

June 30

Two more days; Twenty more pages. It is getting slightly easier; I can already feel the end. Funny word, **end**.¹⁰³ Equivocal; Ambiguous. My coming to Edam was a means to an **end** (namely, this book), and it's coming to an **end**. I wonder if other languages have a similar equivocacy. Hebrew does not. In Hebrew, 'end' (the one that supposedly justifies the means) is equivocal with **reason**, which I think makes more sense. Not always is the end (or ends) achieved in the end. Sometimes a thing ends without the ends having been achieved. But the end is always the **reason** for doing something.

Gaya seemed a little better this morning, but still not her old self. (Well, she was her **old** self, but not her old self). I asked her whether she wanted to skip the morning walk again, but she said she'd go, if we'll make it short. I took her to the spot I discovered yesterday evening, which was not far away and quite beautiful. We sat on the same bench and I asked her about the bugs. She laughed: "You think I'm a bug expert?" I looked at her and answered in a serious expression: "Yes." She laughed again and replied: "Of course insects have a **meaningful** life. They have been around for so much longer than we humans! Do you think they would have survived for so many millions of years, without

¹⁰³ The terms '**ends**', '**purpose**', '**reason**' and '**cause**' are often confused in ordinary language. 'Cause' is used when employing an objectivist view; It does not require reference to human thoughts or intentions; It is taken as being 'in the world'. Aristotle linked 'cause' with 'purpose' by defining *telos* as '*The purpose of a final cause*'. Although 'cause' may be used 'objectively', the principle of causation also participates, or is involved with the first three terms, which are synonymous with *telos*.

'**Reason**' is ambiguous: It is used both in justifying a **belief** and in explaining an **act**: "I have reason to believe" vs. "I acted for a reason". The first usage can be perceived as a special case of the second, if 'believing' or 'adopting a belief' is conceived as an **act**. In this usage, it is a manifestation of an **implication**: If A is the reason I believe (or perform) B (A being a belief I already have), I am simply stating $A \supset B$. However, if I perform **act** C for the reason R, then R is also the **purpose** of act C, or the **ends** I seek to accomplish by the act. Let us concentrate on C and R.

R is a desired **state of affairs**. It is something I **want**. As always, it is a **property**. C is also a property, but of a different kind: an act. The first observation regarding the relations between these two properties, is that C precedes R in time. Here is where **cause** enters the picture: For R to be the reason of act C, a causal connection between C and R must be assumed. Therefore, I must be holding the belief 'C is a cause of R', for R to be the reason of C. What we have now is a two-way relationship between C and R:

C is the **cause** of R R is the **reason** of C
or:
 $R \supset C$

An act always has a reason, and **is** a cause. This establishes a general relation between **reason** and **cause**. The cause causes the reason, and the reason explains the cause (the act which is believed to act as a cause). Naturally, a property may be **both** a cause and a reason, such as in $P \supset Q \supset S$. Here Q is the cause of P and the reason of S. (The discussion is, of course, in the context of human **actions**¹³⁰, not 'objective' science). **Explaining** Q with S is called a **causal explanation**. Explaining it with P is a **teleological** one. This makes **G** the **primal cause**, and it makes **F** the **ultimate reason**. Whatever that means....

significantly changing, if it wasn't worth their while? Insects are the greatest evolutionary success. It is just very hard for us to **relate** to them, because they are so small, and so different. But I think it is mainly because of their short life span. Short in **our** terms, I mean. I don't think it **seems** short to them. I guess their **moments** last split seconds. And I think their **pleasure** is much more concentrated. You know there are butterflies that live **as butterflies** for just one day. Can you imagine the **excitement** during this one day?"

We were watching the ducks in the canal next to us. There were two small groups, each consisting of a mother and several very young ducklings. Gaya said: "It is much easier for us to relate to species that seem more similar to **us**. Mother duck and five little ducklings is a picture which is completely intelligible to us. We can easily relate to it. We know perfectly well what **motherhood** is." I wondered whether Gaya was a **mother**. For some reason I didn't dare ask. It seemed she would have told me if it was my place to know. She continued: "What this mother duck is experiencing right now is probably as close to its **meaning of life**¹⁰⁴ as we can conceive. Can you imagine the **responsibility** she has? Those tiny ducklings are the easiest prey around here. For cats, for large birds or rats. And they have to be taught so much! She has to keep constant watch on them for the whole summer. And she has no one to **share** this responsibility with!" She made it sound unbearable. I said: "And this is the **meaning** of her life? It doesn't sound like much fun. Does she **enjoy** it?" Gaya was staring at the ducks. "Enjoy? Enjoyment can be a deceiving term. What is **enjoyable** changes so many times in one's life! What is enjoyable for a teenager seems absurd to an old man. What the little ducklings **enjoy** now is completely different from what they will enjoy when they grow up. It works the other way around: Enjoyment is achieved, or **felt**, when the 'meaning' is 'fulfilled', so to speak. Enjoyment is the **product** of fulfilling one's purpose. It is the **compass** leading to the purpose, not the purpose itself.

I smelled a juicy topic for conversation, and pursued this line: "You mean that every creature has an 'inherent' purpose? And when it is fulfilled the creature experiences the feeling of pleasure?" Gaya answered carefully: "Not exactly. The purpose is not 'preplanned' or 'innate'. Let me put it this way: The **concept** of 'purpose' is such, that it includes 'pleasure' as a side effect, if it is reached.¹⁰⁵ Take one of these ducklings, for instance. It is hungry. It swims after its mother, who directs it to **food**. It eats, and it is not hungry any more. It **remembers**. In time, being **hungry** becomes, in a way, **good news**: It remembers the feeling of satisfying hunger. It is the first **fulfillment** the duckling

¹⁰⁴ On the year the United States of America declared its independence, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart offered his version as to the 'meaning of life' in a letter directed to Padre Martini: "*We live in this world to compel ourselves industriously to enlighten one another by means of reasoning and to apply ourselves always to carrying forward the sciences and the arts.*". A year later, he congratulated his father on his birthday in the following words: "*I wish you as many years as are needed to have nothing left to do in music*".

¹⁰⁵ If fulfillment of (ones) purpose is taken to be the cause of pleasure, then the following proposition holds: 'Pleasure' \supset '(Fulfillment of) purpose'. And whereas 'Purpose' \supset 'Good', then 'Purpose' could be perceived as the middle term, mediating between 'Pleasure' and 'Good'.

experiences. It learns that it is able to **produce** this feeling, the feeling of fulfilling a need, of satisfying it, which is what we call ‘pleasure’. And as the **needs** change, the way to bring about pleasure changes as well. But the pleasure **itself** is the same. It is the same old ‘Good’. Now, the stronger the **need**, the bigger the pleasure. The bigger the **suffering** before fulfillment, the more ecstatic the satisfaction, the enjoyment. This is what **drugs** are all about. The name of the game is ‘find needs and fulfill them’¹⁰⁶.”

I was disappointed to hear that. I said: “This cannot be a worthy ‘meaning’ of life; Not even for a duck. An endless quest of pleasure, of needs to fulfill.” Gaya shook her head in disapproval. “No, no. I explained pleasure and fulfillment, not the ‘meaning of life’. All I described at this stage is the mechanism of producing pleasure. I told you about this Frenchman I knew, DesJardins. He used to put it this way: Most people are **addicted** to suffering. They wouldn’t give it up, because it is so **pleasant** to get rid of. It is so **satisfying** to rid oneself of sorrow and pain, that people cling to it, are dependent on it.” She still wasn’t making sense to me. “But if **this** is how pleasure is achieved, what other option is there but to engage in an endless cycle of ‘suffering-pleasure-suffering-pleasure’?” “Precisely” she replied. “If you take **pleasure** as what it is all about, that is where you end up. Pleasure is **blind**. It can be achieved in a thousand ways, and it is always the same pleasure, the same good. It is like a rollercoaster: Down-up-down-up. People who think that is what life is about are right in claiming that life is meaningless.

¹⁰⁶ The question of ‘the meaning of life’ has not received much attention from philosophers ever since Nietzsche¹³¹ announced God’s death. One of the more interesting attempts to address the issue at all was made by Richard Taylor in *Good and Evil*¹³². In it, he exemplifies a case of meaningless existence, and tries to add to it the ingredients which could possibly render it meaningful. For this he borrows the mythological figure of *Sisyphus*, who was condemned by the gods to an eternal task of rolling a heavy stone to a top of a mountain, from where it rolls down only to be pushed up again by poor Sisyphus.

Taylor offers two possible ways of adding **meaning** to Sisyphus’ life. The first is an **objective** way: To have Sisyphus assemble the stones on the top of the mountain, to build a beautiful and enduring temple out of. This would supposedly provide Sisyphus with a **goal**, something his efforts are directed towards. The second, **subjective** way, would be for the gods to inject some magic substance into Sisyphus’ veins, to make him **want** to push stones up the mountain. Taylor appears to prefer the second, subjective way; The one involving his **will**. David Wiggins, in *Truth, Invention and the Meaning of Life*¹³³ seems to prefer a combination of the two.

The question I wish to address based on this excellent example, is whether such ‘meaning’ (or goal, or purpose, or *telos*) can **at all** be viewed **objectively**. I claim that it is a categorical mistake to talk of ‘objective goals’. Goals are **inherently** subjective. Even if a goal is set by a **group** of people, it is still **internal**, to the group, conceived as an entity having an (internal) purpose. If I am right, Taylor’s second way of granting Sisyphus’ life with meaning should be enough: If Sisyphus really **wants** to roll stones up the mountain, it should be enough to render his life as meaningful as can be. Still, it is hard to accept the claim that **any** goal, provided it is **wanted**, is as meaningful as any other. What **ethics** is all about, is to answer this problem: To identify a goal that is **transcendent**: Although **internal**, could be seen as **worthy** also observed from the **outside**. The reason this problem **cannot** be solved, is simply because we say ‘outside’, but we have absolutely no idea **what ‘outside’ is**. We get our notion of ‘outside’ by analogy: Usually a **spatial** analogy. But we are creatures with a **point of view**, and a particular one: A human point of view. We cannot imagine what ‘outside human’ is. This is what ethics often tries to do. **Internally**, we know perfectly well what the human goal is: Happiness. Everyone knows it, everybody wants it.

But look at this mother-duck: What is **she** doing now? What need is **she** fulfilling? What is **her** way of finding the good?" She was waiting for my answer. I couldn't think of the duck's situation as **pleasant** in any way. I decided not to make a fool of myself, and said: "Well?" Gaya delivered the answer: "She discovered **care**. Whereas **any** fulfillment produces pleasure, it is possible to find pleasure **everywhere**. So the **purpose** she has 'posited' to herself is to bring up her five kids, to the point they become independent. She **loves** them, cares for them. **Her** need is **their** enjoyment. It is 'pleasure once removed'. Look: She knows various kinds of pleasure, all derived from one or another sort of need that is fulfilled. But there is another possibility: To 'define' her **own** need, her own purpose, as **their** pleasure. So it is like this: If they are enjoying, she is happy. If they are suffering, she is unhappy." I still wasn't **satisfied**: "What is the big deal? What is the difference between this particular way of fulfillment and any other way? What makes this way 'special', or 'worthwhile'? For the duck, I mean. Not for us, with our values and opinions regarding what is 'right'." Gaya seemed a little annoyed: "Who was talking about **us**? I am **only** discussing it from the duck's point of view. What is so **special** in this way of fulfillment, is that it **lasts forever**. It never dies out." I didn't understand why: "Why does it last forever?" "Because," she said "It is always **different**. If you pursue your **own** enjoyment, the fulfillment of your **own** need, you **must** find new things to **want** all the time, because once you have **reached** your goal, it is not a goal any more. Oscar Wilde said it explicitly: 'There are two sources of agony in life: Not getting what you want, and **getting** it'. Suppose you want something, and get it. Now you have two possibilities: Either **wait** until you want it **again**, which means, go through a stage of **need**, of 'suffering' its **lack**, so there is a **point** in reaching it again, or you manage to find a **new** need, a new goal, a new purpose, which gets exceedingly harder all the time. **instead**, you can do something much more clever, which is what the duck did: You make it your purpose to provide enjoyment for **others**. It has the huge advantage, that you never run out of **goals**! because for the little ducklings, everything is **new**! Their goals are not yet 'used up', as it is for their mother. There is a whole world of new pleasure, new fulfillments, for every one of them. And when they are also 'used up', when they grow, she makes **new ducklings** to care for, to create pleasures for." I had a question: "How does the duck bring herself to **want** someone **else's** enjoyment as **her** need?" Gaya nodded. "Good question. This is where the ingenious invention of **love** enters the picture. She **loves** them. It is **really** her need that they will have a good life. The phenomenon of **love** makes the trick possible.¹⁰⁷ You see, Every year the duck loves a new set of ducklings, and it supplies her with an infinite source of satisfaction, of pleasure, if she succeeds in making **them** enjoy. She can fail, of course, and then she is miserable. But it is possible to succeed, even **constantly** succeed, and then the duck's pleasure does **not** suffer from the seemingly inevitable 'rollercoaster' effect." I kept on bombarding Gaya

¹⁰⁷ Let us now enhance Sisyphus' story with another ingredient: Let us inject another chemical into his veins, this time providing him with **affection**, with loving feelings towards some species of creatures living at the top of the mountain, who happen to **feed** on stones of the kind Sisyphus rolls up. Now the story receives a whole new dimension: Sisyphus still **wants** to roll stones up the mountain, he **enjoys** satisfying his will, but in addition, he provides food to a whole colony of creatures he **loves**. Does this make a difference?

with questions: “Why doesn’t she have **enough** of this sort of fulfillment? You said that when she enjoys **directly**, once her goal is achieved it is not desired any more. Why does the same phenomenon not occur here?” “It does occur” she answered. “The purpose she has is to care for them as long as they depend on her for their life and their pleasure. This goal lasts a whole season, and then it is fulfilled. It is **over**. That is why she makes new ones. Besides, she **also** has her own private **direct** pleasure, when she copulates, for example. She is also in a cycle, between her ‘private’ pleasure and her ‘social’ pleasure of caring for others. But what is nice about **this** cycle, is that does not necessarily involve a phase of need, pain or suffering.”¹⁰⁸

I had enough about ducks. I wanted to talk about **people**. I said: “Are you saying that raising children is the only purpose that is worthwhile?” “Not at all!” She exclaimed. “We were talking about **ducks**, and just to demonstrate the **principle**. Still, raising kids is a paradigmatic example of the **smart** way of deriving pleasure out of life. But it is just an example to demonstrate the principle.” I was slow in understanding today. “What is ‘the principle’? Would you phrase the principle, as it applies to humans?” Gaya smiled: “But of course! Here it is: People have the ability to define their purposes, their goals. Achieving these goals makes them **happy**. Once this happens, the goal is ‘used up’, so to speak. Therefore, goals have to be constantly **sought**. The trick is to ‘hitch-hike’ on **other’s** goals. Ten people have ten times as many goals as one person. The phenomenon of **love** makes it possible. If there are ten people you **love**, their goals become **your** goals. So you enhance your ‘happiness potential’ by ten-fold. If you have ten children you love, and you care for them in a way that they all achieve **their** goals, you’ve got it made! Ducks are simple creatures. They just love their children. I guess. But people can also love other people. They can love **animals**. They can love their spouse, their friends, sometimes even strangers. It is even theoretically possible for them to love **everybody**. So the happiness potential can theoretically be **infinite**.” Now things started to make sense. I said: “But it is also **dangerous**: If you have ten kids and they are all miserable, you become ten times as **unhappy**!” Gaya agreed: “True. Like the Hi-Tech business. High risk and high return. But it’s not **really** dangerous, because it is **really** only up to you. If you do the **right** things, nothing bad can happen to the ones dependent on you. There is no ‘fate’ or circumstances ‘beyond one’s control’. You are the **master** of your world, and as such, you can love everyone you know, and to the extent that you are involved in their life, they will not let you down if you do not let them down. If (another) person is **bad**, he may very well be unhappy. But then, it is unlikely that you will **love** him. So, in a way, he brought it upon himself. Still, he can be helped, if you want to help him. And then you can also grow to love him.” I remained quiet for a moment, then said: “Love thy neighbor”. Gaya smiled: “Sounds tacky, but there is a lot of wisdom compressed in these

¹⁰⁸ ‘Bad’ was often described as the **lack** of good (mostly to justify bad’s existence in God’s creation; e.g., Leibniz). If so, isn’t ‘Good’ the **lack** of ‘bad’? The problem with this possibility was widely discussed throughout history, mostly by the Church. Although ‘Good’ and ‘Bad’ **seem** symmetric, they are not. What determines the asymmetry, the directionality, is the human intentionality, pointed like a compass towards the **God**.

three words. But it is taken the wrong way. People understand it as a **commandment**, not as a piece of **advice**, for their **own** happiness”.

I got the picture. Then a question crossed my mind: “You make it sound as if, after all, the meaning of life is happiness; enjoyment. It somehow sounds as a lowly thing: ‘The meaning of life is enjoyment’.” Gaya hesitated before replying. Then she said: “The word ‘enjoyment’ has bad connotations. It has been abused. Better use ‘happiness’.” I still wasn’t happy with this answer: “Still. Even ‘Happiness’ sounds cheap.” Gaya tried again: “Then, how about ‘happiness for the entire world?’ If you take it all the way, that’s what you **end** up with. Look: ‘Happiness’ or ‘enjoyment’ are just **words**. The important thing is what they **denote**. We have discussed the ‘Good’ at great length. You know the feeling. Like your ‘magic moments’. Now, take this feeling, and give it to everyone. Everyone and everything. **All the time**. Does it seem worthwhile now? This is what I take ‘Happiness’ to mean, in its ideal sense.” I was willing to accept that, but I was in an argumentative mood: “Suppose it was **achieved**. It is an **ideal**, I know, but suppose it **was** achieved. What now? It will get a bit **boring** after a while, don’t you think?”¹⁰⁹ Gaya sighed. It must have been a good question. She answered it: “You are both intelligent and quite educated. But you still have a **limited worldview**. Don’t misunderstand me: The same applies to **me**, or to anyone else. There are many things that you have not yet **invented**.¹¹⁰ Not yet **thought of**. Not like a fourth or fifth dimensions. I mean much more **far out**. Things that may **evolve** out of your **present** world. The possibilities are, of course, limitless. So, based on your **present** world, what you can **now** conceptualize, I would say that complete happiness for everyone all the time is just about it¹¹¹. I cannot think of anything **beyond** this. **However**, I know one more thing: I know that in the future, your world will expand. It has a potential to go anywhere. So here is **another** goal that could be set: To **think up** a goal that is even **more** worthy than the one we were able to think up based on our **present** knowledge. Does this qualify as a goal **beyond** absolute universal **Good**? All you have to do, is acknowledge the **possibility** of finding one; Of **making one up**. Goals can be invented, you know. So you can have the goal of finding an

¹⁰⁹ The phenomenon of boredom seems to be a significant obstacle in considering everything **eternal**, even if it is eternal **good**, or eternal happiness. As **intentional** beings, we have an *extatic* tendency (Heidegger again): We **exceed** the present situation, strive for something **else**, something **more**. The concept of **change** is, for us, essential. This may be the reason we find it difficult to grasp **infinity**. Heidegger (and Gaya) believed that **time** (or *Duree*) and **change** are (in) our **essence**. This is also the view of *Tao*.¹³⁴ We **are** ‘change’, which explains our fear of death: It is so **static**.

¹¹⁰ This also coheres with the *Existentialist* view, that humans have no **essence**, but **being**. Human existence determines its own essence; Every **particular** human being is sovereign to ‘invent’ her own personal ‘meaning of life’. Everything that can be ‘thought up’ is therefore possible. However, the (syntactical) structure of the (human) conceptual scheme imposes a **logical** constraint. New concepts can be created indefinitely, but only sequentially, always based on the previous state of the system: step by step. Concepts are built (using the ‘ \supset ’) **sequentially**, like building blocks: The third cannot be erected before the second. This is what we do with (in) **time**.

¹¹¹ Utilitarianism:¹³⁵ The most happiness for most people. If Gaya’s solipsism is accepted, utilitarianism coincides with radical **egoism**: The most happiness (just) for **me** (meaning, the entire world).

even better goal than the previous one you had.” This answer was a bit **circular**, but I left it at that.

We walked back. I was thinking of **love**.¹¹² I never viewed it as a **trick**, a tool employed to multiply happiness. But it certainly does that. I asked Gaya: “Do you think love was **invented** for the purpose you described? As a **means** to an **end**? As a way to overcome the inherent problematic of satisfying needs?” Gaya breathed a little heavy. Maybe we were walking a little too fast. I slowed down, and she replied: “Invented by **whom**?” I knew what she meant. I said: “You tell me”. She smiled: “Love and language go hand in hand. Language is **socializing**. Overcoming the basic **solitude** which is the basic human situation. We start **alone**. Without language, love would be impossible, inconceivable. And without love, there is no **reason** to speak, to **add** someone else to your private world. Love and Language are each other’s **condition**.” We arrived at *De Fortuna* before I had the chance to exploit the subject. Gaya didn’t look so well, and I didn’t want to impose.

I was **worried** about Gaya. So as far as **I** was concerned, **she** was ill. (Regardless of the question how **she** defined her situation). I was therefore very happy to see her in the dining room when I came to have dinner. She was having desert. I considered it a good sign. She waived at me, inviting me to sit at her table. She usually didn’t eat so early. She explained: “Mr. Dekker is picking me up at eight o’clock. I have to go somewhere. How was your day? How is your writing?” I smiled: “So so. I am writing more about **you** than about anything else”. I’m not sure I should have said that, because she wasn’t very pleased to hear it: “Writing about me won’t get you a degree. Don’t get carried away.” It was my turn to smile: “**Now** you are telling me? ‘Carried away’ is a grand understatement. I cannot even remember myself before I met you. **Philosophically**, I mean.” Again, she didn’t look very pleased: “Come on, you know better than that. It has nothing, **absolutely** nothing to do with me. You studied hard for years, you planned this trip for months, you brought a hundred kilos of books with you; Don’t lay it on me. You **summoned** me, remember?” She opened her little purse that was lying on the table, and retrieved an old, shabby watch. She glanced at it, and said, while winding it: “Mr. Dekker should be here any moment.” I gathered she wanted to change the subject, and followed suit: “You have to manually wind your watch every day?” She smiled: “This watch is over fifty years old”. It did look old. I asked: “Why do you keep it? Sentimental value?” “Not at all” she replied; “I bought it myself. It was new then”. “You don’t say!” I exclaimed. “And it still works?” Gaya laughed: “Yes. I must be taking good care of it. To tell you the truth, I wish it broke already. It’s time I joined civilization. As far as **watches** are concerned, I mean”. “So why don’t you just throw it away and get a new one?” I wondered. “I’ll tell you a story” she replied. “Once an old *Guru* gave a private lesson to one of his pupils. The pupil was sitting on a shabby old rug, facing the master. When the lesson was over, the pupil stood up, bowed to the master, and before he left, he threw the

¹¹² **Love** is another concept that was neglected by (non-religious) western philosophy, to an almost unbelievable extent. A phenomenon so common, and still so significant. It simply does not **fit** in the realist metaphysical paradigm; This in itself is a good reason to quickly replace it. Love needs to be **explained**. It is way too important to ignore.

rug he was sitting on to the corner. The master called the pupil back and scolded him fiercely: ‘How **dare** you treat the rug this way! This rug made the lesson **comfortable** for you! It protected you from the cold, hard ground! Don’t you have any respect? Shame on you!’ Then the master took the rug from the corner, and carefully folded it, gently placing it in the same corner. It’s an old story. You never heard it before?’ I didn’t. I asked: “And the moral of the story?” Gaya looked at the watch again. “The moral is obvious: Exercise **care**. Even towards inanimate objects. I take care of my stuff. I don’t even think about it; I just do.” She laughed again: “The problem is, I am stuck with all this old stuff.” She reminded me of my mother. I said: “My mother is like that. She never **replaces** anything. She also has fifty year old things.” Gaya was impressed: “Really? She must be quite a woman, your mother. Any news about your *Deja vu* in Berlin?” I almost forgot about it; apparently she didn’t. “No” I said; “Why is it **important** to hang on to old things?” She laughed again, glancing at the watch for the third time. “It’s not important to hang on to old things. What **is** important, is show **respect**. Treat everything around you with care. Everything and **everyone**. Not for the sake of the **things**. For the sake of **you**.” I was interested, but before I had the chance to say anything, we saw Dekker outside the window. He spotted us, but before he had the chance to come in, Gaya said: “I have to run. Sorry. Bye!” and left.¹¹³

I remained at her table, thinking of what she said. I never thought **things** mattered. That is, if you see **things** as **outside**, as something **else**. For her, things were a part of her. By being ‘nice’ to things, she was just being nice to herself. I thought of the way people treated their homes here in Edam. Some of the houses here were two, three and even four hundred years old. Where I come from, after fifty years houses were torn down and new ones built in their place. I thought about my mother again. Her conduct suddenly seemed praiseworthy, while until now it was just an oddity. I have to talk to her more.

¹¹³ Heidegger (whom I consider a solipsist, although he would probably object to the classification) explained **object** in an exactly **opposite** way from the scientific realist approach. For him, the objects **themselves** were not primary. What he considered primary was the **attitude** of a person (a *Dasein*), the **purpose** that could be served: A ‘hammer’ is a secondary conceptualization of my need to drive a nail. **First** comes my **need**; then I conceptualize the **tool** (to drive nails): A hammer. Only **afterwards** the hammer ‘becomes’ a physical object. Our perception of reality is, thus, **value laden**: We ‘see’ (conceptualize) the things we **need**, and not the other way around; We do not ‘pick’ out of ‘everything there is’ the things that can accommodate our needs. Our needs ‘create’, so to speak, the **tools** for satisfying those needs, and the ‘objects’ in general are a **product**, a further conceptualization of the tools.