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POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

Erik H. Stephenson

AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE / AUTHOR OF THESIS

M.A. (Philosophy)

GRADE / DEGREE

Department of Philosophy

FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT / FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

The Ethics of Authenticity : Heidegger's Retrieval of the Kantian Ethic in *Being and Time*

TITRE DE LA THÈSE / TITLE OF THESIS

Sonia Sikka

DIRECTEUR (DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS SUPERVISOR

CO-DIRECTEUR (CO-DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS CO-SUPERVISOR

EXAMINATEURS (EXAMINATRICES) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS EXAMINERS

Denis Dumas

Jeffrey Reid

Gary W. Slater

LE DOYEN DE LA FACULTÉ DES ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES ET POSTDOCTORALES /
DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

**The Ethics of Authenticity: Heidegger's Retrieval of
the Kantian Ethic in *Being and Time***

Erik H. Stephenson

Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfilment of the requirements
For the MA degree in Philosophy

Department of Philosophy
Faculty of Arts
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Abstract

The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to unearth the ethic implicit in, or, better, the possible ethical implications of, Heidegger's *Being and Time*; and, second, to demonstrate the exact manner in which its latent ethic or ethical bearing, involves a retrieval of the Kantian ethic as Heidegger casts it. Specifically, it is argued that, in summoning Dasein to its authenticity, the call of conscience commands self-responsibility, respect for one's dignity as end-in-itself, preservation of one's ownmost potentiality-for-being as possibility, and 'philosophizing', understood as a radical and perpetual (self)questioning. Furthermore, it is shown that these self-directed imperatives entail certain obligations towards Others. Ultimately, the Heideggerian 'ethic of authenticity' is criticized for its excessive emphasis on the *form* of the will, as opposed to its *content*. While the study demonstrates how almost every one of the obligations to which Dasein is summoned by the call of conscience can be said to have been retrieved through Heidegger's appropriative reading of Kant, the study's chief conclusion is that the Heideggerian ethic's almost exclusive attention to the *how* of Dasein's being can be retraced to a certain, voluntaristic strand in the early Heidegger's interpretation of the Kantian ethic.

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Just as others are pleased by a good horse or dog or bird, I myself am pleased to an even higher degree by good friends... and the treasures of the wise humans of old which they left behind by writing them in books, I unfold and go through them together with my friends, and if we see something good, we pick it out and regard it as a great gain if we thus become useful to one another.

Finally, I'd like to thank my mother for her kindness and patience in helping me with the German of Kant and Heidegger. Every student of German philosophy should be so lucky as to have a mother with an M.A. in German literature!

Introduction

Si je devais écrire un livre pour communiquer ce que je pense déjà, avant d'avoir commencé à écrire, je n'aurais jamais le courage de l'entreprendre. Je ne l'écris que parce que je ne sais pas encore exactement quoi penser de cette chose que je voudrais tant penser. (...) j'écris pour me changer moi-même et ne plus penser la même chose qu'auparavant.

— Foucault

I.1. Presentation and Outline of the Thesis

Two important facts must be stressed right at outset of my study, before I even introduce its topic. The first is that in his monumental work of existential phenomenology, *Being and Time*, Heidegger vehemently denies promulgating an ethic, and flatly proscribes the question of ethics from the domain of fundamental ontology, i.e., the purview of *Being and Time*. The second is that if, in *Being and Time* and elsewhere, Heidegger occasionally insinuates that the existential analytic in which he is engaged in *Being and Time* can be viewed as a retrieval of certain aspects of Kant's practical philosophy, nowhere in *Being and Time* does Heidegger explicitly and unequivocally state precisely what it is that he is retrieving from the Kantian ethic. Taking these two crucial points into consideration, the purpose of my study will nevertheless be: first, to unearth the ethic implicit in, or, better, the possible ethical implications of, Heidegger's *Being and Time*; and, second, to demonstrate the exact manner in which its latent ethic, or, if one prefers, ethical bearing, involves a retrieval of Kant's practical philosophy as Heidegger casts it. In other words, it is my contention that: a) the key concepts which Heidegger expounds in *Being and Time* either entail, or implicitly comprise, an ethic; and, b) many of these concepts, in their unacknowledged¹ ethical thrust, stem from

¹ As mentioned, the analysis of Dasein (*Being-Human*) which Heidegger carries out in *Being and Time* is purportedly devoid of any ethical injunctions, and thus purely descriptive. Hence, if *Being and Time* does

Heidegger's appropriative reading of Kant's ethics. My study's principal aim will thus be to elucidate and substantiate this claim. In order to do so, I will first have to synthetically reconstruct a unified and coherent Heideggerian reading of the Kantian ethic. The task of offering such a synoptic account of Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's ethics, as well as identifying the potential ramifications of his interpretation, will be carried out in chapter one. In my second chapter, I will perform an exegesis of Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of the 'call of conscience', as found in *Being and Time* (Division 2, Section II), in order to unpack this work's most fundamental concepts and themes. This will enable me, in the third chapter of my study, to bring to light the tacit ethic, or ethical import of *Being and Time*. I will conclude my study by making explicit the many parallels and points of convergence that exist between the Kantian ethic, as it is interpreted by Heidegger, and the ethic implicit in, or implied by, *Being and Time*. It is my conviction that regardless of the philological merit and/or hermeneutical validity of Heidegger's controversial interpretation of Kant—i.e., even if it is assumed to be entirely indefensible and tendentious as a reading of Kant's ethical thought 'in itself'—studying *Being and Time* in light of Heidegger's appropriative reading of Kant will allow a better understanding of the tributaries that fed into, or the intricate web of forces at work in, *Being and Time*. This is especially so with regards to *Being and Time*'s latent ethical content. Before offering a preview of my expected findings, it is necessary that I briefly explicate Heidegger's notion of retrieval, both in general, and as it pertains to the relationship between Kant and *Being and Time* specifically.

I.2. History, Controversy, Destructive-Retrieval

contain the makings of an ethic, it does so implicitly, and, I am tempted to say, despite Heidegger's intentions.

In *The Uses and Abuses of History for Life*, Nietzsche astutely and derisively observes that his age is characterized by a “mighty historical orientation” (7). What Nietzsche means by this is that his age has awakened to the fact that Man is an *historical* being, and that it is consequently dominated by a ‘historicist’ outlook. The philosophy of Martin Heidegger, while denouncing many of the same abuses of history which Nietzsche decries in his ‘untimely meditation’, does, broadly speaking, operate within the nineteenth century’s “historical orientation”. Though one should always be wary of applying such a vague, blanket term as ‘historicist’ to a thinker of Heidegger’s profundity and complexity, it *is* an apt designation insofar as Heidegger, like so many of his German predecessors, stresses the fact that no thought or action can be undertaken in an a-temporal vacuum, that Man is a finite and, therefore, historical being. The constellations of possibilities which form the necessary backdrop for Dasein’s world-disclosure² do not arise *ex nihilo*, or by the fiat of any individual Dasein’s will. Rather, they are inherited from preceding generations, they are the harvest or destiny of a particular historical movement. It would therefore be extremely misguided to construe authentic existence³ as a kind of capricious, totally unconditioned and unconstrained

² I will explain what Heidegger means by the terms ‘Dasein’ and ‘world-disclosure’ in some detail in my second chapter. For the moment, suffice it to say that ‘Dasein’ is Heidegger’s term for the special kind of being which characterizes *being-human*, and to which ‘world-disclosure’ (i.e., an understanding of being) belongs essentially. Dasein discloses a world (i.e., a referential whole; a totality of meaning-relations) by projecting upon possibilities available to it.

³ Heidegger’s concept of authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*) will be of pivotal importance throughout this study, and perhaps *the* focal point of both chapters two and three. Simplifying to the extreme, one could define authenticity as that mode of Dasein’s being in which it comports itself towards itself *responsibly*—i.e., in which it chooses to *be itself* by choosing to choose its possibilities *for itself* (by becoming the ‘author’ of its deeds). Thus, in authenticity, Dasein stays true to its ownmost essence by taking possession of (i.e., *own-ing*) its existence.

freedom of choice. Rather, Dasein can become authentic, can take possession of itself and project or fashion its own radically ‘new’ future, only through a resolute retrieval⁴ of the potential lying dormant in previous historical possibilities. In authentic retrieval Dasein ‘chooses its hero’. But this adoption of a model by no means implies a slavish emulation or re-enactment (SZ 385-386). On the contrary, the authentic confrontation with, or response to, a past possibility of existence constitutes a reworking or violent transformation of this possibility so as to unlock and accomplish its original, hitherto hidden and unrealized promise (KPM 143).

More concretely, authentic *philosophical* retrieval liberates the present from the stranglehold of an ossified, up-rooted, and stifling philosophical tradition—from the many conceptual impasses this tradition has engendered—not by rejecting it wholesale, but by loosening or dismantling its fundamental concepts, and recasting them in the light of both present and future. In the destructive-retrieval of a philosophical system or doctrine, the latter is stripped of its external accoutrements and made to reveal its innermost possibility or spirit, which is then appropriated in the construction of new philosophical forms. Heidegger conveys this point most forcefully in section 5 of the 1927 lecture course *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, in which he demarcates the three equiprimordial moments which comprise the phenomenological approach: viz., reduction, construction, and destruction. Reduction is simply the passage from beings to being. Construction, in turn, is described by Heidegger as “the projecting of the antecedently given being upon its being and the structures of its being”

⁴ Heidegger’s term is *Wiederholung*, which can also be translated as: repetition, recapitulation, appropriation, or recollection.

(22). Finally, Heidegger calls destruction “the critical process in which the traditional [historically transmitted] concepts, which at first must necessarily be employed, are deconstructed down to the [genuine and more primordial] sources from which they are drawn” (23). For my purposes, what must be retained is the fact that, as Heidegger puts it: “Construction in philosophy is necessarily destruction, that is to say, a de-constructing of traditional concepts *carried out in a historical recursion to the tradition*. Because destruction belongs to construction, philosophical cognition is essentially, at the same time, historical cognition” (23).

In keeping with this fundamental insight into the co-originality of construction and de-construction, *Being and Time* can, by Heidegger’s own admission, be conceived as a retrieval of some of the basic issues of Kant’s theoretical philosophy.⁵ In *Being and Time*, Heidegger criticizes Kant for having “altogether neglected the question of Being (...) and, in connection with this, (...) [having] failed to provide an ontology with Dasein as its theme” (SZ 24). Heidegger’s retrieval of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* is therefore nothing like a “mechanical repetition” of its content, but, rather, “seizes upon a possible interpretation of *Being from time*” (King 313) which Heidegger discerns, in nascent form, in Kant’s notion of the transcendental imagination and its role in the schematization of the pure concepts of the understanding through temporal determinations. Indeed, Heidegger is comparatively forthright in acknowledging his indebtedness to, or grievances with, Kant’s *Critique of Pure*

⁵ Of course, “the fundamental-ontological laying of the ground for metaphysics in *Being and Time* must be understood as retrieval” (KPM 168) of the *whole* of the history of ontology as represented by *three* of its most paradigmatic figures: Aristotle, Descartes and Kant—not Kant *exclusively* (see ¶ 6 of *Being and Time*).

Reason. This makes it all too easy to overlook, as many commentators have, the fact that Heidegger's existential analytic is also in constant conversation with Kant's practical philosophy. While the fact that many of the pivotal concepts of Heidegger's fundamental ontology stem from an appropriation of Kant's moral philosophy can be extrapolated from the content of *Being and Time*, certain passages support this claim more directly. For example, in the context of a discussion of Kant's theory of conscience, Heidegger makes the following, somewhat parenthetical, yet extremely telling remark: "Even the theory of value, whether it is conceived formally or materially, has as its unexpressed ontological presupposition a 'metaphysic of morals'—that is, an *ontology of Dasein* and existence" (SZ 293). With this remark, Heidegger affirms that any "ontology of Dasein" (i.e., Heidegger's project in *Being and Time*) must necessarily consist in a retrieval of Kant's 'metaphysics of morals'. This is corroborated by an even more overt and unambiguous statement in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*:

Although Kant does not explicitly pose [the question of the ontological concept of the *personalitas moralis*—i.e., the being of Man], he in fact gives the answer to it in his *Metaphysics of Morals*. Metaphysics means ontology. Metaphysics of morals means the ontology of human existence. That Kant gives the answer in the ontology of human existence, or the metaphysics of morals, shows that he has an unclouded understanding of the methodological sense of the analysis of the person and thus of the metaphysical question: What is man? (137).

Hence, it would seem that, according to his own statements, Heidegger is guilty of overstating his case when he alleges that Kant "[fails] to provide an ontology with Dasein as its theme" (SZ 24). In putting forward a 'metaphysics of morals', Kant *does* furnish an ontology of human existence, albeit one that is not sufficiently primordial or phenomenologically grounded—i.e., that does not address the question of Man from the

perspective of the question of Being, and within the horizon of an adequately original (i.e., non-linear, non-vulgar) concept of time. This is what *Being and Time* endeavours to do, and hence why it must necessarily involve a retrieval or reworking of Kant's 'metaphysics of morals'.

I.3. The 'Ethics of Authenticity': *Being and Time* as Retrieval of Kant's Ethics

But what, in more specific terms, does Heidegger retrieve from the Kantian ethic? It goes without saying that any answer which I chance to put forward at this early stage will have to take the form of a hypothesis or mere assertion. A conclusive answer to this question will only be made possible by the investigations which I will carry out in the next three chapters. Even a tentative, and quite provisional answer will have to be prefaced by a discussion of the nature of the ethic implicit in, or implied by, *Being and Time*. And here, again, all I can venture at this point are hypotheses. It is my contention that more or less implicit in *Being and Time* is an 'ethic of authenticity'. Such an ethic is made up of three 'oughts'—three things which Dasein, the recipient of the call of conscience, is summoned to, or which it 'owes to itself'. As I will explain in my third chapter, the call of conscience summons Dasein to: 1) actualize its essence *qua* self-responsibility (i.e., *Jemeinigkeit*); 2) respect itself *qua* autotelic or end-in-itself; and 3) preserve its ownmost potentiality-for-being *as* possibility. A fourth obligation is, as I will show, only very vaguely and indirectly entailed by the explicit content of *Being and Time*, but becomes ever more prominent in works subsequent to *Being and Time*: viz., philosophizing as an anxious, radical, and perpetual (self)questioning.

In addition, and as my study will show, the call of conscience summons Dasein

to an appropriate behaviour towards Others: viz., to respect the Other in its singularity, self-responsibility, and self-purposiveness (its nature as end-in-itself). Such appropriate behaviour towards Others fosters a community, or, as Heidegger calls it, being-with-one-another (*Miteinandersein*), which is authentic—i.e., which is ‘open’, pluralistic, and tolerant; in which strife, tension, and difference is not obliterated, but sustained; and which is bound only by a common experience of Death,⁶ which dissolves every unifying (totalizing; homogenizing) ideology or creed, and suspends all belonging. Authentic Dasein must resolutely accept its essential alienation, both from itself, and from Others. This acceptance is, paradoxically, the source of genuine community, comradeship, and fellowship.⁷

It should be noted, however, that, according to Heidegger, the factual ideal of authenticity is but a mode of inauthenticity or Dasein’s everydayness. In summoning Dasein to its authenticity, the call of conscience enjoins only self-responsibility, respect for oneself as autotelic, and a preservation of one’s ownmost potentiality-for-being as possibility. In other

⁶ As I will show, Death represents Dasein’s innermost essence as not-at-home, radical negativity, or pure potentiality-for-being.

⁷ Some might argue that my interpretation of authenticity or anticipatory resoluteness (in which Dasein maintains itself in *Angst* before Death) as suspending all belonging, and of the authentic community as tolerant and pluralistic, is contradicted by Heidegger’s emphasis on the binding and unifying power of the collective destiny which constitutes a *Volk* or People, the lucid vision and acceptance of which plays an integral role in anticipatory resoluteness or authenticity. There is some warrant to this observation, but more as a critique of the tension in Heidegger’s thought, than of my interpretation thereof. For the interpretation of the authentic community which I will present in sections 2.5 and 3.4 follows directly from Heidegger’s basic claims regarding authenticity and its manifestation in authentic solicitude, and is supported by many explicit passages in Heidegger’s early work. This, despite the fact that, as I freely admit, it is sometimes difficult to reconcile with certain other passages in which he articulates notions such as the sending of Being (see section 2.1), collective destiny, and *das Volk*. Nevertheless, as I will show in my second and third chapters, it is possible to read Heidegger’s descriptions of the destiny which forms a People in such a way as to make them compatible with my reading of authenticity, and the community it engenders.

words, it is concerned only with the *how* of Dasein's being, not the *what* or content (*Wasgehalt*) of Dasein's resolutions. The call of conscience issues no positive prescriptions, no material injunctions. Thus, in principle—i.e., fundamentally or essentially—in opening a space for Dasein's authenticity or self-responsibility, it also sanctions or justifies any actual resolution, provided it has been resolved upon responsibly (that is, in an authentic *manner*).⁸

With respect to others, in summoning Dasein to authentic solicitude, the call of conscience does not bid Dasein to care for the Other's welfare or happiness, but only to care for the Other's *freedom of will*; it charges it only to 'become the conscience of Others', to facilitate their liberation for their own authentic potentiality-for-being, not to concern itself with their well-being (to see to it that they are not dying of starvation, homeless, impoverished, sick, living in fear, etc.). In this specific sense, the 'ethic' latent in, or entailed by, *Being and Time*,

⁸ As I will show, the call of conscience "says nothing"; it calls in the uncanny mode of sheer silence. In so doing, and as I will also explain, it not only serves to disclose to Dasein its self-responsibility, but also the ontic possibility which it is called to responsibly act-upon in its world. It might be objected that the disclosure of Dasein's ontic possibility by the call of conscience is tantamount to a disclosure and sanction of a particular, positive action (a content; a *what*) since it is manifested as a "destiny". Section 2.5 of my study should be viewed as my full reply to this objection. Anticipating one of the points I will be making there, I would like to retort that while some of Dasein's choices do receive justification or sanction as its destiny within the particular world in which it is immersed, and that this destiny is disclosed to Dasein by the call of conscience, this world itself, and *a fortiori* the possibilities it makes available, is fundamentally groundless; it is based on a decision which is, fundamentally, "without why". Moreover, as Heidegger makes clear, Dasein never entirely fits its world; fundamentally speaking, there is nothing for which it is fit. In the words of Ferry & Renault: "le propre de l'homme est de ne pas avoir de propre (...). l'homme seul est néant: impossible pour lui (...) de coïncider avec une quelconque identité, qu'elle soit naturelle, familiale ou sociale" (14; cf. Safranski 232). Dasein is summoned to an experience of *Angst* by the call of conscience. While, as I will explain, this experience serves to disclose to Dasein its everyday world, it also thrusts Dasein *outside* of both its familiar world, and its self *qua* 'worldly'. While assigning it to its familiar everyday world, it also reveals the utter fragility and contingency of its immersion in this everyday world (or, for that manner, in *any* world). To replace the Heideggerian term 'world' with the jargon of Kuhn and Foucault: only within a particular paradigm or *episteme* can certain of Dasein's possibilities be justified. But the paradigm or *episteme* itself, the framework within which the just can be distinguished from the unjust, can never be justified, since its emergence remains groundless (without why). And it is precisely this *fundamental* groundlessness which the call of conscience, in first and foremost calling Dasein to an experience of *Angst* before Death, and *not* to any particular content or action, exposes.

is one which is beyond good and evil: i.e., where the *how* of action has totally eclipsed, or taken precedence over, the *what* of action; where the only good lies in the capacity to willfully determine the good for oneself, to *will oneself as will* in and through one's concrete decisions, and to allow Others to exercise this capacity as well. According to this 'ethic', then, "the good is only the good in evil"—i.e., a willing beyond the limits of the present Order of being, of the good as it is presently defined, in order to be able to either willfully resolve upon, embrace, or endorse, this present Order, or freely instate a new Order of being, a new paradigm or configuration of the good.

Assuming that such an 'ethic' is indeed implicit in, or implied by, *Being and Time*, in what sense does it represent a retrieval of Kant's practical philosophy? For starters, and as I hope to make clear in my study, Heidegger's call of conscience is a phenomenologically—i.e., temporally and ontologically—grounded rewriting of Kant's moral law as Heidegger understands it. For insofar as they are both formally empty, they both summon their 'hearers' to responsibility and the guilt with which they are consubstantial. In other words, they both call their 'hearers' to accede to their innermost essence as human beings: i.e., to self-responsibility or will. This much, at least, one could almost say, Heidegger explicitly or knowingly retrieves from Kant. But in retrieving this much from Kant, there is a great deal else which Heidegger can be said to unwittingly retrieve from Kant. By retrieving the Kantian moral law, and thus the Kantian notion of autonomy to which it is strictly related, in his call of conscience, Heidegger retrieves—develops, works out, and transforms—many of the hidden underpinnings, and/or possible implications of these Kantian concepts. For instance, I believe *Being and Time* retrieves, which means, takes up, and takes further, a

certain non-substantialist or non-essentialist conception of the human being, and, by extension, ethics. This conception, according to the Heideggerian reading of Kant, underlies Kant's conception of the will's autonomy. As I will show, what Heidegger thus unknowingly retrieves from *his* controversial reading of Kant's ethics is a tragi-heroic 'ethic of alienation'.⁹ For self-determination in both Heidegger and Heidegger's Kant is contingent upon Dasein or the moral agent's being *unheimlich*: uncanny, not-at-home; a pure negativity or nothingness; devoid of an essence. Furthermore, as I have already mentioned, and as I will make clear in the body of my study, Dasein's authenticity is but a mode of its inauthenticity or everydayness. As such, Heidegger's conception of authenticity is closely akin to Kant's description of the dutiful ethical act. For, as I will explain, the latter is not, according to the Heideggerian reading, brought about through an elevation or reformation of the will in terms of its objects, but rather through a revolution in its disposition, in which it comes to will itself as pure will, in and through the concrete actions which it has responsibly determined upon, and which receive their goodness as a function of the purity of the will. In other words, according to the Heideggerian reading of the Kantian ethic, there is no absolutely good object or action outside of, or heteronomous to, the will; the goodness of an action does not precede and govern the ethical subject's choice for that action, but rather, the goodness of the action is secondary to, or a function of, the willing of the autonomous subject. Hence, what Heidegger can be said to unwittingly 'find in' Kant, though of course only as a possible

⁹ Lest there be any confusion here, I do not wish to suggest that Heidegger simply borrows a pre-existing 'ethic of alienation' from the Kantian ethic *per se*. Such an ethic is born out of Heidegger's confrontation with Kant's ethical thought, and is not to be found in Kant's practical philosophy 'in itself'.

implication of Kant's explicit teachings, is an 'ethics' beyond good and evil: i.e., an 'ethics' in which, to repeat myself in slightly more Kantian terms, what is deemed good beyond condition is not human welfare, but only the pure will as origin of all values, ultimate goal of existence, and, therefore, object of the will itself; an 'ethics' in which no content is designated as worthy of choice, but only the power of making this choice (i.e., free will; autonomy; self-responsibility) is valorized; an 'ethics' which determines the goodness of the will without reference to anything beyond the will itself, and thus an 'ethics' for which the good will is not good because it wills a good action, but because it wills in a certain *manner* (Birault 156). This is the most radical and disturbing core of Heidegger's retrieval of the Kantian ethic, as Heidegger paints it.

In demonstrating the sense in which Heidegger's *Being and Time* can be understood as enacting, albeit largely unconsciously, a destructive-retrieval of Kant's practical philosophy, my study will have identified another script or hand in the grand palimpsest that is *Being and Time*. If I may indulge in yet another metaphor, Heidegger's dialogue (*Auseinandersetzung*) with, or controversial reading of, Kant is a layer in the strata of *Being and Time*, one whose immense explanatory power has not, hitherto, been properly appreciated.

I.4. Hermeneutical Considerations

Having charted out the steps which my study will take in accomplishing its goal, and having sketched my anticipated findings, there remain some questions of hermeneutical strategy with which I would like to deal before commencing my study in earnest. I would first like to lay out and defend my plan to synthetically reconstruct a single,

cohesive, Heideggerian interpretation of Kant's ethics from out of the sundry, somewhat partial and occasional, discussions of Kant's ethics which Heidegger offered during the early part of his career.¹⁰ The early Heidegger's most thorough accounts of Kant's practical philosophy are to be found in: *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927); *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929); and *The Essence of Human Freedom: An Introduction to Philosophy* (1930). Accordingly, my first chapter will focus on these writings. It will not, however, downplay or neglect the important, if somewhat shorter and more incidental, discussions of Kant's ethics to be found in the 1924 lecture, *The Concept of Time*, the 1935 lecture course, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, and, of course, *Being and Time* (1927).¹¹ In

¹⁰ By 'early', I mean the years prior to Heidegger's much-discussed *Kehre* of the late 1930s.

¹¹ I will, on one or two occasions, make reference to what Heidegger has to say about Kant's ethics in the fragments from 1936-1946 which were originally published in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* under the title *Overcoming Metaphysics*. Such references will be offered as possible ramifications or explications of what Heidegger explicitly says in his earlier writings on Kant. It should be remembered, on these few occasions, that while the later Heidegger's interpretation or understanding of Kant's ethics *may* be argued to have continued upon lines that were already partially present in his earlier writings on Kant, the early Heidegger's stance *vis-à-vis* Kant's ethics is, in many important ways, diametrically opposed to that of the later Heidegger. Indeed, Heidegger's assessment of the Kantian ethic can be said to begin in the 20s and early 30s as critical endorsement and appropriation, and culminate in unmitigated condemnation in the late 30s and onward, when he comes to regard Kant's ethics as herald of the last epoch of nihilism—its apotheosis in the will to will—and thus also as the closest prefiguration or harbinger of the reign of technicity. Heidegger's *judgement* of the Kantian ethic thus undergoes a tremendous metamorphosis sometime in the late 1930s. Perhaps a better word to describe this change would be reversal, since what in Heidegger's earlier writings had represented the most intoxicating, laudable, and salvageable core of the Kantian ethic—the moral law as the law of pure willing—now becomes the most repellent symptom of its inner nihilism and kinship with technicity. Interestingly, this repudiation of Kant's ethics seems to coincide with Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures, in which he first really distances himself from *Being and Time*, vigorously denouncing it as overly transcendental in its approach, and as a "consolidation of subjectivity". Is this mere chance, or does it tell us something profound about the relation between Kant's ethics and *Being and Time*? Finally, it may be claimed that my 'retrieval thesis' is undermined by the fact that all but one of Heidegger's writings which touch upon Kant's ethics were written after, or contemporaneously with, the publication of *Being and Time* (1927). Thus, according to this view, it would make more sense to say that Heidegger developed his existential analytic, that this analytic contained at least the seeds of an 'ethic of authenticity' (see chapter 3 of this study), and that Heidegger then permitted his own philosophical stance to shape his reading of Kant. While this view cannot be refuted outright, neither, I think, can my opposing view, whereby the tremendous pressure Heidegger was under to publish a substantial and original work in the 1920s, pressure which culminated in

trying to reconstruct a single, Heideggerian interpretation of Kant's ethics, I will, no doubt, have to be sensitive to the divergent contexts and ends which frame Heidegger's various confrontations with Kant. For example, in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger's overarching interest lies in refuting the neo-Kantian reading of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* as fundamentally epistemological in its aims and orientation. This leads Heidegger to an innovative analysis of the transcendental imagination as the hidden root of both the understanding and sensibility, and, therefore, the seat of all ontological knowledge—i.e., *a priori* or transcendental knowledge; that knowledge which is productive, which precedes, because it enables, experience. This is the framework for Heidegger's treatment of Kant's practical philosophy in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, and hence why it concentrates on the rational feeling of respect, arguing that it too is a form of self-affection or spontaneous-receptivity, and, therefore, a product of the transcendental imagination. In contrast, Heidegger's account of Kant's ethics in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* takes place against the background of an inquiry into the four traditional theses on being, and, more specifically, the thesis of modern ontology, according to which the two basic ways of being are the being of nature (*res extensa*) and the being of mind (*res cogitans*). Consequently, Heidegger's discussion there centres around Kant's conception of the I as *personalitas* (*transcendentalis*, *psychologica*, and *moralis*). While these early writings may approach Kant's ethics from slightly differing perspectives, and fasten on distinct

the hasty publication of *Being and Time* in 1927, prevented him from making public his reading of Kant. After all, Heidegger had been reading Kant avidly for years, as is attested to by his correspondence with K. Jaspers (see, esp.: Dec. 10th & 16th, 1925). Upon publication of his magnum opus, Heidegger was free to make explicit the destructive reading of Kant's ethics which underlaid his most seminal work.

aspects of Kant's ethical thought, there is nevertheless a great deal of overlap and commonality between them. Hence, a highly consistent Heideggerian reading of Kant's ethics can be garnered from these diverse early sources with a minimal degree of hermeneutical license (violence, as Heidegger would say).

The second hermeneutical issue which needs to be addressed is the legitimacy of using texts written shortly after *Being and Time*, or even after Heidegger's so-called Turn (*Kehre*), to illuminate *Being and Time*. Though the focal point of my study will always remain *Being and Time*, I will often have recourse to texts roughly contemporaneous with *Being and Time*, and, less frequently, his later writings, in order to shed light on some of its more cryptic or inchoate sections. In so doing, I will be following the hermeneutical practice of Magda King in her masterful work, *A Guide To Heidegger's Being and Time*, in which she states that her interpretation "will go beyond what the text explicitly says and suggest what solution may be intended by Heidegger, or is at least compatible with his thought, provided sufficient evidence is available for doing so" (129). The contents of these peripheral works will thus be used as supplements, and interpolated into *Being and Time* as possible implications of, or elaborations upon, its explicit content. This, of course, is provided (to reiterate King's important *caveat*) "sufficient evidence [in *Being and Time*] is available for doing so". While King limits her use of supplementary texts to those written only a couple years after *Being and Time*—those which, according to her, "are generally considered to belong immediately to its problematic"—I will at times have recourse to texts which post-date Heidegger's *Kehre*. I believe that even if these post-*Kehre* texts do not belong immediately to the problematic of *Being and Time*, they are still related to, as an outgrowth, development,

and continuation of, its problematic. Over the years, much has been made of a division which William Richardson first introduced between a so-called ‘Heidegger I’, the Heidegger of fundamental ontology, of *Being and Time*, in which the question of the sense of being is answered through an analysis of the essential structure of that being to whom alone such a question can even arise, and ‘Heidegger II’, the Heidegger of ‘foundational thought’—i.e., the thinking that responds to being, belongs to being, attends to being, and lets being be. Such a distinction is heuristically useful, but should not be absolutized or insisted upon too rigidly. Heidegger himself makes this point in his preface to Richardson’s book:

The distinction you make between Heidegger I and II is justified only on the condition that this is kept constantly in mind: *only by way of what Heidegger I has taught* does one gain access to what is to-be-thought by Heidegger II. But the [thought of] Heidegger I becomes possible *only if it is contained in Heidegger II* (xxii).

As Reiner Schürmann has helped make clear in his book, *Le Principe d’anarchie*, the bulk of what the later Heidegger has to say about the end of the epochs of being, and about the mysterious sending of being as ‘without why’—without *arche* or *telos*—is already embryonically contained in *Being and Time*.¹² In Heidegger’s *Kehre*, the locus of the groundless ground of truth (*aletheia*) is transferred from Dasein to something beyond Dasein, but the inner problematic remains largely the same; the discontinuity is predicated upon an even greater continuity. A remark from Heidegger in *The Essence of Human Freedom*, albeit

¹² As Schürmann puts it: “Rétrospectivement, la praxis privée de but n’est nullement absente d’Être et Temps, puisque le mot même de ‘potentiel’, *Möglichkeit*, s’il indique un pouvoir (*Macht*, de *mögen*...) indique un plein pouvoir, simple surabondance sans but intrinsèque ni extrinsèque. À lire Heidegger de la fin vers le début, donc, les implications pratiques de sa pensée sautent aux yeux: le jeu d’une mouvance sans stabilisation dans la pratique, allant sans doute jusqu’à une fluctuation incessante dans les institutions, est une fin en soi. Le tournant hors de la métaphysique révèle ainsi l’essence de la praxis: l’échange dépourvu de principe” (30).

originally referring to Kant, vouches for this: “...*a genuine and substantively necessary overturning is always a sign of inner continuity* and thus can be grasped only from the *whole problematic*. When confronted by opposing statements we must always exert ourselves to understand the underlying problem. It will then emerge that *no change of standpoint in fact occurs*” (183, Italics mine). In short, the hermeneutical practice in question is tenable, because the writings of ‘Heidegger II’ unfold and develop out of the writings of ‘Heidegger I’.

My final hermeneutical point of contention is as old as the theory of interpretation itself: i.e., the question of the precedence of the spirit over the letter. In alleging that *Being and Time* might imply, or even implicitly contain, an ethic, I am contradicting much of the *letter* of Heidegger’s text. I thus seem guilty of the most unthinkable hubristic and presumptuous claim: to understand Heidegger better than he understood himself. My only defence, beyond the cogency and explanatory power of the actual interpretation itself, is that this was the hermeneutical principle to which Heidegger himself subscribed. Hence, in the opening pages of his *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, Heidegger notes:

(...) to understand Kant properly means to understand him better than he understood himself. This presupposes that in our interpretation we do not fall victim to the blunders for which Kant once blamed the historians of philosophy, when he said: “Some historians of philosophy cannot see beyond the etymologies of what ancient philosophers have said *to what they wanted to say*”. Accordingly, *to understand properly* means to concentrate on *what Kant wanted to say*—that is, not stop at his descriptions, but to go back to the foundations of what he meant. (...) To be able to be understood better and to be worth being better understood is a *privilege* and precisely *not* an indication of something of inferior quality (2-3).

Presumably, this is the principle according to which Heidegger himself would have wanted to be read. Though clearly this fact alone does not vindicate or prove the soundness of this principle (again, only the cogency and the explanatory power of the actual interpretation can vindicate the use of this general principle in this specific instance), it at least serves to allay any fear that in being violent, my reading isn't also charitable. This belief that it is possible to understand certain aspects of an author's work better than (s)he understood her/himself will be the supposition guiding my violent reading of Heidegger, a violence which is not arbitrary, and which complies with Heidegger's own dictate: "In the history of all essential questions, it is our prerogative, and also our responsibility, to become the murderers of our forefathers; indeed, this is even a fateful necessity for us! Only then can we arrive at the problematic in which they immediately existed, but precisely for this reason were not able to work through to final transparency" (EHF 27; see also SZ 311).

Chapter 1: HEIDEGGER'S KANT

Is [Kant] just the 'Chinese of Königsberg', or has his work, once and for all, occasioned a tremor in the existence of the human being? This tremor, do we still manage to feel its shock?

— Heidegger

1.1. Introduction

This chapter will consist in an effort to reconstruct a unified and coherent Heideggerian interpretation of Kant's ethics from out of the numerous, though somewhat fragmentary and *ad hoc*, discussions of Kant's ethics which Heidegger offered during the years leading up to his so-called *Kehre* in the late-1930s. Stated a little more exactly, this chapter will be devoted to a presentation of a certain voluntaristic strand in the early Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's practical philosophy, as well as its potential implications. This 'strand' is, at times, in conflict with other more conventional aspects of the early Heidegger's Kant-interpretation. Indeed, for this and other reasons, it often seems as if Heidegger himself is only partially aware of the radically voluntaristic bent of (part of) his interpretation, and oblivious to its alarming implications. My task will thus be to draw out this more audacious, voluntaristic strand—to bring both it, and its implications, into sharper focus. Such a reconstructive and admittedly selective presentation is vital to the fulfilment of my study's ultimate purpose. For the task of demonstrating *that* and *how* Heidegger's *Being and Time* can be regarded as constituting a retrieval of, or as arising out of an appropriate encounter with, Kant's ethical thought (as Heidegger casts it) will be facilitated by an acquaintance with this aspect of Heidegger's reading of Kant, as well as its potential implications, which, as I will argue in my study's Conclusion, also find their way into *Being*

and Time.

Though, as I mentioned in my study's Introduction, one must be sensitive to the disparate contexts and agendas which frame the early Heidegger's periodic engagements with Kant, a highly consistent 'Heideggerian'¹³ reading of Kant's ethics can nevertheless be culled from these diverse sources with a minimal degree of hermeneutical license. Having said this, the partial and occasional nature of Heidegger's various confrontations with Kant's ethics—the fact that Heidegger only ever approaches Kant's practical writings from a particular vantage point, and always with an eye to a specific, at times quite narrow, problem, theme, or concept—makes it necessary to preface any exegesis of Heidegger's reading with a general, and decidedly less adventurous, exposition of Kant's ethics. Heidegger himself seems to acknowledge the need for such supplementation on several occasions. For example, in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, he confesses that, "Given the limited purposes of our impending description of Kant's analysis [of the phenomenon of respect], we cannot enter into all the particulars and fine details, and still less can we represent all the concepts of morality basically necessary for understanding it, like duty, action, law, maxims, freedom" (133). In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger cautions that his interpretation of Kant's practical thought, and, more specifically, Kant's analysis of respect, "will single out only what is essential" (KPM 110). While serving as a more or less standard introduction to Kantian ethics, my general exposition will also act as a foil to Heidegger's reading, rendering

¹³ I am placing the term 'Heideggerian' under scare quotes here because it would be wrong to present my reading of Heidegger's Kant-interpretation as exhaustive and definitive. I wish to alert the reader to the fact that I am, in truth, presenting only one, albeit extremely important, *strand* in Heidegger's interpretation as *the* 'Heideggerian' reading of the Kantian ethic, and much of my discussion of the 'Heideggerian' interpretation, will, in reality, be focussed on the potential implications of this strand.

it more intelligible, and helping make explicit some of its most important assumptions and ominous ramifications. Indeed, I would like to stress once again, as a final note of caution before I begin, that I will be picking up, and elaborating upon, a particular, voluntaristic strand in Heidegger's interpretation, one which often conflicts with other aspects of the early Heidegger's reading of Kant, and of which Heidegger himself seems only partially aware.

1.2. Preliminary Synopsis of the Kantian Ethic

The overarching design of Kant's so-called mature writings on morality is to exhibit and, if possible, justify the supreme principle of morality in its transcendental purity. This is to say that the supreme principle of morality must be derived *a priori* from reason itself (4:389-390, 4:392). Experience only presents us with an *is*, with contingent, individual actions or occurrences, and no number of repeated observations, no matter how meticulous, could ever supply us with an 'ought'—i.e., with an imperative which commands necessarily and universally (A547/B575). Yet, if the supreme principle of morality is to constitute an objective ground of obligation, it must carry absolute necessity and universality. Hence, the law cannot be a product of experience; the empirical study of human nature cannot comprise a legitimate and secure foundation for morality.

Another account of what it means for the supreme principle of morality to be transcendently pure (i.e., *a priori*) can be gleaned by following the course of Kant's argument in the analytic sections of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. There Kant begins with the well-known claim that only a good will is of unconditional or unqualified worth (4:393). It is thus his view that all other goods are devoid of inherent value, either because they are of merely instrumental value, or because their value is dependent upon their

being related to a good will. To further explicate the concept of the good will, Kant introduces the concept of duty (4:397). Such a move is required because it is only in acting for the sake of duty that the unconditionally good will is manifest. Duty, in turn, is to be defined as action which is performed out of sheer respect for the law, without regards to inclinations,¹⁴ interests, objectives, or consequences (4:394).

Kant's term for the grounds which normally impel us to act is *Triebfeder* (drive or incentive). In the *Groundwork*, Kant contrasts the *Triebfeder* as the "subjective ground of desire", with the *Bewegungsgrund* or "motive", which is an "objective ground of volition", and which "hold(s) for every rational being" (4:427). In principle, the power of choice or *Willkür* can adopt anything as its *Triebfeder*, from the crudest of vital needs to the loftiest and most abstract ideals. The *Triebfeder* is closely tied to two other interrelated concepts: the faculty of desire and its object (*Objekt des Begehrungsvermögens*). In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant defines the lower, i.e., impure or non-self-legislating, faculty of desire as follows:

Life is the faculty [or power] of a being by which it acts according to laws of the faculty of desire. The *faculty of desire* is a being's *faculty to be by means of its representations the cause of the reality of the objects of these representations*. Pleasure is the *representation of the agreement of an object with the subjective conditions of life*, i.e., with the faculty through which a representation causes the reality of its object (5:10n; cf. 6:211)

The lower faculty of desire is thus inextricably and exclusively related to the subject's well-being (*Wohlsein* or *Wohlgefallen*). As Kant puts it: "All material principles as such are,

¹⁴ The German term for inclination is *Neigung*, which Kant demarcates as "The dependence of the faculty of desire upon feelings (*Empfindungen*)", and which "accordingly always indicates a *need* (*Bedürfnis*)" (4:413n).

without exception, of one and the same kind, and come under the general principle of self-love or one's own happiness" (5:22). No matter how disparate the representations of the object, and thus irrespective of their qualitative and genetic differences, i.e., whether they stem from reason, the understanding, or sensibility, the feeling of pleasure (*Gefühl der Lust*) which they evoke, and which is the condition for their acting as *Triebfeder*, is always identical in character. A feeling of pleasure, though it may arise in response to the representation of an ideal or intellectual object, is always empirical (5:23). Hence, by definition, the lower faculty of desire, lacks an *a priori* determination or rule (Deleuze 8-9). Kant is unwavering in his insistence that as soon as *any* object operates as the determining ground of the will, that is, as *Triebfeder*, the action is pathological and, hence, causally determined. To Kant, this is tantamount to saying that the lower faculty of desire operates according to strictly hypothetical imperatives (4:415-417).¹⁵ Even actions which cannot automatically be classified as illicit or immoral since they are in accordance with duty (*pflichtämssig*) do not automatically qualify as moral (4:398). For they may have been prompted by a regard for their object (by a *pathos*), and hence not performed strictly out of duty (*aus Pflicht*)—the *conditio sine qua non* of morality.

To repeat this staple of Kantian ethics: only actions undertaken entirely for the sake of duty are of moral worth. Thus, pure reason in its practical use can refer to nothing outside of itself, to no 'matter' or heteronomous object. As Kant puts it, "action out of duty

¹⁵ These can be summarized as follows: if, by hypothesis, the outcome of the action contributes to one's well-being—i.e., is willed or desirable—then it is 'good', and the means to the achievement of this end must also be willed, desired, or judged 'good'. Of course, the hypothetical imperative is none other than the maxim of immorality, or, perhaps more fittingly, a-morality, whereby the ends always justify the means (Baas 29-30).

must set aside entirely the influence of inclination, and with it *every object of the will (...)*”. Accordingly, “nothing remains which can determine the will except objectively the *law* and subjectively pure respect for this practical law” (4:400). Kant rephrases this crucial point: “Since [we] have deprived the will of every impulse that could arise for it from obeying some law, nothing can serve the will as its principle [determining ground] except the conformity of actions as such to universal law” (4:402). This means that, as one Kant scholar has observed, “one cannot attain the sphere of the ethical through a gradual elevation of the will, by pursuing more and more refined, subtle and noble goals, by gradually turning away from one’s ‘base animal instincts’” (Zupancic 10). On the contrary, as Kant writes in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*:

If a human being should become not merely *legally* good, but *morally* good (...)—this cannot be effected through gradual *reform*, so long as the foundation of the maxims of the human being remains impure, but must rather be effected through a *revolution* in the disposition of the human being. (...) a ‘new man’ can come about only through a kind of rebirth, as it were a new creation (6:48).

The nature of the revolution referred to here can only be grasped in light of another quote, this time from the *Critique of Practical Reason*:

(...) Either there is no higher faculty of desire at all, or else *pure reason* must be practical of itself and alone, that is, it must be able to determine the will by the mere form of a practical rule without presupposing any feeling and hence without any representation of the agreeable (*Angenehmen*) or disagreeable as the *matter* of the faculty of desire, which is always an empirical condition of principles (5:25).¹⁶

¹⁶ A third, no less explosive passage should not be omitted, both because it complements the first two, and because it points ahead to the problematic notion of the *echte Triebfeder* or “genuine incentive”: “The difference, whether the human being is good or evil, must not lie in the difference between the incentives that he incorporates into his maxim (not in the matter/content of the maxims) but in their *subordination* (in the form of the maxim): *that is, which of the two he makes the condition of the other*. It follows that the human being (even the best) is evil only because he reverses the moral order of his incentives in incorporating them

In other words, only the bare form of universality, lawfulness in general, remains as the “genuine moral incentive” (*echte Triebfeder*), and as the determining ground (*Bestimmungsgrund*) of the good will (4:444; 5:109). The first of several formulations of the supreme principle of morality which Kant puts forward thus runs as follows: “act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a *universal law*” (4:421).¹⁷

At this point, my account of Kant’s moral philosophy must tackle the thorny issue of the relation between the rational will as *pure* or *a priori*, and its empirical object. In other words, the question I must try to answer is: How is it that a synthesis is possible between the *a priori* law and its *a posteriori* object or application? The well-known problem, to which I have already alluded, is that in order to preserve its categorically prescriptive nature, Kant must divest the supreme principle of all positive, empirical content, at least insofar as it is related to the *Willkür* as its *echte Triebfeder*, its genuine/pure incentive or motive. Its sole content, again *qua Bestimmungsgrund* of the *Willkür*, is therefore the mere fact *that* it is *a priori* or transcendently pure—i.e. formal universality. Does this not make the law indeterminate, a vacuous tautology? The standard reply is that the law receives positive content whenever our maxim can be universalized without contradiction. Those who subscribe to such a view often support it by citing the fact that the problem of practical

into his maxims” (6:36).

¹⁷ Maxims are “the principle in accordance with which the subject [actually] *acts*” or “tends to act in relevantly similar situations” (Allison 87); they are the “practical rule *determined by reason* conformably with the conditions of the subject [e.g., inclinations or empirical interests]” (4:422n), or, in other words, general policies, guidelines, or rules, which “rational agents freely adopt” (Allison 88). They are subjective because they are “regarded by the subject as holding only for his will” (5:19), or for any other agent under the same conditions (i.e. sharing the same inclinations and interests).

synthesis is homologous to, and, therefore, no more problematic than, the epistemological synthesis outlined in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Accordingly, they maintain that just as the transcendental *schemata* mediate between the heterogeneous spheres of the *a priori* concepts of the understanding and the manifold data of sensibility, so too the “*typic*” of the law of nature—which translates into the Categorical Imperative: “I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law”(4:402)—can be used as a testing-device to bridge the chasm between *a priori* and *a posteriori*, and endow the pure law of practical reason with empirical content.¹⁸ Kant gives us several vivid accounts of such testing-procedures. For example, he assures us that “to inform myself in the shortest and yet infallible way about the answer to this problem, whether a lying promise is in conformity with duty, I ask myself: would I indeed be content that my maxim (to get myself out of difficulties by a false promise) should hold as a universal law (...)?”. Kant avers that he “soon becomes aware that [he] could indeed will the lie, but by no means a universal law to lie”, because this would be self-defeating (contradictory): under such a rule, there “would properly be no promises at all”, and, of course, lying, as the breach of promises, is predicated upon the existence of promises (4:403).

Perhaps *the* perennial objection concerning Kant’s moral philosophy is that its supreme principle, the moral law, is empty, and hence “no practical conclusions can be derived from it unless some actual laws are introduced from outside to provide it with content” (Wood 82). In other words, it is alleged that the moral law stipulates only *that* our

¹⁸ For Kant’s explanation as to why the moral law cannot have its own *schema*, see the chapter entitled “Of the Typic of Pure Practical Judgement” in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (5:67).

maxims should be universalizable, without supplying us with any substantive criteria to determine *which* maxims are, or are not, admissible. Lacking such a positive measure, the moral law is simultaneously too lenient, and too stringent or prohibitive, at once permitting actions which should, it is widely believed, be deemed impermissible, and rejecting maxims which “seem intuitively innocent” (Wood 102-105).

As a rejoinder, proponents of the law-as-test view contend that a correct moral judgement takes into account only the “morally salient” or “relevant” features of a given situation, and that the subject of practical reason “intuitively” knows the level of generality at which a given maxim must be formulated (Wood 104-105; Allison 94).¹⁹ Finally, many scholars, most notably Henry Allison, Allan Wood and Ralph Walker, seek either to reinforce this view, whereby the moral law is *not* tautologically empty (Allison and Walker), or circumvent the crippling deficiencies of the first formulation (Wood), by noting that, in an effort to make the supreme principle more accessible to intuition, and thus less abstract or formal, Kant offers several re-formulations of the universal law. The first is the Formula of Humanity as End in Itself, which runs: “So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never as a means” (4:429). The second is the Formula of Autonomy, which Kant describes as “...the idea of the

¹⁹ Between Wood and Allison, only the latter upholds this view to any degree. Both, however, cite Onora O’Neill’s *Acting on Principle: an essay on Kantian ethics* (New York: Columbia UP, 1975) as its most prominent advocate. According to Wood, to whom the preceding discussion evidently owes a great deal, what is needed, and clearly not supplied by the moral law itself (at least in its first formulation), is a “way of describing our intention at *exactly the right* level(s) of generality” (105). As has been mentioned, descriptions of our intention can neither be too superficial, nor too specific, but must select the aspects of our intention that are “most relevant to the moral evaluation of our action” (*Ibid.*). Yet what grounds have we to identify the morally relevant features of an intention, without a “further specification of the moral laws themselves”, i.e., without presupposing what it is the moral law is supposed to enable us to discover?

will of every rational being as a will giving universal law" (4:431). The third and final is the Formula of a possible Kingdom of Ends, which decrees that one must: "Act in accordance with the maxims of a member giving universal laws for a merely possible kingdom of ends" (4:439). The argument, and here I am taking Walker's version as paradigmatic, is that since the first and third formulations are incomprehensible without the added premise, given in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, that reason compels us to seek both our own perfection and the happiness of others, these formulations furnish the moral law with more specific content and thus refute any charges of so-called empty formalism (Walker 39).

Finally, in view of my upcoming presentation of Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's ethics, in which the intertwined notions of freedom and the will play such a pivotal role, a more meticulous delineation of Kant's conception of freedom is called for. Freedom, understood as autonomy, which, according to its etymological roots *auto* and *nomos* means self-legislation or self-law, is the paramount condition for the possibility of morality. If morality is to be more than a "phantom of the brain", the will must have the capacity to be causally effective "independently of outside determining causes" (4:446). After all, the keystone of all moral judgement is responsibility, and this, in turn, is buttressed by the capacity for self-determination (6:31). Now, to Kant, every event in the realm of phenomena unfolds according to universal and necessary laws (A189/B232). It is thus always tempting for the moral agent to abdicate responsibility, to exonerate itself by professing that it was overtaken by its indomitable inclinations, moved by a sequence of causes beyond its control, or, why not, a captive to the cold and inexorable hand of fate. At first glance, insofar as the subject is an empirical entity, such exculpatory cries seem warranted. After all, Kant does tell

us: “(...) the determining grounds of every action of the subject [qua *phenomenal* and therefore subject to the transcendental conditions of time] so far lie in what belongs to past time and *is no longer within his control*” (5:97). But the important thing here is that, to Kant, freedom is ultimately *not* incompatible with causal determinism.

The usual story told here is that of the dualism between the subject *qua* noumenal and the subject *qua* phenomenal. The abridged version of this story is that Kant’s transcendental idealism, in considering things only as they appear to the finite rational subject, opens a space for freedom. For it says nothing about things, e.g., actions or their agents, as they are in themselves, independently of the a priori structures of the mind, to which objects must conform if they are to *be* objects of a possible experience. It leaves the *Ding-an-sich* or *noumenon* totally indeterminate. *Qua noumenal*, it is conceivable that agents and their actions might be free. Their freedom wouldn’t contradict the law of nature, whereby “everything that happens presupposes a previous state, upon which it follows without exception according to a rule” (A444/B472), since, to repeat, this law applies only to things as they appear.

Unfortunately, this customary tale is a little facile; it fails to capture the truly mysterious, groundless nature of the moral subject’s freedom or spontaneity. One could more accurately express the way in which freedom and necessity are reconcilable by saying that, at least in relation to the *Willkür*, there is, according to Kant, ‘no Cause to the causality of phenomena’. To understand what is meant by such a bizarre assertion, we must examine a passage from *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*:

[The] freedom of the power of choice (*Willkür*) has the characteristic, entirely

peculiar to it, that it cannot be determined to action through any incentive (*durch keine Triebfeder*) *except so far as the human being has incorporated (aufgenommen) it into his maxim* (has made it into a universal rule for himself according to which he wills to conduct himself); only in this way can an incentive, whatever it may be, coexist with the absolute spontaneity of the *Willkür* (i.e., freedom) (6:24).

I'll begin my explication of this passage by shedding light on Kant's distinction between the *Wille* (will/*volonté*) and the *Willkür* (power of choice/*libre arbitre*). As Kant relates: "Human choice (...) is a choice that can indeed be *affected* but not *determined* by impulses, and is therefore of itself (...) not pure but can still be *determined* to actions by pure will. *Freedom* of choice (*die Freiheit der Willkür*) is this independence from being *determined* by sensible impulses..." (6:213). Thus, while the *Wille* as pure or legislative will necessarily wills, or gives itself, the law, the *Willkür* is that facet of the will, considered in its totality, whose harmony with the law is contingent upon its choosing to introduce it into the maxims which it makes (6:226). The *Wille* supplies the norm, the imperative, for action, but it is the *Willkür* which chooses to act either for or against the law which the *Wille* decrees. In Kant's own words: "The will (*Wille*) is (...) the faculty of desire considered not so much in relation to action (as choice is) but rather in relation to the ground determining choice to action. The will itself, strictly speaking, has no determining ground; insofar as it can determine choice, it is instead practical reason itself" (6:213). As Bernard Carnois explains, this schism or tension ("discordance initiale") at the heart of the will is the real reason why, in finite rational beings, "la loi [revêt] la forme d'un impératif" (142). When the power of choice freely incorporates the law into its maxims, when it makes it the sole motive or principle of its actions, the schism is abolished. As Carnois goes on to say: "la *Willkür* devient désormais la *Wille* et la loi de la

volonté législatrice devient la ‘loi du libre arbitre’ (*freien Willkür*)” (*Ibid.*).

While the preceding account covers important terrain, it suffers from at least one major lacuna: it makes no mention of the practical subject’s *Gesinnung* (character or disposition). Only by inquiring into the *Gesinnung* or proximate ground of the incorporation of incentives into maxims can a more subtle and refined comprehension of Kant’s conception of freedom be gained. The *Gesinnung* is the practical subject’s innermost character or disposition, its fundamental maxim. Finite rational beings have both an intelligible and an empirical character.²⁰ The empirical character is “a mere appearance of the intelligible character” (A541/B569); it is the multiple and temporal, which to Kant always means successive, manifestation of a single, timeless disposition or determination. This is what Kant means when he declares that the “sensible being is itself” to be “referred to the intelligible substratum in us”, or, less pithily, that:

The *sensible life* has, with respect to the *intelligible* consciousness of its existence (consciousness of freedom), the absolute unity of a phenomenon, which, so far as it contains merely appearances of the disposition that the moral law is concerned with (appearances of the character), must be appraised not in accordance with the natural necessity that belongs to it as appearance but in accordance with the absolute spontaneity of freedom (5:99).²¹

In a radically evil disposition, pathological incentives have been raised from their rightful

²⁰ I have been employing, and, unless otherwise noted, will continue to employ, the German ‘*Gesinnung*’ by itself (i.e., not specified as either empirical or intelligible) as shorthand for the intelligible character.

²¹ Kant goes on to say, in an attempt to justify the punishment of inveterate or ‘natural born’ criminals, that: “whatever arises from one’s choice (as every action intentionally performed undoubtedly does) *has as its basis a free causality*, which from early youth *expresses its character in its appearances* (actions); these actions, on account of the uniformity of conduct, make knowable a natural connection that does not, however, make the vicious constitution of the will necessary but is instead *the consequence of the evil and unchangeable principles freely adopted*, which make it only more culpable and deserving of punishment” (5:100, Italics mine).

inferiority, and acting on their basis has been anointed first principle or supreme maxim, i.e., has become the condition for the subject's obedience to the moral law. As Kant remarks, this state of the *noumenal* character, its "penchant" or "propensity" for evil, "can also be called the *perversity* (*perversitas*) of the human heart, for it *reverses* the ethical order as regards the incentives of a *free* power of choice; and although with this reversal there can still be legally good actions, yet the mind's attitude is thereby corrupted at its root (so far as the moral disposition is concerned), and hence the human being is designated evil" (6:30). Significantly, only this *noumenal* character accounts for the *phenomenal* subject's evil actions (i.e., directs the incorporation of incentives into maxims which either flatly contradict the moral law, or simply subordinate it to inclinations).

While the *Gesinnung* stands for the subject in its *practical* freedom, i.e., the 'freedom' to 'choose' what incentives to incorporate into its maxims, or, again, which maxims to act upon, this freedom amounts to nothing more than the freedom of a "turnspit" (5:97, 5:99; cf. A549-550/B577-578). What must be noted here is that the *Gesinnung* itself is *freely chosen*:

To have the one or the other disposition [i.e., good or evil] by nature as an innate characteristic does not mean here that the disposition has not been begotten by the human being who harbors it, i.e., that he is not its author, but means rather that it has not been begotten in time (that he has been the one way or the other *always, from youth on*). The disposition, i.e., the first subjective ground of the adoption of the maxims, can only be a single one, and it applies to the entire use of freedom universally. This disposition too, however, must be adopted through the free power of choice, for otherwise it could not be imputed" (6:25; cf. 6:21).

As Kant observes in *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View*, when it comes to the *Gesinnung*, the question is no longer what "nature makes of man", but "what man makes of

himself" (7: 292, 7:119). Henry Allison refers to the doctrine which Kant elaborates here, according to which the transcendental status of the subject implies that only its a-temporal decision allows causes to be causes or, alternately stated, incentives to be incentives, as Kant's "Incorporation Thesis". It is this choice of the *Gesinnung* which exposes a gap in the dualistic ontology between the *noumenal* and the *phenomenal* (Zupancic 35-37).²² The *Critique of Practical Reason* hints at, or moves towards, a tripartite subjective structure in which we have the psychological I or empirical character, the *noumenal* I or intelligible character, and the transcendental I or empty place from which the subject makes an utterly spontaneous choice of its *Gesinnung* (5:98-99; 6:43; 21:470; see Zizek: TS 25, 39; TN 15-18; Zupancic 37).²³ For the subject to be transcendently free, as opposed to merely practically free, means that behind this fundamental choice there is nothing, that the subject is an abyss of freedom, a groundless ground for the causality of all causes (incentives). This is how we must

²² Admittedly, Kant more often than not blurs, loses sight of, or altogether abandons this tripartite distinction, which *must be retained* if Kant's theory of freedom is to remain coherent. Instead, he attributes the absolute spontaneity of the subject to the *noumenal* I or intelligible character (e.g., OP 275-276; 5:99). Kant's own inconsistency and confusion is what leads Allison to speak, mistakenly in my view, of "a timeless *noumenal* choice of one's entire character" (48).

²³ As Slavoj Zizek has shown in *The Ticklish Subject*, the "clear picture" which Kant paints in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, in which the split between freedom and necessity is strictly equivalent to that between *noumenon* and *phenomenon*, is complicated by "Kant's own insight into the catastrophic consequences of our direct access to the noumenal sphere: if this were to happen, men would *lose* their moral freedom and/or transcendental spontaneity; they would turn into lifeless puppets" (25). The passage to which Zizek refers in support of this claim is one from a sub-chapter of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, entitled "On the Wise Adaptation of the Human Being's Cognitive Faculties to His Practical Vocation" (5:146). There Kant describes the repercussions of, so to speak, 'lifting the veil' of the *noumenal*: "Instead of the conflict that the moral disposition now has to carry on with the inclinations, in which, though after some defeats, moral strength of soul is to be gradually acquired, *God and eternity with their awful majesty* would stand *unceasingly before our eyes* (...), most actions conforming to the law would be done from fear, only a few from hope, and none at all from duty, and the moral worth of actions, on which alone in the eyes of supreme wisdom the worth of the person and even of the world depends, would not exist at all. As long as human nature remains as it is, human conduct would thus be changed into mere mechanism in which, as in a puppet show, everything would *gesticulate* well but there would be *no life* in the figures" (5:147). Transcendental freedom, Zizek concludes, is neither phenomenal, nor noumenal, but "the gap which separates the two" (25).

take Kant's statement that:

A rational being can (...) say of every unlawful action he performed that he could have omitted it even though as appearance it is sufficiently determined in the past and, so far, is inevitably necessary; for this action, with all the past that determines it, belongs to a single feature of his character, which he gives himself, and in accordance with which he imputes to himself, as a cause independent of all sensibility, the causality of those appearances (5:98).

Moreover, this is the justification for Kant's claim that punishment for evil actions, no matter what environmental factors may have conditioned them, is the only way to pay proper respect to the dignity of the Human being as transcendently free (5:60-61). However paradoxical this may be, and no matter how many imbrolios and *aporiae* this entails, the timelessness of the "*actus der Freiheit*" (6:21), in which the *Gesinnung*, which, as we have seen, is simple and static, is posited, does not preclude the possibility of change, repentance, or moral rebirth, on the part of the moral agent. Kant firmly believes that at every Moment (*Augenblick*) of decision, the moral agent is "just as accountable, and stands just as condemned, as if (...) he had just stepped out of the state of innocence into evil" (6:41; cf. 6:50 & A555/B583, quoted in: Carnois 160). Every step the moral subject takes in its journey through life is an *Augenblick*, in which, like Hercules, it stands at a crossroads, where it must choose between the Way of Pleasure (acting *aus Neigung*) and the Way of Virtue (acting *aus Pflicht*).

1.3. The Heideggerian Interpretation of Kant's Practical Philosophy

The previous section offered a fairly conventional overview of the Kantian ethic. Its design was not to present a reading of Kant's ethics which was exhaustive, or even of intrinsic merit and interest, but merely to furnish a backdrop against which the

Heideggerian²⁴ reading could better be understood. Heidegger's interpretation often presupposes a great deal of background knowledge on the part of the reader. In addition, it is often extremely condensed, and rather awkwardly phrased. These traits lend it an air of obscurity. Hence, the purpose of my synopsis was to equip the reader with the conceptual baggage needed to decipher the meaning of Heidegger's interpretation, or at least a certain strand therein, as well as appreciate its potential implications. With this groundwork firmly in place, I can now turn to the Heideggerian interpretation of Kant's practical philosophy.

My effort to reconstruct the Heideggerian reading of the Kantian ethic will take, as its starting point, a fact which Heidegger does not state directly, but which arguably forms the background to much of his interpretation: viz., the fact that the moral law sounds the death-knell for the traditional, substantialist view of ethics as grounded in Nature, i.e., in something transcending and limiting the human will.²⁵ Heidegger's description of the very marrow of the moral law shows how stark his sense of the opposition between the traditional view of ethics and the Kantian ethic is:

What is crucial for understanding the moral law (...) is *not* (...) *that some value is held up before us*. It is *not a matter of a table of values* hovering over us, *as if individual human beings were only realizers of the law* in the same way that individual tables realize the essence of tablehood. It is not a formula and rule that we come to understand, but the character of the specific actuality of action, i.e., what is and becomes actual in and as action (EHF 199, Italics mine).

²⁴ See footnote 13.

²⁵ Typically, the understanding of ethics whereby ethical commitments are grounded in nature, or, to quote George Grant, "that for which we are fit", takes nature to be governed by, and/or the expression of, an intelligible, immutable, and absolute source. Furthermore, and again speaking generally, it envisions nature as a cosmos: a purposive and organically interconnected whole in which each member has a pre-appointed place. Accordingly, it defines the good as the actualization of one's essence or nature—which precedes, and sets the standard for, one's will—and respect for the boundaries constitutive of one's station.

This excerpt echos an earlier passage in *The Essence of Human Freedom*, whose meaning will only become fully apparent as we proceed: “What is genuinely law-giving for willing is the actual pure willing itself and nothing else. Unless pure willing, as the genuinely actual of all ethical action, actually wills itself, *a material table of values, however finely structured and comprehensive, remains a pure phantom with no binding force*” (EHF 190, Italics mine).²⁶

Indeed, it can be inferred from Heidegger’s exposition of the Kantian ethic that, in his view, the demise or deconstruction of both the traditional, dare I say ‘agatho-centric’, view, and the contemporary theory of values, is the precondition for human dignity as the power to be self-legislating, to be responsible or “in each case *mine (je meines)*” (BPP 137).²⁷ In effect, though, again, not explicitly, what Heidegger is putting forward here is a kind of quasi-existential interpretation of Kant’s categorical imperative, and, with it, Kant’s entire moral philosophy. For perhaps *the* basic tenet of all existentialism is that true self-responsibility is only possible in the absence of any fixed, pre-established, and determinate human nature—of an essential, immutable form whose actualization would constitute our end, that which we are supposed to do or become. As the existentialist credo goes, we can only become truly autonomous when we are no longer committed to, or constrained by, any external standards. Only when no values (*Werte*), principles (*archai*), edicts or laws (*nomoi*) confront us as an external limit or imposition because their validity transcends our will, are we free to become

²⁶ Here Heidegger is glossing, or drawing out the revolutionary import of, the “paradox of method” involved in Kant’s practical philosophy: viz., “that the concept of good and evil must not be determined before the moral law” (5:63); that, in contrast, “it is (...) the moral law that first determines and makes possible the concept of the good, insofar as it deserves this name absolutely” (5:64). What Heidegger presumes Kant’s absolute good to be will be seen in what follows.

²⁷ Heidegger does not pull his punches here: “The philosophy of value in particular (...) represents a total distortion of the genuinely Kantian problem” (EHF 186).

our own principle, to cast our own laws, and bear the full weight of responsibility. This is the rationale which underlies Heidegger's assertion in *The Essence of Human Freedom* that "the ethicality of action does not consist in realizing so-called values, but in the actual willing to take responsibility, in the decision to exist within this responsibility" (191). The categorical imperative can, in Heidegger's view, be paraphrased as enjoining finite rational beings such as ourselves to "always act in [our] essence", which, of course, is *nothing other than* "self-responsibility" (EHF 199).²⁸ The moral law, in calling us to responsibility, defines us in our essence as freely acting beings. The law "prescribes what man can be as defined by the essential nature of his existence" (BPP 139), and "the essence of the personality of the human person, the authentic (*eigentliche*) essence, the humanity of man" is *nothing other than* "self-responsibility", envisaged as "practical freedom" or "autonomy" (EHF 200-201), and thus as synonymous with "moral reason" (KPM 118). The moral subject has no essence beyond its capacity for responsible self-determination, and, consequently, moral action does not consist in realizing eternal and objective values, but in taking responsibility for the determination of these values.

Now, as I have intimated already, an all-important presupposition, lying behind much of the Heideggerian reading, is that it is precisely insofar as the moral law is enigmatic or formally empty that it rouses its 'hearers' to assume full and anguishing responsibility for the decision through which this indeterminate injunction is endowed with content—a decision which is "self-supporting, (...) which stands purely on its own and which cannot escape into

²⁸ "Der Kategorische Imperativ besagt also: Sei in deinem Handeln jederzeit zugleich, d. h. zuerst, wesentlich in deinem wesen. Das Wesen der Person ist diese Selbstverantwortlichkeit (...)" (GA 31: 293).

something eternal or absolute, but which also cannot escape into the world of things” (KPM 196). To gain a proper understanding of what it means for moral action to be self-supporting, for practical reason or the pure will²⁹ to depend on nothing—no foundation, ground, or principle—beyond itself, it will be necessary to scrutinize Heidegger’s account of the moral law, as well as his portrayal of the successful Kantian ethical act, a little more carefully.

As Heidegger never tires of repeating, and as I tried to show in section 1.2, Kant believes actions have no moral worth if they are determined by an object beyond the law itself. The law of pure practical reason must be the exclusive “determining ground of moral action” (BPP 135). This is confirmed by Kant when, for instance, he says that the moral worth of an action:

(...) can lie nowhere else *than in the principle of the will* without regard for the ends that can be brought about by such an action. For the will stands between its a priori principle, which is formal, and its a posteriori incentive, which is material, as at a crossroads; and since it must still be determined by something, it must be determined by the formal principle of volition as such when an action is done from duty, where every material principle has been withdrawn from it (5:400).

In Heidegger’s opinion, value-philosophers like Max Scheler, who reject Kant’s ethical doctrine on the grounds that it is an empty formalism, and *therefore* incapable of generating definite actions, “totally misunderstand the crucial problem in the concept of the ‘formal’” (EHF 190), and thus “[miss] the point completely” (BPP 136). Heidegger, however, does not

²⁹ Heidegger sees pure practical reason and the pure will as perfectly interchangeable (see EHF 187-189). As he puts it: “Pure will is pure reason which is practical only for itself” (EHF 189). The two are frequently conflated in Kant’s early ‘critical’ writings on morality (viz., the *Groundwork* and *Critique of Practical Reason*) as well (see, e.g., 4:448, 460, 461). Of course, as we have seen in section 1.2, Kant’s later works complicate things by tending to identify the *Wille*—as the legislative function of the will considered in its unity, and as distinct from the will’s ‘executive branch’, the *Willkür* or power of choice—with practical reason.

make absolutely transparent wherein he sees the misunderstanding as lying. Hence, many interpretations are possible. I would like to argue that what Heidegger accuses Scheler and others of missing is what A. Zupancic has called the mystery of “ethical transubstantiation”. This is the transformation indispensable to any ethical act, in which pure form comes to “occupy the position formerly occupied by matter, (...) [is converted] into a materially efficacious drive” (Zupancic 14-15). What is, as Kant puts it, “an insoluble mystery” isn’t the absence or purgation of all incentives or drives, but the fact that this absence, this void, this pure form, “form which isn’t even the form of a matter or content”, should “function as an incentive” (Zupancic 14-15; 18). The Heideggerian reading, I would like to suggest, thus unearths the miraculous core of the Kantian moral act: i.e., its defiance of that axiom of reason, that most hallowed and tenacious belief, *ex nihilo nihil fit*, or *nihil est sine ratione* (as voiced by Parmenides and Leibniz respectively). For moral action, at least in Heidegger’s eyes, requires that an absence or nothingness, which ought never function as cause, should somehow act as determining ground or cause (5:72). In this context, the following passage from *The Essence of Human Freedom* should be quoted in full:

The law of pure will does not pertain to this or that representable effect but is *the law of the existence of the will*, i.e., the will is the willing itself (*der Wille ist das Wollen selbst*). Pure will, however, i.e., the essence of the will as determinatively representing pure willing, is the mode of law-giving. *Everything that determines contains nothing other than the mode and form of the will’s pure willing in and for itself*. This mode as pure, the form of the how (*die Form des Wie*), is the mode of law-giving for willing. When *this alone is determining (das Bestimmende ist)*, then the law of pure will is nothing else than the form of law-giving for a pure will (190, Italics mine).

It should be stressed, before I unpack this notion of a “pure will” any further, that Heidegger is far from being unambiguous on this point in *The Essence of Human Freedom*. Moreover, it

should be reiterated that what I am engaged in here is an attempt to reconstruct a unified and coherent Heideggerian interpretation of the Kantian ethic, using as my point of departure or focal point Heidegger's (at times) pronouncedly voluntaristic understanding of the Kantian pure will. In so doing, I am merely zeroing-in on a particular strand in his interpretation, as well as evoking some of its potential implications.

The idea that a nothing or absence—a pure form—should function as incentive for the will is, in a sense, unproblematically Kantian. For Kant contrasts those actions done out of regard for an object or desired effect, and which are thus commanded only conditionally, with those actions done purely for the sake of duty, i.e., without regard for an object of the will, and which are thus commanded unconditionally. In its more conventional moments, *The Essence of Human Freedom* simply paraphrases this basic Kantian teaching: e.g., “If man in himself actually wills a pure will (e.g., wills to speak the truth) this means that his willing is governed only by the representation of a pure willing” (193); or, again, “[when] pure reason is practical for itself”, that is, when it “determines the will without regard for a desired effect”, it “wills a pure will” (EHF 193). However, there are many occasions where Heidegger, knowingly or not, seems to want to take the inner logic of this basic Kantian teaching and radicalize it, or make explicit its potentially sinister implications. Hence, there are times when Heidegger only seems to be making a rather pedestrian or conventional point. Take, for example, his stating that: “The law of pure will is formal but *not empty*, rather, the form of the law is precisely that which, in the law, in the ordering, in the being-cause, makes

up the determinant, the decisive, the proper” (EHF 190, *Italics mine*).³⁰ This, emphatically, is *not* to say that the moral law isn’t deprived of all content, but rather that this unfathomable emptiness, this pure form, *is its ‘content’*, is “the sole and most concrete (*das einzig Konkrete und Konkreteste*) in the lawfulness of ethical action” (EHF 191).

Admittedly, and as just intimated, Heidegger often seems to be denying that the “categorical imperative”, the “*fundamental law of a finite pure willing, i.e., of a pure practical reason*”, is empty (*Ibid.*). It can be argued, however, that when Heidegger characterizes the moral law as “not empty”, he is, at least for the most part in *The Essence of Human Freedom*, using “empty” the way Scheler and Hartmann did, to whom the moral law was “empty” *because it did not provide a determining ground for action*. In this vein, Heidegger remarks: “If this willing of the pure will transcends the contingency of empirical action, this does not amount to becoming lost in the empty abstraction of a valid form of lawfulness, such that what one is to do remains totally indeterminate” (EHF 193). However, when Heidegger says that the moral law, the law of pure practical reason or “finite pure willing”, is “not empty”, it can be argued that he does *not* mean that the moral law is possessed of positive content, that it presents the will with a determinate object beyond the will itself. For how could he then say, for instance, that “the law is the ‘ought’ of pure willing”, and “what ‘ought to be’ is pure willing; i.e, the willing that does not aim at something else attainable by willing” (EHF 191), but, rather, “wills willing and nothing else

³⁰ “Formal ist das Gesetz des reinen Willens allerdings, aber es ist nicht leer, sondern Form des Gesetzes bedeutet dasjenige, was am Gesetz, an der Regelung, am Ursachesein das Bestimmende, das Eigentliche und Entscheidende ausmacht. *Das Formale ist nicht das unbestimmte Leere, sondern gerade das ‘Bestimmende’*” (GA 31: 279). I have emended Sadler’s translation, which contains major omissions.

besides” (EHF 193)?³¹ Heidegger tells us that what the moral law demands “is that I really will, i.e., that I be decided, that I will decisively, which means, take responsibility (*die Verantwortung*) for myself, and come to exist in this responsibility (*Übernahme*)” (GA 31: 280). Surely, if by characterizing the moral law as “not empty” Heidegger meant to imply that it carried any sort of content or material prescription, Heidegger could not, without jeopardizing the consistency of his analysis, then call the question of *what* determinate object, beyond the willing itself, the law demands to be willed “a vain and fallacious question” since it “leads one astray from actual willing” (EHF 196). In the *Essence of Human Freedom*, Heidegger declares the question which seeks “something that can be willed”—i.e., which asks: ‘*What* should be willed?’—to be mistaken and misleading, for it merely creates the illusion that “one is making an effort to will”, and “closes willing off to the one who at that moment ought to will” (*Ibid.*). As Rogozinski puts it, summarizing this strand in Heidegger’s interpretation of the moral law in *The Essence of Human Freedom*:³² “(...) The Law states nothing, does not stipulate any duty or any end, does not want anything other than itself, its pure will to decision, its pure decision to will” (2002: 55).

Hence, at least according to this strand in Heidegger’s interpretation,

³¹ Perhaps seizing on a possible implication of this strand in his early Kant-interpretation, the later Heidegger describes the pure will as that will which wills only “*empty nothingness*” (OM 86). It should be kept in mind that by the time of Heidegger’s making this remark in *Overcoming Metaphysics*, the Kantian ethic has become the object of his most scathing rebuke. It is as if the Heidegger of *Overcoming Metaphysics* comes to fully recognize the voluntaristic strand in his earlier interpretation, and to attribute it, as well as its disquieting implications, purely and simply, to Kant—denouncing the Kantian ethic as a form of nihilism, and harbinger of the reign of technicity.

³² Rogozinski himself does not deem this view of the moral law as empty or, as he puts it, “indeterminate” to be a strand in Heidegger’s interpretation. He considers it Heidegger’s explicit and unchanging understanding of the moral law, pure and simple. This appears to be the view of H. Birault as well, though it is at times difficult to distinguish Birault’s interpretation of Kant from his presentation of Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant (162-163).

Heidegger's quarrel with Scheler and company isn't over the emptiness of the moral law *qua* bereft of content, but whether it is empty in the sense of failing to yield a determining ground for action. Heidegger's view, as inferred from the preceding, is that the vertiginous emptiness of the moral law is precisely what makes it the determining ground of ethical action, and hence why it is *not* empty in Scheler's sense. This is one way to understand Heidegger's remark that the pure will in its transcendence is not an "empty abstraction", but, rather, "the coming into operation of genuine concrete willing, concrete because it wills willing and nothing else besides" (193). Though Heidegger never says so explicitly, it is to be surmised, at least from this strand in his Kant-interpretation, that he would have taken this lack of a determinate incentive or object, this pure form, or 'ought of pure willing', to be what Kant meant by the *echte Triebfeder*, the genuine or pure incentive (5:88; see section 1.2 of the present study). In willing its *echte Triebfeder*, the will is not directed towards any definite object, or, for that matter, to *anything* standing over-against it (no *Ob-jekt* or *Gegen-stand*). In fact, the will isn't directed toward an *alter* or *alteritas* at all. It wills only itself as will. To Heidegger, the will which wills itself marks the domain of the higher faculty of desire or pure practical reason, which is governed by its own self-generated principle: viz., the moral law as law of pure will.

This brings me to Heidegger's interpretation of the *Groundwork*'s famed opening: "It is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation (*ohne Einschränkung*) except a *good will*" (4:393). Heidegger takes this to mean that a good will is absolutely good because it seeks no good, no goal, no effect, beyond itself. In other words, the absolutely good will is, as

Heidegger understands the term, pure. As Heidegger concludes: “A good will is, *qua* will—i.e., insofar as it only wills the will *and so actually (eigentlich) only wills*—absolutely good” (EHF 189, Italics mine).³³ To the ethical subject, which “exists as its own end (*Zweck seiner Selbst existiert*)”, there belongs a special, ‘circular’³⁴ kind of purposiveness: *self-purposiveness (Selbstzweckhaftigkeit)*. In other words, “its way of being is to *be* the end or purpose of its own self (*Zweck seiner selbst zu sein*)” (BPP 141), to be an end-in-itself.

On this basis, Heidegger contends that Kant *did* “factually” and “positively” contribute to the determination of the ontological constitution of the Human being or “egohood”. As Heidegger sees it, Kant wisely intuited that an essential “ontological disjunction” obtains between the moral Person, which “exists as its own end” (BPP 138), and

³³ “Ein guter Wille ist qua Wille, d. h. sofern er nur das Wollen will *und so eigentlich nur will*, schlechthin gut” (GA 31: 277 italics mine). I have emended Sadler’s translation of this passage, which simply leaves out the segment which I have italicized. Overall, Sadler’s translation of *The Essence of Human Freedom* is woefully inadequate, riddled as it is with imprecisions and omissions. It is to be deplored that Sadler does not live up to his promise of remaining “as close as possible to Heidegger’s actual words” (xii, Translator’s Foreword), since Sadler’s is the only English translation of this major lecture course.

³⁴ Indeed, circular motion in general is a felicitous metaphor for the Kantian good/pure will, or at least the Heideggerian rendition thereof. Aristotle believed rotary motion was the highest, most perfect, and primary form of motion, because, amongst other things, it could be said to be self-contained, to carry its end or purpose within itself (*Physics* Bk VIII: Ch. 9; *On the Heavens* Bk I. Ch. 2, 269a-b; *Metaphysics* Bk. XII: Ch. 7, 1072b, line 7-10; see Heidegger QC 65). In rectilinear movement, there is “a definite starting-point, finishing-point, and middle point, which all have their place in it in such a way that there is a point *from which* that which is in motion can be said to start and a point *at which* it can be said to finish its course [i.e., its limit: the point at which the movement finishes or comes to rest because it has arrived at its destination, and thus achieved its *telos*]” (*Physics* Bk VIII: Ch. 9, 265a, lines 28-35. Italics mine). Things are different with circular motion, for here the designation of such points is completely arbitrary: every point is at once *beginning* and *end*, *origin* and *goal*, *terminus ad quo* and *terminus ad quem*, of the movement. Is this not analogous to the ‘motion’ of the pure will, which *tends toward itself*, and in which willing and willed are one? Keeping in mind that Aristotle, as is well known, attributes circular motion to the ‘heavenly spheres’ (to the *primum mobile*, the ‘fixed stars’, and the celestial orbs) does the parallel between circular motion and the ‘motion’ of the pure will not suffuse one of Kant’s most poetic passages in a new and unexpected light: “Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence (*Ehrfurcht*), the more often and the more steadily one reflects on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me*” (5:161)?

Things (natural objects), whose manner of being Heidegger specifies, purportedly as a faithful paraphrasing of Kant's depiction of the being of natural objects, as *Vorhandensein* or *Vorhandenheit* (mere extant-ness; being present-at-hand), and *beständige Anwesenheit* (constant presence). Heidegger bolsters his claim that Kant was, to a degree, aware of "the impossibility of conceiving the ego as something extant" (BPP 147) by citing this passage from the *Groundwork*:

Beings the existence of which rests not on our will but on nature, if they are beings without reason, still have only relative worth, as means, and are therefore called *things* (*Sachen*), whereas rational beings are called *persons* because their nature already marks them out as an end in itself, that is, as something that may not be used merely as a means, and hence so far limits all choice (and is an object of respect). These, therefore, are not merely subjective ends, the existence of which as an effect of our action has a worth *for us*, but rather *objective ends*, that is, beings (*Dinge*) the existence of which is in itself an end (4:428).³⁵

Moreover, to Heidegger, the moral Person is, in essence, not the merely particularized embodiment of a generic *What*, but a singular, self-responsible individual—a "*Who*" (BPP 135).³⁶ As Heidegger correctly observes, this "ontological disjunction" gives rise to a new

³⁵ Heidegger also cites the following passage from 4:427: "Now I say that the human being and in general every rational being *exists* as an end in itself, *not merely as a means* to be used by this or that will at its discretion; instead he must in all his actions, whether directed to himself or also to other rational beings, always be regarded *at the same time as an end*".

³⁶ Despite lauding Kant's perspicacity in having indicated an ontological divide between the moral Person as end-in-itself, and Things as value-neutral or 'extant' objects, Heidegger criticizes Kant for having nevertheless assigned to the Person—and this "precisely where he touches on the structure proper to the *personalitas moralis*, that of being *autotelic*"—"the ontological mode of extantness", without having "[pressed] on toward the fundamental question of the mode of being of the person ["of an end, an intelligence" (BPP 146)]" (BPP 147), toward the "specific ontological constitution of *Dasein*" (BPP 153; see also EHF 204, 199, 168). Kant never managed to extricate himself from the shackles of traditional, i.e., Ancient Greek and Medieval Latin, ontology, which, pervaded as it was by the spirit of Aristotle's *ousiology* (to borrow Werner Marx's term), conceived the Human Being like any other *res* (thing), as a substance (*ousia*) or *subiectum* (*hypokeimenon*), constantly present, and underlying its accidents or properties. In other words, Heidegger reproaches Kant for not having uncovered the *Dasein* (Being-there) in the Human being—i.e., for his failure to think of the moral Person as *Being-in-the-world* or *Existenz*. More broadly, he castigates Kant because the motives for his philosophy's "primary orientation to the subject are not

formulation of the categorical imperative: “*So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means*” (4:429). But how does this bifurcation in the ontology of all things, i.e., beings in the widest sense of the term, play out in the arena of actual ethical *praxis*? What does it mean to Heidegger that the autotelic nature of the Person “*limits all choice*”? I will postpone answering this question, an answer which Heidegger himself only alludes to, until after I have dealt with Heidegger’s interpretation of one final Kantian concept: viz., respect, and its concomitant notions, freedom, self-alienation, and guilt.

As I have mentioned, Heidegger notes that this “will that wills itself on behalf of itself demands (*fordert*) to be willed” (EHF 197), for it is “the *ought* of one’s existence (*das Sollen seines Da-seins*)” (EHF 196). Furthermore, in the context of an elucidation of Kant’s definition of the essence of the person as self-responsibility—which, as I have shown, Heidegger renders as “[binding] oneself to oneself”; as “giving the self, in all things, the first word”, and “[answering] only to the essence of one’s self”, though “not egotistically, i.e. not in relation to the accidental ‘I’” (EHF 199, Translation modified)—Heidegger makes clear that all of what is implied in self-responsibility is encompassed by, and therefore accomplished in, “[willing] the ought of pure willing” (Ibid.).³⁷ When “pure reason is practical for itself”, that is, when it “determines the will without regard for a desired effect”, it “wills a pure will”

fundamental-ontological. The motive is not to know precisely *that* and *how* being and being’s structure can be clarified in terms of the Dasein itself” (BPP 123), to whose being “*an understanding of being belongs*” (BPP 154).

³⁷ In the original, this whole passage reads: “Das Wesen der Person ist diese Selbstverantwortlichkeit: sich an sich selbst, nicht egoistisch und in bezug auf das zufällige Ich, binden. Selbstverantwortlichsein, nur antworten und d. h. zuerst immer nur fragen nach dem Wesen des Selbst. Diesem zuerst und in allem das Wort geben, das Sollen des reinen Wollens wollen” (GA 31: 293).

(EHF 193). “This purity of willing”, Heidegger continues, “raises the will of the individual up beyond the contingency of his particular circumstances” (*Ibid.*).³⁸ Now, Heidegger explains that the moral Person in its “non-sensible character”, or, what amounts to the same thing, the law in its unblemished purity and transcendence, is made manifest by what Kant calls the “moral feeling” of respect, a feeling which is begotten by reason alone. As Heidegger writes: “Respect for the law is the active ego’s respect for itself as the self which is not understood by means of self-conceit and self-love [i.e., empirically]. Respect as respect for the law relates (...), in its specific revelation, to the person” (BPP 135). Disclosure of the law is identical to disclosure of the moral Person or ethical subject because “Reason, as free, gives this law to itself” (*Ibid.*). Respect makes visible a law which commands absolutely, i.e., whose authority is not seated in the contingent inclinations of the subject, but rather, in itself alone. It reveals a law which, if it becomes the motive of the will, “brings about a breaking off that is practiced on the inclinations, or sensible feelings” (BPP 134). As such, respect is a negative feeling. It

³⁸ It is, by Heidegger’s reasoning, this self-transcendence (i.e., purity of will) which “grounds the possibility of the universal validity of the law of the will” (EHF 193). Indeed, Heidegger is sometimes inclined to think of the universally binding and valid character of the law as *a function of the purity of will*, rather than as a yardstick to gauge the ethicality of the will’s maxims. At one point, after stating that “The pure will is not a mental occurrence that perceives the value of an independently existing law and directs our behaviour accordingly (...)”, Heidegger goes so far as to maintain: “*Only because, and insofar as, the pure will wills, does the law exist*” (EHF 200, Italics mine). Here, as perhaps throughout the preceding, the reader will surely ask: What about the demand for universalizability within Kant’s formalization? Does the test of non-contradictory universalization not imbue the moral law with positive content? As I stated in section 1.2, this is the prevailing understanding of Kant’s moral law. For Heidegger, however, it appears to have been a foregone conclusion that the criteria of universalizability does nothing to attenuate the vacuity of the moral law. Indeed, Heidegger never really bothered to defend, or even make explicit, this presupposition. In the opinion of Rogozinski, this is due to the fact that this understanding of the moral law as empty principle of identity, i.e., as admitting *any and all* maxims (even contradictory ones) if properly formulated, had such a venerable history in Germany. As he puts it: “[Heidegger] never called into question the most massive prejudice of the traditional interpretations, the presuppositions shared by Jacobi, Hegel, and Nietzsche, that the autonomous Kantian will is self-will, will that wills will” (2002: 54). Heidegger simply adopted this traditional reading unquestioningly.

is the feeling of the “rupturing” and “repelling” of all sensible inclinations and feelings. In its respect for the moral law, the moral agent, *qua* empirical, submits to the law. But insofar as the moral agent is free, the law must be seen as the product of its own legislating will. Indeed, as I have said, the law is the subject’s own essence as pure practical reason. Hence, subjection to the law in respect is a *self*-subjection. “In subjecting myself to the law”, Heidegger imparts, “I subject myself to myself as pure reason; but that is to say that in this subjection to myself I raise myself to myself as the free, self-determining being” (BPP 135). In the self-submitting self-elevation of respect for the law, the self is “elevated” beyond itself, *qua* empirical self, towards its “essence” as moral “personality”: i.e., end-in-itself (which, to Heidegger, = pure will = self-responsible). This, in part, explains the strange co-mingling of pleasure and pain, or inclination and fear, which is the hallmark of respect (see 4:402n). Commenting on this admixture, Heidegger recalls that Ancient philosophy “already characterized practical behaviour in the broader sense, *orexis*, by *dioxis* and *phuge*”. *Dioxis* means “following in the manner of pursuit, a striving toward something (*das verfolgende Nachgehen, Hinstreben zu etwas*)”, whereas *phuge* denotes “a yielding, fleeing, retreat from, striving away from (*weichendes, fliehendes Zurückgehen-vor, Wegstreben-von*)”. Heidegger argues that Kant substitutes *Neigung* for the Greek *dioxis*, and that “for *phuge*, giving way before (*Zurückweichen-vor*), he takes fear (*Furcht*) as shrinking standing in fear of (*zurückweichendes Sichfürchten-vor*)” (BPP 136).

Heidegger’s reflections on this curious double-movement end rather prematurely, for a much more incisive and radical understanding of this dual-tendency is suggested both by Heidegger’s immediate discussion, and by much else in his writings on

Kant's ethics. To review: the *a priori* feeling of respect unveils a law which is impenetrable, a law of the will in its purity or emptiness, a law which, as Heidegger might put it, is "a repetition of the same which fills up and simultaneously announces an abyss that gives rise to unbearable anxiety (Your duty is... do your duty)" (Zizek IR 170). Respect reveals to the subject, as progenitor of the law, its own nature as an *Abgrund* of freedom or pure negativity, as *unheimlich* (uncanny/not-at-home/out-of-joint), if not downright *ungeheuerlich* (monstrous/dreadful). This is implied by Heidegger in his debate with Ernst Cassirer over the tenability of his (i.e., Heidegger's) interpretation of Kant, especially Kant's ethics. In the context of an exchange concerning Kant's concept of freedom, Heidegger professes that the "sole and central" vocation of philosophizing, which, as opposed to mere "theoretical apprehending", is inherently practical, or, more precisely, in which *theoria* and *praxis* cannot be partitioned into separate fields, is to allow the "setting free"³⁹ of the human being, to "surrender (*auszuliefern*) man, even radically, to anxiety (*der Angst*)" (KPM 200). Heidegger tacitly includes Kant's practical philosophy under the rubric of such philosophizing. This is to be gathered from the fact that Heidegger presents this notion (philosophizing) as a rebuttal to Cassirer's claim that in Kant's ethical writings, "an Absolute [is] set in place", and the subject's finitude "becomes transcendent"—i.e., the subject sheds the cloak of finitude and accedes to knowledge of the infinite, to absolute knowledge of good and evil.

The finitude of the moral Person, which is to say, its abyssal nature as pure will or pure negativity, is also suggested by Heidegger when he states:

Whosoever comes wholly to be moved by his innermost interest in this

³⁹ The German term is *Befreiung*, which can be translated as emancipation, liberation, or even absolution.

question [What should I do?] reveals a finitude in the depths of his essence. (...) A creature that is fundamentally interested in a duty knows itself in a not-yet-having-fulfilled (*Noch-nicht-erfüllt-haben*), so that what indeed it *should* do becomes questionable to it. This not-yet of a fulfilling, *which is itself still undetermined (unbestimmt)*, gives us a clue that a creature whose innermost interest is with duty is *fundamentally finite (im Grunde endlich ist)* (KPM 151, Italics mine)".

Here, more than ever, it is necessary to read between the lines of Heidegger's text, and discern its hidden implications. For I must try to establish what Heidegger might mean in calling the moral Person an essential not-yet having, or not-yet being, fulfilled, and qualifying this "not-yet-having-fulfilled" itself as indeterminate (*unbestimmt*). The duty-bound subject, we are told, is fundamentally finite. In other words, as, in its essence, pure will, it is a pure negativity, an insubstantial substance or nothingness. This being the case, it is also true that to will nothing is not to will at all, and to be is to be determinate (this rather than that). Hence, insofar as it wills, it must will something. This means that the imperative of pure will which the subject issues to itself, and to which it binds itself, is an asymptotic ideal: i.e., an ideal which is always receding; which is unattainable; which can never be fully realized or fulfilled.⁴⁰ Only the Holy Will can, according to Heidegger, perfectly coincide with itself as pure will. And, of course, because of this perfect coincidence, it can be under no injunction or imperative to pure will (EHF 191). The ethical subject, on the other hand, is essentially a not-yet-having, or not-yet being, fulfilled. This means that it is inescapably and invariably guilty, or, what amounts to the same thing, self-alienated, since its essence is the law of pure will, with which it can only fail to comply/coincide. Its fundamental finitude, its being, in its

⁴⁰ This is in keeping with the fact that, in his *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, Kant defines respect as "The feeling of the inadequacy of our capacity for the attainment of an idea *that is a law for us*" (5:257).

ground, a nothingness or pure will, entails that no empirical content or action (*persona*) can ever correspond to the law of its being as pure will (to its essence as finite; *personality*; nothing and no-one; *personne*), to what it ‘ought’ to be and/or do.⁴¹ Since the duty which the subject is to fulfill, if the subject is to *be* fulfilled, is unspecified or indeterminate, nothing it can do will ever perfectly fulfill it. Since even the “not-yet of a fulfilling” which is essential to the subject is itself “indeterminate” (*unbestimmt*), or, stated more bluntly, since there is *nothing* (determinate) for which the subject is fit, *nothing* (determinate) which it is supposed to do or become in acting, it will incur guilt in everything it does or becomes. The acting subject is, by definition, guilty, and “innocence”, to borrow a line from Hegel, “is merely non-action, like the being of a stone, not even that of a child” (PS § 468).

It might quite plausibly be argued that all of this forms the unstated background to Heidegger’s stated conviction that, in Kantian ethical action, it is not a question of somehow dispelling, resolving or overcoming this finitude, but rather “of becoming certain of this finitude in order to hold oneself in it” (KPM 152). Heidegger tells us that respect: “is the mode of the ego’s being-with-itself (*Bei-sich-selbst-sein*) according to which it does not disparage the hero in its soul” (BPP 135); or, again, “the manner of being-its-self of the I (*des Selbstseins des Ich*), on the grounds of which it ‘does not throw away the hero in its soul’” (KPM 111). What Kant means by moral heroism is quite straightforward: always acting out of duty, never out of inclination. But what does Heidegger mean by the ‘hero of one’s soul’? Nowhere in his writings on Kant does Heidegger spell-out what he

⁴¹ Here I am reminded of an isolated, but in the present context quite apropos, remark by Kant in his *Opus Postumum*: “*Persona* also means mask.” (21:142).

means by ‘hero’ in this context. Hence, a certain amount of speculation is unavoidable here. What Heidegger does tell us is that respect is the moral subject’s “authentic being-a-self (*eigentliche Selbstsein*)” (KPM 111); that it is “nothing but the self’s being responsible to itself and for itself (...) a distinctive way in which the ego understands itself as ego directly, purely, and free of all sensuous determination” (BPP 135-136). Thus far, Heidegger has told us that the moral subject is, in its most proper (*eigentlich*) being, a pure will, and fundamentally finite. It is an essential not-being-fulfilled which is itself indeterminate (which means: a negativity or nothingness). As I’ve shown, this entails, though Heidegger himself never says so, that the moral subject is essentially *unheimlich* (i.e., uncanny or not-at-home), and, therefore, guilty. Hence, one could argue that, whether Heidegger realizes it or not, his own analysis implies that respect as ‘not dismissing or degrading the hero in one’s soul’ means: tarrying with the negative; dwelling, residing, or being at home, in homelessness; embracing the fact that one is essentially and inescapably guilty; accepting the challenging, distressing, or unsettling character (*Angriffscharakter*) of the moral law,⁴² that it exposes one’s fundamental finitude, and condemns one to self-alienation;⁴³ and, lastly, both

⁴² Revisiting my earlier metaphor: just as the circular motion of the heavenly spheres is, according to Aristotle, *both* an eternally continuous motion, change or unrest, *and* an almost perfect immobility, stillness or rest (since, in a sense, it is always already at its goal), so too the perfect self-possession, and, therefore, *Ruhe* or *Stille* of respect for the law of the pure will (i.e., for the essence of the moral person as will to will) is also a challenge, a state of distress, anxiety, or *Unruhe*.

⁴³ In his analysis of Kant’s conception of the ego in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger underscores the fact that the Kantian subject is self-alienated, that it is, in a sense, divided into three discrete ‘persons’: the *personalitas moralis*, the *personalitas transcendentalis*, and the *personalitas psychologica*. The *personalitas moralis*, as “Man’s true being as moral being”, can *never* coincide with the *personalitas psychologica* (the “object-ego”, “empirical-ego”, or “determinable ego”, which is ‘apprehended’ in (sense) experience “like other objects outside me”) (BPP 129-130). Nor does it fully coincide with the *personalitas transcendentalis*, the “subject-ego”, “I-think”, or “original synthetic unity of apperception”—i.e., the “ground of the possibility of all representing, all perceiving, hence of all perceivedness of beings and thus the ground of all being”, but which, as such, cannot itself become an object of experience (BPP 128-129). The subject’s

unavoidably recoiling before the anguishing (painful) sublimity of the moral law, and seeking out—indeed, delighting or taking joy in—the repellant experience of one’s own uncanny core in the feeling of respect for the law of pure will.

Kant tells us that the moral law in its awe-inspiring purity is a “burden” which we would do anything to alleviate (5:77). It is that “in comparison and contrast with which life with all its agreeableness has no worth at all” (5:88), and which thus incites an *a priori* feeling of “reverential dread/anxiety” (5:84), “displeasure” (5:78), and “humiliation” (5:79). Moreover, Kant makes clear that while the rational feeling of respect is accompanied by a “consolation”, “inner tranquillity”, or “enjoyment”, the latter:

is *not happiness* [i.e., the satisfaction of inclinations], not even the smallest part of it. For, *no one would wish the occasion for it on himself*, or perhaps even a life in such circumstances [i.e., it is, in some sense, *painful* or *disagreeable*]. But he [i.e., the dutiful subject] lives and cannot bear to be unworthy of life in his own eyes [by pursuing his happiness (the satisfaction of his inclinations), instead of making himself *worthy* of happiness by acting out of duty]. This inner tranquillity is therefore *merely negative* with respect to everything that can make life pleasant; it is, namely, only the warding off the danger of sinking in personal worth, after he has given up completely the worth of his condition. It is the effect of a respect for something quite different from life, something in comparison with which *life with all its agreeableness has no worth at all*. He still lives only from duty, not because he has the least taste for living (5:88).

To Kant, in pursuing its duty, the moral hero pursues something which, paradoxically, is both “enjoyable” and painful, attractive and repellant. Surely, Heidegger would have been familiar with these passages, and would have had them in mind in his characterization of the moral

self-alienation is also emphasized in *The Essence of Human Freedom*, in which, e.g., Heidegger states: “the *essence of Man*, [which is] not exhaustively defined by his humanity [i.e., his theoretical rationality], *consists precisely in his going beyond himself* (*über sich selbst hinauszu gehen*), as person, in personality (*Persönlichkeit*)” (EHF 180, Italics mine).

feeling of respect before one's innermost essence, or, what amounts to the same thing, before the law of pure will, as a simultaneous attraction (*dioxis*) and repulsion (*phuge*). Hence, a possible implication of Heidegger's discussion of respect is that moral heroism should be viewed as a kind of paradoxical pleasure-in-pain, akin to what Kant describes as the aesthetic feeling of the sublime (see: 5:88; 5:264, 5:257-259), in which freedom itself, i.e., the independence from all inclination, but also the crushing of self-conceit, becomes source of "enjoyment" (5:119; Kant's term is *Genusses*). This would be consistent with the fact that in the dutiful act one attains, according to Kant, a certain "contentment with oneself (*Selbstzufriedenheit*)", which, to repeat, "in its strict meaning always designates only a negative satisfaction (*negatives Wohlgefallen*) with one's existence [or "with one's person" (5:119)], in which one is conscious of needing nothing" (5:117)⁴⁴—i.e., conscious "of mastery over one's inclinations, hence of independence from them and so too from the discontent that always accompanies them"—and which is therefore "analogous to the self-sufficiency (*Selbstgenügsamkeit*)" that can be ascribed "only to the supreme being" (5:119).

Having disclosed the possible background to, and implications of, Heidegger's understanding of respect, I can now venture to answer a question which was raised earlier in this section: viz., What does the fact that the autotelic nature of the Person "limits all choice" mean to Heidegger? It should be reiterated that an answer to this question is only insinuated by Heidegger in his writings on Kant. My ambition is merely to suggest a possible answer which would be consistent with Heidegger's explicit, but sadly insufficient, discussion. An

⁴⁴ Except, one might say, nothingness itself. For when nothing is left to desire or will, the only thing that remains to be willed is will itself, and as the later Heidegger shows, the will to will is synonymous with a will to nothingness.

answer to this question—albeit necessarily tentative and conjectural—will bring me one step closer to fulfilling the purpose of this chapter: the reconstruction of a coherent portrait of the early Heidegger’s interpretation of the Kantian ethic.

For starters, it should be recalled that, to Heidegger, the subject is not the mechanical executor of a set of universal commandments, and does not act under their pacifying auspices. Moral judgements are not, at least according to a certain line of thought which runs through (and from) Heidegger’s early Kant-interpretation, carried out by subsuming the objects of moral deliberation under pre-given universal categories or concepts. It is the responsibility of each subject to decide how to take the empty “law of the pure will” and turn it into a positive and determinate moral obligation. And this decision is not grounded in any ontological guarantee or foundation (Zupancic 58-62). Zupancic, in a Heideggerian spirit, captures the disquieting nature of the moral law ably:

The paradox of the moral law is that, despite its ‘categorical’ character, it somehow leaves everything wide open. For how am I to decide if (the maxim of) my action can hold as a principle providing universal law, if I do not accept the presupposition that I am originally guided by some notion of the good (i.e., some [material] notion of what is universally acceptable)? In other words, there is no a priori criterion of universality (92).

I think it can be conjectured, based on what has been said thus far, that the Heidegger of *The Essence of Human Freedom* would agree that it is misguided to view the Kantian moral imperative as a kind of testing-device whose application to each particular case would disburden the subject of the absolute responsibility for a decision (Zizek IR 170). At minimum, this is supported by Heidegger’s total silence regarding this otherwise common

interpretation of the moral law as universality-test.⁴⁵ However, this more conventional view of the moral law as test can be rejected, as an implication of the Heideggerian reading, only at a rather disconcerting cost: the structure of the successful Kantian ethical act, when understood along such Heideggerian lines, does not allow for the separation of good and evil. Textual support for this claim in Kant is to be found in a footnote to his *Metaphysics of Morals* in which he treats the formal execution of Louis XVI as an instance of “diabolical evil”.⁴⁶ Kant describes the formal execution⁴⁷ of Louis XVI as “a chasm that irretrievably swallows everything, (...) a crime from which the people cannot be absolved, and which tramples and overturns all positive law. As such, Kant says that in this formal execution, “the state commits suicide”, for it destroys the very symbolic order which grants it an identity (6:322). Kant’s account is deeply troubling because the logic of his own concepts forces him to describe this “diabolically evil” act with the same language he uses to describe an ethical act: it is a purely formal act, done solely ‘for the sake of it’; the feeling of “horror” which it inspires is said not to be “aesthetic”, but a “moral feeling”; and it cannot be “explained” as issuing from a “sensible impulse” [*Triebfeder*] but, rather, only as “in accordance with principle”, which makes it an act of freedom (6:320-322; Zupancic 85).

After all that has been said, it would seem to be at least a potential

⁴⁵ See footnote 38.

⁴⁶ Strictly speaking, Kant, here and elsewhere, treats diabolical evil—i.e., ‘making it one’s rule or principle to act contrary to the law’, and to do so out of no inclination, but ‘strictly for the sake of evil’ (e.g., 6:31, 36)—as an exclusively theoretical possibility (“only the *idea* of the most extreme evil”) (6:322). This exclusion of diabolical evil as a real possibility is based on very little in the way of argument, and Kant’s description of the formal execution of the monarch unwittingly makes this execution bear many of the traits of a diabolically evil act.

⁴⁷ Zupancic’s term. This paragraph is heavily indebted to Zupancic’s analysis: see pp. 84-85.

consequence of the innermost principles of the Heideggerian interpretation of the Kantian ethic that a genuinely ‘ethical’ act should bear all the traits of such a revolutionary *passage à l’acte*, in which the utter destitution of the de-personalized moral Person as pure will is experienced in all its painful, mortifying, or “humiliating” starkness, and in which a kind of violence directed at the pathological and symbolic registers of the human being becomes a proper manifestation of respect and good will. E. Bencivenga argues that I cannot treat Humanity as an end by refusing to inflict harm upon others, by treating them with compassion and minimizing their suffering as sentient creatures. For, Bencivenga alleges, according to the logic of Kantian ethics, this would be to reduce or subject their dignity (i.e., personality, practical rationality, or freedom) to pathological factors (43-44). As a reading of Kant, this is a glaring and extreme overstatement. Kant insists that it is a duty to promote the happiness of others, since the objects which they pursue as means to achieving this happiness are ends which they (ought to have) set themselves, and which one therefore has a duty to promote (6:385-387). Yet there might still be some sense to Bencivenga’s claim, if perhaps only as a critique of the inner logic of the Heideggerian reading of Kant, setting aside the question of whether it is a valid critique of Kant.

As S. Sikka makes abundantly clear, “neither physical comfort, nor happiness, understood as the satisfaction of all inclinations (4:399), have intrinsic or absolute worth” for Kant. Thus, Sikka adds, “The principle that all persons are ends in themselves does not mean, (...) that the happiness of individual members of the human species is an end in itself, requiring no further justification” (23). As a footnote to the preceding passage, Sikka cites the following, very revealing passage from Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgement*:

(...) reason will never let itself be convinced that the existence of a human being who merely lives for *enjoyment* (no matter how industrious he is in pursuing his goal) has any worth in itself (...) Only through what he does without regard to enjoyment, in complete freedom and independently of whatever nature could passively provide for him, does he give his existence, as the existence of a person, an absolute worth; and happiness, with the full abundance of its agreeableness, *is far from being an unconditioned good* (5:208-209; quoted in Sikka 36 n47, Italics mine).

Finally, as Sikka notes, only a nature “capable of resisting inclinations and freely determining itself [i.e., setting its own ends] according to universal principles, is an end in itself, possessing inherent dignity or worth rather than merely relative value” (Sikka 22-23). Thus, the fact that I must promote the Other’s happiness is derived from, and, hence, contingent upon, the fact that I owe it respect as an autonomous being, as an end-in-itself. But what happens if the Other to whom I owe respect has *not* responsibly (i.e., freely) chosen its ends?⁴⁸ Or if, in pursuing these ends, it treats itself as a means rather than an end (i.e., if it has absolutized what ought to be a relative end)? I owe the Other respect insofar as it is *practically* rational: that means, insofar as it is self-responsible or free; insofar as it is an end-in-itself. At least according to the Heideggerian reading, the only *rational* (i.e., moral/free) will is an objectless will, a will *to* will; the Other is an end-in-itself, or practically rational, only insofar as its will is pure, i.e., insofar as it wills only itself as pure will, and nothing external to that will. On the basis of this Heideggerian reading, would it not be a proper expression of respect to, in a first

⁴⁸ An end which is not freely chosen might strike some as contradictory, since Kant states that: “An *end* is an *object* of free choice, the representation of which determines it to an action (by which the object is brought about). Every action, therefore, has its end; and since no one can have an end without *himself* making the object of his choice into an end, to have any end of action whatsoever is an act of *freedom* on the part of the acting subject, not an effect of *nature*” (6:385). This being the case, it is also true that Kant often differentiates between the human being’s capacity to “set up ends for himself” (i.e., to determine which incentives to incorporate into ‘his’ maxims), which “still gives him only an external value for his usefulness (...)”, and the human being’s capacity to determine itself independently of all incentives (i.e., *freedom*), which alone gives it unconditional worth (6:434; qtd. in Sikka 37).

‘moment’, force my subjective division upon the Other, to force its will to be pure, and to own-up to the burden of its responsibility, by not catering to its happiness—i.e., its pathologically determined ends—or by going one step further and actively seeking to do it harm? At minimum, under such specific circumstances, I would not be obligated to promote the Other’s happiness, or even to respect it.

A further implication of the Heideggerian reading of Kant’s ethics is that the ethical act would seem to be inherently evil, since only in transgressing or willing beyond a positive legality or boundary, in changing (negating) what is, does one unmask or reveal the subject as radically *unheimlich* (not-at-home/out-of-joint). The ethical act, it might be suggested on the basis of the Heideggerian interpretation, is evil, not in the way evil is conventionally understood, but in the sense that the subject of the moral law, the empty *subiectum* uncovered in the feeling of respect before the moral law, is that which undermines all totalitarian or closed Orders, every myth of a harmonious and unchanging cosmos in which everything has its place, every actual, positive determination or configuration of the good.

This is an exceptionally strange and disturbing notion of a possible moral ‘limit’ to all choice: a limit which appears to eliminate all limits. For it involves a kind of identity-in-opposition between respect for the moral person, and the most frightful form of violence and an-*arche*-ism, one in which the only thing which has been placed out of bounds⁴⁹ is the promotion of ends which have been determined exclusively by pathological considerations, by inclinations rather than pure practical reason (i.e., through freedom). In

⁴⁹ It should be recalled that the Greek term for Justice, *Dikaiosyne*, comes from a term which means ‘boundary-marker’.

addition, I openly concede, and, indeed, wish to emphasize, that Heidegger nowhere draws any of these conclusions regarding the nature of the limit posed by respect explicitly. My intention here was merely to highlight the consequences and conclusions which potentially follow from Heidegger's basic claims *vis-à-vis* Kant's ethics.

Finally, to complete my reconstruction of a unified and coherent Heideggerian interpretation of the Kantian ethic—a reconstruction that has quite unabashedly focussed on a particular, voluntaristic strand in the early Heidegger's reading of Kant—I would like to examine Heidegger's understanding of the Kantian notion of the Kingdom of Ends as *Reich der Freiheit*. As I have already shown, respect reveals to the moral subject its being as end-in-itself, which, to Heidegger, means pure will or self-purposive (will willing itself). Now, as a moral agent, that is, “as existent end of his own self, man is in the kingdom of ends (*Reich der Zwecke*)”. The latter, in turn, is, according to Heidegger, the “*being-with-one-another* (*das Miteinandersein*), the *commercium of persons* as such, and therefore the realm of freedom (*das Reich der Freiheit*)”, the realm “of existing persons among themselves (*Reich der existierenden Personen unter sich*)” or “with-one-another” (BPP 139). Heidegger does not elaborate on his conception of the *Reich der Zwecke* as *Reich der Freiheit*. Nor does he explain, in any detail, the sense in which he sees the Kantian *Reich der Zwecke* as tantamount to authentic *Miteinandersein*, a pivotal concept in Heidegger's fundamental ontology. For this reason, the full significance of Heidegger's equating the two will only really be graspable subsequent to the exposition of Heidegger's concept of *Miteinandersein* itself, which I will perform in section 3.4 of this study. The most I can do here is to collect the rather scanty clues which Heidegger does supply, and make what I can out of them.

As one might by now expect, the Kingdom of Ends is not, to Heidegger, “some system of values to which any active ego relates” as particular realization of some intended, universal ideal or archetype. Rather, as we have seen, the moral law radically individuates the moral subject: it questioningly “challenges” (attacks, assaults, subverts) it, in going to its roots; it exposes its fundamental finitude;⁵⁰ and calls it to its self-responsibility. Accordingly, in Heidegger’s view, “mutual understanding (*Einverständnis*)” or “community (*Gemeinschaft*)” is brought about by “actual essential [i.e., pure] willing”; it is made possible by “the mystery of the actual [i.e., pure] willing of the individual” (EHF 199). The Heideggerian conception of the Kingdom of Ends, the realm of freedom or authentic *Miteinandersein*, is thus that of a community in which each individual member wills its own, radically singular essence as will, a community in which each individual has assumed its own being as end-in-itself, and as self-responsible. This radical individuation is thus, at once, the condition for the possibility of proper community, i.e., in which the Other in its singularity and finitude, in its unconditional worth as end-in-itself, in its capacity as self-determinative, is respected, and the “condition for the possibility for the *division* in the *distinction* (*die Scheidung in die Unterschiede*) between *Persons and Community* (*Person und Gemeinschaft*)” (EHF 90). For, as I’ve shown, if the moral law is inextricably tied to the moral subject’s autonomy—its freedom or self-responsibility—it is also strictly related to the moral subject’s essential guilt and alienation. Hence, it can be gathered from Heidegger’s overall analysis that the community founded upon respect will be one in which alienation, alterity, tension, and discord, are never resolved in a closed, harmonious, and peaceful

⁵⁰ I.e., its being as pure will, essentially indeterminate, and not-at-home.

communion.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate and underscore some of the potential implications of the Heideggerian reading of Kant's practical philosophy which I have already identified, as well as draw attention to one which I have not yet fully articulated. In the foregoing, I have tried to show how, according to what I have called a certain voluntaristic strand in Heidegger's reading of Kant, the only possible 'fulfilment' of the subject's duty, given Heidegger's characterization of the moral subject as essential not-yet-having-fulfilled, is not brought about through an elevation or reformation of the will in terms of its objects, but rather through a revolution in its disposition, in which it comes to will itself as pure will, in and through the concrete actions which it has responsibly determined upon, and which receive their goodness as a function of the purity of the will. In other words, according to the Heideggerian reading: there is no absolutely good object or action outside of, or heteronomous to, the will; the goodness of an action does not precede and govern the ethical subject's choice for that action, but rather, the goodness of the action is secondary to, or a function of, the pure willing of the autonomous subject. Hence, a possible ramification of the voluntaristic strand, upon which I have been focussing, in Heidegger's early writings on Kant, is that the Kantian ethic becomes an 'ethic' beyond good and evil: i.e., an 'ethic' in which what is deemed good unconditionally is not human welfare or happiness, but only the will as origin of all values, ultimate goal of existence, and, therefore, object of the will itself; an 'ethic', moreover, in which no content is demarcated as worthy of choice, but only the will as capacity to make this choice is esteemed, i.e., in which the *how* of action (freedom; acting out

of duty) has totally eclipsed, or taken priority over, the *what* of action (the content).⁵¹ This is an ‘ethic’ which appraises the value or goodness of the will itself “sans rien considérer d’autre que la volonté elle-même” (Birault 156), that is, an ‘ethic’ for which the good will is good not because it wills an intrinsically good action, but because it wills this action, whatever it may be, in a certain *manner*.

Finally, I mentioned above that one of the potential implications of the Heideggerian reading is that, given Heidegger’s account of the moral subject as essential not-yet-having-fulfilled, the only possible ‘fulfilment’ of the subject’s duty would have to take the form of a revolution in its disposition—as opposed to a change in its *object*; to its striking upon the *right* action—in which it comes to will itself as pure will in and through the positive actions which it has freely resolved upon. In other words, I think it follows from the basic logic of the Heideggerian reading that the moral subject could only ‘fulfill’ its duty, i.e., its self-directed imperative to pure will, the “ought of its existence”, and, hence, preserve the purity of its objectless/pure will, by maintaining a kind of critical distance towards the positive, and therefore accidental⁵² objects of its will, which are thus made to occupy the place of (i.e., fill in for, or masquerade as) the a priori, pure, but therefore also strictly unrealizable, law of pure practical reason. It would also seem that this possible implication of the

⁵¹ Though I have been labouring this point throughout this section, one final passage should be cited to support my claim: “Perhaps it is no accident that Kant determined the fundamental principle of his ethics in such a way that we call it formal. He perhaps knew from a familiarity (*Vertrautheit*) with Dasein itself that it is its ‘how’ [i.e., *self-responsibility/freedom* (as opposed to a *what*, a *Washeit*, *Was-gehalt*, or *quidditas*)]. It was left to contemporary prophets to organize Dasein in such a way that the ‘how’ is covered up” (CT 13). Heidegger seems to me to be suggesting here that the Kantian ethic is to be praised because it is one in which only the *how* of action—i.e., whether or not the action has been freely or responsibly determined; whether it has been accomplished in a certain *manner*—is what truly matters (not its ‘matter’ or content).

⁵² I.e., a posteriori; historically and physiologically conditioned.

voluntaristic strand in the early Heidegger's reading of Kant which I have just delineated, comes to be explicitly attributed to Kant by the later Heidegger. Thus, in *Overcoming Metaphysics*, Heidegger states that: "Man wills *himself* as the volunteer of the will to will [i.e., Kant's good/pure will], for which all truth [i.e., every positive object/action] *becomes that error which it needs* in order to be able to guarantee for itself *the illusion that the will to will can will nothing other than empty nothingness*, in the face of which it asserts itself, without being able to know its own complete nullity" (OM 86). And a little further in *Overcoming Metaphysics*, while commenting on the epochal role of the will to will in Modernity in general, and its incipient state in the Kantian ethic in particular, Heidegger adds: "(...) the will to will absolutely denies every goal and admits goals only as means to overcome/win itself willfully in this game, and to make room for this game (...)"(OM 101-102). Extrapolating slightly from what has just been said, it would seem that, according to the later Heidegger, in the Kantian moral act, the subject selects a stand-in amongst determinate possibilities and lifts it to the exalted status of the completely indeterminate, abyssal, pure law of the will, only to simultaneously disengage from it because '*Das* (this determinate action) *ist es* (the empty injunction of the law of pure will) *nicht*'. The subject maintains a critical distance towards, or detachment from, its pseudo-duty; a hiatus, unassimilable remainder, or ellipsis is surreptitiously inserted between it and the determinate object of its will. One could call this a 'mediated' stance on the part of the moral subject towards its specific action or object, one in which the action is at once posited and negated. What I wish to suggest is that this later reading of the pure will as engaged in a game, as positing its object only as a means to overcome this object, and will itself in the process, is a

possible, alarming implication of the voluntaristic strand in Heidegger's earlier reading of Kant.

Chapter 2: ELUCIDATION OF THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF *BEING AND TIME* THROUGH AN EXEGESIS OF THE ‘CALL OF CONSCIENCE’

A free man thinks of nothing less than death, and his wisdom is not a meditation on death, but upon life.

— Spinoza

2.1. Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I offered a preparatory and more or less conventional overview of Kant’s ethic. I also endeavoured to synthetically reconstruct the early Heidegger’s reading of the Kantian ethic—a reading he himself proclaimed to be controversial—as well as make explicit some of its rather unsettling implications. With these vital tasks out of the way, I will now perform an exegesis of Heidegger’s phenomenological analysis of the call of conscience, as found in *Being and Time* (Division 2, Section II), in order to unpack this work’s most fundamental concepts and themes. This will enable me, in the third chapter of my study, to bring to light the implicit ethical bearing of *Being and Time*, and, ultimately, to conclude my study by demonstrating the sense in which its basic concepts, and, *a fortiori*, their latent ethical content, constitute a retrieval of the Kantian ethic as Heidegger casts it. In other words, the whole of this chapter should, in a sense, be viewed as an extended preparatory exegesis whose purpose is merely to acquaint the reader with the basic concepts of Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, and thus lay the groundwork for the argument of chapter 3.

It would no doubt be something of a platitude to say that Heidegger is not a system-builder. After all, it is well known that much of Heidegger’s philosophy militates against the very notion, which, according to Heidegger, prevails in, and, in part, defines the

Modern philosophical project, that truth can only take the form of a system: i.e., a totality of interconnected propositions, in which each individual proposition is necessarily and transparently derived from a set of axioms, or a single fundamental and indubitable principle. This being said, the writings of the so-called early Heidegger do nevertheless display a high degree of systematicity, if by this one means a kind of inner unity and cohesiveness. Nowhere is this systematicity more apparent than in the early Heidegger's most formidable and influential work, *Being and Time*, in which he re-opens the classical Greek question of the meaning of being by conducting an "existential analytic" of that being⁵³ to whose being there belongs, essentially and constitutively, an understanding of being. In other words, the Heidegger of *Being and Time* asks about the meaning of being by inquiring into the transcendental conditions for the possibility of Dasein's understanding of being. Such a procedure is admissible within Heidegger's own paradigm because, again, according to Heidegger, to be is to appear to, or be disclosed by, Dasein. This is the cardinal assumption of all phenomenology, and the key to Heidegger's otherwise puzzling assertion that: "*ontology is possible only on the basis of phenomenology*" (SZ 35).⁵⁴ What is of importance for the minor point I am trying to make at the moment is simply that the conditions which enable Dasein's understanding of being turn out to be "equiprimordial" (*gleichursprünglich*: equally "underivable", irreducible, original) (SZ 131). This is to say that they stand in a relation of conceptual reciprocity or mutual implication, such that "*the unity of these structures is always co-intended*" when "phenomenologically envisaged" (HCT 305).

⁵³ Viz., Dasein, Heidegger's term for the special kind of being which characterizes *being-human*.

⁵⁴ Or, in slightly different terms: "Phenomenology is the science of the being of entities—ontology" (SZ 37).

Now, as mentioned above, the present chapter's immediate task is to carry-out an exegesis of a specific section of *Being and Time*: viz., Section II of Division 2, entitled "*The Attestation of Dasein of an Authentic Potentiality-of-Being, and Resoluteness*". This section is one of the most pivotal junctures in *Being and Time*. In it, almost all of the basic concepts, all of the essential, structural components of Dasein's being, which Heidegger's existential analytic has, up to this point, made known, can be seen in their interdependence and intricate interplay. It follows that an exegesis of this section will incorporate, or at least make mention of, almost all of the basic concepts of *Being and Time*, and therefore work well as a compact, yet comprehensive overview of its contents. As mentioned, such an overview is vital if the reader is to be able to appreciate how the basic concepts of *Being and Time* comprise a latent ethic, and, ultimately, how this latent ethic can be argued to have arisen out of Heidegger's appropriative encounter with Kant's practical philosophy.

2.2. General Characterization of the Call

The first question which my exegesis of this section of *Being and Time* must answer is quite simple: What purpose does this section play in the grand scheme of *Being and Time*? At various points in the investigations which precede this section, Heidegger either intimates or explicitly states that authentic existence is a possibility essential to Dasein *qua* Dasein.⁵⁵ If authenticity is indeed a universal and inalienable possibility rooted in Dasein's

⁵⁵ What Heidegger means by the term 'authenticity' (*Eigentlichkeit*) is a question which I will be dealing with, either peripherally or directly, throughout this chapter and the next. Only at the end of this chapter, however, will I be in a position to offer an adequately fleshed-out definition. In the interim, I will hazard a working, and still frustratingly vague, definition: authenticity is that mode of Dasein's being in which it has, so to speak, 'become what it is'; in which it has laid claim to itself, owned up to itself, or taken possession of itself as a responsibility and unsettled "*issue*". Authentic Dasein has become transparent to itself, has apprehended itself with complete lucidity—i.e., has grasped or seen itself 'as it is', and held fast to this sight. [It should be stressed that Dasein's 'becoming what it is' is not to be confounded with a kind of Aristotelian

ontological structure as care,⁵⁶ the enactment of this possibility cannot be contingent upon extraneous or favourable circumstances (SZ 267; King 163). It must always be feasible for Dasein to spontaneously reveal to itself its own possibility for authentic existence (SZ 234). Yet Heidegger has not yet substantiated this claim. Hence, what Heidegger is eager to find at the outset of this section is a specific ontic-existential possibility in which Dasein would show itself its own authentic potentiality-for-being (SZ 267). Such a possibility would provide phenomenal confirmation for the results of the foregoing existential analyses. It is Heidegger's conviction that "this potentiality is attested by that which, in Dasein's everyday interpretation of itself, is familiar to us as the 'voice of conscience'" (SZ 268). Following Heidegger's lead, my priority here is to retrace this everyday phenomenon of conscience back to its existential foundations, making it visible as an integral, structural element of Dasein's being.

self-realization (*entelechy*), and does not imply any belief in a hierarchy of being. As Heidegger explains: "(...) The inauthenticity of Dasein does not signify any 'less' being or any 'lower' degree of being. Rather it is the case that even in its fullest concretion Dasein can be characterized by inauthenticity" (SZ 43; see also 128, 170, 176).]

⁵⁶ Dasein's essential care-structure will be explicated in section 2.3. For the moment, suffice it to say that if the understanding of being belongs essentially to Dasein's way of being (SZ *ubique*), and if the task of the existential analytic is to uncover the transcendental conditions for the possibility of this understanding, then these essential, structural elements of Dasein's being ("existentials" or "existentials", as Heidegger calls them (SZ 44)) will turn out to be ramifications of Dasein's core as care (*Sorge*) (SZ 230). For, in the sparest terms, care means that things *matter* to Dasein, and only because things always *matter* to Dasein, can it be said to have an 'innate' and *a priori* understanding of being. Being affects Dasein. Dasein takes notice of beings in their being, it is concerned by and/or with the being of beings, especially its own. Hence, care *is* Dasein's understanding of being—an understanding which, at first and for the most part, remains pre-conceptual, pre-thematic, or, as Heidegger most often puts it, pre-ontological. It is this "average everyday" mode of Dasein's understanding of being—the "kind of being which is *closest* to Dasein (*der nächsten Seinsart des Daseins*)" (SZ 66), and which is virtually synonymous with its essential *being-in-the-world* (SZ 53)—which will be the object of Heidegger's existential analytic. For precisely "because this average everydayness makes up what is ontically proximal (*Zunächst*) for this being, it has again and again been *passed over* (*übersprungen*) in explicating Dasein. That which is ontically closest and well known (*Bekannte*), is ontologically the farthest and not known at all (*Unerkannte*)" (SZ 43).

Heidegger begins his analysis by noting what he considers to be an uncontentious fact, ascertainable in even the most commonplace experiences or interpretations of conscience: viz., that the voice of conscience “gives ‘something’ to understand (*gibt* ‘*etwas*’ *zu verstehen*)” (SZ 269). This mundane fact has major implications. Though the prominent role played by conscience in Dasein’s understanding of being will only become truly comprehensible towards the end of my exposition, it can be noted at this early stage that there is, at the very least, a curious resemblance between the voice of conscience as *zu-verstehen-geben* (giving-to-understand) and the *es gibt* of being. For being is (*es gibt* / ‘il y a’) only insofar as it gives (*es gibt*) itself to understanding.⁵⁷ “Being is dependent upon the understanding of being”, which is why “only as long as Dasein *is* (i.e., only as long as an understanding of being is ontically possible), ‘is there’ (*gibt es*) being” (SZ 212).⁵⁸ This relation, which has not yet been substantiated or satisfactorily clarified, between conscience

⁵⁷ The *es gibt* of being is, of course, also related to Heidegger’s quasi-mystical notion, present in embryonic form in *Being and Time*, but only really developed in subsequent works, of the sending of being (*das Seinschicken*). It is the sending of being which, for the later Heidegger, comprises (or, better, ‘works itself out as’) Dasein’s *Schicksal* (fate) or *Geschick* (which, in Heidegger, denotes Dasein’s collective destiny, but with undertones, from its root, *der Schick*, of skill, aptitude, adroitness, or *savoir-faire*). That is, it is the sending which, through Dasein’s stewardship or shepherding, sets up or shapes the particular historical (*Geschichtlich*) epoch *in which* each Dasein ‘lives, breathes, and has its being’, and *through which* being reveals itself. Providing, as it does, boundary-markers or guidelines for what is *schicklich* (suitable, proper, decent, acceptable), the sending serves to guide, reign-in, or circumscribe Dasein’s existence. As the later Heidegger explains in his *Letter on Humanism*: the sending of Being assigns to Dasein “those directives that must become law and rule for [it]” (P 274)—i.e., that serve to ground it in a ‘world’ or ‘horizon of meaning’ [I will expand upon the concept of ‘world’ in what follows].

⁵⁸ Heidegger draws attention to this intimate correlation between the *es gibt* (i.e., being) and its *giving itself* to Dasein’s disclosive understanding throughout *Being and Time*. For example, Heidegger writes: “Being ‘is’ only in the understanding of those beings to whose being something like an understanding of being belongs” (SZ 183); or, again: “The being of truth [understood primordially as *aletheia* or un-concealed-ness] is connected primordially with Dasein. And only because Dasein is as constituted by disclosedness (that is, by understanding), can anything like being be understood; only so is it possible to understand being. *Being* (not beings) *is something which ‘there is’ [gibt es] only insofar as truth is. And truth is only insofar and as long as Dasein is. Being and truth ‘are’ equiprimordially*” (SZ 230, Italics mine).

and the fundamental question of being is tied to the fact that the voice of conscience, as giving-something-to-understand, is disclosive. As such, conscience must belong to the existential phenomena which constitute the being of the 'there'. It should be recalled that Dasein's very being is to be the *there*, the locus, or clearing (*Lichtung*), of being. "By its very nature", Heidegger insists, "Dasein brings its 'there' along with it. If it lacks its 'there', it is not factually the being which is essentially Dasein. (...) *Dasein is its disclosedness (Erschlossenheit)*" (SZ 133). Quite simply, Heidegger's claim is that conscience is one of the equiprimordial elements which form the conditions for the possibility of Dasein's being *as this disclosedness*. Up to this point in *Being and Time*, Heidegger has shown how attunement (*Befindlichkeit*), understanding (*Verstehen*), and discourse (*Rede*) are such *a priori* components of disclosedness or Dasein's being-*there* (SZ 180).⁵⁹ Since, as Heidegger demonstrates, conscience has the character of a call (*Ruf*), it must be a mode of discourse (SZ 269). Yet it should be emphasized that conscience will prove not to be a mere instance of discourse, or, for that matter, disclosure, amongst others. From the start, Heidegger maintains that an analysis of conscience will allow a more primordial grasp of the phenomenon of disclosure and, therefore, of being as such. Conscience will act as the clue

⁵⁹ Occasionally, Heidegger also includes falling prey (*Verfallen*) (see: e.g., SZ 270 and 349) as one of the *a priori* components of the "ontological constitution of the disclosedness which essentially belongs to Dasein" (SZ 180). I will touch upon the function and character of each of these constituents as I continue to work through this section of *Being and Time*. I will also make clear how the everyday mode of Dasein's disclosedness, in which it operates 'proximately and for the most part', is "characterized by idle talk (*Gerede*), curiosity (*Neugier*), and ambiguity (*Zweideutigkeit*)" (SZ 180; 175). For Heidegger's exposition of these *a priori* components of Dasein's being-the-there, see Division 1, Section V, of *Being and Time*. For a more detailed review of these *a priori* constituents than I will be able to afford in this chapter, see (*inter alia*): pp. 75-91 of Magda King's *A Guide to Heidegger's Being and Time* (Albany: SUNY, 2001); pp. 163-225 of Hubert Dreyfus' *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time* (Cambridge: MIT, 1991); ch. 1 of William Richardson's *Heidegger: From Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963); and ch. 3 of Richard Polt's *Heidegger: an Introduction* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999).

which will point us to an eminent form of disclosure, to an authentic form of being-there (Dasein).

If conscience is accurately portrayed as a call, and, therefore, as a mode of discourse, it must necessarily be susceptible to an analysis in terms of the formal, tripartite structure common to all discourse. Accordingly, every call must have: a caller, a called, and a content or message (the call must be about something). Both the caller and the ‘about which’ of the call are most easily understood in contrast to the called. But just *who* or *what* is addressed in the call? The call reaches Dasein as it is “always already (*je schon*)”, “initially and for the most part (*zunächst und zumeist*)”, and in its “average everydayness (*durchschnittlichen Alltäglichkeit*)”. Everyday Dasein is its there in the manner of being-fallen (*Verfallen*).⁶⁰ Now, Dasein’s being-fallen is not an accidental or secondary property (SZ 179; HCT 274). On the contrary, it is “a definite existential characteristic of Dasein itself” (SZ 176), part of its “essential ontological structure” (SZ 179), and a “basic kind of being of the there” (*eine Grundart des Seins des Da*)” (SZ 134).

To understand what it means for Dasein to always already be fallen, as well as what it means for the call of conscience to reach Dasein in its being-fallen, we must look at what it is Dasein necessarily falls ‘into’: viz., the ‘world’. Insofar as Dasein is inherently

⁶⁰ Throughout the ensuing discussion, it will be helpful to keep in mind that the German term *Verfallen*, which Heidegger scholars generally render in English as “falling” (following Macquarrie & Robinson), or “falling-prey” (following Stambaugh), carries a variety of meanings: e.g., decaying, declining, collapsing, forfeiting, and being in a state of dilapidation or ruination, as well as being entranced, addicted, submerged, enslaved or in bondage. As we shall see, all of these connotations are at play in Heidegger’s use of the term, though without the additional moral-theological associations of depravity, corruption, or sin—or so Heidegger adamantly maintains (SZ 179-180; HCT 283).

disclosive,⁶¹ being-in-the-world is “something that belongs [to it] essentially” (SZ 13; 86). It is a “basic state of Dasein” (SZ 52), and “necessary *a priori*” (SZ 53). This is because Dasein’s *a priori* understanding of being is predicated upon, or equiprimordial with, its disclosure of a world.⁶² And Dasein’s world-disclosure is, as I have shown, equiprimordial with, or grounded in, (self)understanding.⁶³ (Self)understanding takes place through Dasein’s adoption and projection of certain ground-possibilities, i.e., norms, beliefs, ideals, values, roles, desires, which act as the primary focus, aim, or measure, according to which all intermediary and, therefore, subordinate activities or ends are ordered.⁶⁴ In the words of H. Dreyfus, these possibilities are “the life-organizing self-interpretations”, which lead “to certain organized activities [or roles]”, each of which “is an integrated set of practices” (96). In turn, each integrated set of practices⁶⁵ both calls into play, and presupposes a familiarity with, a network of “assignments / references” (*Verweisungen*) and “involvements” (*Bewandtnisse*), i.e., a nexus of instrumental relations, which Heidegger calls a “referential” or “equipmental totality” (*Zeugganze*) (SZ 68). What Heidegger calls the ‘world’ is simply the relational

⁶¹ I.e., insofar as Dasein is the there of Being.

⁶² As Heidegger writes: “(...) to Dasein, being in a world is something that belongs essentially. Thus Dasein’s understanding of being pertains with equal primordially both to an understanding of something like a ‘world’, and to the understanding of the being of those entities which become accessible within the world” (SZ 13); “If being-in-the-world is a kind of being which is essentially befitting to Dasein, then to understand being-in-the-world belongs to the essential content of [Dasein’s] understanding of being” (SZ 86).

⁶³ To make no mention, for the time being, of attunement or discourse.

⁶⁴ As Heidegger puts it, they are the “primary ‘towards which’ (*das primäre ‘Wozu’*)” (SZ 84), the “‘for-the-sake-of-which’ (*Worum-willen*)’ to which every ‘towards-which’ [or ‘in-order-to’ (*Um-zu*)] ultimately goes back (*darauf letztlich alles Wozu zurückgeht*)” (SZ 86).

⁶⁵ For example, the planting, trimming, watering, and weeding, affiliated with the role of gardener.

whole, the all-encompassing context, within which these patterns of significance between equipmental entities,⁶⁶ their purposes, and their users, can be significant. It is this relational whole of signifying, the world, which Dasein always already has in sight when, in its concerned dealings (*Umgang*) with ready-to-hand entities within its world, it looks *around* with *circumspection* (*Umsicht*) for a means to achieve a certain ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ (*Umwillen*), given the *circum*-stances. Dasein’s originary projection (*entwerfen*) of basic, life-directing possibilities⁶⁷ is thus world-forming (*weltbildend*); it sends-forth (*ent-wirft*) and lets-prevail a world by pre-*figuring* its general ‘schema’, by pre-*sketching* the central ‘image’ (*Bild*) around which the world will be structured (FCM 362-363).⁶⁸

Now, everyday Dasein is always already fallen because it is always already immersed in such a world (SZ 176; 270, 354), and “Being-in-the-world is always fallen” (SZ 181). In its average everydayness, Dasein is concerned⁶⁹ with its world—be it an environing-world (*Umwelt*: its surrounding world, the world ‘in’ which it is wrapped up), work-world (*Werkwelt*), or other—to the point of being totally absorbed in it.⁷⁰ This concerned

⁶⁶ Which Heidegger designates as ‘ready-to-hand’ or *zuhanden*.

⁶⁷ Which Heidegger elsewhere calls Dasein’s “transcendence to world” (P 126)

⁶⁸ Crucial here is the fact that the German verb for projection, *entwerfen*, also means to sketch, design, form, or draw-up a scheme or plan. The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, for its noun-form, *Entwurf*. It might be helpful to quote a related passage from p. 123 of Heidegger’s *On the Essence of Ground*: “Dasein transcends’ means: in the essence of its being it is *world-forming*, ‘forming’ (*bildend*) in the multiple sense that it lets world occur (*Welt geschehen läßt*), and through the world gives itself an original view (*Anblick*) (image (*Bild*)) that is not explicitly grasped, yet functions precisely as a paradigmatic form (*Vor-bild*) for all manifest beings, among which each temporally particular (*jeweilige*) Dasein itself belongs” (cf., P 126).

⁶⁹ Concern (*besorgen*) is a species of Dasein’s being as care (*Sorge*), and basically means: taking-care of, attending-to, looking-after, managing, arranging, or procuring something in, or some aspect of, the world.

⁷⁰ The German term for Dasein’s concerned absorption in the world, *Aufgehen*, bears a wider array of meanings than its closest English equivalent. While it literally means going-up, coming-up, or rising-up, it

absorption translates into Dasein's being, at first and for the most part, "*fascinated by*" (Macquarrie & Robinson) or "*taken-in by*" (Stambaugh)⁷¹ the world it takes care of (SZ 61; 113).⁷² Concernful absorption is also the basis upon which everyday Dasein understands itself. Heidegger repeats this claim time and again: "Proximally and for the most part, Dasein *is* in terms of *what* it is concerned with" (SZ 141; CT 16); "...Dasein is inclined to fall back upon its world (the world in which it is) and to interpret itself in terms of that world by its reflected light" (SZ 21; 120); "Dasein finds 'itself' proximally in *what* it does, uses, expects, avoids—in those things environmentally ready-to-hand with which it is proximally *concerned*" (SZ 119); "...everyday Dasein understands itself in terms of that with *which* it is customarily concerned. 'One *is*' what one does'" (SZ 239; HCT 310). Now, as I will show in the next two paragraphs, but also throughout the remainder of this chapter, there is a special kind of "movement" to falling, "with temptation, tranquillizing, alienation, and [self-] entanglement, as its essential characteristics" (SZ 180; HCT 281). Moreover, I will show how Dasein's "everyday kind of being is characterized by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity" (SZ 180). To do this, I will have to inquire into the publicness of everyday Dasein: i.e., the fact that its

can also mean becoming apparent, or even coming undone. Moreover, and perhaps still closer to Heidegger's intended usage, it denotes being wrapped-up in, taken by, or utterly devoted to, something, as well as disappearing into, merging with, or being consumed by, something.

⁷¹ In German, the term *benommen* (*fascinated*, dizzy, stunned, fixated, bemused) is used as the past participle (*habe benommen*) of *benehmen*, which means 'to take away'. Stambaugh's astute translation of *benommen* as "taken-in by" successfully preserves and conveys something of this semantic connection.

⁷² At this stage, it might be worth quoting one of the most dazzling passages in *Being and Time*, which masterfully captures almost everything which has been said up to this point: "Being-in-the-world, according to our Interpretation hitherto, amounts to a non-thematic circumspective absorption in references or assignments constitutive for the readiness-to-hand of a totality of equipment. Any concern is already as it is, because of some familiarity with the world. In this familiarity Dasein can *lose itself* (*sich verlieren*) in what it encounters within-the-world and be fascinated by it" (SZ 76).

everyday world of concern is a “with-world” (*Mitwelt*), and Dasein’s being-*in* is a being-*with* (*Mitsein*). Specifically, I will examine how, to Heidegger, the *self* of everyday Dasein, the *who* which is reached by the call of conscience, is a *they-self* (*Man-selbst*).

One way to understand what it means for Dasein’s everyday self to be a they-self is to ask: What is the source of the possibilities which Dasein adopts and projects in its world-forming self-interpretation? These possibilities, in terms of which Dasein understands itself, for the sake of which it exists, and out of the projection of which there emerges (‘worlds’) a world, are offered to it by what Heidegger calls the they (*das Man*).⁷³ In a sense, *das Man* is simply Heidegger’s term for the social, economical, cultural, and historical situation “into which Dasein has grown in the first instance, with never a possibility of extrication” (SZ 169, 12; HCT 270). *Das Man* can thus, in part, be defined as: the interpretation of the world endemic to a particular tradition, into which Dasein has been assimilated (SZ 21); the horizon of intelligibility through which all that appears can appear because infused with meaning (SZ 270). Insofar as everyday Dasein “has always already submitted⁷⁴ itself to a ‘world’” (SZ 87), always already “stands in subjection to Others [i.e., the they]” (SZ 126), has always “already surrendered itself⁷⁵ in being-among-one-another (*Untereinandersein*)” (SZ 129), *das Man* firmly and securely embeds Dasein in a referential

⁷³ In German, the pronoun ‘*Man*’ works much like the English ‘they’ or ‘one’, as well as the French ‘on’. Thus, the questions “What should one do?”, and “How does one say?” would respectively be translated as “*Was soll man tun?*” and “*Wie sagt man?*”, and the indefinite interdiction “One cannot smoke here” would be rendered “*Man darf hier nicht rauchen*”.

⁷⁴ Heidegger’s term is *angewiesen*, which can mean being assigned, consigned, or allotted to something, but also being dependent upon, or at the mercy of, something.

⁷⁵ One could also translate “*sich je schon ausgeliefert hat*” as “has always already delivered itself over to, or put itself at the mercy of...”.

totality, or cultural matrix. The latter grants Dasein the illusion of a determinate and fixed essence, of being an objectively present substance with some sort of abiding nature (SZ 126, 177, 195; IM 2-3), even though Dasein's essence lies in its existence (SZ *ubique*), and "Dasein is essentially not a being-present-at-hand (*kein Vorhandensein*)" (SZ 104).⁷⁶ Furthermore, this cultural matrix outfits Dasein with a wealth of concrete, supposedly universal and natural norms which it 'ought' not transgress (SZ 288); with a set of supposedly immutable and transcendent reference points according to which Dasein can orient itself, and through which Dasein is relieved of the responsibility for choosing its *own* possibilities. The they prescribes (*vorzeichnet, vorschreibt*): "that way of interpreting the world (...) which lies closest" (SZ 129); "the kind of being of everydayness"; "what can and may be ventured" (SZ 127); "that which is fitting and proper" (SZ 194); as well as "one's state-of-mind (*Befindlichkeit*)" (SZ 170; 167-168). In short, it "determines (*bestimmt*) what and how one 'sees'" (SZ 170). Heidegger refers to the inconspicuous, yet therefore all the more ubiquitous and absolute, influence of the they as the "domination (*Herrschaft*)" or "dictatorship (*Diktatur*)" in which Dasein is "mastered (*gemeistert*) by", and "held 'in thrall' (*hörig*)" to, the they (SZ 126-129, 163, 167; CT 8; HCT 270). While the they's tutelage gives Dasein a semblance of "constancy (*Ständigkeit*)", "stable self-standing" / "independence (*Selbstständigkeit*)", and a "ground to stand on (*Bodenständigkeit*)", it remains precisely that: a *simulacra*, a mask or disguise (*Verstellung*) (CT 12).

So far, I have shown how the call of conscience, as a form of discourse, can be

⁷⁶ "Presence-at-hand is the kind of being which belongs to entities whose character is not that of Dasein" (SZ 115).

analysed in terms of the tripartite structure common to all discourse: i.e., in terms of a caller, a called, and a content or message. Having established that the call reaches Dasein as it is in its *fallen* everydayness, I proceeded to unpack Heidegger's notion of Dasein's average everydayness, and what precisely it is Dasein falls 'into'—viz., the world. Continuing my exposition, I will now explain how, according to Heidegger, Dasein's everyday being-there is characterized by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity, before closing my discussion of the recipient of the call by offering a first indication as to how everyday Dasein is, in its very being, alienated and disowned.

Idle talk can be described as superficial chatter, as the mindless repetition of, and conformity to, popular opinion. Curiosity is a kind of restless searching for the exotic and novel; it is a fleeting interest in, and facile understanding of, everything and nothing. Finally, ambiguity is Heidegger's term for the collapse of the distinction between the genuine and the fraudulent, or the sincere and the hypocritical. Through these three components of its everydayness, Dasein uproots itself and becomes completely groundless (SZ 168-175). The they's reign is so pervasive, its command so complete, that in fact "The Self of everyday Dasein is the *they-self*" (SZ 129; HCT 245-247; CT 8). In everyday being-in-the-world, "Everyone is the other, and no one is himself (SZ 128). Heidegger states this quite bluntly: "proximally and for the most part, Dasein *is not itself*" (SZ 116; 115; 125); "Proximally, 'I' 'am' not in the sense of my own (*eigenen*) Self, but I am the others in the mode of the they" (SZ 129). Hence, the everyday Dasein which is "*dispersed*"⁷⁷ into the they" is thoroughly self-

⁷⁷ It should be remembered that the German word for dispersed, *zerstreut*, also means being amused, distracted, or diverted by something.

alienated. Its *Ständigkeit* is *Unselbst-ständigkeit*: a constant failure to stand by itself, or lack of independence; a constant not-being-its-Self. Dasein's disownment in the they, and here the they's work is all the more insidious since it conceals the very disownment it institutes, also means that it has disburdened itself of responsibility (HCT 247, 271). As they-self, everyday Dasein has forsaken its autonomy; the subject of responsibility, the "Realist subject of everydayness", has been transposed to an indefinite 'everyone and no-one' (SZ 127).

Having outlined the *who* which is called, viz., Dasein *qua Man-Selbst*, I can now venture a preliminary account of that to which the summoned is called, i.e., the content of the call. "What does the conscience call to the one summoned?", asks Heidegger, "Strictly speaking—Nothing" (SZ 273). Heidegger continues by saying: "*Nothing* is called to the self which is summoned, but it is *summoned to itself, that is, to its ownmost potentiality-of-being*" (*Ibid.*). How is this possible? What is it about Dasein's ownmost potentiality-of-being which makes it such that it can be disclosed or summoned to only by a call which says *nothing*? Answering this question will require a somewhat lengthy, and, at times, perhaps seemingly digressive discussion of the interrelated concepts—central to Heidegger's existential phenomenology—of Death, *Angst*, freedom, and uncanniness.

As we have seen, "the potentiality of being as which Dasein exists has always already given itself over to definite possibilities" (SZ 270). Or in slightly different terms: "As factual Dasein, any Dasein has already diverted its potentiality-for-being (*Seinkönnen*) into a [definite] possibility of understanding" (SZ 146; 144). Yet it must be insisted that Dasein's essence is to be devoid of any essence (SZ 12; 117; 212; 231), to be a pure, non-relational potentiality-for-being, an absolute negativity, or nothingness-which-paradoxically-is. After

all, this is what the harrowing experience of *Angst* before Death⁷⁸ makes manifest: that Dasein has no determinate, static, positive content or possibilities of *its own*. The “pure understanding (*reinen Verstehen*)” of Death as “Dasein’s *ownmost* possibility” or “*ownmost being*” (HCT 313), i.e., as pure or “measureless” possibility, which is associated with an attunement of *Angst*,⁷⁹ “gives Dasein nothing to be actualized, nothing which Dasein, as actual, could itself *be*. It is the possibility of the impossibility of comporting oneself towards anything, of every way of existing” (SZ 262, 307). The fact that “Dasein *qua* [pure] *Seinkönnen* is essentially *already* its Death” (HCT 314)—i.e., that “Dasein (...) *is* already its end”; that “Death is a way to be, which Dasein takes over as soon as it is” (SZ 245); in sum, that death is “constitutive of the being of Dasein” (HCT 315), its “totality” (HCT 313), “in which it is wholly by and of itself” (HCT 318)—signifies that it is a mistake to interpret Death and the “existential possibility of having no possibilities” which it embodies as the *existentiell* possibility of “demise” (SZ 247). Existential Death must be understood as an *analogon*⁸⁰ for “(...) the fact that Dasein (...) is a *nullity* in that it can make no possibilities its own” (Dreyfus

⁷⁸ “(...) which must be kept *altogether distinct* from the *fear* of death, for it is not fear in the face of ‘death’, but *Angst* as a disposition to the *naked* being-in-the-world, to *pure* Dasein” (HCT 291, 292; SZ 251).

⁷⁹ As was seen earlier, attunement (*Befindlichkeit*) is one of the equiprimordial constituents of disclosure. *Befindlichkeit* refers to the way in which Dasein is always already touched by its world in a certain manner. Dasein always already finds itself in a certain ‘mood’ (*Stimmung*: disposition or atmosphere, but also ‘tuning’, like that of a musical instrument). Dasein’s *Stimmung* casts the world in a certain light, gives it, in advance, a certain tone, and lets it matter in a certain way. The world is disclosed according to ‘how one finds oneself’, or, as Heidegger puts it: “Disclosing a world is always already a self-finding” (HCT 257). Hence the hidden ontological import of the question: *Wie befinden Sie sich?* To give an illustration: according to Heidegger, the *Grundstimmung* of the Greeks was one of wonder at the order and harmony of nature (e.g., its cyclical patterns). Only on the basis of this fundamental disposition could the world be disclosed to them as a *cosmos* governed by *logos*—could they be impelled to inquire *rationally* into what disclosed itself as *ratio*.

⁸⁰ Kant’s term for a concrete example which makes visible that which, strictly speaking, cannot be made visible. Death is thus an *analogon* for Dasein’s being as pure possibility (*Seinkönnen*).

310-311). This is what it means for Death, i.e., bare *Seinkönnen*, to be Dasein's *only* non-substitutable or non-interchangeable possibility—to be “uniquely” and “essentially mine”—and why, in being-towards-Death, Dasein “stands before itself” (HCT 313; SZ 252-253). This is also what it means for Heidegger to say that the only “appropriate statement pertaining to Dasein in its being” is “*sum moribundus* [‘I am in dying’]” (HCT 317), and why “Only in Dying can I to some extent say absolutely, ‘I am’” (HCT 318).⁸¹

Furthermore, in *Angst*, which is always *Angst* before Death: “what is environmentally ready-to-hand sinks away (*versinkt*), and so (...) do entities within-the-world. The world can offer nothing more, and neither can Dasein-with others” (SZ 187).⁸² *Angst* in the face of Death thus “takes away from Dasein the possibility of understanding itself, as it falls, in terms of the world and the way things have been publically interpreted” (*Ibid.*). The roles or identities made available *via* involvement in the world cease to have any intrinsic meaning or significance for the Dasein which has been individuated in a *negative* manner by *Angst*. When Dasein stands before its own Death as before its ownmost, non-relational, certain, indefinite, uttermost, and not to be outstripped potentiality-for-being (SZ 258-259), i.e., when it faces its own “naked” or “pure ‘that it is’ (*Dass es ist*)”, which is “veiled in its ‘whence’ and ‘whither’” (SZ 134-135), “the totality of involvements of the ready-to-hand and the present-to-hand discovered within-the-world, is, as such, of no consequence; it collapses into itself; the world has the character of completely lacking significance (*ohne Belang*)” (SZ

⁸¹ Heidegger cautions that the ‘*moribundus*’ is not to be taken in the sense of “someone gravely ill or wounded” but in the sense that “insofar as I am, I am *moribundus*. The *moribundus* first gives the *sum* its sense” (HCT 317).

⁸² “all [Dasein’s] relations to any other Dasein have been undone (*gelöst*)” (SZ 250).

186; 187). In the *Angst* which is always “latent in being-in-the-world” (SZ 189; HCT 290), “being-in-the-world is transformed into a ‘not at home’ purely and simply” (HCT 289). It thus reveals Dasein’s *uncanniness* or *not-at-home-ness* (*unheimlichkeit; Nicht-zuhause-sein*), which is not a momentary condition or fleeting sensation, but rather “lies in Dasein”, and “pursues Dasein constantly”, threatening “its everyday lostness in the they”—the tranquilized and familiar kind of being-in-the-world which, as we will see, is actually “a mode of Dasein’s uncanniness” (SZ 189), and, therefore, less primordial from an “existential-ontological” point of view. *Angst* “brings [Dasein] back from its absorption in the ‘world’”, because in it “everyday familiarity collapses” (SZ 189). It thus reveals Dasein’s “*being-free for the freedom of choosing and taking hold of itself*”, and “brings Dasein face to face with its *being-free for the authenticity of its being*” (SZ 188)—with its freedom *qua* transcendence, or *qua* “**impassioned freedom toward death**” (SZ 266). Dasein’s freedom *as* uncanniness is the condition for the possibility of *owned* (*eigentlich*) existence—‘*mineness*’ (*Jemeinigkeit*); existence as “in each case my own (*je meines*)”—as well as that of care as the holding of its being before itself as a necessarily unsettled issue or problem. “Dasein determines its own character (*wie es ist*) as the entity that it is” (SZ 259) only from out of the depths of its innermost uncanniness/not-at-homeness.

Yet Dasein’s uncanniness or being as pure potentiality, i.e., the source of its transcendence or freedom, also means that Dasein always *a priori* outstrips its definite actualization. Consequently, Dasein is never self-coincident like objects present-at-hand.⁸³

⁸³ Even though, “in the first instance”, Dasein “gets its ontological understanding of itself from those entities which it itself is *not* but which it encounters ‘within’ the world, and from the being which they possess” (SZ 58), and thus, “when Dasein addresses itself in the way which is closest to itself, it always says ‘*Ich bin es*’ [I

Dasein is always and in principle *other than it is*, or “‘more’ than it factually is” (SZ 145). The call of conscience, as inducing, and calling Dasein to a preservation of, an attunement of *Angst*, is the name for the existential phenomenon which shows Dasein that it *is* other than itself, that it is entangled (*verfängt*) in the world, and, from the perspective of its ownmost essence as pure *Seinkönnen*, estranged. Thus, as Heidegger puts it, “the voice reaches him who has distanced himself from his own self [*as non-relational Seinkönnen*]” (SZ 272, Marginal note). Or, a little further, “conscience calls the self of Dasein *forth* from its lostness in the they” (SZ 274). As we might by now expect, the call does not summon Dasein to any particular commitment, ideal, or ontic possibility. Indeed, it passes over (*übergeht*; *überspringt*) and dissolves/disperses (*zerstreut*) Dasein’s ‘worldly’ identity, pushing it “into insignificance (*Bedeutungslosigkeit*). The Self to which Dasein is summoned “remains *indifferent* (*unbestimmt*: uncircumscribed, indeterminate) and *empty* in its *what*” (SZ 274). Thus, the call deprives Dasein of its tranquillity and stability, of its ground (*Grund/Boden*), dwelling (*Heim/Haus*), or refuge (*Versteck*: hide-out), in the they and its they-self. The call robs it of the illusion that its they-given *what* corresponds to its ownmost possibility and thus represents its complete actualization and fulfilment. Everyday Dasein “clings” to a “specific ‘what’ that is present (*jeweilige gegenwärtige Was*)” (CT 16). In the call of conscience, “all ‘what’ dissolves into dust” (CT 21).⁸⁴ There is really no understating the traumatic and

am it: this object or entity]” (SZ 115; Cf. BP 159).

⁸⁴ This is nicely expressed by C. Scott: “The voice of conscience, as the disclosure of Dasein’s being in the midst of its everyday values and standards, functions to make those values uncertain and to ‘call’ Dasein to its difference from who it is in its efforts to be someone recognizable in its culture (...) On Heidegger’s account, we begin to find ourselves when we are dislocated and displaced by the disclosure of our being that has no standing, no name or heritage in our environment” (1999: 217).

wrenching nature of this experience (Scott 1993: 70). For after all, part of what makes the “downward plunge (*Absturz*)” of Dasein’s falling out of itself into its they-self so tempting (*versucherisch*) and tranquillizing (*beruhigend*) is that the they offers the false guarantee “that all the possibilities of [Dasein’s] being will be secure, genuine, and full” (SZ 177). As Heidegger explains: “The supposition of the ‘they’ that one is leading and sustaining a full and genuine ‘life’, brings Dasein a *tranquillity*, for which everything is ‘in the best order’, and all doors are open. Falling Being-in-the-world, which tempts itself, is at the same time *tranquillizing*” (*Ibid.*).

Now, to answer the questions that were raised a little earlier, given what it is that the call is supposed to make manifest to the called, it is obvious that the voice can say nothing at all. The call cannot interrupt idle talk and act as a “jolt”⁸⁵ or “arousal”,⁸⁶ extracting Dasein out of its fixation with the they, by uttering more words. This would serve only to perpetuate idle talk and curiosity (SZ 271). The call can only have the character of a breach or rupture (*Bruch*) in the discourse of the they, and exhibit Dasein’s authentic self to itself, if it speaks in the uncanny mode of sheer and inviolate silence (*Schweigens*). In this silence, the call of conscience, which, as I am about to show, is none other than the call of Dasein itself, says nothing. Yet by this token it presents or voices the *absence* which is constitutive of its (Dasein’s) own being.

Having examined both the recipient of the call and the ‘about which’ of the call, there remains the question of the caller. In a way, I can only elaborate on what has

⁸⁵ *Stossen*: push, shove, impact.

⁸⁶ *Aufrütteln*: an awakening, or emphatic warning.

already been said regarding the ‘about which’ of the call, for in this unique type of enunciation, the caller and the content of the call are conflated: the caller *is* what is disclosed in the call. Thus, Heidegger tells us that “the caller too remains in a striking indefiniteness (*unbestimmtheit*)” which “absolutely distances any kind of becoming familiar (*bekanntwerden*)” (SZ 274). Heidegger goes on to say that “in its who, the caller is definable by nothing worldly. It is Dasein in its uncanniness: primordial, thrown being-in-the-world as not-at-home, the bare ‘that-it-is’ in the ‘nothing’ of the world” (SZ 276-277). The caller is Dasein which finds itself (*sich befindet*) in the very depths of its uncanniness, and, hence, in the ground of its being, through the *Angst* which discloses it in an authentic (*eigentlich*) and eminent (*ausgezeichnet*) way. The caller has no name, status, origin, gender or any other trait obtainable only in relation to a world (SZ 274). Since all knowing is interpretation, and all interpretation is grounded in a world, the caller cannot be made-known or made-familiar.⁸⁷ This isn’t because the caller is masked so as to veil its true identity. On the contrary, the caller is Dasein as it truly is, in its ownmost, non-interchangeable, non-relational, *Seinkönnen*, divested of all masks, all ontic personas. The caller is not a person, but *personne*; it is the actor behind the mask of the *Man-selbst* which conceals *nothing* and *no-one*, except the *nothing* and *no one* (SZ 129; Safranski 235).

Finally, it is worth noting that while the voice of conscience is not extrinsic to Dasein (after all, it comes from the very core of Dasein’s being), it is experienced as somehow radically alien: coming “*from me, and yet over me*” (SZ 275); “*from afar to afar*” (SZ 271). To borrow a term from Lacan, the voice is *ex-timate*: it is an instance of transcendence or

⁸⁷ Heidegger’s term is *Bekanntwerden*. *Bekannt* means ‘well-known’, or ‘familiar’.

alterity at the very heart of the immanent, of the 'self'. The voice calls from a "proximate distance" (Dasture 94). It is neither deliberately brought about, nor even expected by *me*. Rather: *it* calls ("*es ruft*") (SZ 276). And yet, according to Heidegger, Dasein also experiences the call as unmistakably and unequivocally arising from itself, as its *own* unfamiliar or alien voice (SZ 277). This connection between conscience and (self)certainty is more apparent in German, where the term for conscience, *Gewissen*, is closely akin to the terms *Gewiß-sein* (being-certain) and *Gewißheit* (certainty).

This concludes my preliminary, and quite general, characterization of the call, which proceeded by analysing the call of conscience in terms of the tripartite structure common to all discourse. In the next section, I will carry my exegesis of the call of conscience further by revealing the call of conscience to be the call of care, and demonstrating how, as such, the call displays an ek-static and cyclical care-structure. Once again, this is all in the ultimate aim of providing a comprehensive overview of the basic concepts of *Being and Time*, which will enable the reader to follow my argument in chapter 3, according to which these basic concepts imply, or implicitly contain, a latent ethic.

2.3. Conscience as the Call of Care: its *Ek-static*, Cyclical Care-Structure

As I have indicated already, at the heart of Heidegger's existential analytic there lies the phenomenological datum that "Dasein's being reveals itself as *care* (*Sorge*)" (SZ 182). To put it as simply and straightforwardly as possible, Dasein's being as care means that the being of beings matters to Dasein. It is of significance to Dasein that things are the way they are, and not otherwise. Most notably, Dasein's own being is an issue for it. This means that, in its being, Dasein "goes *about* its very being (*es geht um sein Sein selbst*)"; its own

being is that with which it deals, towards which it is directed, and around which it revolves or is always circling (HCT 292). Only because (its own) being matters to Dasein can it be said to have an ‘inborn’ understanding of being. In other words, care *is* Dasein’s understanding of being.

While not incorrect, the foregoing description of care is in need of some refining. As a first step towards achieving this, it will be recalled that *Being and Time* aims to supply two things: an “Interpretation of Dasein in terms of temporality”, and an “explication of time as the transcendental horizon for the question of being” (SZ 39). While in Division 2 of Part 1, Heidegger manages to “bring to light” how “temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) makes up the primordial meaning of Dasein’s being” (SZ 235; 17), Heidegger never finished Division 3 of Part 1, which was slated to perform the transition between being and time, and *time and being*, i.e., show how time operates as the “horizon” for “all understanding of being” (SZ 19; 235).⁸⁸ Now, if the propositions “Dasein’s being reveals itself as *care*” and “*temporality* makes up the primordial meaning of Dasein’s being” are superficially juxtaposed, they seem to contradict each other. But the conflict is merely apparent. For the principal finding of the completed portion of *Being and Time* is that only “in terms of temporality” does “the articulated structural totality of Dasein’s being as care (...) [become] existentially intelligible” (SZ 234). In other words: “temporality [manifests itself] (...) as the meaning of the being of care” (SZ 436); care is a function of Dasein’s temporality (SZ 382).

This is of capital importance for my study of conscience because it means that

⁸⁸ The fragment we know as *Being and Time* in fact ends with the question: “Does *time* itself manifest itself as the horizon of *being*?” (SZ 437).

the call of conscience, which issues from the ground of Dasein's being, and, as such, must be the call of care, is inextricably related to Dasein's primordial being as temporality. In fact, it is the *ek-static*, temporal structure of care which unifies the three formally distinct moments of the call: viz., caller, called and the content or 'about which'. The caller is thus "Dasein, anxious in its thrownness (in its already-being-in...) about its potentiality-of-being". This is care's standing-out into its Past. The one called is also Dasein, "called forth to its ownmost potentiality of being (its being-ahead-of-itself...)". This is care's standing-out or projecting into the Future. Finally, what is called forth in the summons (the content of the summons) "is Dasein, out of falling prey to the they (already-being-together-with-the-world-taken-care-of...)". This is care's standing-out into the Present (SZ 277-278).

By now, Heidegger's analysis has covered a lot of terrain. But it is plagued by at least one major omission: it has not dealt with the "quality of Hearing (*hören*)" associated with the summons. Accordingly, if the analysis is to be phenomenologically adequate, it must describe the response an authentic Hearing of the call would provoke. It must be shown how a proper understanding of the call would provoke what Heidegger calls resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*), and how this eminent form of disclosure (*Erschlossenheit*) discloses Dasein's essential being-guilty (*Schuldigsein*). I have not succeeded in displaying either the disclosive nature of the call, and, thus, its relation to Dasein's understanding of being in general, or what it is that the call discloses in a sufficiently fundamental manner (viz., as disclosing being-guilty), until I have shown how it is to be understood as a calling *back* that calls *forth*—that is, until I have shown how conscience, as the call of care, partakes of care's "circular structure" (SZ 153). This cyclical structure can be described somewhat

metaphorically as a continuous oscillation between the negative and positive poles of Dasein's being (IM 28; FCM 6). Heidegger tells us that "the fact of the *Angst* of conscience is a phenomenal confirmation of the fact that in understanding the call Dasein is brought face to face with its own uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*)" (SZ 296). And, of course, to Heidegger, "uncanniness brings [Dasein] face to face with its undisguised *nothingness*, which belongs to the possibility of its ownmost potentiality-of-being" (SZ 287). This is what the bringing-back consists in, and it is one moment or pole of the circular structure of conscience as the call of care. But why is this bringing-back a necessary, constitutive element of Dasein's being as being-there (as care)?

The answer to this question is only hinted at in *Being and Time*. Heidegger recognized this deficiency, and the lecture *What is Metaphysics*, as well as the essay *On the Essence of Ground*,⁸⁹ attend to this question more thoroughly.⁹⁰ The calling-back of conscience is a necessary structural element of Dasein's being as disclosedness or the there of being, because it is only "in the clear night of the nothing of *Angst* [that] the original openness (*ursprüngliche Offenheit*) of beings as such arises: that they are beings—and not nothing" (P 90). There must necessarily be something intrinsic to Dasein which brings it back to its ground as nothingness, because it is only this confrontation which "makes possible in advance the revelation of beings in general". As Heidegger writes: "the essence of the originally nihilating nothing lies in this, that it brings Dasein for the first time before beings as such. (...)

⁸⁹ Both of which were written in 1928 (P 97).

⁹⁰ I owe the following two paragraphs to Part 3, ch. XI, of Magda King's insightful commentary *A Guide To Heidegger's Being and Time* (Albany: SUNY, 2001).

Dasein means: being held out into the nothing” (P 90-91).⁹¹ Beings show themselves only as radically other than the nothing, and Dasein’s holding itself out into the nothing is made possible through the experience of the call of conscience. To put this in slightly different terms, one could say that Dasein’s constitutive understanding of being is reliant upon its capacity to be struck, overwhelmed, or even oppressed, by the enigmatic contingency of being, i.e., its ability to wonder “Why are there beings at all, and not rather Nothing?” (P 289). As Heidegger explains, it is only on the grounds of the “manifestness of the nothing” that such wonder can be “evoked” (P 95). And, as I have shown, it is in the Hearing of the call of conscience that Dasein is called back to, or held before, the nothing. Of course, this calling-back is also integral to Dasein’s being because it is the condition for the possibility of existence as *mine*—as owned or authentic—and of care as holding one’s being as an issue. Heidegger summarizes his view with a breathtaking flourish: “If in the ground of its essence Dasein were not transcending (...) if it were not in advance holding itself out into the nothing, then it could never adopt a stance toward beings, *nor even to itself*. Without the original revelation of the nothing, no selfhood and no freedom” (P 91).

To complete the circuit of care, I must describe how the positive moment or pole, the calling-*forth*, comes about as an automatic counterbalance to the calling-*back* or

⁹¹ In *On the Essence of Ground*, Heidegger explains that in being held out into the nothing, Dasein is actually held out into *being*, for the nothing “is the ‘not’ of beings, and is thus being, experienced from the perspective of beings” (P 97). This ‘not’ which distinguishes between being and beings, i.e., the fact that being is not *a being*, since it transcends or escapes all determination, qualification or predication (SZ 38), is what Heidegger refers to as the “ontological difference” (P 97). This *rapprochement* between being and the nothing is made patent by Heidegger in a passage from his *Letter on Humanism*: “The nihilating in being is the essence of what I call the nothing. Hence, because it thinks being, thinking thinks the nothing” (P 273). In the words of D.F. Krell, “the Nothing” is “the name Heidegger offers to designate the presencing of beings as Being (...), that region in which Being revealingly hides” (1978: 251).

negative pole of care. In *What is Metaphysics*, Heidegger describes Dasein's encounter with the nothing as a recoiling from or shrinking back before (*Zurückweichen vor*), for "the nothing itself does not attract, it is essentially repelling (*wesenhaft abweisend*)" (P 90). In anxiously being called to face the nothing, Dasein reaches an "impassable limit which forbids [it] any (...) penetration" (King 176). The nothing offers no determinate object (*Gegenstand*) of thought (P 91), no concept (*Begriff*) to be com-prehended (*begriffen*), no-thing to be grasped (*erfassen*). In the nothing, Dasein "can get no hold on things (*Es bleibt kein Halt*)" (P 88); the nothing gives Dasein no foothold or ground upon which to stand, no stabilizing support. As we have seen, *Angst* "induces the slipping away of beings as a whole (*zum Entgleiten bringt*)", and thus leaves Dasein "hanging" (*schweben*) over the abyss of its own freedom or nothingness (P 88; 93). This denial "is the repulsion that refers us to beings as those which we *can* know and among which we *can* stand on firm ground" or dwell (King 176); it furnishes the momentum or impetus for Dasein's falling.⁹² Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, this repulsion is Dasein's recoiling (*zurückweichen*), turning away (*abkheren*), evading (*ausweichen*), or fleeing (*Flucht*), in the face of itself (*vor ihm selbst*) (SZ 139, 184-186, 252; HCT 282-284). The angst-laden call of conscience makes manifest the uncanny "nothing and nowhere" (SZ 186), the "not-at-home" (SZ 189) or "being-

⁹² At times Heidegger also refers to this repulsion in psychological language as the motive or motivation behind Dasein's fall. This accords with the fact that though Dasein's falling into the they-self is an "existential", and, as such, "belongs to Dasein's positive constitution", the degree of Dasein's being-fallen would seem to vary throughout history. After all, Heidegger does tell us that: "The extent to which [the they's] dominion becomes compelling and explicit may change in the course of history" (SZ 129). Nevertheless, given the very fact that falling is an *a priori* component of Dasein's being, it would seem logical to place the emphasis on the structural character of the fall, and, accordingly, its impetus. Cf. the treatment of this question by L. Ferry & A. Renaut in *Heidegger et les modernes* (Paris: Grasset, 1988), pp. 70-72.

towards-death” (SZ 252), which comprises Dasein’s “ownmost potentiality-for-being” (SZ 255). In turning-away from this uncanniness, what Dasein does is “*turn-thither (hinkehrt)* towards entities within-the-world by absorbing itself in them” (SZ 186).⁹³ This positive pole of care, from which “establishing (*Stiftung*), taking up a basis (*Boden-nehmen*), and legitimation (*Rechtgebung*) (...) *spring forth*”, Heidegger sometimes characterizes as Dasein’s “*care for steadfastness (Beständigkeit) and subsistence (Bestandes)*” (P 132).

What all of this amounts to is that the call of conscience, as call of care, is paradoxical: it simultaneously robs Dasein of a world or ‘worldly’ identity, and forces Dasein to seek presence, stability, constancy, or grounding, in a world. Dasein’s “freedom as transcendence”, which is a “freedom for ground”, and which is disclosed by conscience, both “*gives (gibt) and takes (nimmt) ground*” (P 127).⁹⁴ There is an underlying and indissoluble link between these two contradictory but co-original moments: Dasein’s grounding in a world is predicated on groundlessness, and its essential groundlessness compels it to find grounding in a world. Furthermore, this movement of repulsion is nothing else than the origin or groundless ground of Dasein’s essential character as thrown-projection. Dasein’s primordial (*ursprünglich*) and, therefore, constant encounter with the nothing which is made possible by conscience, throws it into its particular, finite situation; it is the origin (*Ursprung*) of the primal leap (*Ur-Sprung*), through which there occurs the pro-jection of a world which

⁹³ Or, if one prefers: “Dasein’s absorption in the they and its absorption in the world of its concern, make manifest something like a *fleeing* of Dasein in the face of itself—of itself as an authentic potentiality-for-being-its-Self (*eigentlichem Selbst-sein-können*)” (SZ 184).

⁹⁴ As Heidegger remarks in a marginal note inscribed next to this passage in his 1929 copy of *On the Essence of Ground*, the freedom which grounds by ‘letting beings be’ also “Places into the ground-less (abyss of ground), non-ground (*stellt in das Grund-lose (Ab-grund), Un-grund*)” (P 127 / GA 9: 165).

“*carries* whoever is projecting *out and away from themselves* (...) and removes them into whatever has been projected...” (FCM 363). This explains why thrownness/facticity (past), falling prey (present), and projection (future) are ineradicable, *a priori* structural components of Dasein’s being as care (i.e., temporality). Moreover, since the “anticipation (*Vorlaufen*)” of death to which Dasein is called in the call of conscience throws “existence back upon its *factual thrownness*, and so for the first time imparts to *been-ness* (*Gewesenheit*) its peculiarly privileged position in the historical”, it must be concluded that “*Authentic Being-towards-death—that is to say, the finitude of temporality—is the hidden basis of Dasein’s historicity* (*Geschichtlichkeit*)” (SZ 386). Hence, “the interpretation of Dasein’s [essential] historicity [proves] to be, at bottom, just a more concrete working out of temporality”, i.e., of Dasein’s cyclical care-structure. In other words, history too, arises from Dasein’s perennially being held-out into the *hors-là*.

2.4. Conscience as Summons to Dasein’s Originary Guilt⁹⁵

An understanding of the call of conscience as calling-*back* which simultaneously calls-*forth* permits us to conceive why it is that the call must also disclose Dasein’s being as fundamentally and irreparably guilty: i.e., why “Care harbors in itself both death and guilt equiprimordially” (SZ 306). So far, we have seen that Dasein’s being as care is permeated by nothingness, that it is a pure negativity (SZ 285). Yet we have also seen that Dasein cannot remain indeterminate (no-thing), for to be is to be a determinate *this* or

⁹⁵ As will become apparent in what follows, the guilt Heidegger ascribes to Dasein is originary or ontological: insofar as it *is*, Dasein is always already guilty. Dasein’s guilt has nothing to do with the infringement of any ontic prohibitions, laws, or moral precepts. For further discussion of what Heidegger means by “guilt beyond any law or ought”, see section 3.1 of the present study.

someone, and therefore to espouse, or identify with, possibilities which are made available within a world. Thus, as we have also seen, in order to become something, to gain content (*Gehalt; Inhalt*), stability (*Beständigkeit*), objectivity (*Gegenstand*), and presence (*Gegenwart*), Dasein, as care, must be self-alienated or stand outside of itself qua bare *Seinkönnen* in at least two ‘temporal directions’: viz., the Past (thrownness/facticity) and the Present (falling prey). The formal definition of being guilty is “being the ground for a being which is determined by a *not*” (SZ 283). Dasein, as thrown Being-in-the-world, does *not* lay its own ground, though it must take over or appropriate this ground as its own. It is released to itself from the ground of freedom in order to become this free ground. Dasein never gets behind this ground or lays this ground itself (SZ 228). This is eloquently stated by Heidegger in his 1930 lectures on freedom:

[If] we are seeking out freedom as the ground of the possibility of existence, then *freedom must itself, in its essence, be more primordial than man*. Man is only an administrator of freedom, i.e., he can only let-be the freedom which is accorded to him, in such a way that through man, the whole contingency of freedom becomes visible. Human freedom now no longer means freedom as a property of man, but *man as a possibility of freedom*. Human freedom is the freedom that breaks through in man and takes him up unto itself, thus making man possible (EHF 93).

Moreover, Dasein is marked by a certain powerlessness or impotence insofar as it is never the author of the finite, historical context conditioning and enabling its decisions, insofar as its ability to apprehend the possibilities relegated to it by the tradition is premised on its always already being engaged in a project. In this sense, Dasein’s freedom lies in its “freely assuming its imposed destiny” (Zizek TS 18). Thus a *not* necessarily belongs to the existential meaning of thrownness and falling prey (the past and present dimensions of Dasein’s being-in-

the-world). This is the first way in which Dasein, in its ground, is guilty.

Ek-sistence as a projecting of possibilities, and, therefore, as the futural orientation of care, is another manner in which Dasein is guilty. As existing, Dasein is ‘self-grounding’: it understands itself in terms of possibilities which it itself has projected. It is free to be a self-project, free *for* these existentiell possibilities which it has projected, because in its ground it is a nothingness. Only as such is it always capable of transcending or negating its current determinations and projecting upon further ones. However, as we have seen, Dasein cannot remain a pure transcendence, “*solus ipse*” (SZ 188), or “isolated, free-floating ego”. It must be made determinate, and, as Spinoza was fond of saying, every determination is also a negation (a ‘not’). Here we see how the strictly formal and therefore empty or indeterminate character of the call is “consubstantial with” essential and universal guilt: “it is precisely because Dasein never receives any positive injunction from the call of conscience” that it is necessarily guilty (Zizek TS 47). Though it must choose *one* possibility to the exclusion of all other possibilities, it must live with the guilt of being unable to *fundamentally* justify this decision, and of having renounced countless other *fundamentally* valid possibilities (SZ 285; HCT 298).⁹⁶ Strictly speaking, nothing Dasein chooses can ever discharge its duty

⁹⁶ It might be objected that the disclosure of Dasein’s ontic possibility is tantamount to a justification since it is a “destiny”. Moreover, that the return to Dasein’s destiny (see SZ: Division 2, section V) releases powerful and substantive forces of collective meaning, re-energizing centuries of historical experience by *changing* their pattern retroactively as Dasein, in its fore-running retrieval of its past, leaps both *ahead* and *behind*. The whole final section of this chapter should be viewed as my full reply to this objection. Anticipating one of the points I will be making there, I would like to retort that while some of Dasein’s choices do receive justification or sanction as its destiny *within* the particular world in which it is immersed, this world itself, and *a fortiori* the possibilities it makes available, is *fundamentally* groundless; it is based on a decision which is, *fundamentally*, “without why”. Moreover, Dasein (as opposed to, say, elephants or tulips) never entirely *fits* its world; *fundamentally* speaking, there is nothing for which it is *fit*. In the words of Ferry & Renaut: “le propre de l’homme est de ne pas avoir de propre (...). l’homme seul est néant: impossible pour lui (...) de coïncider avec une quelconque identité, qu’elle soit naturelle, familiale ou sociale” (14; cf. Safranski 232). What else does the experience of *Angst* show, in thrusting Dasein outside of both its familiar world and its

towards itself, because no positive, ontic possibility can ever perfectly fit or coincide with Dasein's innermost essence as pure potentiality, i.e., can ever represent Dasein's consummation, perfection, or fulfilment (*entelechy*). In *this* limited sense, it is fair to say that where no ontic-existential possibility is ontologically-existentially 'wrong' (excluded by Dasein's essence as *fundamentally* unfitting), every ontic-existential possibility is *fundamentally* (i.e., ontologically-existentially) 'wrong' or unfitting.

2.5. The Proper or Authentic Mode of Hearing the Call

Up to this point, I have presented a general analysis of the call of conscience in terms of the tripartite structure common to all discourse, revealed how the call reflects the ecstatic, cyclical structure of care, and explained how the call summons Dasein to its originary guilt. By means of these largely exegetical sections, I have laboured to afford the reader a comprehensive overview of the basic concepts of *Being and Time*. Before proceeding, in chapter 3, to demonstrate how these basic concepts comprise a latent ethic, there remains to be seen the proper or authentic mode of Hearing the call. In some respects, my treatment of the authentic mode of Hearing the call in this section should be regarded as an introductory *aperçu* or preamble to section 3.2, in which more or less the same subject will be taken up

self *qua* 'worldly', but the utter fragility and contingency of its immersion in its everyday world (or, for that matter, *any* world)? To replace the Heideggerian term 'world' with the jargon of Kuhn and Foucault: only *within* a particular paradigm or *episteme* can certain of Dasein's possibilities be 'justified'. But the paradigm or *episteme* itself, i.e., the framework within which the just can be distinguished from the unjust, can never be justified, since its emergence remains groundless (without why). This equivocality in the concept of 'justification' in Heidegger, is the reason why he can legitimately claim to steer clear of the "dangerous threat of relativism", while also stating that "*Angst* in the face of relativism is *Angst* in the face of Dasein (...) which is historicity itself" (HCT 20). [See: the beautiful study by Reiner Schürmann *Le Principe d'anarchie: Heidegger et la question de l'agir* (Paris: Seuil, 1982); as well as Lawrence Vogel's *The Fragile 'We': Ethical Implications of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1994), esp. pp. 57 & 60.]

again, though with the specific intention of demonstrating that the concepts associated with this proper Hearing contain at least the makings of a Heideggerian ethic—a claim Heidegger would never have endorsed.

An appropriate understanding of the silent (*schweigen*) call of conscience, silent because it comes from the “soundlessness (*Lautlosigkeit*) of uncanniness” (SZ 296), manifests itself as a wanting-to-have-a-conscience. This does not mean that Dasein decides to have a conscience. Rather, in this “original choice”, Dasein chooses to “seize” (HCT 318), or hold fast to, the ownmost potentiality-for-being which conscience has made transparent (*durchsichtig*), instead of fleeing, repressing (*Niedergehalten*) or relinquishing it (P 93). Now, Heidegger calls the “eminent, authentic disclosedness attested in Dasein itself by its conscience—the reticent (*verschwiegene*) projecting upon one’s ownmost being-guilty which is ready for Angst—resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*)”. In resoluteness, the most primordial truth of Dasein has been reached” because, according to Heidegger, “it is *authentic*”. Accordingly, “*Entschlossenheit*” must be considered “an eminent mode of the *Erschlossenheit* or disclosedness of Dasein” (SZ 297). Its authentic constituents are an attunement of *Angst*, an understanding which projects upon one’s ownmost being-guilty (or *Seinkönnen*), and discourse as *Verschwiegenheit* (reticence, reservation). This is authentic disclosedness because it discloses Dasein’s most fundamental and uncanny essence as care, potentiality-for-being, or being-guilty.

In this authentic disclosedness, neither the world, nor being-with-others disappears: their disclosedness is merely modified. To this effect, Heidegger states: “Authentic being-one’s-self (*Selbstsein*) does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the

subject, a condition that has been detached (*abgelöst*) from the they; *it is rather an existentiell modification of the they—of the they as an essential existentielle*” (SZ 130).⁹⁷ Just as it is the *Man-selbst* which is modified in an existentiell manner in order to become authentic *Selbstsein*, the content of the world is unaltered in authentic disclosure (SZ 268). This is perfectly consistent with the fact that in running-ahead to its *own* already “being-gone” (*Vorbei*)—which “scatters (*jagt*) all secretiveness (*Heimlichkeiten*)⁹⁸ and busyness” (CT 12), and places Dasein, “amid the glory of its everydayness, into uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*)” (CT 13)—Dasein discloses to itself that “it is not some ‘what’” (*Ibid.*), but rather its *how*. As mentioned above, in wanting-to-have-a-conscience, Dasein “wants to be what it properly is” (Kisiel 340). Since ‘what Dasein properly is’ is *not* a *what*, that which is modified in resoluteness or authentic *Selbstsein* is the *manner* in which Dasein is its *how*. “As opposed to the lapsing how, the how of habit and routine always looking to the ‘what’ of concern” (Kisiel 340), resolute Dasein in its proper *how* “can make itself responsible in an absolute sense. It ‘can’ *choose the presupposition (Voraussetzung) of being of itself*, that is, it can *choose itself*” (HCT 319).⁹⁹ Resolute, Dasein ‘chooses to choose for itself’, and in so doing chooses

⁹⁷ Heidegger reiterates this crucial point at SZ 179: “Authentic existence is not something which floats above falling everydayness; existentially, it is only a modified way in which such everydayness is seized upon”; as well as at SZ 297-298: “...*authentic* disclosedness then modifies equiprimordially the discoveredness of ‘world’ (...) and the disclosedness of being-with with others. The ‘world’ at hand *does not become different as far as ‘content’*, the circle of the others is not exchanged for a new one (...) (Italics mine; cf. 267-268; BP 171).

⁹⁸ As W. McNeill observes in a translator’s note: “The German *Heimlichkeiten* also implies that with which one is familiar, intimate, or ‘at-home’ (*heimisch*) to such an extent that it remains concealed (*heimlich*)”. Hence, what is chased-off or driven-away is Dasein’s inconspicuous or unobtrusive at-home-ness (CT 25, n10).

⁹⁹ Heidegger adds: “What is chosen in this choice is (...) *willing to have conscience*” (*Ibid.*).

itself, instead of being chosen *for* by the they (SZ 268).

Another way of putting this would be to say that what is changed or reversed in resolute Dasein is the *ordo cognoscendi*, the *how* of Dasein's (self)understanding. Whereas in inauthenticity, the (they)self is understood from its relation to the world, in authenticity, it is the world which is understood on the basis of Dasein's ownmost potentiality of being (a self). Thus, in *Entschlossenheit*, Dasein "takes over" the historical Situation as it presents itself in the "Moment of Vision (*Augenblick*) for 'its time'" (SZ 385), acts on certain definite, factual possibilities and resolutions, and clear-sightedly takes on the role which it has been assigned, or which it has inherited, in a meaningful totality, without "shirking" or "taking things lightly". In the "sober understanding of basic factual possibilities of Dasein" (SZ 310), resolute Dasein "*gives* itself the actual factual Situation¹⁰⁰ and *brings* itself into that Situation" (SZ 307). Wanting-to-have-a-conscience, i.e., *Sein-zum-Tode*, thus does not mean "a detachment in which one flees from the world, but brings one without illusions to the resoluteness of acting" (SZ 310). Indeed, as Heidegger writes: "The more authentically Dasein resolves—and this means that in anticipating death it understands itself unambiguously in terms of its ownmost distinctive possibility—the more unequivocally does it choose and find the possibility of its existence, and the less does it do so by accident" (SZ 384). The real difference, however, between *Entschlossenheit* and mere *Erschlossenheit* is that, in the former, Dasein keeps in view the fact that, as the there, it is always equiprimordially in truth and untruth, "that being-in-untruth makes up an essential characteristic of being-in-the-world" (SZ 222). In other words, resolute Dasein adopts a certain task, vocation or persona as its

¹⁰⁰ Which Heidegger defines as "*das je in der Entschlossenheit erschlossene Da*" (SZ 299).

‘own’, while courageously remaining ready-for, or holding fast to, that “before which *Angst* brings us” (SZ 308, 254): i.e., the “nothingness by which Dasein’s being is dominated primordially through and through” (SZ 306), and which “determines Dasein in its ground” (SZ 308).¹⁰¹ In contrast to *Erschlossenheit*, “resoluteness (...) bring(s) itself into its authenticity only when it projects itself not upon any random (*beliebige*) possibilities which just lie closest, but upon that uttermost possibility which lies *ahead* of every factual potentiality-for-being of Dasein, and, as such, *enters more or less undisguisedly (unverstellt)* into every potentiality-for-being of which Dasein factually takes hold” (SZ 302, Italics mine). By anticipating, or running ahead to, its Death, resolute Dasein remains acutely aware of the fact that no ontic possibility can ever represent its complete fulfilment or truth; that insofar as it must always already be in *Erschlossenheit*, it is at once un-concealing a world (beings, and itself *qua* ‘worldly’), and concealing the nothing (being, and itself *qua* abyss of freedom or “null ground”) upon which this world (a “nullity”, “nothing”, “nothingness” (SZ 343, 305, 285, 276-277, 187)) is grounded. Perhaps this is what Heidegger means when he states that while “Dasein is always already in irresoluteness [i.e., “at the mercy of the dominant interpretedness of the they”]”, “resoluteness appropriates untruth authentically” (SZ 299); or, again, when he affirms that the “*authenticity of Dasein*” is “such that it does not really

¹⁰¹ Scott summarizes what Heidegger is getting at as follows: “As Dasein lets itself be called forth in its most proper being (...) it becomes strange to itself in its clarity of purpose and certainty, and it acts forthrightly in understanding the collapse of clarity in its being. No less situated, no less concerned or committed, the individual’s attunements and expectations, its perceptiveness, satisfactions, and priorities are conditioned by, as it were, an open door to mortal time that lets in an element different from the presence and totality of value. It acts, but now in the questionableness of the possibility of its actions and in the transgressions of being that mark its living. To be this way is to be resolved, and to be resolved is to attest to the nonbelonging of being in the value-laden situation that one lives in and through” (1993: 78); earlier in the same essay, Scott states that “to belong to being unto death” in resoluteness “is to belong to nothing at all *as one dwells in the familiarity of one’s world*” (1993: 68).

extricate itself from this being-with-one-another but, while this remains constitutive in it as being-with, *it is still itself*" (HCT 248). As Kisiel explains (paraphrasing GA 20: 7):

Proper being is such that it is the improper properly, that is, it "lifts" (*aufhebt*) the improper properly into itself. The 'how' seized in the proper resolve of forerunning is proper only as the determination of an action taken in the now of the improper time of being-with-one-another. (...) Thus, even though [resolute Dasein's] concerned presentifications are now properly authentic, it is publically indistinguishable from decadent temporality [the Fallenness of the *Man-selbst*] (345).

In other words, to quote L. Vogel: "There is no pure authenticity but at best an authentic appropriation of the inauthentic" (12). Here, as J. Rogozinski has shown, "we find the echo of Hegelian ontothanatology¹⁰² and the theological motif which underlies it: the schema of the *kenose*, the drama of the incarnation and the cross taken as the 'emptying' or 'evacuation' of God, the exposition of the nothingness of death which returns in glory through the resurrection" (68). But Rogozinski discerns a crucial difference:

the nullity of *Dasein* in its thrownness [cannot be] assimilated into a dialectical negation, nor its recovery of itself into an *Aufhebung*. (...) the opening up of *Dasein* to authenticity aggravates its exposure to Nothing in a *non-dialectical tension*, a paradoxical 'coincidence of the most proper and the most other'. (...) Perhaps the wager of *Being and Time* will have been to replay the *kenose* of the infinite in finitude, or to undertake a quasi-*Aufhebung* of finitude without leaving the horizon of finitude (*Ibid*).

But what, more specifically, is the nature of this paradoxical "reappropriation in expropriation [i.e., radical dis-possession]", as Rogozinski calls it (79, n19; cf. Raffoul 205-6, 212; Brogan 241)?

¹⁰² Rogozinski is, of course, referring to the doctrine which Hegel summarizes in his Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: "...the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment (*Zerrissenheit*), it finds itself. (...) Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts (*umkehrt*) it into being. This power is identical to what we earlier called the subject" (§ 32).

As Ben Vedder explains in his article, *Heidegger on Desire*, authentic Dasein:

a) preserves its being as being-richer, as super-abundant possibility, as essentially being-out-for-something (*auf etwas Aussein*) and therefore as pure Lack which is not the lack of anything definite or objective; b) quickens and perpetuates its being as dynamism or ‘motion’ (as a not-yet; something “constantly still to be settled (*ständige Unabgeschlossenheit*)” and “*still outstanding*”¹⁰³ (SZ 236)); and c) remains by-itself (*bei sich; chez-soi*) even in its structurally necessary self-estrangement (not-being-at-home), *only* if it is able to will itself as end in and through the willing of each determinate ‘for the sake of which’ (Vedder 358-359). This, it could be argued, is what Heidegger means when he says that what is thrown-forward in projection must not be reduced to the “given contents which we have in mind”, and that in projection, it is not the actualization of the project which is of utmost importance, but rather that “(...) projection, in throwing, throws before itself the possibility *as possibility*, and lets it *be as such*” (SZ 145)? Dasein’s being as pure possibility, i.e., its *Sein zum Tode*, must not be dimmed down (SZ 195), “weakened” (SZ 261), or “annihilated” by “making it available (*Verfügbar machen*)” or turning it into something “actual (*wirklich*)”. Rather, “it must be understood *as possibility*, it must be cultivated *as possibility*, and *endured as possibility* in [Dasein’s] relation to it” (SZ 261). Yet, how can Dasein ‘set itself free as pure possibility’ (SZ 262, 144), or be “liberated *for its uttermost possibility of existence*” (SZ 303), if, to *be*, Dasein must be something actual and determinate,¹⁰⁴ must assume certain definite, ontic

¹⁰³ “...*im Dasein immer noch etwas aussteht...*” (SZ 236).

¹⁰⁴ Dasein’s “*being-gone as the authentic future can never become present (Gegenwärtig)*. If it were present, it would be the nothing” (CT 16).

possibilities, and if, moreover, the *Augenblick* or authentic present associated with *Entschlossenheit* shows it that it ‘has to be’ the temporally particular (*jeweilige*) ‘there’ which it is called to ‘make its Fate’? The solution to this dilemma is that authentic disclosedness or resoluteness relates to its temporally particular ontic possibilities as so many masks through the mediation and, therefore, falsification or concealment of which Dasein can come to *be*: i.e., can disclose itself, ‘take place’ or, to transplant a term which the later Heidegger applies to *being*, “properize” itself (*er-eignet sich*).

Thus, after informing us that “Dasein is equiprimordially in untruth”, Heidegger goes on to write: “anticipatory resoluteness (*vorlaufende Ent-schlossenheit*) at the same time gives Dasein the primordial certainty of its *Verschlossenheit* (being closed-off). In anticipatory resoluteness, Dasein *holds itself open* for its constant lostness in the irresoluteness of the they” (SZ 308, Italics mine). That is, in *Ent-schlossenheit* (un-locked-ness), Dasein becomes certain of the strict belonging-together of its dis-closedness (*Er-schlossenheit*) with its being closed-off (SZ 222), or locked-up (*Ver-schlossenheit*), and keeps itself open for the certainty of its being constantly lost and locked-up. Such a reading is also bolstered by the following, rather lengthy, but extremely important passage:

What, then, does the certainty belonging to such resoluteness mean? This certainty must hold itself in what is disclosed in resolution. But this means that it simply cannot become rigid about the situation, but must understand that the resolution must be kept free and open for the actual factual possibility in accordance with its own meaning as a disclosure. The certainty of the resolution means keeping oneself free for the possibility of taking it back, a possibility that is always factually necessary. This holding-for-true in resoluteness (as the truth of existence), however, by no means lets us fall back into irresoluteness. On the contrary, this holding-for-true, as a resolute holding oneself free for taking back, is the authentic resoluteness to retrieve itself. But thus one’s very lostness in irresoluteness is existentially

undermined. The holding-for-true that belongs to resoluteness tends (...) towards *constantly keeping itself free*, that is, to *keep itself free for the whole potentiality-for-being of Dasein*. (...) In its death, Dasein must absolutely ‘take itself back’. Constantly certain of this, *anticipating*, resoluteness gains its authentic and whole certainty (SZ 307-308).

This is what the *Ent*¹⁰⁵ of *Ent-schlossenheit* denotes: a distancing or pushing-away of the ontic possibilities disclosed and resolved upon by Dasein (Safranski 224; King 179); a falling away of immediacy; the establishment of a *Spielraum*¹⁰⁶ *between* Dasein and itself *qua* ‘worldly’ (Safranski 258; King 182). This is even suggested by Heidegger in his description of the self-responsibility or self-possession of resolute Dasein: for “the certainty of this possibility [i.e., self-responsibility] is seized when every other possible can-be of mine is *set apart from it*, that is, when the resoluteness *toward itself* is such that it is the source of the possibility of this or that action” (HCT 319, Italics mine). In self-responsibility, i.e., the resolute anticipation of death which “lets death become powerful in itself”, Dasein drives out all accidental possibilities by taking these up into its *how* (GA 27: 337), or, in other words, by “[*handing*] itself *down* to itself, free for death, in a possibility which it has inherited and yet has chosen” (SZ 384).

Dasein’s resoluteness or owned-ness is thus its Fate, “that powerless superior power which puts itself in readiness for adversities—the power of projecting oneself upon one’s own being-guilty, and of doing so reticently, with readiness for anxiety” (SZ 385). Resoluteness or Fate is a *superior power*, the “power of [Dasein’s] finite freedom”, because in its “moment of vision” (*Augenblick*), Dasein ascertains: a) the contingency of the Situation,

¹⁰⁵ A prefix with the meanings: away from, removing, and arising.

¹⁰⁶ The term can be translated as: play-space, clearing, room to manoeuvre, or leeway.

i.e., that it is only ‘necessary’ in retrospect, once Dasein has ‘made’ it necessary by resolving upon it; and b) that its own character as being-gone “towers-over”¹⁰⁷ every possibility disclosed in the Moment. Resolute Dasein, in its superior power, Hears the tolling of the “silent power of the possible” (SZ 394) behind or through the trumpeting of its fated ontic possibilities. Yet anticipatory resoluteness is also *powerless* because Dasein is “abandoned to itself in that very freedom” (SZ 384), and because “by shattering itself against death”, Dasein is “thrown back upon its factual ‘there’” (SZ 385). As Fate, resoluteness or ownedness is thus the “freedom to *give up* a definite resolution, as may be required in the Situation” (SZ 391).

All of this confirms what I have just said regarding the nature of resoluteness as, in Rogozinski’s words, a paradoxical “reappropriation in expropriation”. But this does not exhaust the possible sources of confirmation. In the “genuine” (*echte*: pure) mode of discourse which forms an integral part of resoluteness, insofar as Dasein necessarily “goes in for something”, it does so reservedly, i.e., “in the reticence of carrying something through or even genuinely breaking down (*echten Scheiterns*: wrecking, foundering) on it” (SZ 174). The call is a “vacant” (P 89), “sounding of silence (*Geläut der Stille*)” (PLT 207) which calls Dasein to a kind of dynamic-stillness. Resolute Dasein, in its reticence, puts itself in play (or ‘comes into play’—*Abspielt*) while simultaneously holding itself back. Reticent, Dasein inhabits the still and depersonalized ‘hollow’ of its being, right in the midst of the tumult and bustle of its everydayness. Thus, in *Entschlossenheit*, Dasein invests both its world, and the role it occupies or has been assigned within this world, with meaning, without depending on

¹⁰⁷ The German term is *überragt*, which can be translated as: protrudes, juts out, projects, or outshines.

them as Absolute or Ultimate sources of meaning, i.e., while never losing sight of the fact that none of the possibilities which its world places at its disposal are definitive of its being.

Resolute Dasein recognizes that it must always remain distinct from, and can never be totally enclosed in, or encapsulated by, ‘itself’ in its temporally particular ‘whatness’—the specific ‘what’ as which it ‘whiles’. It keeps in view the fact that, as temporality (care), it is a “non-identical actuality” (HCT 21). Resolute Dasein engages itself in the world in a lucid and completely fearless way, precisely because its engagement is a paradoxical engagement-*in*-disengagement, because there always remains a space or tension (King 182) between *itself* (insofar as it is: en-closed in, or belongs to, a world; present; a ‘this-here’; apprehensible in its actuality; at-home) and *itself* (insofar as it is: en-opened to what transcends the world, and belongs nowhere; non-present; not-yet ‘here’; unthought possibility; not-at-home).

A little like the Nietzschean Child of the Three Metamorphoses, which joyously posits the rules of its play/game (*Spiel*), and wills the inevitable destruction of its creation, resolute Dasein joyfully risks itself (*se met en jeu*) in the free play of the world (Wahl 177),¹⁰⁸ authentically choosing what role it wishes to, but also in a sense *must*, play, while anticipatively “[disclosing to itself] that its uttermost possibility lies in *giving itself up*, (...) thus [shattering] all [its] clinging to whatever existence [it] has reached” (SZ 264).¹⁰⁹ Indeed,

¹⁰⁸ My brief exposition of Heidegger’s conception of ‘play’ is indebted to two sources: the first is J. Wahl’s lecture course on Heidegger’s *Einleitung*, published under the title *Introduction à la pensée de Heidegger* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1998), pp. 155-177; the other is J. Greisch’s essay “The ‘Play of Transcendence’ and the Question of Ethics” in *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY, 2002), pp. 99-117. The majority of the passages which I have cited from GA 27 come from Greisch’s essay, though I have modified almost all of his translations.

¹⁰⁹ In this sense, Heidegger avers, resoluteness stands in “secret alliance with the cheerfulness and gentleness of creative longing (*schaffende Sehnsucht*)” (P 93), and resolute Dasein can be compared to “those daring (*Verwegene*: bold, audacious, rash) ones [who] are sustained by that on which they expend (*verschwendet*:

perhaps the best way to illuminate Heidegger's notion of resoluteness or the authentic Hearing of the call is to link it to Heidegger's conception of play. In both the 1928/1929 lecture course *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, and again in a later series of lectures, *The Principle of Reason* (1955/1956), Heidegger teaches that a "play character" lies in the essence of Dasein (GA 27: 310). The reason for this is that "the understanding of Being" which essentially belongs to Dasein's being rests upon "the teetering ground of a *game*" (GA 27: 318; PR 112); i.e., to understand being is "to play the game, to game (*erspielen*), to be trained in these games" (GA 27: 315). This, in turn, is connected to the fact that the basis of Dasein's understanding of being, transcendence, is itself said to be nothing other than play (GA 27: 314, 323). What is the game which transcendence plays?:

'World' is the title for the game which transcendence plays. Being in the world is this original playing of the game which every single factual Dasein must attune itself to (*sich einspielen muß*: jump into, take part in) in order to be able to play itself, that which will be factually so or so played with Dasein for the duration of its existence (GA 27: 312).

The "game" of existent, being-in-the-world, is, at once, a "free formation", and "the formative binding of oneself to and in the playing formation itself" (GA 27: 316). It is the game of the world which:

engages us mortals who are who we are only insofar as we live in proximity to death, which as the most radical possibility of existence is capable of bringing what is most elevated to the clearing and lighting of being and its truth. Death is the as yet unthought standard of measure of the unfathomable, which means, of the most elevated play in which humans are engaged in on earth, a play in which they are at stake (PR 112).

waste, throw-away, squander) themselves—in order thus to preserve the ultimate grandeur (*Grösse*: greatness, rank) of Dasein" (P 93). This 'self-expense' to which resoluteness is akin is reminiscent of another Nietzschean image: the (self)sacrifice on the altar of the nothing to which the *Übermensch* is called.

The “unthought standard of measure” for Dasein’s “transcendental play” is Death. It is both the unsurpassable limit of Dasein’s play, and that which enables Dasein’s world-play.

Dasein’s “transcendental play” is thus equiprimordial with *both* Dasein’s being “not factually, but metaphysically and according to its essence, without bearing (*Haltlos*)”, and Dasein’s necessarily seeking-out and being reliant-upon bearing (*Halt*). Thus, Heidegger tells us: “To be put into play, i.e., being-in-the-world, is in itself a lack of bearing, that is, the existing of Dasein must provide itself its bearing (*Halt*)” (GA 27: 337).

This brings me to the concluding passage of *The Principle of Reason*. Though the later Heidegger is here articulating his conception of the sending of being as world-play, it helps us understand, *mutatis mutandis*, what the early Heidegger means in calling the world that “game which the transcendence of Dasein plays”:

The *Geschick* of being, a child that plays, shifting the pawns: the royalty of a child—that means, the *arche*, that which governs by instituting grounds, the being of beings. The *Geschick* of being: a child that plays. In addition, there are also great children. (...) the greatest royal child is that mystery of the play in which humans are engaged throughout their life, that play in which their essence is at stake. Why does it play, the great child of the world-play (...)? It plays, because it plays. The “because” withers away in the play. The play is without “why”. It plays because it plays. It simply remains a play: the most elevated and the most profound (113).

Dasein’s transcendental play projects a world; it sets in place its rules (Wahl 164), or a “given range of what is possible” (P 133). The world is thus a historical phenomenon, through and through. Every world is an ordering, an economy, a configuration of possibilities, and set of parameters. Every world thus has its ordering principle (*arche*), its *ratio*, paradigm (*eidōs*) or *Grund*. Within these parameters, certain actions, certain possibilities, are considered fitting (*schicklich*) or appropriate (‘proper’ to the temporally particular Dasein), and others unfit,

inappropriate. But what must be remembered is that, to Heidegger, no *telos* or *logos*, no meta-narrative or supra-historical and over-arching principle, governs, i.e., provides a stable ground for, the appearance and disappearance of each historical constellation (the advent and decline of each epoch in the history of being).¹¹⁰ Whether we are talking about Dasein's world-forming "transcendental play", as in the early Heidegger, or of history as essentially determined by the *Geschick* of being, as in the later Heidegger, it remains true that the world itself as historical phenomenon is "without why", that it is grounded in Freedom (a groundless ground).¹¹¹ In *On the Essence of Ground*, Heidegger formulates this as follows:

The ground that springs forth in transcending folds back upon freedom itself, and freedom *as origin* itself becomes 'ground'. *Freedom is the ground of ground.* (...) Freedom's being a ground does not—as we are always tempted to think—have the character of *one* of the ways of grounding, but determines itself as the grounding unity of the transcendental strewal of grounding. As *this* ground, however, freedom is the *abyss of ground* (*Ab-grund*) in Dasein. Not that our individual, free comportment is groundless; rather, in its essence as transcendence, freedom places Dasein, as potentiality for being, in possibilities that gape open before its finite choice, i.e., within its destiny. Yet in its world-projective surpassing of beings, Dasein must surpass itself so as to be able to first of all understand *itself* as an abyss of ground from out of this

¹¹⁰ As Schürmann explains: "À la fin d'une époque, son principe dépérit. Le principe d'une époque est ce qui lui donne cohésion, une cohérence qui pour un temps va sans dire et sans question. À la fin d'une époque, au contraire, dire et questionner cette cohérence deviennent possibles (...) La raison justificative a son temps. Elle s'établit, règne, puis périlite. Son établissement, le régime qu'elle impose, puis son péril la montrent essentiellement provisoire. Les raisons justificatives ont leur généalogie et leur nécrologie. Elles sont époquales. Elles s'érigent sans plan directeur, les unes après les autres, et elles s'abaissent sans préavis. Ainsi le principe d'une époque commande celle-ci, mais il a lui-même un commencement. Il se lève, c'est-à-dire il a son *arché*, dans ce qu'on appelle les crises d'histoire" (37); "aux seuils entre époques, les ordres se confondent et se brouillent—d'un embrouillage révélateur. À ces transitions, l'origine se montre autrement que comme *arché* et principe" (50).

¹¹¹ After all, what Heidegger wishes to signify by calling the world the "game" which Dasein "plays" in its transcendence, is, as J. Wahl puts it: "la multiplicité, la mutabilité et la contingence du monde, et aussi de la réalité humaine [Dasein] à laquelle il est relié" (162).

elevation (P 134).¹¹²

It also remains true that “humans, in the concealed grounds of their essential being, first truly are when in their own way they are like the rose—without why” (PR 38).¹¹³

If I may extrapolate slightly from what Heidegger actually says about resoluteness, I think it is consistent with Heidegger’s overall presentation of resoluteness to maintain that the Dasein which, in its resoluteness, remains aware of its being fundamentally without why, continuously wills to “challenge” itself in its “historical being-there” (IM 11; FCM 21-23), to hold itself questioningly outside of the predominant Order (IM 12-13), to “transgress the limits of the familiar” or “customary” in its “tending”, as the “doer-of-violence” (*Gewalt-tätige*),¹¹⁴ towards the “uncanny/not-at-home” (IM 150).¹¹⁵ If, in addition, the reader will grant me the hermeneutical license to expand upon an edifying parallel which Heidegger himself establishes in an earlier text (viz., *On the Essence of Ground*—see footnote

¹¹² In *The Principle of Reason*, which the later Heidegger wrote as a sequel and corrective to the work from which I have just quoted, Heidegger shifts the emphasis to *being*: “Being ‘is’ the abyss in the sense of (...) a remaining-apart of reason from being. To the extent that being as such grounds, it remains groundless. ‘Being’ does not fall within the orbit of the principle of reason, rather, only beings do. (...) Being and *Grund*: the same. Being: the abyss.” (51); “The grounds that essentially determine humans as having a *Geschick* stem from the essence of grounds. Therefore these grounds are abysmal” (37).

¹¹³ Finally, whether discussing either the early or the later Heidegger’s conception of the ground of world-formation, it remains appropriate to appeal to the following passage from Novalis (as does Heidegger in *PR*) for clarification: “Should the highest principle contain the highest paradox in its task? Being a principle that allows absolutely no peace, that always attracts and repels, that always anew would become unintelligible as soon as one had understood it? That ceaselessly stirs up our activity—without ever exhausting it, without ever becoming familiar? According to old mystical sayings, God is something like this for the spirits” (quoted in PR 13).

¹¹⁴ In his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger affirms that “the use of violence (*Gewaltbrauchen*) is the fundamental trait not only of [Man’s] action, but also of his being-there” (IM 149-150, Translation modified).

¹¹⁵ Which, as I’ve shown, is the “basic trait of the essence of Man, to which every other trait must always be brought back” (IM 151).

109), and thus consent to my using a passage from *Introduction to Metaphysics* dealing with “creators and men of action” to shed further light on the nature of resoluteness, I should like to quote the following:¹¹⁶ “Pre-eminent in the site of history [these creators and men of action] become at the same time *a-polis*, without city and place, lonely, strange, and alien, without issue amid beings as a whole, at the same time without statute (*Satzung*) or border (*Grenze*), without structure (*Bau*) or order (*Fug*), because they themselves, *as* creators must first create all this” (IM 152-153, Translation modified). In a sense, resolute Dasein, which has been individuated down to its “mysterious (*geheimnis*) ground of Freedom” (IM 12), can be likened to these creators. Its primal leap (*Ur-sprung*) or original (*Ursprung*) decision, its “world-forming transcendental play”, both holds it out into the *a-polis*, and brings it out of the *a-polis* into the ‘game of the *polis*’. Which is why resoluteness is the authentic and eminent form of Dasein’s cyclical being as care, i.e., the whole formed by Dasein’s constant vacillation between its positive and negative poles, or, as Safranski puts it, dispersal and “recueillement” (255).¹¹⁷

I would like to conclude by once more going beyond the letter of Heidegger’s text to what I regard as its inner logic. Specifically, I would like to suggest that in holding before itself the “play-character” of its engagement in the “game of the world”¹¹⁸, resolute

¹¹⁶ Though not before warning the reader that Heidegger here uses the term *Polis* in a broad, ontological sense, to mean “the place, the there, wherein and as which historical being-there is”.

¹¹⁷ As Scott writes: “[Heidegger’s] account of Dasein’s authenticity takes its departure from the finite, temporal movement that is the condition of possibility both of meaning and no meaning, that is, from the questionableness of meaning in being to death” (1993: 69).

¹¹⁸ Which remains utterly serious, despite its being recognized as a “game”, and does not devolve into mere frivolity. This is not unlike the play of children, which Heidegger takes to be ‘more authentic’ than the play of everyday adults (Wahl 163). Perhaps what Heidegger means by this is that children tend to totally engage

Dasein manifests to itself the nothing which is the ground of its existence *in and through* its active being-in-the-world; in other words, it gains access to the Horrible or Monstrous (*ungeheuerlich*) ‘kernel’ of its being, the “*reine Da-sein*”, the uncanny and de-personalized ‘it’ which “is all that is still there” in the “clear night” of *Angst* (P 89), in a mediated manner, i.e., *in its everydayness*.¹¹⁹ After all, as Heidegger’s commentary in *Introduction to Metaphysics* on the first Chorus of Sophocles’ *Antigone* suggests, the fact that Dasein is essentially not-at-home (*unheimlich*: Heidegger’s translation of the Greek *deinon*) makes every resolute acceptance, imposition, or choosing of a home a necessarily violent and “excessive gesture of groundless decision” (Zizek TS 16, 49), one that reveals and exacerbates the nullity it simultaneously conceals, and thus represents a kind of third term between Dasein’s withdrawal in *Angst* and its immediate presence in undifferentiated everydayness (IM 149-152; Zizek TS 16, 49). If I may be permitted a childish expression: resolute Dasein plays house.

This brings to an end my exegesis of the call of conscience, which I have used as a platform to acquaint the reader with the basic concepts of *Being and Time*. In the next chapter, I will argue that these basic concepts imply, or implicitly comprise, an ethic.

themselves in their play, and to bind themselves to the rules which they themselves have posited for their game, while all the while acknowledging the “play-character” of their game.

¹¹⁹ In the 1930 lecture series *The Essence of Human Freedom*, Heidegger calls Man’s uncanniness (*unheimlichkeit*: not-at-home-ness) Monstrous/Horrible/Awe-inspiring (*ungeheuerlich*) (94). The fact that, in resoluteness, Dasein recognizes the fact that it must be itself *sur le mode de ne pas l’être*, gives added significance to the fact that, in its being, Dasein “goes about its very being”—i.e., Dasein’s being is an issue (*es geht um*) for it. For in addition to dealing with, going around, circling, etc, the verb *umgehen* also means to avoid, detour, bypass or evade something.

Chapter 3: THE LATENT ETHICS OF *BEING AND TIME*

Quel critérium adopter pour juger les hommes?
— Proust

3.1. Introduction

In the last chapter, I tried to lay bare the nature and function of the call of conscience in Heidegger's most important work of fundamental ontology, *Being and Time*. It was hoped that this would provide a concise, yet thorough overview of *Being and Time*'s basic concepts and themes. The chapter culminated in an exposition of the proper or authentic mode of Hearing, i.e., of responding to, or heeding, the call. In this third chapter, many of the concepts which I have dealt with in the previous chapter, and especially those related to resoluteness or the authentic mode of Hearing the call, will be taken up again, though now with the specific aim of demonstrating that they have an unacknowledged ethical import, that they comprise a latent Heideggerian ethic. When I say that the alleged ethical bearing of *Being and Time* is 'unacknowledged', I am not claiming to be the first to have discerned in *Being and Time* at least the seeds of a Heideggerian ethic. This would be to ignore the myriad books and articles that have already been written on the topic, in which it has been argued that *Being and Time* either implicitly contains an ethic, though interpretations vary as to what this ethic actually consists in, or that, given a sufficient amount of creative manipulation or re-construction, *Being and Time* can be made to yield an ethic—i.e., an ethic can be derived from the overt content of *Being and Time*; it supplies the fundamental-ontological foundation for an ethic.¹²⁰ On the contrary, what I mean by 'unacknowledged' is

¹²⁰ Representatives of the first view include R. Safranski's *Heidegger et son temps* (Paris: Grasset, 1996), p. 243; and M. de Beistegui's "Homo Prudens" in *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY, 2002),

simply that, for reasons which I will seek to make clear, Heidegger himself would never have accepted the notion that in *Being and Time* he was somehow promulgating an ethic, or that *Being and Time* holds the promise of a full-fledged Heideggerian ethic. Thus, and here the secondary literature is in almost universal agreement, any claim that *Being and Time* contains an implicit ethic, the makings of an ethic, or even a “moment of ethics”, will have to be made “against the letter of Heidegger’s own warnings” (de Beistegui 118-119). In sum, since, on the one hand, the purpose of this chapter is precisely to demonstrate that *Being and Time* contains a latent ethic—injunctions rather than pure phenomenological descriptions—and since, on the other hand, Heidegger explicitly banishes the question of ethics from his fundamental ontology, I will have to stray from Heidegger’s intentions as I labour to disclose the ethic implicit in, or, better, the *possible ethical ramifications of*, Heidegger’s existential analytic.

3.2. Heidegger’s (Ambiguous) Proscription of Ethics in *Being and Time*

As I have just stated, the aim of this chapter is to exhibit the ethic entailed by, or latent in, *Being and Time*—and this, despite the fact that, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger himself repudiates any suggestion that his fundamental ontology carries an ethic. In this section, I would thus like to: a) present Heidegger’s explicit proscription of ethics in *Being and Time*; and b) demonstrate how this overt proscription is, in many important ways, more ambiguous than Heidegger would have us believe.

p 118. As for the second position, see, by way of example: L. Vogel’s *The Fragile ‘We’: Ethical Implications of Being and Time* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1994), pp. 7 & 9; F. Olafson’s *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: a Study of Mitsein* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), pp. 3, 6-7; and C. Sherover’s “Founding an Existentialist Ethic” in *Human Studies* (4: 1981), p. 223. Naturally, I will be examining, or at least referring to, these and other works as I proceed.

As I explained in the preceding chapter, the avowed aim of *Being and Time* is to show how time functions as the transcendental horizon for the understanding of being. As I also made plain, Heidegger's declared procedure is to carry out, as a kind of necessary propaedeutic to this ultimate task, a (supposedly) strictly descriptive, existential analysis of that being to whose being there belongs, essentially and constitutively, an understanding of being: viz., Dasein. The stated ambition of Heidegger's existential analytic is thus purely ontological: its design is to uncover the transcendental structures of Dasein's inherent understanding of being, in order to shed light on the enigma of being. Accordingly, the Heidegger of *Being and Time* "repeatedly insists that he is not doing ethics, that philosophy has no room for ethics, and that his concepts are purely 'descriptive' and contain no moralizing criticism or negative value judgements"(Solomon 228). This, despite the fact that his analysis of Dasein's everydayness routinely makes use of attributes and phrases which, were it not for Heidegger's vigorously and vigilantly guarding against such a "misunderstanding", would otherwise automatically be considered pejorative. Indeed, Heidegger's caveats and admonitions against such a "misinterpretation" may strike some as rather unconvincing, given the fact that, as just mentioned, he depicts everyday Dasein, and the social relations which take place within this mode of being, in such unmitigatedly derogatory and unflattering terms.¹²¹

Perhaps it is because of this 'misleadingly' critico-moralistic language that on at least four occasions in *Being and Time*, Heidegger makes sure to expressly reject the

¹²¹ To enumerate but a few of these dubiously descriptive, i.e., non-evaluative, attributes, everyday Dasein is said to be: cunning, duplicitous, competitive, spying, backbiting, gossiping, superficial, uprooted, disowned, evasive, and alienated (see, esp.: SZ ¶ 27 & ¶¶ 35-38).

notion that with his existential analytic, he might be putting forward something even vaguely resembling an ethic. First, in the midst of a general discussion pertaining to the equiprimordial phenomena that make up the “everyday being of the ‘there’”, Heidegger cautions that: “In relation to these phenomena, it may not be superfluous to remark that our own Interpretation is purely ontological in its aims, and is far removed from any moralizing critique of everyday Dasein” (SZ 166-167). Second, when Heidegger introduces the specific ‘existential’ *falling* as “a basic kind of being which belongs to everydayness” (SZ 175), he is quick to point out that “This term does not express any negative evaluation”; it is, he declares, a “definite existential characteristic of Dasein itself”, and “We would (...) misunderstand the ontological-existential structure of falling if we were to ascribe to it the sense of a bad or deplorable ontical property of which, perhaps, more advanced stages of human culture might be able to rid themselves” (SZ 175-176). This claim is repeated at SZ 179-180 where, after once again describing how Dasein’s falling “reveals an *essential* ontological structure of Dasein itself”, Heidegger professes that his “existential-ontological Interpretation makes no ontical assertion about the ‘corruption of human Nature’, not because the necessary evidence is lacking, but because the problematic of this Interpretation is *prior* to any assertion about corruption or incorruption. (...) Insofar as any faith or ‘world view’ makes any such assertions, and if it asserts anything about Dasein as being-in-the-world, it must come back to the existential structures which we have set forth”. Finally, after finding that, “*Because Dasein is essentially falling, its state of being is such that it is in ‘untruth’*”, Heidegger warns: “This term [i.e., untruth], like the expression ‘falling’, is here used ontologically. If we are to use it in existential analysis, we must avoid giving it any ontically negative ‘evaluation’ (*Wertung*)”

(SZ 222).

Turning, for a moment, to Heidegger's 1925 *History of the Concept of Time*, which, in many important respects, stands as a kind of precursor or penultimate draft of *Being and Time*, we find that many of the cautionary statements made in the latter (such as the ones I have just cited) were rehearsed in the former. Thus, in *History of the Concept of Time*, Heidegger highlights the importance of regarding phenomena such as tempting, tranquillizing, alienation and (self-)entanglement "always as characteristic and primary modes of the being of everyday Dasein", and adds: "It is not my intention to use what I have just said for moral applications or anything of that sort" (281). A little further, Heidegger reiterates this point even more emphatically:

It should be noted here that the explication of these structures of Dasein has nothing to do with any doctrine of the corruption of human nature or any theory of original sin. What is involved here is a pure consideration of structures, which *precedes* all such considerations. (...) Since this analysis time and again incurs this misunderstanding, let me emphasize that it proposes no covert theology and in principle has nothing to do with theology. (...) Falling, falling apart and all of these structures (...) *have nothing to do with morality and ethics or the like* (HCT 283; cf. 245, 273; KPM 166, Italics mine).

In light of the many excerpts I have just invoked, S. Sikka is right on the mark when she observes that:

In a sense, it is fair to say that *Being and Time* does not contain any ethics, and that producing ethical propositions is foreign to its aims and methodology. Its purpose, after all, is to work out a fundamental ontology, using a version of the phenomenological method developed by Husserl. It attempts, in short, to locate and articulate basic structures of reality, as given within experience. The analysis of *Dasein* which occupies the greater portion of the book forms part of this enterprise, laying out an interpretation of what its author takes to be general characteristics of human existence. If a moral philosophy is supposed to develop, and to justify, principles for human conduct, then providing such a philosophy falls outside the parameters of Heidegger's

project (4).

Heidegger's reasoning in proscribing ethics from *Being and Time* is thus fairly easy to follow: because *Being and Time* is a work of fundamental ontology, it operates at a level which is prior to any moral or ethical considerations.

Heidegger's use of this rationale is evident in his analysis of the call of conscience. During the course of his analysis, Heidegger takes pains to distinguish what he calls Dasein's originary (*ursprünglich*: primordial) being-guilty, i.e., the guilt which, as I explained in section 2.4, belongs to Dasein "in the ground of its being" (SZ 286), and devolves upon it simply insofar as it *is*,¹²² from Dasein's factual guilt, which is the "failure to fulfill some [positive] requirement" (SZ 283), one which may or may not be a specifically "moral requirement (*sittlichen Forderung*)" (SZ 282). In the authentic Hearing of the call which summons it to its ownmost being-guilty, Dasein seizes upon its capacity for self-determination in full recognition of the fundamental finitude that pervades, and, in a sense, grounds, its self-projection; Dasein takes hold of its capacity for self-projection in the awareness that this projection is one which is also thrown—which Dasein cannot master or get behind—and which cannot possibly fulfill, consummate, or exhaust Dasein's being as sheer and unfathomable possibility. In other words, a proper Hearing of the call spurs Dasein to assume responsibility for the being to which it has been delivered-over, to choose what to make of the situation it has inherited, or the factual possibilities at its disposal, while shouldering the burden of having to choose only one possibility at the expense of all others (SZ 285). Originary guilt thus has to do with Dasein's free self-circumscription; it has to do

¹²² As Heidegger puts it: "... 'guilty' turns up as a predicate of the 'I am'" (SZ 281).

with Dasein's imposing upon itself the limits which delineate or delimit its being, i.e., which give it its definite 'shape'. This choice is itself beset or circumscribed by the limits of Dasein's facticity, and what is chosen in the choice can never, structurally speaking, perfectly and essentially 'fit' the Dasein whose choice it is. Hence the guilt incurred by Dasein's embracing one (un)fitting possibility, while forsaking countless other (un)fitting possibilities.¹²³ Stated a little more straightforwardly, willing to have a conscience, which is tantamount to willing one's ownmost being guilty, is willing to choose (for) oneself. As such, and as Heidegger states quite clearly: "This being-guilty first gives the ontological condition for the fact that Dasein can become guilty while factically existing. This essential being guilty is, equiprimordially, the existential condition for the possibility of the 'morally' good and evil, that is, for morality in general and its possible factual forms" (SZ 286). Actions cannot be considered morally reprehensible or praiseworthy, unless they can be imputed or traced back to a free, i.e., self-responsible, agent. Since Dasein's being guilty is equiprimordial with its being free or self-responsible, it represents the condition for the possibility of morality. Given this fact—that "morality already presupposes [being-guilty] for itself"; that moral/factual guilt is a "derivative" of ontological/originary guilt—Heidegger feels entitled to conclude that "Primordial being guilty *cannot be defined by morality*" (SZ 286, Italics mine). It is,

¹²³ This is *not* to say that every possibility is equally (in)valid for the temporally particular Dasein, and that its concrete decisions are therefore arbitrary. Its decisions can find relative justification in the prevailing ethical paradigm or world-view, without being *fundamentally* justified, i.e., without absolutely fitting, or corresponding to, Dasein's innermost essence. As F. Schalow puts it: "Any grounds that one can ascribe to one's action, for example, in seeking moral justification, have as their counter-weight Dasein's negativity and finitude" (1995: 269). Hence, a factually 'righteous' or 'virtuous' Dasein can, and indeed *must*, still be ontologically or primordially guilty. See section 2.4 of this study for further qualifications and corrections to this view (i.e., that Dasein's decisions are arbitrary), as well as a more subtle exposition of Heidegger's conception of originary guilt in general.

furthermore, partly on the basis of this argument for the priority of ontological guilt that Heidegger maintains: “The idea of [originary] guilt must (...) be detached from relationship to any law or ‘ought’ (*Gesetz und Sollen*) such that by failing to comply with it one burdens himself with guilt” (SZ 283). In short, what must be noted here is that even when Heidegger introduces such a seemingly ethical-evaluative term as ‘guilty’ to characterize Dasein’s originary being, he insists that he is employing the term in a purely ontological-descriptive sense, which is prior to its ethical-evaluative usage.

Heidegger’s conception of originary guilt as independent of any “law or ‘ought’”, as well as, more broadly, his outright proscription of ethics from the purview of fundamental ontology, will be better understood once I have elucidated the connection, central to Heidegger’s thinking in *Being and Time*, between ethics, the they, and the ontological domain of what Heidegger calls the present-at-hand (*vorhanden*). I’ll begin by explicating the link which Heidegger draws between ethics and objective presence.¹²⁴ In *Being and Time*, Heidegger tends to equate ethics with the search for a positive hierarchy of values and norms, grounded in some objective order of being, i.e., an ontological order or set of commandments which, in being external to the will, sets boundaries upon it. A universal standard, usually the representation of a supposedly fixed and eternal human essence, is held up as the ideal of what it is good, i.e., what one *ought*, to do and be, and all particular actions are measured against this yardstick. In Heidegger’s opinion, ethical deliberation is thus a kind of calculative thinking which reckons how best to make Dasein conform to a given norm or “law”. It thus effectively reduces Dasein to the status of a present-at-hand object with

¹²⁴ The term is *Vorhandenheit*, which is alternately translated as presence-at-hand or substantial reality.

objectively ascertainable properties which can be taken care of or looked after. Guilt, in this context, is “necessarily defined as a *lack*”,¹²⁵ and “a lack, as the not being objectively present of what ought to be (*Nichtvorhandensein eines Gesollten*), is a determination of being of objective presence” (SZ 283).

To gain still greater insight into Heidegger’s association of ethics with the misapplication of the ontological category of objective presence to Dasein,¹²⁶ it is necessary to understand how the Heidegger of *Being and Time* ultimately views ethics as a symptom of Dasein’s fallenness, “entangled self-interpretation”, and slavish obedience to the they. Heidegger articulates this view most fully in his analysis of the “vulgar” or “everyday common sense” interpretation of being-guilty (SZ 281-282), and its correlate, the “vulgar interpretation of conscience”, which is “vulgar” precisely because “it keeps to what *they* know as conscience, how they follow it or fail to follow it” (SZ 289). Heidegger notes that, typically, i.e., in our everydayness as *they*-self, when we imagine being interpellated by the voice of our conscience, “*we expect to be told something actually useful about assured possibilities of ‘action’ that are available and calculable*” (SZ 294). “This expectation”, Heidegger continues, “is based on the horizon of interpretation of the commonsense way of taking care of things, which forces the existence of Dasein to be subsumed under the idea of a governable course of business” (*Ibid.*). It is thus Heidegger’s view that “Everydayness takes Dasein as something at hand that is taken care of, that is, is regulated and calculated” (SZ 289); it forces guilt “into the area of taking care of things in the sense of calculating claims and balancing

¹²⁵ The German term is *Mangel*, which could also be translated as shortcoming, deficiency, or blemish.

¹²⁶ “Dasein is essentially not a being-present-at-hand”; “The facticity of Dasein is essentially distinguished from the factuality of something objectively present” (SZ 104, 267; cf. 294; HCT 237, 239, 291; BPP 119).

them off” (SZ 283), and thus conceives of ethical action as “actualizing values” and “satisfying norms” (SZ 293). To everyday Dasein, it is “As if Dasein were a ‘household’ whose indebtedness [to itself by deviating from its presumed essence (not giving itself its ‘due’), and to others by reneging upon its contracts and obligations, or by infringing upon their rights (not giving them their ‘due’)] only needed to be balanced out in an orderly way for the self to be able to stand ‘next to’ these experiential occurrences as an uninvolved spectator” (SZ 293). The ethical relationship, be it to others or to oneself, is envisaged as a kind of moral economy: a series of transactions in which accounts are settled, outstanding debts are paid, errors are redressed, and restitution is made for damages caused. To quote yet another passage in which this concept is expressed: “The common sense of the they knows only what is sufficient or insufficient with respect to handy rules and public standards. It calculates infractions of them and tries to balance them off” (SZ 288).

The “vulgar interpretation of conscience” which accompanies this everyday common-sense conception of ethics is pacifying and reassuring even when, as ‘bad’ conscience, it reproves for past iniquities, or warns of future misdeeds. For, in order to have found itself, as the judge presiding over its own trial in the “court of conscience” (SZ 293), factually guilty, Dasein must already, on a certain level,¹²⁷ have bought into, or identified with, the conventional values, ideals, and norms which, in large part, originate, circulate, and even get enforced, anonymously in the they. Though it might have trespassed some article of the law of the land, the fact that the Dasein plagued by bad conscience reproaches itself for its

¹²⁷ The ‘level’ of what, ‘in’ Dasein, functions as the *ontic* Judge; that which, ‘in’ Dasein’s *they*-self, I am tempted to call its *Über-Ich* or *Ideal-Ich* (terms which I am, of course, transplanting, for heuristic purposes, from Freud’s metapsychology, and which are, strictly speaking, foreign to *Being and Time*).

transgression means that, in a very real and important sense, it has assimilated or internalized this law. This means that it is no longer suspended over the abyss of its own nothingness, with no foothold or ground to stand on; it has a star to guide it 'out' of its *Angst*, an established path to follow, a positive identity to which it can cling, and which is defined as the aspiration towards a certain self-ideal which it has not-yet attained. Even bad conscience thus essentially disburdens Dasein of the task of genuinely and radically having to choose (for) itself, *qua* pure *Seinkönnen* or nothingness, and suppresses any authentic Hearing of the call as a readiness for *Angst* and an "understanding of one's ownmost and constant being-guilty" (SZ 292). In fact, the more "vociferously" Dasein *qua* they-self talks about "mistakes", the further it "has slunk away from its ownmost being-guilty" (SZ 288). Given that what the call of conscience reveals is Dasein's essential being-guilty, and given that its function is to tear Dasein out of its comforting immersion in the they, it follows that "good conscience", i.e., the "becoming certain of not having done something [factually wrong]", is "not a phenomenon of conscience at all" (SZ 292). For rather than call Dasein to its essential being-guilty, it declares it "innocent" according to the standards and conventions upheld by the they. And rather than extricate Dasein from its falling-prey, it both promotes, and serves as an index of, Dasein's utter submersion and entanglement in its everyday they-self. Furthermore, the "good" conscience allows Dasein to believe that in conforming to whatever ontic ideals it has been provisioned with by the they, it is made perfect, impeccable. Another way of putting all of this would be to say that an "essential consciencelessness" is that "within which alone there is the existentiell possibility of *being* 'good'" (SZ 288). This crucial point merits repeating: Dasein can only be factually "good" if it is without conscience, if it represses, silences, or

disregards the voice which attests to its fundamental being-guilty. Bad conscience, on the other hand, represents a kind of halfway-house between the genuine call of conscience and the “good” conscience, which, as I’ve shown, is in fact a complete lack of conscience. For while it does call Dasein to a type of guilt, the guilt to which it points is only Dasein’s ontico-factual guilt, and its ultimate objective is to rid Dasein of this guilt and restore its “good” conscience. As such, it actually works to dispel Dasein’s *Angst*, shelter it from its own uncanniness, and relieve it of its most fundamental responsibility to choose (for) itself. For these reasons, the bad conscience can be said to be “oriented toward [the idea] of the ‘good’ conscience” (SZ 292).

All of this explains why Heidegger was so reluctant to develop an ethic, and why he was, at least at the time of his writing *Being and Time*, so quick to chastize those who sought an ethic in *Being and Time*. As I have just shown, the Heidegger of *Being and Time* equates ethics with the misapplication of the ontological category of objective presence to Dasein. Since one of Heidegger’s primary motives in writing *Being and Time* was to correct this long-standing misapprehension of Dasein’s being, it is clear why, in Heidegger’s mind, it was important not to confound his fundamental-ontological project with the search for an ethic; to Heidegger, the very success of his fundamental-ontological project depended upon the proscription of ethics from its domain. Based on what we have seen thus far, it would seem incontestable that, in the words of M. King: “In view of the fundamental-ontological aim of *Being and Time* (...) we cannot demand from it a fully worked out ‘ethics’ any more than a physics” (189).

Yet, it might reasonably be asked: Is Heidegger’s proscription of ethics in

Being and Time really as peremptory and unambiguous as I, following Heidegger's pronouncements on the matter, have made it out to be? After all, is it not the case that, as Heidegger openly concedes in *Being and Time*, the idea of authentic existence, and hence the entirety of Heidegger's existential analytic, is rooted in a factual ideal of Dasein? To initiate a transition between a discussion of "anticipatory resoluteness as the way in which Dasein's potentiality-for-being-a-whole has existentiell authenticity" (the topic of ¶ 62), and a treatment of the "methodological character of the existential analytic in general" (the subject of ¶ 63), Heidegger asks: "But does not a definite ontic interpretation of authentic existence, *a factual ideal of Dasein*, underlie our ontological interpretation of the existence of Dasein? That is indeed the case (*Das ist in der Tat so*)" (SZ 310, Italics mine). Earlier in *Being and Time*, Heidegger had affirmed that Dasein is *not* "to be construed in terms of some concrete possible idea of existence" (SZ 43; cf. 266). Contradicting this earlier claim, Heidegger now tells us that this even has a "positive necessity" (SZ 310), for:

where [else] are we to find out what makes up the 'authentic' existence of Dasein? Unless we have an existentiell understanding, all analysis of existentiality remains groundless. Is it not the case that underlying our interpretation of the authenticity and totality of Dasein, there is an ontical way of taking existence which may be possible but need not be binding for everyone? (...) Where does this Interpretation get its clue, if not from an idea of existence in general which has been 'presupposed'? How have the steps in the analysis of inauthentic everydayness been regulated, if not by the concept of existence which we have posited? (...) Is not everything already illuminated by the light of the 'presupposed' idea of existence, even if rather dimly? (SZ 312-313).

This is consistent with what Heidegger states in his first introduction regarding the fact that "the roots of the existential analytic, on its part, are ultimately *existentiell*, that is, *ontical*" (SZ 13). It is also concordant with what Heidegger has already told us about the

hermeneutical circle, which cannot be avoided, and must simply be entered into in the appropriate manner (SZ 152-153), because the act of interpretation, while striving for universal validity, is always embedded in a finite, historical situation; it is never undertaken *sub specie aeternitatis* (from the perspective of eternity; with a view from nowhere). But what must be retained for my purposes is the fact that, as L. Vogel puts it: “Heidegger admits that authenticity is a ‘factual *ideal*’ that governs the entire account of Being-in-the-world” (1).¹²⁸ Might this not mean that, contrary to what Heidegger doggedly maintains, *Being and Time* does actually entail an ethic? Or that an ethic illicitly, i.e., against Heidegger’s explicit intentions and design, makes its way into *Being and Time*? Such a conclusion is, in the eyes of R. Safranski, not at all implausible or outlandish, as he writes:

Bien des interprètes de *L’Être et le temps* se sont appliqués, dans la perspective d’une ontologie fondamentale, à souligner que la philosophie heideggérienne de l’authenticité n’était pas une éthique, afin de prévenir le soupçon d’un possible lien entre cette *authenticité* et l’engagement ultérieur de Heidegger en faveur du national-socialisme. Mais cela revient à surestimer le caractère formaliste de cette philosophie de l’authenticité. Heidegger lui-même n’a-t-il pas expressément déclaré que ‘l’idée de l’existence authentique se fondait sur un idéal facticiel de l’être-là?’” (239).

Moreover, it cannot be denied that in Heidegger’s all-important analysis of conscience, the call of conscience (*Gewissensruf*) carries an ought, that is, a summons, command, demand, or imperative which is always ‘heard’, though not always ‘heeded’ (i.e., Heard authentically). A number of passages could be cited to bolster this claim. For example, at SZ 287, Heidegger writes: “The calling back in which conscience calls forth gives Dasein to understand that

¹²⁸ Another scholar to have picked up on this point is King, who remarks: “Heidegger himself explicitly acknowledges that his ontological interpretation of existence is based on a definite ontic conception of owned existence, on ‘a factual ideal of Dasein’” (189).

Dasein itself—as the null ground of its null project, standing in the possibility of its being—*ought* to bring itself back to itself from its lostness in the they, and this means that it is *guilty*” (Italics mine).¹²⁹ Or again, at SZ 294, Heidegger tells us that the call “*summons*”¹³⁰ Dasein to existence, to its ownmost potentiality-of-being-a-self” (Italics mine). Further illustrative support for my claim is provided by the fact that: a) the declared purpose of Heidegger’s analysis of the call is to “investigate to what extent *at all* and in what way Dasein *bears witness* to a possible *authenticity* of its existence from its ownmost potentiality-of-being, in such a way that it not only makes this known as *existentielly* possible, but *demands* it of itself (*von ihm selbst fordert*)” (SZ 267; cf. 266); and b) what is discovered in the investigation is that the call of conscience “individualizes Dasein down to its potentiality-for-being-guilty which it *expects (zumutet)* it to be authentically” (SZ 307, Italics mine). Furthermore, in the section immediately following Heidegger’s conscience-analysis, we are told that resoluteness *demands Angst* of itself (SZ 305), and that *Angst*, in turn, “strives to *expect* resoluteness of itself” (SZ 308, Italics mine). Finally, Heidegger states at SZ 310 that “Anticipatory resoluteness is (...) the understanding that *follows (folgende)* the call of conscience and that frees for death the possibility of *gaining power over* the *existence* of Dasein and of basically dispersing every fugitive self-covering-over”. Admittedly, the term *folgende* could here be construed to mean following-on as a consequence, or the next event in a sequence. But given the fact that, as Heidegger makes exceedingly clear, resoluteness does

¹²⁹ In the German: “*Der vorrufende Rückruf des Gewissens gibt dem Dasein zu verstehen, daß es (...) aus der Verlorenheit in das Man sich zu ihm selbst zurückholen soll, das heisst schuldig ist*” (boldface mine).

¹³⁰ The German term is *aufruft*, which carries the sense of a judicial imperative or order.

not automatically or invariably succeed the ‘hearing’ of the call of conscience—rather, a choice is involved in this ‘following’—and, moreover, that such a serial conception of time is, according to Heidegger, deficient because it fails to capture the primordial, ek-static, temporality of such basic existential phenomena as resoluteness and the call of conscience, I think it is far more reasonable to interpret *folgende* in the sense of obedience, compliance, acceptance, or willingness.¹³¹ All of this goes to show that while Heidegger vehemently denies championing or advancing an ethics in *Being and Time*, it must still be said to contain at least the makings of an ethic. The call can be viewed as an injunction or ethical interpellation, and Heidegger’s proscription of ethics from *Being and Time* is, therefore, more ambiguous than it might appear upon first inspection—or than Heidegger himself was prepared to recognize.

3.3. Ethical Imperatives In (and Around) *Being and Time*

At this point, having explained Heidegger’s rationale in proscribing ethics from the field of fundamental ontology (*Being and Time*), and having indicated how this proscription might be more ambiguous than Heidegger would have us believe, the specific nature of the imperative(s) which Dasein can be said to ‘hear’ in being summoned by the call, and ‘heed’ in authentically responding to the call, should now be examined in a more systematic and detailed manner. Such an exercise, though vital, will inevitably consist in an elaboration upon, and clarification of, what I have already said in section 2.5 concerning the proper (*eigentlich*) way of responding to, or Hearing, the call. The difference, however, is

¹³¹ Hence, one could translate the passage in question so as to read: “Anticipatory resoluteness is the understanding that *obeys* [or: *willingly complies with*] the call of conscience (...)” (SZ 310).

that here I will be seeking to demonstrate the specifically ethical bearing of this proper way of Hearing the call. It is my contention that more or less implicit in *Being and Time* are three ‘oughts’—three things which the recipient of the call is summoned to, or which it ‘owes to itself’.¹³² As I will explain in this section, the call summons Dasein to: 1) actualize its essence *qua* self-responsibility (i.e., *Jemeinigkeit*); 2) respect itself *qua* autotelic (i.e., end-in-itself); and 3) preserve its ownmost potentiality-for-being *as* possibility. A fourth obligation is, as I will show, only very vaguely and indirectly entailed by the explicit content of *Being and Time*, but becomes ever more prominent in works subsequent to *Being and Time*: viz., philosophizing as an anxious, radical, and perpetual (self)questioning. I will begin with Dasein’s obligation to assume responsibility for its existence.

My discussion of Dasein’s obligation to self-responsibility will proceed more or less in two stages: first, I will review Heidegger’s conception of responsibility; second, I will present what justification I have for regarding this concept as an ethical imperative.¹³³ In order to understand what Heidegger means by responsibility, it should first be recollected what the call of conscience summons Dasein *from*: i.e., its fallen, being-in-the world in the mode of its everyday they-self. Heidegger summarizes this condition as follows:

With Dasein’s lostness in the they, that factual potentiality-for-being which is closest to it (the tasks, rules, and standards, the urgency and scope, of concerned and solicitous being-in-the-world) has already been decided upon. The they has always taken the seizing (*das Ergreifen*) of these possibilities-of-being away from Dasein. The they even conceals the way it has silently disburdened Dasein of the explicit *choice* of these possibilities. It remains indefinite who is ‘really’ choosing (*wer ‘eigentlich’ wählt*). So Dasein is taken

¹³² The relationship with *Others* to which Dasein is summoned by the call of conscience, i.e., what Dasein ‘owes to others’, will be dealt with in section 3.4 of this study.

¹³³ Generally speaking, this will be my procedure in dealing with each of the remaining obligations as well.

along by the no one, without choice, and thus gets caught up in inauthenticity (SZ 268).

Thus, the first obligation to which the call of conscience can be said to summon Dasein is “*making up for not choosing*”, that is, so to speak, “*choosing to make this choice*—deciding for a potentiality-of-being, and making this decision from one’s own self. In choosing to make this choice, Dasein *makes possible*, first and foremost, its authentic potentiality-of-being” (*Ibid.*). Indeed, as is attested to by the fact that Dasein is, essentially, an issue for itself (SZ 12) and in each case ‘mine’ (*je meines*) (SZ 41-43; BPP 170), Dasein’s essence is to be self-responsible, self-determining (SZ 259). As Heidegger puts it: “Letting one’s ownmost self (*eigensten Selbst*) act in itself of its own accord in its being-guilty (*Schuldigsein*)¹³⁴ represents phenomenally the authentic potentiality-of-being attested in Dasein itself” (SZ 295). Depending on where one places the accent, “choosing for oneself” or “self-choosing” can either mean autonomous decision-making, or seizing upon one’s ownmost self; choosing *for* oneself the possibilities to be pursued, or choosing *oneself* as it is revealed in the call of conscience. This equivocity is felicitous, as it perfectly reflects the fact that there are, for lack of a better term, two ‘levels’ to becoming-responsible (“*self-choosing*”): the choice *of* the choice, and the choice of definite choices; grasping oneself as essentially yet to be determined (i.e., *as* a capacity to choose), and grasping specific ontic possibilities. The first level is described by Heidegger in a passage from his *History of the Concept of Time*, of which I have already made partial use in section 2.5:

Dasein’s running forward toward death at every moment means Dasein’s drawing back from the they by way of a self-choosing. In choosing myself as

¹³⁴ It should always be remembered that *Schuldigsein* can also be translated as ‘being-responsible’.

my possibility I myself choose my being. (...) If Dasein in forerunning can bring itself into such an absolute resoluteness, it means that in this running forward toward its death Dasein can make itself responsible in an absolute sense. It 'can' *choose the presupposition of being of itself*, that is, it can *choose itself*. What is chosen in this choice is nothing other than *willing to have conscience* (...) *Forerunning is the choice of willing to have conscience* (HCT 319).

In a sense, the second level, the choice of definite ontic possibilities, consists in Dasein's world-forming projection of a 'for the sake of' before itself. This "surpassing [i.e., transcendence] in the direction of world" is Dasein's freedom. "Accordingly", Heidegger notes, "transcendence does not merely come upon the 'for the sake of' (*umwillen*) like a value (*Wert*) or end (*Zweck*) that would be present at hand in itself; rather, freedom holds the 'for the sake of' toward itself, and does so as freedom" (P 126). Significantly, Heidegger adds: "In this transcending that holds the 'for the sake of' toward itself there occurs the Dasein in human beings, such that in the essence of their existence they can be obligated to themselves (*auf sich verpflichtet*), i.e., be free selves. In this, however, freedom simultaneously unveils itself as making possible something binding, indeed obligation in general" (*Ibid.*).

It is important to realize that while Dasein in its freedom is obligated to itself in its electing to bind itself to a particular possibility, and while this free projection or choice, as grounded in Dasein's abyssal freedom, is fundamentally groundless, it is *not arbitrary* (Vogel 51). As I have already explained, Dasein gains its freedom to project, or self-responsibility, through the confrontation, to which it is summoned by the call of conscience, with its own death understood existentially. But the choices upon which Dasein can project "are not to be gathered from death" (SZ 383). Dasein has possibilities to project because its projection is a *thrown-project*; Dasein projects from out of the temporally particular circumstances into which it has been thrown. As Heidegger writes: "Dasein exists as thrown, brought into its

there *not* of its own accord. It exists as a potentiality-of-being which belongs to itself, and yet has *not* given itself to itself. Existing, it never gets back behind its thrownness. (...) The self, which as such has to lay the ground of itself, can *never* gain power over that ground, and yet it has to take over the ground in existing” (SZ 284). Hence, as I have shown in section 2.5, Dasein’s freedom or self-responsibility¹³⁵ lies in “[*handing*] itself *down* to itself, free for death, in a possibility which it has inherited, *and yet has chosen*” (SZ 384, Italics mine). In other words, self-responsibility consists in “the *repetition* [*“handing down explicitly”*] of a possibility of existence that has come down to us [or “has been”]” (SZ 385). This is to be inferred from the fact that in resoluteness or the proper mode of Hearing the call of conscience, in which Dasein assumes its being-guilty (i.e., being-responsible), Dasein “first chooses the choice which makes [it] free for the struggle of loyally following in the footsteps of that which can be repeated [i.e., the ‘hero’ which it has ‘chosen’]”(SZ 385).¹³⁶

Now, of capital importance here is the fact that self-responsibility is an *imperative* issued by the call of conscience: “The calling back in which conscience calls forth gives Dasein to understand that Dasein itself (...) *must (soll)* bring itself back to itself from its lostness in the they, and this means that it is *responsible*”.¹³⁷ As King writes, commenting on

¹³⁵ At what I have called its second level—the choosing of definite ontic possibilities.

¹³⁶ When it comes to shedding light on Heidegger’s very nuanced conception of self-responsibility, perhaps the most helpful passage is to be found in his *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (1928-1929): “That which does not arise of one’s own express decision, as most things for Dasein, must be in such or such a way retrievingly appropriated, even if only in the modes of putting up with or shirking something; that which for us is entirely not under the control of freedom in the narrow sense (...) is something that is in such or such a manner taken up or rejected in the How of Dasein” (GA 27: 337). The ‘How’ of Dasein is, of course, its being as self-responsibility, i.e., as a question or issue for itself. See my Introduction for further discussion of the concept of ‘repetition’.

¹³⁷ Earlier, I translated *schuldig* as guilty (as both Macquarrie & Robinson, and Stambaugh do). In now translating *schuldig* as responsible, I am following C. Sherover (234).

this passage: "...we must maintain that Heidegger is in fact making a concrete ethical distinction between owned and disowned existence; the very tone of rejection and contempt in which he speaks of the disowned *Man-selbst* is itself an ethical indictment" (190); or, again, "...in summoning Dasein to a decision about how he is to be, conscience itself gives him his first 'ought'. (...) Conscience does not merely inform Dasein of his owing-being [i.e., being-responsible], but summons him, demands from him to take it over for himself" (194). The imperative quality of this summons to self-responsibility becomes all the more patent in Heidegger's 1929-1930 lecture course, published under the title *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*.¹³⁸ There, Heidegger speaks of "the ultimate demand (*Zumutung*) upon man" which, he explains, "is the demand that [Man] necessarily shoulder once more his very Dasein, that he explicitly and properly take this Dasein upon himself. Man *must* first resolutely open himself up to this *demand* again (...)" Heidegger goes on to say that "It is the *liberation of the Dasein in man* that is at issue here. (...) the task *laid upon us* to assume once more our very Dasein as an actual *burden*. The liberation of the Dasein in man is one which human beings can only ever accomplish in and for themselves in each case from out of the *ground of their essence*" (FCM 171-172, Italics mine). Even in his public addresses and written

¹³⁸ I am granting myself the hermeneutical license to refer to slightly later works in trying to flesh out, or shed light on, the shadowy, unacknowledged, and latent ethical dimension of *Being and Time*, precisely on the assumption that what I have demonstrated to be dormant, implicit, nascent or undeveloped in *Being and Time*, might be more fully developed, or find more complete expression, in these later works. It is clear that there is a high degree of continuity between *BT* and the rest of the works which Heidegger produced before the *Kehre* of the late-1930s. For this reason, these writings can be of invaluable service in making explicit what is merely implicit in *BT*; their content can often be interpolated into *BT*, which is then read by their reflected light, as it were. But, admittedly, this procedure remains somewhat conjectural: for just because Heidegger, in a slightly later work, interprets, casts, or explains concept X in a certain manner, doesn't mean that concept X already bore that meaning in *BT*. To repeat, such a procedure is warranted *only* if the concept, in its later, more explicit form, can be demonstrated to be, in some facet, present (i.e., implicit) in, or a possible implication of, *Being and Time*.

statements as rector of the University of Freiburg, Heidegger speaks of self-responsibility as the “essential law for all human existence (*Dasein*)”, and an “absolute requirement” (119-120).¹³⁹ In sum, while, as we’ve seen, Heidegger certainly did not intend to give rise to ethical injunctions in carrying-out his existential analytic, i.e., his description of the basic structures of *Dasein*’s being, I believe I have shown that, for *Dasein*, self-responsibility has all the gravity of an imperative, even if this imperative remains largely implicit in *Being and Time*.¹⁴⁰

Continuing my survey of the ethical imperatives in (and around) *Being and Time*, I would like to underline the fact that the second ‘ought’ to which *Dasein*, as recipient of the call, is subject, is altogether tacit in *Being and Time*. To my knowledge, Heidegger nowhere overtly states that *Dasein* *must* respect its dignity as end-in-itself. This is in contrast to the first and third ‘ought’, which are both explicitly formulated as imperatives on at least one occasion in *Being and Time*. Yet such an imperative form might, as I will show, very well be implied by what Heidegger does have to say about *Dasein*’s autotelic nature. It should be noted, before I begin my treatment of this second ‘ought’, that I will be dealing with this specific injunction in greater detail in section 3.4 as an obligation to respect the autotelic nature of Others, i.e., a summons to what Heidegger calls ‘authentic solicitude’.

¹³⁹ Page numbers refer to F. Fédier’s French translation (Heidegger, Martin. *Écrits Politiques: 1933-1966*. Tr. F. Fédier. Paris: Gallimard, 1995). The translation from French to English is mine.

¹⁴⁰ It is worth repeating here that, if responsibility (“owned existence”) is indeed an ethical ideal, and many scholars have certainly interpreted it as such, it “assumes”, in the words of T. Kisiel, “the status of an *asymptotic* ideal, since I am called upon to become the author of an existence over which I never have absolute authority. Charged by life to take charge of It [the *es gibt* of my indefinite being], yet never discharging that debt, always remaining in deficit to It, an impersonal taskmaster ever exacting its due, over which I can never achieve mastery” (435; cf. Birmingham 117; Raffoul 212).

Now, as was alluded to above, and as was explained in some detail in the preceding chapter, the world in which everyday Dasein moves about in concerned circumspection—taking care of things which matter to it; getting things done—has the structure of a referential totality. The discrete objects with which everyday Dasein deals only have their being, which, to Heidegger, always means intelligibility or significance, in a network of assignments and involvements: i.e., in relation to their precise purpose or ‘in order to’; to other instruments; to their users; and so on. Thus, a pen *qua pen*, is not first and foremost a bare, spatio-temporal object of a certain dimension, weight, or any other quantifiable and empirically observable property, but a means for writing. It thus has its being only in relation to such other instruments as paper, ink, and tables, as well as, ultimately, certain life-defining goals which Dasein projects and holds before itself.¹⁴¹ Thus, in other words, the *causa finalis*, the supreme and overarching ‘in order to’, of Dasein’s existence is actually Dasein itself. Heidegger’s first account of Dasein’s nature as end-in-itself runs as follows:

(...) the totality of involvements itself goes back ultimately to a ‘towards which’ in which there is *no* further involvement: this ‘towards-which’ is not an entity with the kind of being that belongs to what is ready-to-hand within a world; it is rather an entity whose being is defined as being-in-the-world, and to whose state of being, worldhood belongs. This primary ‘towards which’ is not just another ‘towards this’ as something in which an involvement is possible. The primary ‘towards which’ (*primäre Wozu*) is a ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ (*Worum-willen*). But the ‘for-the-sake-of’ (*das Umwillen*) always pertains to the being of *Dasein*, for which, in its being, that very being is essentially an *issue*. We have thus indicated the interconnection by which the structure of involvement leads to Dasein’s very being as the sole authentic (*eigentlichen und einzigen*) ‘for-the-sake-of-which’; for the present, however, we shall pursue this no further (SZ 84).

¹⁴¹ For example, in the case of the pen, perhaps: poet, student, lawyer, or pen-maker.

As Heidegger later puts it: “In Dasein’s being the context of references or assignments which significance implies is tied up with Dasein’s ownmost being—a being which essentially can have no involvement, but which is rather that being *for the sake of which* (*worumwillen*) Dasein itself is as it is” (SZ 123; cf. 236). This claim—that Dasein is the *end* of its own being, that towards which it ultimately tends, what it is always out for—is reaffirmed in the almost exactly contemporaneous (1927) lecture course, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, and had already been made in *Being and Time*’s predecessor, the 1925 *History of the Concept of Time*. In the former, we are told that:

The Dasein exists in the manner of being-in-the-world and as such *it is for the sake of its own self* (*ist es umwillen seiner selbst*). It is not the case that this being just simply is; instead, so far as it is, it is occupied with its own capacity to be (*geht es ihm um sein eigenes Seinkönnen*). That it is for its own sake belongs to the concept of this existent being, just like the concept of being-in-the-world. The Dasein exists; i.e., it is for the sake of its own capacity-to-be-in-the-world (BPP 170).

As mentioned, this notion was already present, in embryonic form, in Heidegger’s *History of the Concept of Time*, in which it is stated that Dasein “can be taken neither as being-handly [i.e., ready-to-hand] nor as being on-hand [present-at-hand]” (HCT 239). Arguably, this is an imperative. Granted, Heidegger does not say Dasein *must* not be taken as a means. But on the other hand, it is obviously *possible* for Dasein to be treated, or, indeed to treat itself, as a means. Hence, Heidegger’s “can... neither” must not be taken in the sense of a description of a factual impossibility, but rather in the sense of an injunction. While it is true that, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger does not explicitly present Dasein’s essence as end-in-itself as something that Dasein *ought* to respect, such an obligation is strongly implied by Heidegger’s discussion. For the call of conscience does summon Dasein to its authentic, owned, or proper

(*eigentlich*) existence—to ‘become what it is’, so to speak. And since being an end-in-itself belongs to Dasein’s proper or own-most essence, it follows that in being summoned to authenticity, Dasein is called to respect its dignity as autotelic. An appropriate behaviour towards itself is thus, at the very least, implied by the notion that it *cannot*, and here I think it is permissible to read *must not*, be treated as a means: i.e., an ‘in-order-to’; “something in which an involvement is possible” (SZ 84).

The call of conscience can be said to convey a third ‘ought’, insofar as Dasein is summoned to the preservation of its ownmost potentiality-of-being *as possibility*. As I explained at length in the previous chapter, Dasein’s essence is, according to Heidegger, to be devoid of an essence (SZ 12, 117), to be an “absolute nothingness” (SZ 306), or pure potentiality-of-being, and, hence, to be an issue for itself. In other words, its ground is care, which “is in its essence thoroughly permeated with nullity” (SZ 285). Now, both “the nothingness primordially dominant in the being of Dasein”, and the complete “indeterminacy of its potentiality-of-being” are “revealed to [Dasein] in authentic being-toward-death” (SZ 306-308). Death, understood existentially, is thus Dasein’s ownmost, non-relational, certain, indefinite, uttermost, and not to be outstripped *Seinkönnen* (SZ 258-259); it is the ‘highest instance’ of Dasein’s potentiality-of-being (SZ 313). Moreover, given the fact that possibility defines Dasein in its essence, i.e., that “Dasein itself, insofar as it is, is nothing but *being-possible*” (HCT 298; CT 11), Heidegger can aver that, conceived existentially, possibility stands higher than actuality (SZ 38, 143; BPP 308). As Heidegger writes: “Ontologically, [possibility] is on a lower level than actuality and necessity. On the other hand, possibility as an *existentiale* is the most primordial and ultimate positive way in which Dasein is

characterized ontologically” (SZ 144). This ‘intrinsic being-possible’ is pure or absolute: “it knows no measure at all” (SZ 262). In its essence, Dasein is a super-abundance or surplus (*Überschuß*) of possibility (GA 26: 248). As B. Vedder has shown, “This being of Dasein in the abundance of possibilities involves that it is attended by a primary dissatisfaction or insufficiency with regard to all entities” (357). Dasein’s being as mortal temporality “is necessarily richer and more pregnant than anything that may arise from it” (BPP 308; cf. P 128). This means that it can never coincide with, or be fulfilled by, the limited and determinate ontic possibilities into which it must, in order to be *this*, temporally particular or “factual” Dasein, always already have “diverted its potentiality-for-being” (SZ 146). Dasein is essentially and primordially: a ‘not-yet’ (SZ 145, 233-234, 242-244) or ‘not-yet-having’; a ‘not-being-settled’ (SZ 236); a ‘neediness’ (KPM 265), ‘lack’, or ‘being-out-for-something’ (HCT 294-295). It is therefore never “at-home” (SZ 189; HCT 289). As Heidegger puts it: “Dasein is essentially *underway towards something*; in caring it is toward itself as that which it still is not. Its own sense of being is to always have something before itself which it still is not, which is still outstanding. That something is always still outstanding means that the being of Dasein as care, insofar as it is, is *always incomplete*; it still lacks something as long as it is” (HCT 308). This lack is “not merely a pure and simple objective not-having” (HCT 295) that could be pinpointed and rectified; it is ontological/structural, it has to do with the fact that as soon as Dasein does perfectly coincide with, or is no longer outstripped by, its essence—as soon as there is “‘nothing more outstanding’ for it”—it is “also no longer Dasein. (...) Its wholeness makes it vanish” (HCT 308). Dasein *is* the unending movement of its temporal *ek-stasis*; it *is* its self-transcendence. Accordingly, and as Vedder also notes, Dasein can be

“stipulated as motion”, for it “never finds itself at rest. If Dasein is essentially after something, this means that that which Dasein is directed at will never become a permanent (fixed) possession” (358; cf. Scott 1993: 78).

Now, as I also explained in the last chapter, this being fundamentally unsettled or uncanny, this being a not-yet, is itself unsettling—the source of Dasein’s *Angst*. Everyday Dasein tends to flee or evade itself as uncanny, and conceal its ownmost being as pure potentiality or “being-towards-death” (SZ 253; 185, 189). In Heidegger’s words: “For the most part, everyday Dasein covers up the ownmost possibility of its being (...). This factual tendency to cover up confirms our thesis that Dasein, as factual, is in ‘untruth’” (SZ 256-257). This “inappropriate certainty”, which “does not dare let [Dasein] become transparent” in its essential, *futural* being, tries to pass Dasein’s death off as something *actual* which is (thankfully; reassuringly) still to come, and thus veils “death’s ownmost character as possibility” (SZ 258; cf. 253). Furthermore, by restricting its “possible options of choice to what lies within the range of the familiar, the attainable, the respectable—that which is fitting and proper [the *Diktat* of the they]”, that is, by sticking “to what is proximally at its everyday disposal”, “the average everydayness of concern becomes blind to its possibilities, and tranquillizes itself with that which is merely ‘actual’” (SZ 194-195; cf. 262). Concordantly, in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger tells us that: “Inauthentic self-understanding experiences the authentic Dasein”, but only in its “peculiar ‘actuality’ (*Wirklichkeit*)” as it “reflects itself to itself from out of that to which it has given itself over [i.e., the world of its concern]” (160).

An extreme case of this “dimming down of the possible as such” (SZ 195; cf.

261) is to be found in what Heidegger calls “urge”. An urge “seeks to crowd out other possibilities” (SZ 195); it “suppresses” Dasein’s “explicit being-ahead-of-itself”. As urge, “care is now merely the concern for a ‘towards this and nothing else’” (HCT 296). Urge, as such, therefore “blinds” (*Ibid.*). As Heidegger explains, “*Urge is care which has not yet become free*”. But, Heidegger continues, “Against the care which has not yet become free in the urge, against the attachment of propensity,¹⁴² there is their liberation in the sense that they are not simply let go but are themselves fulfilled in their way of fulfilment in *pure (echten: ‘genuine’) care*” (HCT 297); “they are both to be modified in an ontical and existentiell manner by care—by care as something authentic” (SZ 196).

What is being intimated here, or what we have just now caught a glimpse of, is the proper or authentic way in which Dasein *ought* to be towards its ownmost possibility, and to which each Dasein is summoned in ‘hearing’ the call of conscience. As Heidegger writes: “Being toward this possibility, as being-toward-death, *should (soll)* relate itself to that *death* so that it reveals itself, in this being and for it, *as possibility*” (SZ 262). As P. Birmingham explains, the proper “relation between Dasein’s being and [its] uttermost possibility of death *calls for the inviolability of the possible*” (121, *Italics mine*).¹⁴³ Thus, instead of “concernfully” ‘making the possibility available’ as “something actual”, Dasein, in its authentic

¹⁴² Propensity (*Hang*: alternately translated as ‘addiction’) is defined as “being out for Dasein’s evasion of itself in being-involved-in” (HCT 296); “What one is addicted ‘towards’ is to let oneself be drawn by the sort of thing for which the addiction hankers” (SZ 195).

¹⁴³ Birmingham also notes that in a later essay, viz., *Overcoming Metaphysics*, Heidegger calls this “the inconspicuous law of the possible” (OM 110). She then adds: “The inconspicuous law of the possible demands that one act so that the possibility of the impossible not be made actual. This law gives the ‘ground’ of emancipatory solicitude [see section 3.4]: to let the death of the other be as its uttermost possibility so that the other is free to be in his or her authentic potentiality-for-being” (121).

being-towards-death, i.e., anticipatory resoluteness, must let “the possibility of the possible just [become] ‘greater’. *The closest closeness which one may have in being towards death as possibility, is as far as possible from anything actual*” (SZ 262). Dasein’s ownmost potentiality-for-being must be disclosed “*as a possibility*”, and in “being-towards-death this possibility must not be weakened: it must be understood as possibility, it must be cultivated *as possibility*, and we must *put up with it as possibility*, in the way we comport ourselves towards it” (SZ 261). Dasein’s proper relationship of being to its ownmost being as pure *Seinkönnen*, “must be such that it lets [its essential] possibility stand as a possibility, and not such that the possibility becomes actual”; an authentic relationship to my ownmost possibility in anticipatory resoluteness “must be such that I am precisely the *possibility* itself” (HCT 317, Italics mine). Only thus does Dasein become “free *for* its ownmost potentiality-for-being” (SZ 144):

Just how this is achieved, given the fact that, according to Heidegger, Dasein becomes ‘visible’ (= intelligible; = *a being*) only in receiving, or willfully taking on, some sort of limitation (*Einschränkung*; see GA 26: 248), and hence Dasein *cannot* remain¹⁴⁴ a bare potentiality or nothingness, was discussed, in some depth, in section 2.5. It is neither desirable nor necessary for me to repeat everything that was said there about the special nature of anticipatory resoluteness—the proper Hearing of the call; the most eminent form of disclosure—as play, and as Dasein’s willing of itself in and through its determinate, ontic

¹⁴⁴ I do not wish to suggest that there is ever a time ‘before’ Dasein takes on its definite ontic identity (possibilities), in which it *was* a pure potentiality. Such a linear conception of time is not applicable to the temporality of Dasein, which, as care, always already “contains death and guilt equiprimordially”—is always already *both* this, temporally particular, factual Dasein, *and* an essential nullity or bare *Seinkönnen* (though everyday Dasein seldom recognizes this fact) (SZ 306).

possibilities. Suffice it to say that in being called to a preservation of its potentiality-for-being as possibility, Dasein is “summoned back to the stillness (*Stille*) of itself (...), to become still” (SZ 296). This does not mean an abatement or attenuation of Dasein’s activities as being-in-the-world, an ascetic withdrawal from the world—as if that were existentially possible—or something of the sort. On the contrary, an authentic Hearing of the call “amounts to an intensification of life” (de Beistegui 119) through the realization of its fundamental ephemerality, fragility, and mystery. However, it might not be too far-fetched to describe Dasein’s proper or authentic being as a kind of ‘existential asceticism’ (Kisiel 405-406, 550-551 n.8), in the sense that resolute Dasein, in the reticence to which it has been summoned, puts itself in play, engages itself in a particular enterprise, commits itself to a specific ontic identity, while at the same time holding itself back, i.e., holding fast to its uncanny essence as pure possibility. Reticent, Dasein ‘heeds’ the “soundlessness of [its] uncanniness” (SZ 296). It dwells in the *Stille* of its innermost essence as “silent power of the possible” (SZ 394), in the depersonalized ‘hollow’(the nothing and nowhere) of its being, even as its everyday involvement in the world is galvanized or intensified. Thus, in resoluteness, Dasein invests both its world, and the role it occupies or has been assigned within this world, with meaning, without depending on them as Absolute or Ultimate sources of meaning; it never loses sight of the fact that none of the possibilities which its world places at its reach are definitive of its being.¹⁴⁵ This, in short, is that to which Dasein is called, in being summoned to preserve its being as pure potentiality. Here, again, we see that despite the tenacity and vociferousness of Heidegger’s claims regarding the exclusively descriptive nature of his fundamental ontology,

¹⁴⁵ Which, as I have shown, is defined only by its being in-definite, un-definable, un-limited possibility.

Being and Time does, at the very least, have possible ethical ramifications, if it doesn't in fact, and I believe I have shown it does, contain more or less implicit ethical injunctions—i.e., a latent ethic.

To complete my exposition of the ethical imperatives to be found in *Being and Time*, I would like to suggest that there is a fourth obligation which Dasein can be said to hold toward itself, one which is only really presented in works written after *Being and Time* in the late twenties and early thirties, but which might still be implied by Heidegger's discussion of resoluteness as the proper Hearing of the call. This fourth obligation is to philosophizing as a ceaseless, angst-laden, and courageous 'holding oneself in question'.¹⁴⁶

In his famous Davos debate with Ernst Cassirer, Heidegger states quite boldly that "freedom only is and can only be in (...) setting-free (*Befreiung*: liberation, emancipation). The sole, adequate relation to freedom in man is the self-freeing of freedom in man" (KPM 200). "This setting-free", Heidegger continues, "must be the sole and central [thing] which philosophy as philosophizing can perform" (*Ibid.*). Hence, it can be said to have, as its essential, incumbent task "to surrender (*auszuliefern*) man, even radically, to anxiety" (*Ibid.*). This view is expressed throughout Heidegger's writings during the period extending from the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927, to his 1935 lecture-course, *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Thus, in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, we are told that philosophizing, which "must maintain itself in nothingness, in finitude, (...) is the opposite of

¹⁴⁶ I confess that even in these slightly later works, in which philosophizing (not as a pedantic or scholarly exercise, but as a way of life—i.e., as a *praxis*) is tacitly presented as something of an ideal or higher form of existence, it might still be overstating things to characterize it as an obligation, binding upon Dasein *qua* Dasein. My aim isn't to prove that this is the case beyond a shadow of a doubt, but simply to show that it is possible to take Heidegger's notion of philosophizing in this manner.

all comfort and assurance. It is turbulence, the turbulence into which man is spun, so as in this way alone to comprehend Dasein without delusion”, and “precisely because the truth of this comprehension is something ultimate and extreme, it constantly remains in the perilous neighbourhood of supreme uncertainty” (FCM 19-20). In addition, philosophizing is described as a ‘hopeless’ and ‘terror-filled’ activity, “for in it there becomes manifest something essential about all philosophical comprehension, namely that in the philosophical concept, man, and indeed man as a whole, is in the grip of an attack (*Angriff*: challenge)—driven out of everydayness and driven back into the [abyssal] ground of things” (FCM 21).

This general characterization of philosophy is upheld in *The Essence of Human Freedom* (see: 14, 33, 94), as well as *Introduction to Metaphysics*, though in the latter philosophizing is understood and designated simply as “questioning”. Thus, in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger asserts that “The determination of the essence of man is *never* an answer but essentially a question” (IM 140, 143), and that, therefore, “It is questioning contending [i.e., what Heidegger earlier called “philosophizing”] that first brings man back to the being that he himself is and must be. Only as a questioning, historical being does man come to himself; only as such is he a self” (IM 143; cf. GA 27: 214).¹⁴⁷ Dasein, as essentially not-at-home or uncanny, must constantly ‘decide’ not to let itself become “mired” or “caught in the beaten paths” of its everyday, customary or familiar *habitus*—the world which it *in-habits*, *zunächst und zumeist* (IM 157). It must resolve to always maintain a

¹⁴⁷ This passage should be read alongside the following from Heidegger’s *Einleitung*: “Philosophizing as the letting occur (*Geschehenlassen*) of transcendence is the freeing of Dasein. (...) The original letting be (*Gelassenheit*) of Dasein lies in the letting occur of transcendence as philosophy (...)” (GA 27: 401).

critical distance, tension, or space for ‘dialogue/conflict’ (*Auseinandersetzung*), between itself and whatever factual identity it has taken on, to hold itself questioning outside any established world-view, *ethos*, or conventional frame of reference. “But”, as Heidegger points out, “such essential decision must use violence if it is to persevere against the continuous pressure of involvement in the everyday and commonplace”, if it is to “wrest” Dasein from its “home in what happens to be nearest and most familiar to [it]” (IM 168). It is in this resolve to hold itself in question that “Dasein’s most uncanny (*unheimlichste*)¹⁴⁸ possibility shows itself: breaking the preponderance of being¹⁴⁹ by exerting the most supreme violence against itself. Dasein has this possibility not as an empty way out (*Ausweg*); no, insofar as it is, Dasein *is* this possibility, for as Dasein it must, in every act of violence,¹⁵⁰ shatter against being” (IM 177).¹⁵¹

That Dasein, in order to truly *be* Dasein, is under an obligation to philosophize, becomes a little more apparent in Heidegger’s Rectorial addresses, and even more so in his 1935-1936 lecture course, published under the title *What is a Thing?* In the former, Heidegger characterizes “being knowing” as a kind of lucid mastery of things which is intimately tied to “being resolved to act” in one’s proper being-toward-death (123), and

¹⁴⁸ Which, since Dasein is essentially *unheimlich*, means *most essential*.

¹⁴⁹ I.e., the predominant, concrete, and temporally particular Order or world as which being has ‘properized’ (*ereignet*) or manifested itself (cf. GA 27: 381-383).

¹⁵⁰ It must not be forgotten that Heidegger has defined Dasein—as question, questioner, and creator—as the doer of violence (IM 149-150).

¹⁵¹ “Hier zeigt sich die *unheimlichste* Möglichkeit des Daseins: in der höchsten Gewalt-tat gegen sich selbst die Übergewalt des Seins zu brechen. Das Dasein hat diese Möglichkeit nicht als leeren Ausweg, sondern es ist diese Möglichkeit, sofern es ist; denn als Dasein muß es in aller Gewalt-tat am Sein doch zerbrechen” (135).

“questioning” as a perilous exposure to the problematicity of one’s own being, i.e., as “the courage, with our questions, to follow the abysses of our existence (Dasein) without ever backing away from their vertiginousness, this courage is in itself (...) a higher response [than any mere ‘information’ provided by a convenient ‘system’]” (106, 123).¹⁵² This “trenchant” knowing, especially with respect to oneself as being-towards-death (135), is described as an exigency or requirement (128-130). Finally, in *What is a Thing?*, Heidegger states that “By the degree, each time freely chosen, of the freedom of knowing, that is, by the inexorability of [its] *questioning*, a people always fixes for itself the *rank* (*Rang*) of its Dasein. The Greeks saw in the power of questioning all the *nobility* of their *Dasein*; their power of questioning was for them the measure of their difference from those who could not or would not question. These, they called barbarians” (31-32).¹⁵³ Heidegger goes on to say that the necessity of questioning stems from the fact that it is “only in questioning that we will become the *masters* of that which, without questioning, by its self-evident intelligibility, would oppress us” (QC 32; cf. SZ 21). Later still, Heidegger compares this act of questioning to leaping over one’s shadow, and asserts that “this is what all philosophy *must* want”, for it is its “vocation” (160).

In the second chapter, I argued that, granted the license to extrapolate slightly from what Heidegger explicitly says about resoluteness, it is consistent with Heidegger’s overall exposition of the proper Hearing of the call of conscience to suppose that resolute Dasein continuously wills to hold itself in question in the manner I have just described. In the

¹⁵² See footnote 139.

¹⁵³ The translation is mine. Page numbers refer to the French edition (Heidegger, Martin. *Qu'est-ce qu'une chose?* Tr. J. Reboul & J. Taminiaux. Paris: Gallimard, 1998).

present chapter, I have tried to show that if such philosophizing/questioning isn't explicitly presented as an obligation, it certainly has the tenor of an ethical injunction. After all, Heidegger does declare that Dasein—in order to *be* Dasein; to actualize its 'essence'; to stay true or loyal to its innermost possibility—*must* continuously engage in such self-challenging questioning. Can any hint or trace of this injunction be found in *Being and Time*, beyond simply being consistent with Heidegger's notion of resoluteness?

Resoluteness is, as I have said before, the "primordial truth of existence".

Now, as Heidegger makes clear: "To any truth, there belongs a corresponding holding-for-true (*Für-wahr-halten*)", and this "explicit appropriation of what is disclosed or discovered is *being-certain (Gewiß-sein)*". Hence, "The primordial truth of existence requires an equiprimordial being-certain in which one holds oneself in what resoluteness discloses" (SZ 307). What, Heidegger asks, "*does the certainty belonging to such resoluteness mean?*". As was just intimated, this certainty, Dasein's authentic "knowledge of the self" (SZ 287), "*must hold itself in what is disclosed in resolution*" (*Ibid.*). In part, this simply means that resolute Dasein must 'hold itself' in the factual situation as it has been disclosed. But, as I have shown, this *also* means "*keeping oneself free for the possibility of taking [that which has been resolved-upon in the situation] back. (...) The holding-for-true that belongs to resoluteness tends, in accordance with its meaning, toward constantly keeping itself free, that is, to keep itself free for the whole potentiality-for-being of Dasein*" (SZ 308). Thus, as L. Vogel notes: "Far from entailing a decisionistic close-mindedness or dogmatism, authenticity would seem to encourage a self-critical skepticism: a recognition that since no resolution is absolutely warranted, one's own assertions should remain tentative and open to objections" (67).

Can we retrospectively draw a parallel between such critical self-knowledge or being-certain, and Heidegger's slightly later conception of philosophizing? Heidegger himself did not seem to shy away from such an interpolation. For in a marginal note to the passage in *Being and Time* which runs: "In choosing to make this choice [i.e., willing to have a conscience; 'heeding' the summons of conscience to responsibility], Dasein *makes possible*, first and foremost, its authentic potentiality-for-being", Heidegger remarks, "a taking place (...) of philosophy, freedom" (SZ 268). Thus, it can be said with some confidence that an injunction to philosophizing as a 'holding oneself in question' is a possible implication of the explicit content of *Being and Time*.

3.4. Liberating Solicitude and Authentic *Miteinandersein*

Having disclosed the nature of the specific obligations which Dasein can be said to bear towards itself, i.e., the injunctions, more or less implicit in *Being and Time*, which Dasein delivers to itself by means of the call of conscience, and by which it summons itself to its proper, ownmost, or authentic being, I will now seek to determine whether Heidegger's ostensibly pure description of existential phenomena in *Being and Time* also entails, or implicitly contains, certain obligations on Dasein's part toward its fellow Dasein. In other words, my task will be to demonstrate how, despite what I have shown to be Heidegger's adamant refusal to acknowledge an ethical dimension to the fundamental ontology of *Being and Time*, the call of conscience can nevertheless be said to summon Dasein to an (ethically) appropriate relationship with, or behaviour towards, *Others*. This will mark my final step in fulfilling the overarching purpose of this chapter which, it should be recalled, was to establish that and how *Being and Time* implies, or implicitly contains, an ethic.

An understanding of what it is that Dasein is revealed by the call of conscience to be 'owing' Others will be facilitated by a review of Heidegger's crucial ontological distinction between persons and things. It will be recalled that in its average everydayness Dasein:

never finds itself otherwise than in the things themselves, and in fact in those things that daily surround it. It finds *itself* primarily and constantly *in things* because tending them, distressed by them, it always in some way or other rests in things. Each one of us is what he pursues and cares for. (...) We understand ourselves and our existence by way of the activities we pursue and the things we take care of. We understand ourselves by starting from them because the Dasein finds itself primarily in things. (...) As the Dasein gives itself over immediately and passionately to the world itself, its own self is reflected to it from things (BPP 159).

For reasons which I have already made clear, Dasein exhibits an inborn proclivity to (mis)interpret itself as a determinate and essential *what*, "as if it were a table, house, or tree" (SZ 42). It tends to reify itself (SZ 46), to comport itself towards itself as though it were a thing—an object either present-at-hand or ready-to-hand—even though these modes of being are, as Heidegger is eager to underscore, "essentially inappropriate to entities of Dasein's character" (SZ 42). For Dasein does not just unfold or actualize its essence like other entities. On the contrary, "*The 'essence' of Dasein lies in its existence*". This means that "the being of any such entity *is in each case mine*. These beings [viz., Dasein], in their being, comport (*verhält*) themselves towards their being. As beings with such being, they are delivered over (*überantwortet*) to their own being. *Being* [especially their *own*] is that which is an issue for every such being" (SZ 41-42).¹⁵⁴ In this sense, "Dasein is an entity which does not just occur (*vorkommt*) among other entities" (SZ 12). It is "essentially not a being-present-at-hand; (...)

¹⁵⁴ "*Das Sein ist es, darum es diesem Seinden je selbst geht*" (SZ 42).

its ‘spatiality’ cannot signify anything like occurrence (*Vorkommen*) at a position in ‘world-space’, nor can it signify being-ready-to-hand at some place” (SZ 104). Dasein’s being is a problem or issue for it; it is that which is at stake in its being-towards the concrete possibilities which it has chosen in its world-projecting. Dasein’s existence therefore has the character of the ultimate ‘for the sake of’, or final cause, of its own existence. It is an end-in-itself. As Heidegger explains: “That Dasein gives ‘itself’ [the signification of whatever possibilities it is able to comport itself towards] from out of ‘its’ world then means: In this coming toward itself from out of the world Dasein gives rise to itself as a *self*, i.e., as a being entrusted with having *to be*. In the being of this being *what is at issue is its potentiality for being*. Dasein is in such a way that it exists *for the sake of itself*” (P 121; cf. MFL 189). As such, Dasein *cannot* be treated as an object ready-to-hand, i.e., as a means or instrument towards some further end. In Heidegger’s words: Dasein “is not just another ‘towards-this’ as something in which an involvement [i.e., an assignment to a further end] is possible” (SZ 84).

Now, as I mentioned in the last chapter, equiprimordial with Dasein’s being-*in* (the world) is Dasein’s *Mitsein* or *Mitdasein* (its being-with or Dasein-with). Dasein’s being-with is “an existential characteristic of Dasein even when factually no Other is present-at-hand or perceived” (SZ 120). The world in which Dasein dwells is a with-world, and Dasein can *be-there* only in a referential whole which includes other Dasein(s).¹⁵⁵ As an essential component of Dasein’s being, being-with must be interpreted “in terms of the phenomenon of *care* (*Sorge*); for as ‘care’ the being of Dasein in general is to be defined” (SZ 121). What is

¹⁵⁵ I have bracketed the ‘s’ because, strictly speaking, it is wrong to refer to Dasein in the plural. Dasein is not a *what*—a particular instance of a universal—but rather an always-singular *who*.

of note here is that, as Heidegger relates: “Concern is a character-of-being which Being-with *cannot have as its own*, even though being-with, like concern, is a *being-towards (Sein-zu)* beings encountered within-the-world. (...) Those beings towards which Dasein as being-with comports itself do not have the kind of being which belongs to equipment ready-to-hand; they are themselves Dasein. These beings are not objects of concern,¹⁵⁶ but rather of *solicitude (Fürsorge)*” (*Ibid.*). In other words, as S. Sikka notes: “The ‘seeing’ that is appropriate to being with others, therefore, can never be the prudential looking around [*Umsicht*] characteristic of utilitarian “concern” (*Besorgen*) (15; cf. Sherover 227).

But what, more specifically, and in more positive terms, is this “appropriate form of comportment towards the other” (Sikka 15), which Heidegger designates as solicitude? According to Heidegger, there are two possible modes of solicitude. These correspond to the two fundamental modes of Dasein’s being: viz., authenticity and inauthenticity. In its most extreme form, inauthentic solicitude can be described as a kind of patronizing or condescending charity: i.e., a potentially demeaning relationship in which one (supposedly) able party steps in and takes care of the (supposedly) incapable or helpless party which, it is said, needs to be cared for, looked after, or governed. Heidegger’s description of this form of solicitude hardly needs comment, and is worth quoting in full:

[Inauthentic solicitude] can, as it were, take away ‘care’ from the Other, and put itself in his position in concern: it can *leap in* for him (*fur ihn einspringen*). This kind of solicitude takes over for the Other that with which he is to concern himself. The Other is thus thrown out of his own position; he steps back so that afterwards, when the matter has been attended to, he can either take it over as something finished and at his disposal, or disburden himself of it completely. In such solicitude *the Other can become one who is dominated*

¹⁵⁶ *Besorgen*: i.e., the *Sorge* appropriate for ready-to-hand objects.

and dependent, even if this domination is a tacit one and remains hidden from him. This kind of solicitude, which leaps in and takes away ‘care’, is to a large extent determinative for Being with one another, and pertains for the most part to our concern with the ready-to-hand (SZ 122, Italics mine).

It is this form of solicitude which manifests itself as empathy or compassion, as social conscience or a neighbourly regard for the welfare of Others. It is therefore, in its less extreme or invasive forms, something which no right-minded Dasein could ever wish away entirely. The form of disclosive understanding or seeing (*Sicht*) associated with this mode of *Fürsorge*, which is itself a mode of *Sorge*, is “considerateness”.¹⁵⁷ This backwards-looking understanding looks back to the Other Dasein’s thrownness in being-in-the-world, and looks to take over the Other Dasein’s care for this thrownness. In looking to shoulder or take-on the Other Dasein’s thrownness—its dependence on, or being-assigned to, a particular factual ‘here’; its lot, so to speak—the Dasein of inauthentic solicitude can end up stripping the Other Dasein of its independence, disburdening it of its self-responsibility, and, hence, cancelling its Otherness (Raffoul 217). In contrast, authentic or liberating solicitude leaps ahead (*vorauspringt*) of the Other “in his existentiell potentiality-for-being”, that is, in his factual and temporally particular determinations, “not in order to take away his ‘care’, but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time”. “This kind of solicitude”, Heidegger adds, “pertains essentially to authentic care—that is, to the existence of the Other, not to a ‘what’ with which he is concerned; it helps the Other to become transparent (*durchsichtig*) to himself *in* his care and to become *free for it*” (SZ 122). This is a dense, and highly charged passage. It will be more readily understood once I have elucidated the nature

¹⁵⁷ The German term is *Rücksicht*, which, literally translated, means looking-back or backwards-looking.

of the sight (*Sicht*) associated with this mode of solicitude, as well as how this form of solicitude is related to Dasein's self-interpellation in the call of conscience.

One thing, however, is already clear, and that is that scholars such as Vogel, Sikka (16), Sherover (227), de Beistegui (121), and Birmingham (115) are perfectly justified in their contention that, to quote Vogel: "in authentic *Mitsein* as 'liberating solicitude' we find the ultimate sense in which fundamental ontology is [or at the very least *entails*] a fundamental ethics" (68; quoted in Sikka 16). To Heidegger, liberating solicitude is "guided by (...) *forbearance* (*Nachsicht*: literally, forward-looking)". That to which *Nachsicht* looks forward cannot be a *what*, i.e., a definite, ontic possibility which lies somewhere in the future, for this would, in effect, reduce *Nachsicht* to, at best, *Rücksicht*¹⁵⁸ (mere considerateness), and, at worst, *Umsicht* or prudential 'looking-around'. Though Heidegger does not explicitly say so (Heidegger actually says regrettably little about either of solicitude's corresponding 'ways of seeing'), it can quite plausibly be surmised that what *Nachsicht* looks forward to, in liberating the Other in its essential being as care, is the Other's being as pure negativity or potentiality, i.e., as Death. This would explain why, in confronting its own innermost being as Death, as exacted by the *Angst*-laden call of conscience, Dasein, "as being-with", comes to "have some understanding of the potentiality-for-being of Others" (SZ 264). Liberating solicitude is thus the *Other*-oriented counterpart to anticipatory resoluteness; it is an extension or manifestation of Dasein's proper Hearing of the call, i.e., of its authentic *Selbstsein*. As Heidegger makes clear, anticipatory resoluteness or the authentic mode of Hearing the call of

¹⁵⁸ Just because *Rücksicht* looks *backwards* doesn't mean it isn't concerned with the future. Dasein's temporality is fundamentally futural. Hence, Dasein's thrownness (i.e., its past) is also a thing of the future.

conscience, “brings Dasein to the possibility of letting the Others who are with it ‘be’ in their ownmost potentiality-for-being [i.e., as nothingness], and also discloses that potentiality in solicitude (*Fürsorge*) which leaps ahead and liberates. Resolute Dasein can become the ‘conscience’ of others” (SZ 298).

Hence, it would appear that in summoning Dasein to its ownmost potentiality-for-being, the call of conscience also summons Dasein to a proper recognition of the ownmost potentiality-for-being of Others. What’s more, in this proper recognition of the Other’s being *as pure Seinkönnen*—that is to say, *as mortal temporality, fundamentally finite, an abyss of freedom, or care* (“thoroughly permeated with nullity”)—Dasein can be incited to “become the conscience of others”. Here we are offered some insight into how “It is from the authentic being a self of resoluteness that authentic being-with-one-another (*Miteinandersein*) first arises” (SZ 298). As I’ve shown, Heidegger characterizes Dasein’s everyday, inauthentic *Miteinandersein* as one which “dissolves one’s own Dasein completely into the kind of being of ‘the Others’” (SZ 126). In *History of the Concept of Time*, Heidegger articulates this as follows:

Right in its ownmost everyday pursuits, Dasein as being with the others is not itself. (...) What matters is only the others to whom one’s own Dasein itself belongs. These others, to whom one oneself belongs and who one is in being-with-one-another, constitute the ‘subject’, so to speak, which in its constant presence, pursues and manages every everyday concern. (...) [In the world of everyday concern] we move with others in modes of being in which every other is just as I am, where every distinction in occupation and profession collapses. (...) The Dasein allows itself to be carried along by the others in such a way that *the others in their distinctiveness vanish even more*. In the sphere of its possibilities of being, each is totally the other (HCT 245).

Inauthentic *Miteinandersein* is thus a form of community achieved on the basis of homogenization, standardization, and conformity. Its logic is that of the melting pot,

according to which the strength of the *community* is to be measured by the degree to which ‘*tous font comme-un*’, by the degree of assimilation or identification (Brogan 240). All genuine differences are levelled, and only the superficial veneer of plurality remains. While it is true that in this form of *Miteinandersein*, everyday Dasein “constantly lives in the *concern (Sorge) over being different from [others]*”, this difference is merely the difference of status or rank in a shared social hierarchy, and Dasein’s concern is “only to equalize that difference”, in the instance that is has “[fallen] behind others and wants to catch up”, or to maintain a difference that is only relative to a common standard, in the instance that “it has an advantage over [others] and is intent on keeping them down” (HCT 245). Dasein’s interactions with others are thus marked by “ambiguous and jealous stipulations” or “talkative fraternizing [i.e., commonality based on idle talk] in the they and in what the they want to undertake” (SZ 126).

In contrast, liberating solicitude, which is engendered by, or arises out of, anticipatory resoluteness, cultivates difference, respects the uniqueness of the Other by ‘letting it *be* in its ownmost potentiality-for-being’ (cf. Schalow 1995: 271), and even promotes the Other’s becoming-free for its innermost essence as an abyss of freedom by ‘becoming the Other’s conscience’ (I will examine what this means shortly).¹⁵⁹ Accordingly, the seeing which looks-ahead understandingly to the Other’s Death translates into a practice of forbearance, lenience, tolerance,¹⁶⁰ or even, one might say, a kind of Heideggerian *Caritas*. True recognition of both one’s own, and the Other’s, mortal temporality or finitude—of the

¹⁵⁹ As Raffoul remarks: “everything takes place as if it was precisely the *disruption* of (...) commonality between the I and others (...) which provided the basis for the very emergence of the other *as other* and therefore for the very possibility of an ethics of responsibility” (217).

¹⁶⁰ Any one of these three terms might very well serve as a translation of *Nachsicht*.

fundamental groundlessness of all one's projects¹⁶¹—entails reticently abstaining from passing judgement upon the Other in its difference (Babich 87; Caputo 258). Vogel describes the forbearance of liberating solicitude as follows: “The authentic response to the precariousness of one's own perspective on the world is to be responsible to the perspectives of others. The resolve to face ‘the truth of existence’ alone does not imply a dogmatic closure to other points-of-view; rather, it opens one to the plurality of perspectives on our existence given the partiality of any one” (99). This kind of self-problematizing forbearance is thus the essential counterpart to the reticence which comes with anticipatory resoluteness and “gives rise to (...) a *Miteinandersein* which is transparent” or “authentic”, because the speech by which its members *communicate*, i.e., reticent silence, discloses the fundamental ineffability or *incommunicability* of Dasein's being as *Nichtigkeit* and *haecceitas* (singularity) (Brogan 242; cf. Vogel 77). Thus, as de Beistegui concludes: “To the being-together of everyday existence in which one forgets oneself as singularity and lives according to the mode of the empty majority, we thus need to oppose the community of singularities, the *being-together* of which would precisely be the meaning of existence as such, the community of mortal factual existents” (123).

Soon after *Being and Time*, Heidegger presented his conception of authentic community as no longer based on “appropriation and ownership” (Brogan 241), on the ideal of perfect unison and accord, but rather on a resolute appropriation *of* disownment and alienation, and as fraught with tension and *polemos*, in much greater detail or explicitness in

¹⁶¹ I.e., that none of them are wholly definitive of what one should be; the Absolute Alpha and Omega of one's existence.

works such as *Introduction to Metaphysics*, *The Hymns of Hölderlin*, and *Contributions to Philosophy*. Nonetheless, I think it is fair to say that already in *Being and Time* the “community that Heidegger envisions sustains its being in common precisely by holding in question the closure of its own unity and holding its unity out toward and open to what has remained unsaid in its history. (...) At the heart of this community is a strife and an experience of lack and negation, but the negation is no longer conceived of in negative terms as what is in need of sublation and dialectical overcoming. The negation and lack belong to the fullness of possibility of this community” (Brogan 245). For, as Vogel rightly claims, the notion of authenticity in *Being and Time* “points toward a form of coexistence in which one remains attentive to others as centres of transcendence and possibility who are never subsumed by the public projects in which they happen to be absorbed” (71). Thus, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger contends that an “*authentic alliance*” or being “bound together (...) makes possible the right kind of objectivity (*die rechte Sachlichkeit*), which frees the Other in his freedom for himself” (SZ 122). While strictly speaking, *Sachlichkeit* does mean objectivity or reality, it should be remembered in this context that its root word, *die Sache*, can mean ‘cause’ in the sense of a political engagement or objective. Hence, in authentic *Miteinandersein*, the common cause (*Sache*) which unites many, singular Dasein(s) under a common banner, and thus imparts to them a certain ‘objectivity’ (*Sachlichkeit*), does so in a way that does not eradicate their singularity, strangeness (*Fremdheit*), Otherness (*Anderheit*), or uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*: ‘not-at-home-ness’). Thus, as W. Brogan keenly observes, “The community of possible beings [i.e., beings that have been “freed from the tyranny of the they”] stands face to face with the impossibility of all community” (243). In other words, the authentic

community is not an Ithaca of peaceful repose and belonging for the Dasein weary of its odyssey—of its being, in its essence, far from home and never quite at its destination. Nor is it a H(e)aven free of all discord and travails. The authentic community is one which maintains Dasein's essential alienation, its sense of rupture and estrangement, even as it, for that very reason, enables the nearest nearness of fidelity, comradery, and solidarity.¹⁶²

Now, Brogan calls this “community of singular beings” the “community of those who are going to die” (237). Due to the parsimoniousness of Heidegger's treatment in *Being and Time* of the question of authentic *Miteinandersein*, it remains impossible to prove that this is exactly what Heidegger had in mind. Nevertheless, Brogan's formulation strikes me as entirely consistent with what Heidegger does say in *Being and Time* about liberating solicitude and its relation to authentic being-with-one-another. His formulation is especially apt if it is considered in light of a rather ominous passage from Heidegger's 1934-1935 lecture course on Hölderlin's *Germanien* which reads:¹⁶³

Originary community (...) is thanks to the primordial link between *every individual* and that which, at a superior level, binds and determines each individual. Something must be manifest, which is neither the individual in itself alone, nor the community as such. The comradery of soldiers on the front does not come from a need to unite [e.g., because of some enemy threat]; its

¹⁶² At this point, the following passage from *On the Essence of Ground* becomes very pertinent: “And so the human being, existing as a transcendence that exceeds in the direction of possibilities, is a *creature of distance (Wesen der Ferne)*. Only through originary (*ursprüngliche*) distances that he forms for himself in his transcendence with respect to all beings does a true nearness to things begin to arise in him. *And only being able to listen into the distance awakens Dasein as a self to the response of the other Dasein in whose company (Mitsein) it can surrender its I-ness (Ichheit) so as to attain itself as an authentic self*” (P 135, Italics mine).

¹⁶³ Here I am continuing my hermeneutical practice of resorting to works slightly later than *Being and Time* in order to go beyond what *Being and Time* explicitly says, and shed light on what it leaves unsaid, half-said, or unanswered (provided adequate support is available in *Being and Time* to demonstrate that what Heidegger says in these later works is at least compatible with what Heidegger *has* said in *Being and Time*—i.e., that the later formulation is a possible implication of, or elaboration upon, the explicit content of *Being and Time*).

most profound and unique reason is that the closeness of death as sacrifice has first led each one to the same nullity (*Nichtigkeit*) which has become the source of an absolute belonging of each one to another. It is precisely the death that each man must die for himself alone that isolates each individual to the extreme, and it is death and the acceptance (*Bereitschaft*) of sacrifice that it requires which create, above all, the space of the community in which comradeship wells up. Does comradeship thus have its source in *Angst*? (...) Yes, if *Angst* is known as the metaphysical proximity of the absolute which is accorded only to autonomy and supreme acceptance (73).¹⁶⁴

Heidegger goes on to say that “If we don’t, *by force*, introduce in our *Dasein* powers that bind and isolate as absolutely as the freely consented sacrifice of Death, i.e., that go to the roots of each individual, and which reside in a manner as profound and complete in authentic knowing, there will never be ‘comradeship’: at most a particular form of society” (*Ibid.*). These comments should be taken in tandem with what Heidegger has to say in his addresses as rector of the University of Freiburg about the necessity of military service (which “hereafter encloses and penetrates the whole of *Dasein*” as “the acceptance of ultimate engagement”), or the necessity of a “trenchancy of will and lucidity of heart” to endure the greatest peril and sacrifice, i.e., *Dasein*’s being-unto-Death, out of which alone there can arise the “will to be a spiritual people”, that is, to affirm/will itself in its essence as self-responsible, and thus instate a genuine community (105, 106, 115, 120).¹⁶⁵

To conclude this section of my study, I believe Heidegger should be praised for having “abjured the domination of others because it infringes on their own sovereignty of

¹⁶⁴ My translation is based on Rogozinski’s, who quotes part of this passage (1991: 71). Page numbers refer to the French edition (Heidegger, Martin. *Les hymnes de Hölderlin: La Germanie et Le Rhin*. Tr. F. Fédier & J. Hervier. Paris: Gallimard, 1988).

¹⁶⁵ See footnote 139.

care” (Sherover 227), or, more broadly, for having expounded, even *malgré lui*,¹⁶⁶ an ethic of tolerance and respect for the freedom of Others. Moreover, it is no doubt true that “Heidegger’s thought of Dasein helps us think a primordial, factual, finite responsibility, one that manifests the essential exposure to alterity of human beings” (Raffoul 205). Yet the passages I have just cited from Heidegger’s Hölderlin lectures and political writings should give us pause, and perhaps temper our enthusiasm. After all, what *does* it mean to ‘become the conscience of others’, or to ‘disclose the Other’s innermost essence as pure potentiality (i.e., Death) in the solicitude which leaps ahead and liberates’? *Being and Time* gives us pitifully little to go on here, and any answer will unavoidably be conjectural. In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger states that since, “in spite of all our neediness, the oppressiveness of our Dasein still remains absent today and the mystery [of our being] is still lacking, (...) we must principally concern ourselves with preparing for man the very basis and dimension upon which and within which something like the mystery of his Dasein could once again be encountered” (172). If such preparation for the revelation of the enigma of Dasein’s being can be assumed to be tantamount to, or even a mere aspect of, what Heidegger meant by ‘becoming the conscience of others’, then it should be cause for alarm when Heidegger goes on to suggest that, as a vital first step in such preparations, “We must (...) call for someone capable of instilling *terror* into our Dasein once again” (*Ibid.*)¹⁶⁷. If the function of the call of conscience is to shatter Dasein’s fixation with the they and undo its entanglement in its they-self by summoning it to a terrifying, or, as Heidegger would have said

¹⁶⁶ It must not be forgotten that Heidegger always denied having introduced an ethic in *Being and Time*.

¹⁶⁷ Something, Heidegger adds, “even the Great War failed to accomplish”.

in *Being and Time*, anxious, encounter with its monstrous (*ungeheuerlich*) essence as Death, might ‘becoming the conscience of Others’ not involve instilling or inducing such terror (or *Angst*) in them? Moreover, who might this ‘terror’ be provoked by? Might it be provoked, as Rogozinski suggests, by “the *Führer* of knowledge, the thinker who thinks Death” (1991: 71) and is thereby empowered to take over his/her “own guidance (*eigene Führung*)” (SZ 21)? Or by “the *Führer* of war who inflicts this [death] in the name of the people”—the voices of the two *Führers* unifying “in a common call to death” (Rogozinski 1991: 71)?

Perhaps the Dasein of authentic solicitude frees the Other Dasein for its ownmost potentiality-for-being, i.e., Death, and enables the Other to assume responsibility for its own being, by acting, in the first ‘moment’, as a kind of quasi-Hegelian Master: forcing the Other to be “seized with *Angst*”, instilling in it “the fear of Death, the Absolute Master”, an experience in which “everything solid and stable [is] shaken to its foundations”, and ‘melts-away’, leaving only that which, by its very nature, is an essential remainder, i.e., “simple, (...) absolute negativity” (Hegel PS § 194). Out of the ashes of such an incineration (or liquification—to mix metaphors) of its being, there would arise, like a Phoenix, an authentic Dasein that has been freed for its ownmost being as an issue by the harrowing experience of Death, and is ready to take up the being which it has to-be, as its *own*. Thus, a kind of violence towards the Other, exactly parallel to the violence which Dasein inflicts upon itself in the philosophizing which it can be said to require of itself, may actually be the condition for the possibility of the Other’s being freed for its ownmost being as care or self-responsibility, and thus a proper manifestation of liberating solicitude. After all, “to care about the other’s existence or freedom” must, as Vogel astutely points out, “be distinguished from caring about

the other's welfare (...). The object of liberating solicitude is not the other's good but rather the other's capacity for having an authentic relationship to his own existence, the other's freedom to determine his own good for himself' (78; cf. 84).¹⁶⁸

At minimum, the possibility that liberating solicitude, i.e., 'becoming the conscience of others', should take the initial form of a terrorizing of, or violence towards, the Other—one which, of course, cannot destroy the Other—is not excluded by the explicit content of *Being and Time*. For, as I will show in my Conclusion, if *Being and Time* does contain a latent ethic, or bear ethical implications, it is also true that in Heidegger's analysis of conscience it is "the very difference between good and evil itself which is challenged as 'inauthentic', *indifferent* to thought" (Rogozinski 2002: 59). As King puts it: "Nowhere does Heidegger's interpretation [of conscience and, more broadly, Dasein in general] give us the slightest hint of how good and evil may be distinguished and decided upon" (173, 188). Hence, as I will also make clear in my Conclusion, if there is an 'ethic' implicit in, or implied by, *Being and Time*, and I believe I have shown that there is, it is an 'ethic' which "no longer gestures toward a morality of good and evil, of the will as a capacity to choose between good and evil (...)" (de Beistegui 128). It is an 'ethic' beyond good and evil: i.e., an 'ethic' in which the *how* of action has totally eclipsed, or taken precedence over, the *what* of action; an

¹⁶⁸ In contrast to Vogel's interpretation, I find Schalow's account of authentic solicitude either misleading or downright confused: "In *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes this way of responding to the *welfare* of the other, which acknowledges the singularity of his or her own way of being-free, [as] authentic or emancipatory solicitude. (...) Through this emancipatory solicitude, *Dasein champions the welfare of others in such a way that its interests, its administration of care, can extend to all corners of the world*" (2002: 37-38, Italics mine). Heidegger would never have described the solicitude which seeks to emancipate the Other as an interest in the Other's *welfare*. Freedom has nothing to do with *welfare* or *happiness*. Though resoluteness can be associated with a certain joy, it might very well be that, on the whole, freedom and happiness are incompatible. Heidegger is *not* a eudemonist.

‘ethic’ according to which the only good lies in the capacity to willfully determine the good for oneself, to will oneself as will in and through one’s concrete decisions, and to allow Others to exercise this capacity as well. In other words, it is an ‘ethic’ in which what is deemed good is not human welfare or happiness, but only the will as source of all values: the will as final goal of existence itself, and, therefore, the ultimate object of the will itself. This ‘ethic’ does not single-out any content as worthy of choice, but only valorizes the power of making this choice (i.e., the will). According to this ‘ethic’, then, “the good is only the good in evil”: i.e., the good resides in a willing *beyond* the limits of the present Order of being, of the good as it is presently defined, in order to be able to either willfully resolve upon, embrace, or endorse, this Order, or freely instate a new Order of being, a new paradigm or configuration of the good.

To recapitulate: I began this chapter by explaining both how and why Heidegger explicitly proscribes the question of ethics from the field of fundamental ontology. I also drew attention to those aspects of *Being and Time* which seem to contradict Heidegger’s alleged proscription of ethics, or at the very least render this proscription more ambiguous than Heidegger was prepared to recognize. I then provided a survey of the obligations—both to itself and to Others—to which Dasein can be said to be summoned by the call of conscience. I concluded with some cautionary remarks about the ethic which I have argued to be latent in, or entailed by, *Being and Time*. In addition to making clear how the latent ethic of *Being and Time* can be regarded as a retrieval of Kant’s practical philosophy as Heidegger casts it, my Conclusion will also take up and elaborate upon the cautionary or critical remarks which I have offered here.

Conclusion: THE LATENT ETHICS OF *BEING AND TIME* UNDERSTOOD AS RETRIEVAL OF KANT'S PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

Let each remain in the situation in which he was called.

— 1 Corinthians: 7, 20

C.1. *Being and Time*'s Latent 'Ethics of Authenticity'

In chapter 3, after showing how Heidegger himself explicitly placed the question of ethics outside the precinct of his fundamental ontology, I argued that *Being and Time* can nevertheless be viewed as implying, or even implicitly containing, an 'ethic'. In addition, I made manifest the specific character of the obligations which Dasein can be said to bear both towards itself, and towards Others, as well as how these obligations are revealed to Dasein by the call of its conscience. To conclude, I would like to offer some more general remarks about the nature of the 'ethic' latent in *Being and Time*, before finally demonstrating how this implicit, 'Heideggerian ethic' can be said to constitute a retrieval of Kant's practical philosophy—i.e., to stem from Heidegger's appropriative reading of Kant.

When it comes to the analysis of Heidegger's description of resoluteness and its repercussions for conventional ethics, my findings are in almost complete agreement with those of Charles Scott. Thus, for example, I think the results of my own study support Scott's contention that:

To be resolved in one's being to death provides no ground for concluding anything with certainty and puts in question the appropriateness of the kind of thinking that expects human existence to find its fulfilment on the basis of structures like those of good and evil (...). [*Being and Time* cannot be read] as finding an enclosed universal basis for normative ethical judgements. Resolution, by opening to Dasein's disclosive mortality, interrupts the enclosing structures necessary for traditional systems, concepts, and universal principles (1999: 214-215).

Moreover, Scott is correct to say that “If the being of Dasein were [determinate] and if it provided immediately a nature to be realized by individual action, ethics would not be put in question” (1999: 218), but that since the call of conscience reveals to Dasein its nature as fundamentally indeterminate,¹⁶⁹ “The voice of conscience, as the disclosure of Dasein’s being in the midst of everyday values and standards, functions to make those values and standards uncertain and to ‘call’ Dasein to its difference from who it is in its efforts to be someone recognizable in its culture” (1999: 217). Hence, Heidegger’s notion of authenticity—i.e., that mode of being in which Dasein lucidly seizes upon the fundamental ‘nonbelonging’ revealed to it by the call of conscience, and “[overcomes] the monopolizing power of valences and exigencies that define [who it is]” (*Ibid.*)—“puts Heidegger’s thought at an edge that is dangerous in the perspective of the values and meanings that tells (*sic*) us what is right and wrong at the most fundamental level of our culture” (1993: 73). Indeed, as Scott points out, the factual ideal of authenticity puts “the structure of ethics as such (...) in question” (1999: 218).

I do, however, have serious reservations about part of the conclusion at which Scott arrives. Scott’s analysis leads him to state that “as we turn to the possibility of *Eigentlichkeit*, (...) we are turning away from ethics as we know it even as we turn to Dasein’s determining itself in relation to its mortal disclosiveness” (1993: 75). So far so good. But Scott then, I think, goes too far when he asserts that “Nonbelonging interrupts both our heritage of ethics and the possibility of making authenticity into a new ethics” (*Ibid.*). What Heidegger’s account of authenticity interrupts is ethics *as we know it*. But

¹⁶⁹ I.e., as an essential “nonbelonging”.

there is no reason why this same account cannot offer at least the possibility—one which, of course, Heidegger never explicitly advanced, or even recognized—of an *altogether different form of ethics*: an “éthique de l’authenticité”, as Safranski puts it (243).

In the preceding chapter, I argued that *Being and Time* implicitly contains, or at least implies, such an ‘ethic’, insofar as Dasein is summoned by the call of its conscience to: 1) self-responsibility; 2) respect its dignity as end-in-itself; and 3) preserve its ownmost potentiality-for-being *as* possibility (with a possible fourth obligation being to philosophizing or ‘holding oneself in question’). I also showed how these self-directed imperatives translate into certain obligations towards Others. Before offering a few closing observations and cautionary remarks about the latent ‘ethic’ of *Being and Time*, I should like to point out that while I am by no means the first to have argued that *Being and Time* contains at least the makings of an ‘ethic of authenticity’—the quote from Safranski alone is sufficient proof of this—my study has contributed to the secondary literature on this topic by presenting a comprehensive overview of all of the isolated obligations which previous scholars have discerned in the call of conscience’s summons to authenticity, and even broken new ground in demonstrating how philosophizing can be understood as an ‘ethical’ imperative both in the works following *Being and Time*, and, if somewhat obliquely, in *Being and Time* itself. While many scholars have sought to show that Dasein owes both itself and others respect as a responsible being and as an end-in-itself, and while at least one scholar, P. Birmingham (see footnote 143), has intimated that Dasein should be viewed as summoned by the call of conscience to preserve its ownmost potentiality-of-being *as* possibility, no commentator has argued that the radical, anxious, and perpetual (self)questioning/criticism involved in

Heidegger's notion of philosophizing also qualifies as an ethical injunction.

This being said, I would like to make a few general, closing observations on the so-called 'ethic of authenticity', as well as expand upon some of the critical remarks I made at the end of the last chapter. The latent 'ethic' of *Being and Time* is, in a sense, a kind of "self-realization ethics" (Sherover 226). The call of conscience summons Dasein to, so to speak, 'become what it already is'. As Heidegger puts it: "*Resoluteness (...) is only the possible authenticity of care itself* [i.e., Dasein's ownmost being], *that is, the authenticity which, in care, and as care, is the object of care itself*" (SZ 300-301). In other words, Dasein's own being as "existence" or care is the "true object of action, that which needs to be enacted" (de Beistegui, 129). Resoluteness, Dasein's *proper* being, "constitutes the *loyalty* of existence to its own self" (SZ 391), and an 'ethic of authenticity' is thus "an ethics of the self"—a "matter of self-appropriation, (...) of persevering in [or coming to] one's being" (de Beistegui 130). With regards to Others, Heidegger's existential analytic suggests that "a proper understanding of my own being entails an appropriate manner of conduct towards any entity that, like myself, counts as a person [i.e., Dasein]" (Sikka 18). *Being and Time*'s latent, 'ethic of authenticity' thus enjoins a tolerance of the Other in its irreplaceable uniqueness and irreducible difference, as well as a respect of the Other's dignity as end-in-itself and self-responsible. An 'ethic of authenticity' thus fosters a community based on plurality and a dialogical openness to what is still unthought, unsaid, or 'un-done', to possibility and Otherness.

An 'ethic of authenticity'¹⁷⁰ is therefore a paradoxical *anti-ethic*, insofar as it

¹⁷⁰ It might even be advisable to put the term 'ethic' under erasure—cf., de Beistegui 125.

exhorts Dasein to hold every ethics in question, and an *ethic of alienation*, insofar as it exhorts Dasein to hold *itself* in question. It militates against all enclosure (captivity to, or confinement in, a set of *mores*; a particular *ethos* or *habitus*), all limitation of possibility (the inflexible and authoritarian imposition of *dike*—Greek for ‘law’, ‘limit’, or ‘boundary marker’), and all dogmatism (the Absolutization of one standpoint or *doxa*; the repressive preservation of ‘*ortho*’-doxy and ‘*ortho*’-praxy). It subverts the principles (*archai*) which have traditionally governed or grounded ethical conduct. It is thus an ‘ethic’ which calls one to lead—to borrow a term from Foucault—an “*anti-fascistic life*” (135).¹⁷¹

Dasein, in its essence as “lieutenant of the Nothing” (P 93), is the ‘hole’ which disrupts all totalizing/totalitarian systems, which prevents every closed Order from completely closing-in upon itself (and this, even if, after¹⁷² having broken free from or transcended this Order in anticipating its Death, Dasein resolves upon or wills this current Order). It is this ‘hole’ or “primordial violence of the negative, which is definitive”, i.e., which is most proper to Dasein, and hence what authentic action must not “fetter or cloak”, but reveal (letter to Elisabeth Blochmann, Sept. 12th, 1929; quoted in Safranski 261). In the same letter, Heidegger proclaims this to be “what we must concretely learn and teach” (*Ibid.*). Yet, such an ‘ethic’—as fundamentally non-prescriptive; as dealing with the *how* of Dasein’s being as self-responsible, rather than any concrete *what*—is of necessity predicated upon the “co-presence of evil in good and good in evil”, and upon their collapsing into one another in the

¹⁷¹ There is, of course, a tragic irony to the fact that Heidegger—who notoriously pledged allegiance, no matter how short-lived, to one of the most horrifically totalitarian and fascistic regimes in History—might *implicitly* (one could almost say, despite himself) have engendered such an inherently anti-fascistic ‘ethic’.

¹⁷² See footnote 144.

“absolute indifference” of Dasein’s *ground* as *Ab-grund*, and *Nichtigkeit* (S 157). In the letter to Elisabeth Blochmann from which I have already quoted, Heidegger tries to convey to her what he had experienced, upon attending a *compline* service with her at the Abbey of Beuron:¹⁷³ “In the service of *compline*, there still subsists the mythical and metaphysical violence of the ‘night’ that we must constantly break to truly exist. *For the good is only the good of evil (Das Gut ist nur das Gut des Bösen)*” (*Ibid.*). If Dasein were not held before this ‘night’¹⁷⁴ by the call of conscience, if, instead, the call were to give it “calculable maxims”, concrete “‘practical’ directives” or possibilities to follow, Dasein would be denied “nothing less than the *possibility of acting*”, i.e., *its very being* as self-responsible (SZ 294).

Perhaps, then, it is indeed, to transplant a passage from Heidegger’s discussion of Plato’s ‘allegory of the Sun’ in *On The Essence of Ground*, “not by accident that the *agathon* is indeterminate with respect to its content, so that all definitions and interpretations in this respect must fail” (P 124). Dasein *is what* (or, better, *who*) *it is*, i.e., self-interpreting or self-responsible, precisely because its free, world-forming self-projection is *prior* to the distinction between good and evil: only through the self-projection which arises from a ‘ground’ which is in fact *prior* to the differentiation of good and evil, is the good, as overarching ‘for the sake of’, and, thus, ordering principle of the world, defined, and thus differentiated from evil. The fundamental act of Dasein’s free self-responsibility, that is, its self-projection, its willing of definite possibilities, takes place prior to this differentiation,

¹⁷³ An experience which was to form the lived basis for Heidegger’s essay *What is Metaphysics?* (Safranski 260-261, My translation).

¹⁷⁴ I.e., the abyss of its ownmost potentiality-for-being and freedom, which is *prior* to the ontic differentiation of good and evil.

because, in part, it gives rise to this differentiation (i.e., because it *is the act of this differentiation*). Hence, an ‘ethic of authenticity’—i.e., of self-responsibility, and, therefore, self-realization or self-loyalty—requires that “we release ourselves into the nothing, that is to say, that we [have the ‘daring strength’ to] liberate ourselves from those idols (*Götzen*) everyone has and to which they are wont to go cringing (or ‘take refuge’: *zu denen er sich wegzuschleichen pflegt*)” (P 96), in order to *properly be who we are*.

All of the preceding leads me to conclude that the ‘ethic’ implied by, or latent in, *Being and Time*, is, in fact, an ‘ethic’ beyond good and evil. I have repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that, in summoning Dasein to its authenticity, the call of conscience commands only self-responsibility, respect for oneself as autotelic, preservation of one’s ownmost potentiality-for-being as possibility, and radical (self)questioning or ‘philosophizing’. Hence, the call is concerned only with the *how* of Dasein’s being, not the *what* or content of Dasein’s resolutions. The call of conscience delivers no positive prescriptions, no material injunctions. Thus, *at the most fundamental level*, in creating a space for Dasein’s authenticity (its responsibility), it also sanctions or justifies any actual resolution, provided it has been resolved upon responsibly, that is, in an authentic *manner*. With respect to Others, in summoning Dasein to ‘authentic solicitude’, the call of conscience does not bid Dasein to care for the Other’s welfare or happiness, but only to care for the Other’s freedom of will; it charges it only to become the conscience of Others—to facilitate their liberation for their own authentic potentiality-for-being—not to concern itself with their well-being.

In calling the ‘ethic’ latent in, or entailed by, *Being and Time*, an ‘ethic’

beyond good and evil, I thus mean: an ‘ethic’ where the *how* of action has totally eclipsed, or taken precedence over, the *what* of action; where the only good lies in the capacity to willfully (i.e., responsibly) determine the good for oneself,¹⁷⁵ to *will oneself as will* in and through one’s concrete decisions, and to allow Others to exercise this capacity as well. The latent ‘ethic’ of *Being and Time* is one which is indifferent to human welfare, i.e., to human suffering, and to the development of ‘ontic’ talents and capacities: it values only the will as the origin of all values; the will as constantly freeing itself from its structurally unavoidable constraints and limitations; the will, whose actualization in authenticity (anticipatory resoluteness) is the *causa finalis* of Dasein’s existence, and, thus, the ultimate object of the will itself. Thus, while the latent ‘ethic’ of *Being and Time* might, in many ways, appeal to our liberal, post-Enlightenment sensibilities, it is also extremely dangerous—perhaps as dangerous as the dogmatism and totalitarianism to which it is logically opposed.

C.2. Kant and the ‘Ethics’ of *Being and Time*

Having recapitulated and highlighted the central tenets of what I have demonstrated to be the ‘ethic’ latent in, or implied by, Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, it remains to be seen to what extent this implicit ‘ethic’ can be regarded as constituting a retrieval of, or arising out of an appropriative encounter with, Kant’s practical philosophy. In other words, the purpose of this section of my Conclusion will be to prove the felicitousness of T. Kisiel’s remark: “‘When was Heidegger not a Kantian?’ It is almost like asking ‘When was Heidegger not a German?,’ in his case, imbibing the very air (*Geist*) of the German university which he attended as a student of the ‘Southwest German School of Neo-Kantianism’” (408-409). I

¹⁷⁵ A capacity which arises out of *Angst*, and a resolute anticipation of Death.

have characterized the preceding remark as felicitous, as opposed to, say, judicious, or discerning, because while Kisiel's invaluable account of the genesis of *Being and Time*, showing how the fundamental concepts of *Being and Time* emerged on the basis of a deconstructive reading of the theological and philosophical tradition, considers the impact which Kant's *theoretical* works had on the shape and content of *Being and Time*, the question of Heidegger's indebtedness to Kant's *practical* philosophy is conspicuously absent. Hence, all Kisiel means by his rhetorical question is: there was never a period of time when Heidegger was not heavily influenced by Kant's *theoretical* philosophy. While true, this does not tell the whole story regarding the relation between Heidegger and Kant. This is an oversight which most Heidegger scholars are guilty of, even those who, like Kisiel, are explicitly engaged in 'source work'. There are, however, a few notable exceptions, to which I will be referring in the pages that follow. This being said, even those exegetes which have described the presence of certain aspects of Kant's ethics in *Being and Time* have, on the whole, failed to appreciate the real scope or breadth of its impact on Heidegger. Thus, what I hope to do in the remaining pages of this study is to help redress this lacuna or imbalance by providing a broad summation of those aspects of the latent 'ethic' of *Being and Time* which can be retraced to Heidegger's reading of the Kantian ethic.

First and foremost, I think it is quite plausible to suggest, on the basis of the analyses which I have undertaken in this study, that Heidegger's call of conscience can be understood as a phenomenologically, i.e., temporally and ontologically, grounded rewriting of Kant's moral law, as Heidegger interprets it. As I've shown, both the call of conscience and the moral law, at least according to the Heideggerian reading, are formally empty. They both,

to use Heidegger's terminology, speak in the uncanny mode of perfect silence. As such, they both call their 'hearers' to accede to their innermost essence as human beings: i.e., to self-responsibility and its necessary counterpart, guilt. Furthermore, I believe my study has confirmed what a handful of scholars have already observed regarding Heidegger's retrieval of the Kantian conception of the human being as end-in-itself, and, thus, of one formulation of the moral law which states that Humanity should always be treated as an end, never merely as a means (4:429). For example, my findings concur with those of C. Sherover, who affirms:

Heidegger's road to the centrality of responsibility and the resoluteness it engenders first comes to solicitous concern, a mode of responsible involvement with other persons. Building on the fundamental Kantian distinction between persons and things, Heidegger has differentiated that circumspective concern we display to the things about us from our solicitous comportment toward other persons. Only through solicitous behaviour do other persons enter into our experience *qua* persons (instead of things). It is toward them that we are able to exhibit moral responsibility. Reminiscent of Kant's injunction that the prime moral responsibility is to treat them *qua* persons and to enhance *their* own free self-development, Heidegger abjured the domination of others because it infringes on their sovereignty of care. (...) The existential analytic (...) rests on a fundamental Kantian distinction between persons and things (227-228).

My findings also agree with the thesis of L. Vogel, who argues that Heidegger's fundamental ontology "[provides] an existential basis for the second version of Kant's categorical imperative" (9), and the claim made by J. Young, that the Heideggerian notion of authentic solicitude is "a *moral* relationship (...) for what it amounts to is the fundamental Kantian principle of respect: never treat humanity either in your own person or that of another person as a means, but always as an end-in-itself" (104; cf. Safranski 242).¹⁷⁶ For both Kant, at least

¹⁷⁶ All three of the passages which I have cited are quoted in S. Sikka (2-3). Sikka deems their contentions "not only plausible, but even rather obvious".

as he is interpreted by Heidegger, and Heidegger himself, the ultimate ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ cannot be a *specific* ‘for-the-sake-of’ or object of the will, but *freedom itself*—i.e., Dasein; the moral subject; the rational will. In Kant’s eyes: “If the will of all creatures were bound to sensuous drives [i.e., *object-drives*], the world would have no worth (...) Freedom is thus the inner worth of the world” (27:1482). And as Heidegger puts it: “[Dasein’s] transcendence to world is freedom itself. Accordingly, freedom does not butt into the ‘for the sake of’ as something like a substantial value or aim which is there in and by itself, but freedom holds out—as *freedom*—the ‘for the sake of’ toward itself” (P 126). Finally, as I have shown in section 1.3, Heidegger himself makes perfectly clear that his notion of authentic *Miteinandersein* (and thus everything it entails—see section 3.4) is to be connected to the Kantian notion of the *Reich der Zwecke* as *Reich der Freiheit*.

This much, at least, one could almost say, Heidegger explicitly or knowingly retrieves from Kant. Accordingly, this is where just about every Heidegger-scholar ends his/her exploration of Heidegger’s retrieval of the Kantian ethic. But in retrieving this much from Kant, there is a great deal else which Heidegger can be said to unwittingly retrieve from Kant. In other words, e.g., by retrieving the Kantian moral law, and thus the Kantian notion of autonomy to which it is strictly related, in his call of conscience, Heidegger retrieves—i.e., develops, works out, and transforms—many of the hidden underpinnings, and/or possible implications of these Kantian concepts. Take, for instance, the non-substantialist or non-essentialist conception of the human being, and, by extension, ‘ethics’, which I have shown to

be so pervasive in *Being and Time*. According to the Heideggerian reading of Kant,¹⁷⁷ this conception of the human being, albeit in a flawed and merely incipient state, can be said to underlie Kant's conception of the will's autonomy. Hence, it is quite natural to conclude that *Being and Time* retrieves, which is to say, takes up, and takes further, this notion from Kant's ethics, ridding it of whatever remnants it still contained of the traditional, metaphysical conceptualization of the human being as a constantly present 'thing' (*res*) or 'substance' (*ousia*). What Heidegger thus unknowingly retrieves from *his reading of Kant's ethics* is a tragi-heroic 'ethic of alienation'. For, as I've shown, self-determination in both Heidegger and (Heidegger's) Kant is contingent upon Dasein (or the moral agent's) being *unheimlich*: uncanny/not-at-home; a pure negativity or nothingness; devoid of an essence.

Furthermore, as I have already mentioned, and as I have made clear in the body of my study, Dasein's authenticity is but a mode of its inauthenticity or everydayness. As such, Heidegger's conception of authenticity is closely akin to Kant's description of the dutiful ethical act, which, as I have also explained, is not, according to the Heideggerian reading, brought about through an elevation or reformation of the will in terms of its objects, but rather through a revolution in its disposition, in which it comes to will itself as pure will, in and through the concrete actions which it has responsibly determined upon, and which receive their goodness as a function of the purity of the will. According to the Heideggerian reading: there is no absolutely good object or action outside of, or heteronomous to, the will; the goodness of an action does not precede and govern the ethical subject's choice for that

¹⁷⁷ Which, it should be remembered, is but a prominent strand in the early Heidegger's Kant-interpretation which I have highlighted, and whose potential implications I have tried to draw out—see section 1.1.

action, rather, the goodness of the action is secondary to, or a function of, the willing of the autonomous subject. Hence, what Heidegger can be said to unwittingly ‘find in’ Kant, though of course only as a possible implication of Kant’s explicit teachings, is an ‘ethics’ *beyond good and evil*: i.e., an ‘ethics’ in which, to repeat myself in slightly more Kantian terms, what is deemed good beyond condition is not human welfare, but only the pure will as origin of all values, ultimate goal of existence, and, therefore, object of the will itself; an ‘ethics’ in which no *content* is designated as worthy of choice, but only the power of making this choice (i.e., free will; autonomy; self-responsibility) is valorized; an ‘ethics’ which determines the goodness of the will without reference to anything beyond the will itself. This is an ‘ethics’ for which the good will is not good because it wills a good action, but because it wills in a certain *manner* (Birault 156).

This is the most radical and disturbing core of Heidegger’s retrieval of the Kantian ethic, as Heidegger paints it, and, amazingly, the aspect of Heidegger’s Kant-retrieval almost totally neglected by commentators. While, as I have shown, many paper or chapter-length articles have anticipated some of the points which I have made regarding Heidegger’s retrieval of the Kantian ethic, there exists no thorough, full-length study of Heidegger’s appropriation of Kant’s practical philosophy which endeavours to show, as I have, both that *Being and Time* contains a potentially nihilistic ‘ethic of authenticity’, *and* that this ‘ethic beyond good and evil’ is actually what constitutes Heidegger’s retrieval of the Kantian ethic. This is to say that none of the full-length studies of which I am aware have focussed on the Kantian notion of the *pure will*—the focal point of at least a certain, I would say predominant, strand in the early Heidegger’s Kant interpretation—as the core feature of the Kantian ethic

which Heidegger recuperates in *Being and Time*.

Finally, I mentioned above that one of the potential implications of the Heideggerian reading of Kant is that the only possible ‘fulfilment’ of the subject’s duty would have to take the form of a revolution in its disposition (as opposed to a change in its object; to its striking upon the ‘right’ action), in which it comes to *will itself* as pure will in and through the positive actions which it has freely resolved upon. In other words, I think it follows from the basic logic of the Heideggerian reading that the moral subject could only ‘fulfill’ its duty—its self-directed imperative to pure will; the ‘ought of its existence’—and, hence, preserve the purity of its objectless/pure will, by maintaining a kind of critical distance towards the positive, and therefore accidental, objects of its will, which are thus made to fill in for, or masquerade as, the a priori, pure, but therefore also strictly unrealizable, law of pure practical reason. The reader will recall that Heidegger’s notion of anticipatory resoluteness or authenticity, as the proper Hearing of the call of conscience, involves a comparable relationship between Dasein and its concrete resolutions. For, as I have explained, resolute Dasein, in the reticence to which it has been summoned by the call of conscience, puts itself in play, engages itself in a particular enterprise, commits itself to a specific ontic identity, while at the same time holding itself back—i.e., holding fast to its uncanny ‘essence’ as pure possibility. Reticent, Dasein heeds the “soundlessness of [its] uncanniness” (SZ 296); it dwells in the *Stille* of its innermost ‘essence’ as “silent power of the possible” (SZ 394)—in the depersonalized ‘hollow’(the nothing and nowhere) of its being—even as its everyday involvement in the world is intensified. Thus, in resoluteness, Dasein invests both its world, and the role it occupies, or has been assigned, within this world, with meaning, without

depending on them as Absolute or Ultimate sources of meaning—i.e., while never losing sight of the fact that none of the possibilities which its world places at its reach are definitive of its being. This, in short, is that to which Dasein is called, in being summoned to preserve its being as pure potentiality. I think it can be maintained that the (for lack of a better term) ‘mediated’ relationship between the will and its positive object which was a possible implication of the Heideggerian reading of Kant’s ethics, is retrieved in the stance which Dasein is called to take towards its determinate possibilities, in being called to preserve its innermost potentiality-for-being *as possibility*.

Thus, to conclude, we see that all three major components of the ‘ethics of authenticity’ which I have demonstrated to be latent in, or entailed by, *Being and Time*—i.e., the obligations to: 1) self-responsibility; 2) respect for the dignity of oneself and Others as autotelic; and 3) the preservation of one’s potentiality-for-being *as possibility*—can be regarded as having been retrieved from Heidegger’s reading of the Kantian ethic. Though the reader will surely have noted other points of convergence between the Heideggerian reading of Kant and *Being and Time* (e.g., respect as a feeling of both repulsion and attraction, and *Angst* as containing a negative and positive pole—see: P. Birmingham 119), these are the most important lines of convergence and influence.

The question of the validity and accuracy of the Heideggerian reading of Kant will, unfortunately, have to be left open for the moment, since it falls outside the confines of this study. This question is obviously of vital interest, since even a partial vindication of the Heideggerian reading would raise serious questions about the defensibility of the Kantian ethic itself—exposing it to the criticisms I have levelled at both the Heideggerian reading of Kant,

and the ‘ethic of authenticity’ which I have demonstrated to be latent in *Being and Time*, and a product of Heidegger’s destructive-retrieval of the Kantian ethic. Indeed, were the Heideggerian interpretation to be validated, it would mean that much of what is ethically suspect in *Being and Time* could be retraced to Kant’s practical philosophy. This would prove that, contrary to what “both Heidegger’s detractors and his defenders have tended to assume”, “the proximity of his thought to that of Kant” should not be taken, without further question, as “the measure of its defensibility” (Sikka 3). In other words, it would cast doubt on the practice of pointing—as the vast majority of commentators who *have* noticed a link between *Being and Time* and the Kantian ethic do—to the Kantian elements in Heidegger’s thought to defend it from accusations of nihilism and empty decisionism. Note, however, that I have not been totally one-sided or single-minded in my appraisal of the ‘ethic of authenticity’ which I have uncovered in *Being and Time*, and which I have shown to have taken form through a destructive-retrieval of the Kantian ethic. A wholesale justification of the Heideggerian reading would mean that all that is *praiseworthy* about *Being and Time*’s latent ‘ethic of authenticity’ could also be retraced to Kant’s practical philosophy.

I will, however, have to leave any effort to justify Heidegger’s reading of the Kantian ethic for a later work. The modest aim of this study was merely to identify another hand in the grand palimpsest that is *Being and Time*, one whose immense explanatory power I do not pretend to have fully exploited. If anything, I hope to have shown the need for further study of the ethical dimension of Heidegger’s dialogue with Kant. For, to play freely with the

passage from Heidegger's *The Student as Worker*¹⁷⁸ which I have selected as an epigraph to the first chapter of my study, perhaps it is *we* who have not yet managed to feel the full shock of the tremors in the existence of the human being occasioned by *Heidegger's* reading of the Kantian ethic. What I mean by this is that the 'ethic of authenticity' implicit in, or implied by, *Being and Time*, and born out of a destructive-retrieval of the Kantian ethic, *must be reckoned with*, must itself be *subjected to a destructive retrieve*. We feel the 'shock of the tremors' in our existence when we ask ourselves: is the 'ethic of authenticity' which arose out of Heidegger's reading of the Kantian ethic *the only ethic for our time*? Is it the only possible ethic in the wake of the death of God (metaphysics), and the collapse of all grand narratives? Is it possible to salvage those aspects of the 'ethic of authenticity' which call for the maximization of freedom, for the respect and promotion of difference, for the joyful affirmation of becoming, for playful experimentation, and for the honing of our critical lenses in an endless struggle against our own obscure, and most often unavowed, proclivity to submit to the forces of conformism, dogmatism, tyranny, and fascism, while rejecting its excessive (one might very well say exclusive) valorization of the will, as well as its related neglect and devaluation of the body? Can we circumvent the nihilistic pitfalls of *Being and Time's* latent 'ethic of authenticity', while also refraining from any sort of nostalgic and evasive flight to an irretrievable, halcyon past in which ethics was rooted in nature, and we knew 'that for which we are fit'?

¹⁷⁸ An address to the students of Freiburg University, which Heidegger proclaimed on the 25th of November, 1933. The original passage reads: "Is [Kant] just the 'Chinese of Konigsberg', or has his work, once and for all, occasioned a tremor in the existence of the human being? This tremor, do we still manage to feel its shock?" (130).

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