his key suggestions, we must bear in mind that the Self we are dealing with is not an I-ness that takes its orientation from das Man. We are speaking, rather, of our fundamental "I-ness," the Self which has been called back into the stillness of itself from the ground of the future.

III

Hofstadter suggests that man's "fitting relationship" to otherness is the one in which, by appropriating the other to himself and himself to the other, he "finally reaches the appropriate, what is appropriate both to him and the other."¹² It is in this "appropriateness of relationships" that human freedom is found to lie. Furthermore, such relational belonging between self and other is dependent upon an appropriation of self to other which not only reduces beyond the limitations of its own "predilections" but which also allows this other to "be what it is and tell what it is."¹³ This is, of course, the very relation of lived-reciprocity we have been referring to as a mental turning-towards which lets the entity which is available for concerned regard "be" in its presentation of itself. Thus when the Self comes to appropriate otherness, it must first have desired to give itself over to the holding of this other which the Self truly identifies with. And when this other is another Self, then the appropriation is an act of "love," an embracement of the Other's right to be its own authentic Self. If this love is reciprocated, the relation takes the form of authentic being-with-one-another. Hofstadter fleshes out the significance of this relationship in the following passage:

When the other becomes kin and own, in a relation of reciprocal belonging, then it no longer limits, but complements, completes, and liberates. It is through kinship with what is other than myself that I am able, in my Being, to point toward that other and participate with it in our belonging to one another. My Being then assumes a meaning that transcends the limitations of my existence in space and time and the body, while yet I remain in space, time, and the body.¹⁴

The point here is that reciprocal belonging, as the relation in which each participant has given himself over to the project of making space available for his other, transpires only when the "self/other" dichotomy breaks down. One can transcend the limitations of one's existence in objective space and time only to the extent that one has overcome the temptation for taking a "perspective" which objectifies the relational participants. And this "transcending" is essential if one is to allow what is "other" to show forth as the Being-possible which engages his anticipatory resoluteness. For only then does the Other become truly "kin and own." But as we have seen, such kinship amounts to reciprocal belonging, which is only possible to the extent that Self and Other are engaged by the immediacy of lived-reciprocity. Consequently, it seems clear that Hofstadter

is implicitly depending upon the structure of the engagement in lived-immediacy when he offers his key suggestions concerning the nature of human freedom. More importantly, he seems to suggest as well that engagements in lived-immediacy actually harbor freedom. This would mean, of course, that the engagement in lived-immediacy is the very "field" of human freedom which makes possible the fitting relationship Hofstadter terms "reciprocal belonging." I use the expression "field" to draw explicit attention to the engaging nature of expressive space, as well as to the "structuring" quality which accompanies the upsurge of authentic temporality which Heidegger terms the "moment of vision." Expressive space engages because there is no "detachment." The moment of vision structures the engagement by holding life "in photographic abeyance." Together, these two lived-qualities "shape" the orientation which harbors reciprocal belonging. Since this reciprocal belonging is a being-with-other-as-with-own, it would seem to follow that human freedom is only possible within the upsurge of orientation which we term the engagement in lived-immediacy, and that this engagement is thus the very "field" of human freedom.

In the concluding remarks which follow, this suggestion will be defended. At the same time, we must endeavor to show that the "Self" we call "free" must be the Self which has given itself over to its ownmost-potentiality-for-Being-authentic. This will necessitate showing that one who chooses to live by the dictates of das Man cannot be free, since the very possibilities he projects himself into, and the corresponding "self" which is the structure of these possibilities, are not his own, but another's.

IV

Determinists and Free-will advocates argue over the status of choices and their relation to actions performed by an agent who has (and is assumed to exercise) the capacity to choose in accordance with intentions and motives. But they agree on one point: an action is--by definition--preceded by a "preconceived project."¹⁵ Their meaning is clear: if we are to speak of actions which are "free," we must limit ourselves to an analysis of the conceptual awareness and deliberative thinking which necessarily precedes and "guides" the performing of the action. Consequently, the Determinist argues that one's actions cannot be free, since the deliberation and conscious awareness which precede the actual performance are determined by the limitations of one's life-situation--limitations which dictate the actual behavior from which the choices necessarily spring. And the Free-will advocate argues that one's choices are in-

deed free, given the simple fact that one could easily have chosen a different preconceived project if he had so desired.

Life-world philosophers, on the other hand, must "undercut" this controversy, for they ground their thinking solely in the fact of a human existing which orients itself "primordially" by means of a pre-thematic encounter. And this means undercutting the central assumption which members on both sides of the argument accept as fundamental. The Life-world philosophers succeed in this endeavor by assuming the possibility of actions which precede any conscious awareness which would lead to deliberation, desire, and intention. Actions occur, these thinkers suggest, which are not the product of a preconceived project. Such actions are one's projective Being in its unfolding. Furthermore, these are actions one can meaningfully call "free," since they alone are performed by a "Self" which is its own. But how can we then proceed to argue that only such actions are free? How, in other words, are we to argue that those who live by the dictates of das Man cannot act freely?

We must begin by recollecting what "freedom" means to us, while remembering our previous interpretation of the way of existing peculiar to those who live in total disregard for their authenticity. Those who spurn their authenticity in favor of the sanctuary of the taken-for-granted context of das Man are wholly determined by the motives and "nebulous presence" of a "They-self" which is both everywhere and nowhere. Living in the midst of our everyday concerned attitude, we strive to "fit in, go along, agree, and thereby avoid the insecurity, fear, rejection, shame, and embarrassment that would derive from acting otherwise."¹⁶ Is this freedom? Heidegger tells us at one point in Being and Time that "everyday" Dasein

stands in subjection to Others. It itself is not; its Being has been taken away by the Others. Dasein's everyday possibilities are for the Others to dispose of as they please. These Others, moreover, are not definite Others. On the contrary, any Other can represent them. What is decisive is just that inconspicuous domination by Others which has already been taken over unawares from Dasein as Being-with. One belongs to the Others oneself and enhances their power. (Heidegger, p. 164)

Thus, not only are we "determined" by our subjection to das Man, but we are not even ourselves! We are one of them! Locked into the nonspontaneous, routine-filled attitude of everyday concern, we are not free because

we will not have ourselves. We "choose" ourselves in bad faith by shirking responsibility for what we must become. But this choice is not our freedom. It is precisely a flight from freedom. We are giving ourselves over to the role of living the "pre-cast" life demanded of us by the very structure of das Man's drama. And of course, we act as though we were free, carefully weighing the pros and cons of the possibilities given over to us for appropriation without questioning. But this is only because the domination by the motives and intentions of das Man--which are our motives and intentions, insofar as we promote the very role assigned to us in the drama--this self-assumed determining factor in our lives, is inconspicuous. To actually exercise freedom, one must break through this domination and step back into the stillness of one's ownmost Self. Martin Buber writes that man must "find his way from the casual, accessory elements of his existence to his own self." He must, in other words,

find his own self; not the trivial ego of the egoistic individual, but the deeper self of the person living in a relationship to the world. And that is contrary to everything we are accustomed to.¹⁷

From our interpretation of Heidegger, we know that one "finds" his way to his ownmost self by keeping silent, by no longer saying, "I." One must give up his "detaching" perspective and thus cease to be any kind of "spectator" at all. One must open himself to a relation of reciprocal belonging which exhibits the relative flow of existence necessary for human reality to engage freedom. Only then is there a "reaching out across the bounds of one's own being" which allows for one's participation "in the being of another."¹⁸

Yet this participation, which involves "letting ourselves go," is not a "cognitive" being-with-other. It must be pre-cognitive, insofar as the participant lacks the perspective necessary to take a point of view on the object engaging his fascination. Thus I do not in anyway absorb my other, nor do I become my other. Rather, I have appropriated the "fitting" relationship to my other, by letting the character inherent in this other present itself to me directly, so that it becomes the very content of my own life's expression. In a striking passage from Thomas Wolfe's Of Time and the River, we find the intensity of just such an encounter captured in words:

He turned, and saw her then, and so finding her, was lost, and so losing self, was found, and so seeing her, saw for a fading moment only the pleasant image of the woman that perhaps she was, and that life saw. He never knew: he only knew that

from that moment his spirit was impaled upon the knife of love. From that moment on he never was again to lose her utterly, never to wholly re-possess unto himself the lonely, wild integrity of youth which had been his. At that instant of their meeting, that proud inviolability of youth was broken, not to be restored. At that moment of their meeting she got into his life by some dark magic, and before he knew it, he had her beating in the pulses of his blood.¹⁹

Wolfe's character, by no longer saying "I," allows his Other to show forth in her ownmost potentiality-for-Being, while simultaneously, he appropriates the content of this possibilization of her being as the expression of his own lived-possibilities. Only in this manner can she come to beat in the pulses of his blood. If he does not reach out across the bounds of his own being, and thus allow himself to be "caressed" by his Other, then he can never come to participate in the being of his Other, and he will not be free. After all, he will not be open to the possibility of sharing life-space, then she cannot get into his life.

Keeping-silent is opening oneself to the possibility of sharing life-space. Sharing life-space is authentic being-with-another, and this is only possible if each participant appropriates the relational lived-reciprocity which Albert Hofstadter has termed "being-with-other-as-with-own." If one is then willing to accept Hofstadter's interpretation of this relation as freedom, then it is a mere formality to suggest that human freedom is only brought to concrete expression in the sharing of life-space. And one is then in position to conclude that this very relative flow of existence which is brought to presence in the spatial/temporal immediacy constitutes the field of human freedom.

V

We have argued in this paper that human beings can choose either to appropriate their freedom (by engaging lived-immediacy) or to effect a flight from their freedom (by succumbing to the dictates of das Man). Freedom thus becomes an achievement, though by no means a property which one "possesses," and more importantly, an achievement which is continually reborn to the extent that the individual is able to engage lived-reciprocity. It is, furthermore, an achievement which is never won, insofar as it is nothing more than "a moment's flash of grace and intuition."²⁰ If we try to take a point of view on it, if we try to capture it in context, "it melts away like smoke, is gone forever, and the snake is

eating at our heart again; we see then what we are and what our lives must come to."²¹

University of Colorado

NOTES

¹Thomas Wolfe, Look Homeward, Angel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 197.

²The point here is that the immediacy is not merely conceptual, but equally well structural.

³Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, translated by Hazel Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. 177.

⁴Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke: 1892-1910, (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1969), p. 25.

⁵Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, translated by Macquarrie and Robinson (New York: Harper, 1962), p. 89.

⁶Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, translated by Colin Smith with revisions by Forrest Williams (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. xii.

⁷Heidegger says as much in Being and Time, pp. 369-70.

⁸The terms "being-open" and "waiting-towards" are my own, not Heidegger's. This is true also of the terminology "engagement in lived-immediacy."

⁹Alphonso Lingis, "A Time To Exist On One's Own," in Analecta Husserliana, Vol. VI, ed., Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht-Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1977), p. 39.

¹⁰Thomas Wolfe, Of Time and the River: A Legend of Man's Hunger in His Youth (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 885.

¹¹Albert Hofstadter, "Ownness and Identity: Re-thinking Hegel," Review of Metaphysics, 112 (1975), pp. 681-97.

¹²Albert Hofstadter, Agony and Epitaph (New York: George Braziller, 1970), p. 252.

¹³Agony and Epitaph, p. 252.

¹⁴Agony and Epitaph, p. 3.

¹⁵This terminology is suggested by Alfred Schutz in the first volume of his Collected Papers, p. 214. The concept is clearly present as early as Aristotle's analysis of deliberation, desire and choice in Book III of his Nicomachean Ethics.

¹⁶Edward Sampson, Ego at the Threshold: In Search of Man's Freedom (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1975), p. 161.

¹⁷Martin Buber, The Way of Man (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950), pp. 29-30.

¹⁸Agony and Epitaph, p. 229.

¹⁹Of Time and the River, p. 911.

²⁰Of Time and the River, p. 590.

²¹Of Time and the River, p. 454.