

AN "AUTHENTIC" PROBLEM IN HEIDEGGER'S *BEING AND TIME*

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I THE PROBLEM

There is a tension in Heidegger's concept of authenticity. On the one hand, authenticity is described as the correlate of inauthenticity and has the function of "mineness" (Jemeinigkeit) in contrast to the impersonality of the "they" (das Man). On the other, authenticity is prescribed as an ideal. In this paper, I will examine critically the interrelation of the three concepts of conscience, authenticity, and resoluteness. More specifically, I will show that if authenticity is an ideal towards which Dasein should aspire, then care as the "primordial structural totality," as the unity of Dasein, would become questionable. For it would conspire to undermine the a priori status of care.

However, the general tenor of *Being and Time* suggests that authenticity is the meaning of Being, and this thesis is strongly supported by the dimension of care as the matrix of meaning.¹ Therefore, since care is

¹Jacques Derrida has called attention to the "anthropological formations in the reading of *Sein und Zeit*, notably in France." "Ends of Man", in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: 1982), p. 127. This earlier misreading of *Being and Time* now requires, Derrida insists, a proper rereading of the book in the light of Heidegger's own ontological, not anthropological, intention and method. And Derrida would bring us back to Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle. Aristotle stated the problem thus: *Kai de kai to palai te kai nun kai aei dzetoumenon kai aei aporoumenon, ti to on?* (Met. Z 1, 1028 b s sqq.) W. D. Ross translates this passage in the following way: "And indeed the question which was raised now and always, and is always the subject of doubt, viz. what being is, is just the question, what is substance?" Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: 1941), p. 783. Of course, Heidegger takes issue with Aristotle's interpretation of being. Vide: *Was ist das - die Philosophie? What is Philosophy?* Translated by Jean T. Wilde and William Kluback, with the German original (New Haven, Conn.: College and University Press, n.d.).

Elsewhere in *Margins of Philosophy*, in the essay "Ousia and Gramm ", Derrida shows how this question, both in Aristotle and in Heidegger, is

the structure that accounts for the actualization of Dasein's possibilities, thereby rendering its existence meaningful by justifying its choice, I see no reason why authenticity should be further considered as an ideal.

II

CONSCIENCE

Heidegger characterizes conscience as a call, and the character of the call discloses conscience as quadripartite in essence. There is (1) that which calls, (2) that which is called, (3) that about which the call is made, and (4) that to which the call is made. According to Michael Gelven, the last element in this fourfold formula is what distinguishes calling from other forms of discourse, "for when I *call* someone, it is for the sake of initiating action or response."² He then goes on to point out that each of the four elements of calling is a different way *to be* a self. Emphasis is placed on *way to be* a self because it must not be forgotten that the caller is the called calling about itself on behalf of itself. Hence these are all possible ways of existing which are open to Dasein.

The self as the called. Imagine an ambitious man who, by sheer industry and a bit of cunning has, in a series of promotions, reached a level in the bureaucracy that is only one step removed from the top. Let us situate him at a party he has dutifully organized in celebration of his penultimate position. Late into the evening he and his guests are sleepy, content, well-entertained, so that they now slouch about, sluggish in consciousness, letting themselves be carried away by the comfort of the present state of things, oblivious to everything else. Then the telephone rings, and our man picks it up only to hear from the other end of the line the unexpected voice of his employer. And what the employer tells him leaves doubts in his own mind about the possibility of ever getting the final promotion. He has been snapped out of his lethargy and thrust, unexpectedly, into an awareness

inseparably linked with the problem of time. Hence a proper reading of *Being and Time*, according to Derrida, requires a parallel reading of *Physics IV* in particular and *Metaphysics* in general.

Though Derrida's point is commendable, I cannot pursue it any further here. The French misreading of *Being and Time* to which he alluded, and the corresponding need for a proper rereading of it, is enough to caution us not to commit a similar error. Therefore, in pointing out this conflict in *Being and Time* I am sending out warning signals against an unnecessary misconstruing of Heidegger's notion of authenticity.

²Michael Gelven also argues that in *Being and Time* authenticity is the meaning of Being. In dealing with this issue with Heidegger, I have considered some pertinent points raised by Gelven. M. Gelven, *Winter, Friendship, and Guilt: the Sources of Self-Inquiry* (New York: 1972), p. 183.

that rendered the revelry insignificant, reminding him of things more serious and urgent than the soothing occasion of the moment.

Except for the external agent in this example, conscience functions almost in the same way. The comfort and carefreeness in which our man allowed himself to languish is characteristic of Dasein in existing as the "they". It should be noted, however, that when, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger refers to *das Man*, he does not mean others as opposed to Dasein. If that were the case, then how could it enter into the fourfold essence of conscience? In conscience, after all, the caller is the called. How, then, is the "they" to be understood? "The 'they-self' is that uncritical and unexamined, vapid mode of existence which keeps our attention directed toward the trivial interests of mere goings-on."³ It is from this luxurious somnolence, in which Dasein is wont to take shelter, apparently happy, being unaware that conscience summons it.

The self as the caller. If Dasein is existing in such a way that it hears a call directing it to relinquish its way of being, then clearly there is a tension somewhere, especially since the call comes from within. How must Dasein be such that it calls itself from its own uncritical, somnolent "they-self?" Heidegger answers:

The caller is Dasein in its uncanniness: primordial, thrown Being-in-the-world as the "not-at-home" - the bare 'that-it-is' in the "nothing" of the world. The caller is unfamiliar to the everyday theyself; it is something like an *alien* voice. What could be more alien to the "they", lost in the manifold 'world' of its concern, than the self which has been individualized down to itself in uncanniness and been thrown into the "nothing"?⁴

In the above quotation Heidegger emphasizes the fact that the caller, considered as a participant in the world, is *nothing at all*. This is so for the simple reason that the call originates not with Dasein in its "worldly" capacity, i.e., its preoccupation with the instrumental world of things and the depersonalized public world, but in its *individualized* self. This is the self that is primordial, that is *not at home* in the world. It is this self,

³Michael Gelven, "Authenticity and Guilt", in *Heidegger's Existential Analytic*, ed. Frederick Elliston (The Hague: 1978), p. 241.

⁴Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Tr. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: 1962), p. 321. Hereafter, BT. "Er ist das Dasein in seiner Unheimlichkeit, das ursprüngliche geworfene In-der-Welt-sein als Unzu Hause, das nackte >>Dass<< im Nichts der Welt. Der Rufer ist dem alltäglichen Man-selbst unvertraut-so etwas wie eine *fremde* Stimme. Was könnte dem Man, verloren in die besorgte, vielfältige >>Welt<<, fremder sein als das in der Unheimlichkeit auf sich vereinzelt, in das Nichts geworfene Selbst?" *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: 1972), p. 276. Hereafter, SZ.

uncanny in the world, that does the summoning from the somnolence which renders Dasein dyslogistically oblivious of the ontological cleft which separates its being from the instrumental being of the world. Such oblivion conceals from it the fact that the world of things is not its true home.

When this dimension of its existence is disclosed to it, usually in the phenomenon of anxiety (Angst), Dasein feels strangely uncomfortable in the world. Everything seems not to matter, and a feeling of helplessness accompanies this mood. Dasein may be so absorbed in its activities that nothing else matters; but then, it may be so alienated from its activities that even they do not matter. It is then that Dasein feels the ice of loneliness. The overpowering feeling is one of not belonging.

The self as that which is called about. Out of the depths of uncanniness, then, Dasein calls the self that is scattered about like any other item in the world. However persistently and fervently the self may pursue its worldly interests, the loneliness and alienation of uncanniness may ruffle the composure that usually results from so much industry and concern. This disjunction within Dasein - the self calling the self - attests to the possible ways that Dasein can exist. Since it is the uncanny self that enables Dasein to "shake off the numbing influence of the they-self",⁵ it can be said that uncanniness furnishes Dasein with the possible ways of existing; for without uncanniness Dasein would be lost in the "vortex of onticity." Since, however, Dasein is called from its aberration, it is fair to attribute this "summons" or "appeal" to Dasein in its dimension as *Care*. If it did not care, it would not call.

The self as that to which the call is made. Out of its near narcoleptic way of existing, where, uncritical and unaware, the self drifts along like leaves swept by autumn winds, the voice of conscience calls. What is that to which the self is called? When the uncanny self calls to the they-self which is lost in its absorption with innerworldly entities and its solidarity with the public, it is for the self to be its own self, that is, to be authentic.

III

AUTHENTICITY THROUGH GUILT

If conscience calls Dasein to be its true self, i.e., authentic, the implication is that Dasein can exist erroneously. When Dasein thus errs, it is not being faithful to its essence. It renders itself an injustice, as it were. Despite the deontological tone of this locution, however, there is nothing moralizing - at least Heidegger disclaims any attempt at a moral version of conscience - about Dasein's effort to come to terms with its own self in authenticity. But existing inadequately is a mode of negative existence, which manner of being is "guilty." How, then, is guilt to be understood?

⁵Gelven, *Winter, Friendship, and Guilt*, p. 181.

When conscience calls, it may be heard and understood genuinely or mistakenly. It is always open to misinterpretation. The self that is called, after all, is the they-self, which fashions its conduct in accordance with the norms set by public opinion. This same public opinion can also influence the hearing of the call in such a way that what is understood eventuates in a distortion of the call itself. When this is the case, Dasein remains unaltered. In other words, the call, heard with public ears, has no essential impact on Dasein. It is only when the hearing understands the call as a summons to be guilty that Dasein's existence undergoes significant alteration.

What is to be noted in Heidegger's analysis of conscience is that there is no external reference whatever. The hearing of the call of conscience, the source of the call, and the experience of guilt are entirely internal and are manifested as a process of self-interpretation. Guilt, then, is derived from no other source than Dasein itself. Heidegger comments: "Yet if Dasein addresses itself as 'Guilty!', whence could it draw its idea of guilt except from the interpretation of its own Being."⁶ It is in the process of self-interpretation that Dasein apprehends guilt. What does this mean? In Heidegger, guilt is understood primarily as a phenomenon which bespeaks the presence of a nullity in the very being of Dasein. The oxymoron, "presence of a nullity", is meant to emphasize the fact that what is involved here is a negativity of sorts, though not in the sense of "that which does not exist," but rather, "that which exists privatively." Since, in Dasein-analysis the categories of Aristotelian substance are considered inapplicable, it should be noted that even in the case of guilt, it is not so much the *what* as the *how* of being which relates to negation. Dasein can exist in such a way that its existence is apprehended as inadequate, as if "something is missing." But since, metaphor notwithstanding, it is not *something* that is missing, Heidegger contends that it is the manner of Dasein's existence which indicates a lack; hence, the silent voice of conscience. As Michel Gelven puts it less abstrusely, "To be guilty means that one sees his own existence as that which can fail or be inadequate, and that this failure is one's own."⁷

It is possible for Dasein not truly to be itself; nevertheless, when it exists in this defective way, it is acutely aware of the shortcoming, and apprehends it as a failure on its part. And the curious thing about existing inadequately is that it cannot go on serenely. The anguished awareness of its negativity is simultaneously an experience of an ontological disjunction. The character of the "not" underlying this disjunction and which lies in the idea of guilt is also expressed as a basis:

⁶BT, p. 326. "Wenn jedoch das Dasein sich selbst als >>schuldig<< anspricht, woher soll die Idee der Schuld anders geschöpft werden, es sei denn aus der Interpretation des Seins des Daseins?" SZ, 281.

⁷Gelven, "Authenticity and Guilt", p. 242.

Hence we define the formally existential idea of the 'Guilty!' as "Being-the-basis for a Being which has been defined by a 'not' - that is to say, as "Being-the-basis of a nullity."⁸

Being the basis of a nullity actually implies the role of responsibility inherent in guilt. Compelled as Dasein is by the nature of things to project itself upon possibilities, possibilities, moreover, into which it was thrown, it nevertheless *owes it to itself* to respond to this thrown state. In point of fact, it is the very arbitrariness of this *debt* which constitutes the nullity of guilt, and Dasein's acknowledgment of it as its own constitutes it as a basis. Therefore, "what is lacking appears to be the power to master the possibilities for which conscience demands that we accept responsibility."⁹ Once the thrown basis has been acknowledged by Dasein as its own, the possibilities inherent in it also claim its innermost interests. Accepting responsibility for possibilities orients Dasein towards the future whereby "he calls himself (in conscience) to a recognition of the *future as a debt* ('I should, 'Ich soll') owed to himself, and he applies himself to the task of bringing to fruition those situational possibilities for existence which he apprehends as most appropriate (*eigenste*)."¹⁰

Dasein emerges into being as a self-conscious *tertium quid* between the thrownness of its past and the openness of its future possibilities. And to both diametrical terms Dasein must, by the very constitution of care, respond intrinsically. Because responsibility is ineluctably imposed, as it were, on Dasein; and due to the fact that Dasein can never get the basis of its possibilities into its power, by virtue of this elusiveness holding sway over it, Dasein understands itself as guilty.

This existential nullity, then, has a firm hold on Dasein. For it is essentially a lack of power - Dasein's inability to discharge its responsibility, as Macquarrie pointed out. And it is this helplessness in the face of an ineluctable state of affairs which renders Dasein guilty. Furthermore, in so far as accepting responsibility is tantamount to acknowledging that there is a "not" in its origin, that Dasein is the ground of a negativity, this recognition of limitation or lack is what amounts to guilt. That is why Richardson succinctly puts it thus: "The guilt consists in

⁸BT, p. 329. "Die formal existenziale Idee des >>schuldig<< bestimmen wir daher also: Grundsein für ein durch ein nicht bestimmtes Sein - das heisst *Grundsein einer Nichtigkeit*". SZ, 283.

⁹John Macquarrie, *An Existentialist Theology: A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann*(Harmonsworth: 1973), p. 136.

¹⁰David E. Starr, *Entity and Existence: An Ontological Investigation of Aristotle and Heidegger*(New York: 1975), p. 39.

its finitude."¹¹ Therefore, to accept itself as finite is to let itself be called, to be free for the call to become guilty. And Heidegger is clear on this point:

When Dasein understandingly lets itself be called forth to this possibility, this includes its *becoming free* for the call - its readiness for the potentiality of getting appealed to. In understanding the call, Dasein is *in thrall to its ownmost possibility of existence*. It has chosen itself.¹²

Wanting-to-Have-a-Conscience. With the choice of self we broach the controversial theme of authenticity in Heidegger. However, the transition from the inauthentic they-self to authenticity involves an existential condition which Heidegger calls *Gewissen-haben-wollen*, i.e., "wanting-to-have-a-conscience." This phenomenon, in spite of its unique function in Heidegger's concept of authenticity, has not been given the kind of attention it deserves. Nevertheless, this term is pregnant with meaning. How is it to be understood?

Dasein, in letting itself be called forth, "hears" and appropriates the guilty verdict, and in this situation, chooses itself. In genuinely, not perversely, hearing the call, Dasein is made to understand that "Guilty!" is what conscience calls. Mark Blitz explains:

But such 'hearing' means *letting myself be called forth to myself, freeing myself for my ability to be called forth and called back to my own Being as my own*. Heidegger calls such understanding choosing oneself, or 'wanting-to-have-a-conscience': this means that I free myself for, disclose in and for, my unavoidable Being guilty.¹³

However, being guilty means that Dasein recognizes itself as not being the "master" of its origin and at the same time as being the ground of its own negativity. On the other hand, being the ground of negativity actually turns out to mean that "we accept the fact that we can fail at the enterprise of existing."¹⁴ But a failed existence is not what is meant by the meaning of Being. After all, this deficient mode of being is what characterizes the they-self, wherein Dasein is not at home. Therefore, "he wants to have a

¹¹William Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: 1974), p. 82.

¹²BT, p. 334. "Das verstehende Sichvorrufenlassen auf diese Möglichkeit schliesst in sich das *Freiwerden* des Daseins für den Ruf: die Bereitschaft für das Angerufenwerdenkönnen. Das Dasein ist rufverstehend *hörig seiner eigensten Existenzmöglichkeit*. Es hat sich selbst gewählt." SZ, 287.

¹³Mark Blitz, *Heidegger's "Being and Time" and the Possibility of Political Philosophy* (Ithaca: 1981), p. 134.

¹⁴Gelven, "Authenticity and Guilt", p. 243.

conscience because he realizes that without a conscience he must forever remain on the level of mere responses to the they-self, wherein one's own reality must forever be lost."¹⁵

There is in this phenomenon of wanting to have a conscience a willingness on the part of Dasein to accept what is disclosed in the disposition corresponding to the "understanding of the appeal": the nothingness of anxiety. But this nothingness further indicates that Dasein, by virtue of its "expatriate condition,"¹⁶ must project itself in the effort to "stand together with itself primordially," to come "face to face with its undisguised nullity;" in brief, to achieve authenticity. Since conscience calls the self away from its preoccupation with the world of things and isolates it in anxiety, wanting-to-have-a-conscience, as a deliberate act (an existentiell choosing) is essentially Dasein choosing itself. Richardson writes: "And in this choice is achieved authenticity. Such a choice Heidegger will henceforth designate as 're-solve'."¹⁷ Richardson seems to equate wanting-to-have-a-conscience with resolve. And Heidegger himself, more often than not, gives the same impression:

Our understanding of the appeal unveils itself as our wanting to have a conscience. But in this phenomenon lies that existentiell choosing which we seek - the choosing to choose a kind of Being - one's Self which, in accordance with its existential structure, we call '*resoluteness*."¹⁸

Is there, then, no difference between wanting-to-have-a-conscience and re-solve or resoluteness? As deliberate acts of re-reflective Dasein, they express the same phenomenon - self-choosing - in two dimensions: the former points to the acceptance of its negative ground (its limitation), and the latter stresses the positivity implied by the very concept of potentiality-for-Being, that is, Dasein's innermost self. Thus, wanting-to-have-a-conscience becomes a readiness for anxiety: "Das Gewissenhabenwollen wird Bereitschaft zur Angst."¹⁹

What basically underlie wanting-to-have-a-conscience and are explicitly disclosed in it are therefore: anxiety as a state-of mind, understanding as a projection of being guilty, and reticence as discourse, in that conscience calls in silence. When Dasein opens up to itself in this way

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Richardson, op. cit., p. 83.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸BT, p. 314. "Das Anrufverstehen enthüllt sich als *Gewissenhabenwollen*. In diesem Phänomen aber liegt das gesuchte existenzielle Wählen der Wahl eines Selbstseins, das wir, seiner existentiellen struktur entsprechend, die *Entschlossenheit* nennen." SZ, 269.

¹⁹SZ, 296.

through genuinely hearing the call of conscience, it appropriates its *telos*, to use an Aristotelian term without confounding its "ousiological" connotation with Dasein's existential meaning. As Zimmermann explains:

To be fully open, requires disclosure of our mortality. This disclosure is hard to bear; hence, existence also inclines to be untruthful. Conscience is the sign that our temporal openness is dissatisfied with functioning deficiently. Because conscience calls without warning, we must be vigilant for it. We must continually *want* to be summoned if we are to heed the summons when it unexpectedly comes.²⁰

To summarize our examination of Heidegger's concept of wanting-to-have-a-conscience: *anxiety*, disclosed in wanting to have a conscience, is the state-of-mind in which Dasein apprehends its ultimate limitation - its mortality. In Dasein's daily dimension of being as they-self, the significance of this mortality is habitually de-emphasized by considering it a universal concept applicable to all and sundry, thereby removing its task of first-personal immediacy. *Understanding* itself as guilty, Dasein assumes the ineluctable task of self-realization. This means that though thrown into existence willy-nilly, it must up and go, as it were. Finally, as *discourse*, Dasein is reticent in heeding the individuating call of conscience, wary of the "numerous self-interpretations offered by the 'they' and accept himself as finite openness which is an issue for itself."²¹ The deliberateness of the act of wanting to have a conscience, the conscious act of choosing the self inherent in conscience itself, this refusal to remain inured in a deficient or failing mode of being, is what approximates wanting-to-have-a-conscience to resoluteness, and then to authenticity. For this reason, Heidegger is able to formulate this approximation thus:

This distinctive and authentic disclosedness, which is attested in Dasein itself by its conscience - this reticent self-projection upon one's ownmost Being-guilty, in which one is ready for anxiety - we call resoluteness.²²

Since the tendency of the "they" is to abrogate individuality, thereby effacing the very possibility of decisive action, the countervailing thrust of resoluteness is the decisive unveiling of Dasein's own specific and unique

²⁰Michael Zimmermann, *Eclipse of the Self: The Development of Heidegger's Concept of Authenticity*(Athens: 1981), p. 75.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²BT, p. 343. "Diese ausgezeichnete, im Dasein selbst durch sein Gewissen bezeugte eigentliche Erschlossenheit - *das verschwiegene, angstbereite Sichentwerfen auf das eigenste Schuldigsein* - nennen wir die *Entschlossenheit*." SZ, 296.

possibilities. The attempt to appropriate these specific and unique possibilities will occasion an authentic way of being.

IV

AUTHENTICITY AS MEANINGFUL

Inherent in the structure of Dasein is the power of self-correction, which power is disclosed in the phenomenon of conscience. But self-correction implies errancy, and the latter points to the presence of an imperious force that demands identity with itself. Dasein experiences this gravitational pull towards the focal point of its being when, in uncanniness, it is called to itself. If a name is to be given to this imperious force which brooks no interference from its course, it should be: *authenticity*. Expressions such as Dasein coming "face to face with itself", or "standing together with itself primordially",²³ bespeak the self-identity and the unitary thrust of authenticity.

Writers noticeably differ in their approaches to the concept of authenticity in Heidegger. In their attempt to describe authentic existence, they invariably ask a question which is meant to disclose the very meaning of authenticity. Hence, for Macquarrie, to describe an authentic existence is to answer the question, "What is man's true life?"²⁴ He then cites a quotation from H. Zehrer's book, *Man in the World*, where the contention is that not only is this question the most natural but the most radical man can ask. Put briefly, Zehrer's thesis is this: since this question is so natural, it is seldom asked, but when it is finally asked, "one can infer that something which gave him security has come to an end."²⁵ Then Macquarrie observes:

So long as man is lulled into that contentment - however illusory - which belongs to an existence founded on the world, he is untroubled by ultimate questions about his whence and whither, his why and wherefore - indeed...he avoids such questions. But when the mood of anxiety breaks in to reveal that he is not at home in the supposedly secure world which he has constructed, when everyday existence is disclosed as a life of care terminated by death, the question of existence forces itself upon him.²⁶

Within the artificial structures erected by man to carry on with his existence, there can be no fundamental security whatsoever. Institutions and traditions - marriage, for instance - have been largely denuded of their intrinsic values and left extant bearing only their names. Where, in this

²³Ibid., p. 333.

²⁴Macquarrie, *An Existentialist Theology*, p. 127.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

fleeting world, can man invest his beatitude? In a wife, who falls prey to the artful designs of an ardent lover *à la* Karenina? In an investment house that goes bankrupt in a financial crisis? In the highest office of a sovereign state, with all its perquisites and emoluments, only to be forced out due to blunders incurred by greed? Obviously, such a security is built upon the sand. But Macquarrie wants to know if there is "an authentic existence, founded, so to speak, upon a rock - or is there just nothingness?"²⁷

Another writer on Heideggerian authenticity, Michael Gelven, also approaches the subject interrogatively: "Can reason, with its 'a priori' and universal authority in any way discover nonarbitrary meaning, not to what I am or what I do, but simply to my being as such?"²⁸ Where Macquarrie, in accordance with his attempt to find Christian undertones in Heidegger's thought, finds authentic existence in an other-worldly source (not just Heidegger's *Unheimlichkeit*: state of expatriation), Gelven will locate it within existence itself. And in this way he is more faithful to Heidegger's enterprise.

In exploring the possibility of meaning in human activity, Gelven reverts to Heidegger's modes of existing called "existentials". Like Kant's categories, Heidegger regards them as *a priori*: that is, they cannot be discovered by being abstracted from experience. On the contrary, they are the very forms which render experience intelligible at all, hence, they must be ontologically prior to it. Heidegger has made these "existentials" the principles which "provide meaning by manifesting a positive and a negative element in the revelation of our meaning."²⁹ In other words, the existentials supply the capacity to differentiate, thereby enabling a conscious human activity to acquire the meaningfulness sought by the earnest agent.

Let us take the example of what it means to have a body. I want to *think about* what it means to have one, not however, about its genetic source or the physical laws governing it. My thinking, interrogatively, is this: "How can I inquire nonarbitrarily (i.e., with the authority or lawlikeness of reason) about what it means to have a body?"³⁰ How can the body provide a structure of positive and negative criteria which are the *conditio sine qua non* of meaning? The answer offered is: pleasure and pain. The body becomes manifest as meaningful in terms of pain and pleasure. Feeling is never without a content. When I feel it is either something pleasant like the satisfaction of food when I'm hungry, or something painful like unsatisfied hunger. Gelven gives the impression that the matrix of meaning, given the precondition of existentials, is to be found in that capacity to differentiate earlier mentioned:

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Gelven, "Authenticity and Guilt", p. 234.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., p. 235.

Now, this capacity to *differentiate* the stimuli upon the body makes my *having* a body meaningful. For without pleasure and pain, or some other form by which the difference between a positive and a negative evaluation can be found, there would be no way in which my having a body could be thought about as something that *matters to me*.³¹

As far as the discovery of meaning is concerned, what applies to the body also applies to the mind. I may want to reflect upon the nature of knowledge. As in the example of the body, where pleasure and pain were the diametrical determinations required for differentiation, so too, epistemologically, a positive and negative structure is needed to make sentences meaningful. In this case, the prior conditions are the correlates: true and false. I cannot claim to know anything without being able to distinguish the true from the false. Also, in the field of ethics, this principle of discrimination holds. In order for a will to be intelligible, there must be the prior distinction of good and bad.

Suppose, now, that my thinking is directed at what it means to exist. Are the above-mentioned formal differentiations of judgment sufficient? Differently phrased, is existence intelligible through the distinctions: pleasure and pain, truth and falsity, good and evil? The answer is yes, though only partially so, because "Before I can use the disjunct of(sic) pleasure pain, I must first limit the understanding of my sentient body. I must translate the understanding of my existence into claims of fact before I can apply the logician's forms of truth and falsity. I must *act* before the good and the bad are applicable."³² Since these discriminating principles are not sufficient to enable an inquiry into being as such, how, Gelven asks, can such a principle be found that would render intelligible what it means to be? The question is uniquely significant for a fuller appreciation of Heidegger's inquiry into authenticity.

What is noticeable about the three examples given above is that the subjects of disjunction are third-personal referents. My body is not circumspectly identical to myself. Neither does any knowledge I have exhaust the range of my personality; nor does my awareness of good and evil transform me into a virtual agent of moral action. All three ways of being indeed refer to me, but they presuppose my first-personal concern for my own existence, which cannot be appropriated third-personally in the manner of objective entities.

Gelven reverts to mankind's use of masks in gradually unfolding Heidegger's understanding of authenticity. Why do people devise and wear masks? The obvious, and perhaps only, reason is, deception. But to be able to hide behind a mask implies that there is a sense in us of the

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

difference between disguising our true selves and revealing our true selves. A person who wears a face-mask, for example, feels quite protected in that he escapes the recognition of his identity and therefore feels free from restriction and responsibility. More often than not, however, we wear masks not so much to deceive others as to fool ourselves. What men of bygone days did with the actual face-mask we do today by the way we act and the way we live. We display this predilection to deceive others and ourselves in the social roles we play, the attitudes we assume, and the mannerisms we cultivate. Hiding from others and from ourselves, therefore, is a possible way of existing. And revealing ourselves as we actually are is another possible way to exist. Here, too, the disjunction is present.

But the difference between hiding ourselves and revealing ourselves must not be considered, Gelven cautions, as just simply one more interesting thing that we do. Like the a priori forms that enabled us to think about our existence, our consciousness of the difference between hiding and revealing is a *conditio sine qua non* for the meaning of existence. Indeed, "if we ourselves are capable of both hiding and revealing our true reality, is not this, then, the key to the way existence as such can be analyzed as meaningful?"³³

The time has arrived to turn to *Being and Time* itself, for the gist of Gelven's question is precisely the point argued by Heidegger. The revelation of the true, undisguised self Heidegger calls *Eigentlichkeit* (authenticity), and that of the covered-up self, *Uneigentlichkeit* (inauthenticity).

V

RESOLUTENESS

There are two dimensions to Heidegger's concept of authenticity. This fact alone has occasioned some confusion among interpreters of Heidegger's existential analytic. In pointing to this fact, those who have carefully studied *Being and Time* invariably turn to two specific pages in Heidegger's masterpiece: pages 68 and 358 in the Macquarrie-Robinson translation, or pages 42 and 310 in the 1972 edition by Max Niemeyer of *Sein und Zeit*. On the earlier of the two pages authenticity is rendered as the correlate of inauthenticity and has the function of "mineness" (*Jemeinigkeit*) in contrast to the impersonality of the "they". The emphasis is on the first-person-singular characteristic of Dasein and entails the activity of a reflective agent. Accordingly,

As modes of Being, *authenticity* and *inauthenticity* (these expressions have been chosen terminologically in a strict sense) are both grounded in the fact that any Dasein whatsoever is characterized by mineness. But the inauthenticity of Dasein does not signify any "less" Being or

³³ibid., p. 236.

any "lower" degree of Being. Rather it is the case that even in its fullest concretion Dasein can be characterized by inauthenticity - when busy, when excited, when interested, when ready for enjoyment.³⁴

Proceeding phenomenologically, Heidegger is merely describing Dasein, noting that both modes of being are on equal footing in daily life. After all, we cannot deny that we do in fact succumb "to the false security of everydayness by moving within the realm of approved habits, accepted customs, and current conventions of everyday life."³⁵ When Dasein exists in this way, its standards are not its own, and its existence is only the expression of public opinion. Apparently Dasein is even bereft of decisions, since they have already been made for it; consequently it has virtually abdicated the possibility for personal responsibility. Because, however, this is a way of existing, Heidegger takes care not to undermine it. For right beside it, or better, in the midst of it, Dasein exercises its first-personal prerogatives of self-consciousness and motivations to choose and act. In other words, the possibility of exercising individuality is ever present.

On page 358 of *Being and Time*, however, authenticity is no longer treated merely descriptively but prescriptively as well. This is the ambiguity that causes the confusion. What is more, it is the version of authenticity that has led commentators to ascribe to Heidegger the kind of nihilism which authenticity so understood can easily suggest. This is the famous passage in question:

Is there not, however, a definite ontical way of taking authentic existence, a factual ideal of Dasein, underlying our ontological Interpretation of Dasein's existence? That is so indeed. But not only is this fact one which must not be denied and which we are forced to grant; it must also be conceived in its *positive necessity*, in terms of the object which we have taken as the theme of our investigation.³⁶

³⁴BT, p. 68. "Die beiden Seinsmodi der *Eigentlichkeit* und *Uneigentlichkeit* - diese Ausdrücke sind im strengen Wortsinne terminologisch gewählt - gründen darin, dass Dasein überhaupt durch Jemeinigkeit bestimmt ist. Die Uneigentlichkeit des Dasein bedeutet aber nicht etwa ein >>weniger<< Sein oder einer >>niedrigeren<< Seinsgrad. Die Uneigentlichkeit kann vielmehr das Dasein nach seiner vollsten Konkretion bestimmen in seiner Geschäftigkeit, Angeregtheit, Interessiertheit, Genussfähigkeit." SZ, 42.

³⁵Calvin O. Schrag, *Existence and Freedom: Towards an Ontology of Human Finitude* (Evanston: 1961), p. 186.

³⁶BT, p. 358. "Aber liegt der durchgeführten ontologischen Interpretation der Existenz des Daseins nicht eine bestimmte ontische Auffassung von eigentlicher Existenz, ein faktisches ideal des Daseins zugrunde? Das ist in der Tat so. Dieses Faktum darf nicht nur nicht geleugnet und

But the immediate problem is with the nature of authenticity itself. For if authenticity is to be considered as a correlate of inauthenticity where the two are inextricably interlinked, how can Dasein be authentic in an "ideal" way? Or, differently phrased, if inauthenticity does not signify any less being or any lower degree of being, what justification is there for postulating authenticity as an ideal? What is it about authenticity, as over against inauthenticity, that renders it existentially or ontically recommendable? But in asking these questions are we not in fact mishandling the issue? After all, Heidegger did caution that "this cannot mean...that 'Dasein' is to be construed in terms of some concrete possible idea of existence."³⁷

But if authentic self-being is a factual ideal of Dasein, then it is a *recommended way to be*, which implies "some concrete possible idea of existence," Heidegger notwithstanding. Does this not make Heidegger's position ambiguous? It does. Furthermore, is it not the case that "authentic existence is not something which floats above falling everydayness; existentially, it is only a modified way in which such everydayness is seized upon."³⁸ Then falling or inauthenticity, though not signifying less being or lower degree of being, *should nonetheless be modified* to give way to authenticity? That seems to be the case.

Earlier it was stated that authenticity and inauthenticity were inextricably interlinked. But how is resoluteness related to this correlation? Authenticity is a modification of inauthenticity. Authenticity is also best expressed as resoluteness. The relation, then, would be this: Resoluteness transforms Dasein from an inauthentic existence to an authentic self-being.

Before dealing with the concept of resoluteness, therefore, it behooves us to examine the manner in which the "they" exists. This manner of existing is referred to as falling (*die Verfallenheit*), which Heidegger

gezwungenerweise zugestanden, es muss in seiner *Positiven Notwendigkeit* aus dem thematischen Gegenstand der Untersuchung begriffen werden." SZ, 310. Referring to this passage, Douglas Kellner writes: "In fact, when Heidegger characterizes his concept of authenticity, he admits that an ideal of existence underlies his interpretation (SZ 310), indicating that authenticity is an *ideal* for Heidegger which he is recommending as a modification of inauthenticity. Hence Heidegger's contrast between inauthenticity and authenticity indicates he is maintaining an *axiological dualism* which he dialectically develops, spelling out oppositions and differences between authentic and inauthentic ways of being." Douglas Kellner, "Authenticity and Heidegger's Challenge to Ethical Theory," in *Thinking about Being: Aspects of Heidegger's Thought*, ed. Robert W. Shahan and J.N. Mohanty (Norman: 1984), p. 162.

³⁷ibid., p. 69.

³⁸ibid., p. 224.

defines as "an absorption into Being-with-one-another, in so far as the latter is guided by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity."³⁹ He then lists six elements that constitute falling: (1) temptation (Versuchung), (2) tranquilization (Beruhigung), (3) alienation (Entfremdung), (4) self-entanglement (Sichverfangen), (5) the downward plunge (Absturz), and (6) turbulence (Wirbel). Heidegger is careful to emphasize that although termed "falling," this mode of being is not a negative evaluation but signifies only that Dasein, as an authentic potentiality for being, drifts away from itself and "falls" into the world.

Idle talk, the source of groundless floating, indulges in the soothing practice of assuring the "they" that everything is in the best of order, that whatever is there to be understood about Dasein is available information for everyone. With this comprehensive knowledge about all the possibilities open to the "they", Dasein then interprets this state of affairs as guaranteeing genuine security. Lured thus into believing that this manner of being offers the best in life, Dasein thereby prepares for itself a temptation to falling. However, this tranquilization does not merely leave Dasein complacent or otherwise inactive, but has the added effect of enticing Dasein to uninhibited pursuits (Hemmungslosigkeit des "Betriebs").

An inordinate interest in foreign cultures, an unbounded curiosity about almost everything, may somehow produce a range of knowledge and a degree of enlightenment enough to ensure that an adequate understanding of Dasein has been procured. All this knowledge notwithstanding, in spite of this universal understanding, "it remains indefinite *what* is really to be understood, and the question has not even been asked."⁴⁰

This preoccupation with everything under the sun, however time-consuming and absorbing it may be, is not only tempting and alluring, but *alienating* as well. However voluminous the information gleaned, however penetrating and profound the knowledge of these cultures, Dasein is no less enriched concerning knowledge of itself. On the contrary, in this alienation Dasein gets entangled, caught up in a vortex which, by the sheer turbulence of its power, plunges Dasein "out of itself into itself, into the groundlessness and nullity of inauthentic everydayness."⁴¹

When Dasein indulges in idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity, it in fact disperses itself and loses its own integrity, unaware as it is of its authentic possibilities. Now these movements in which Dasein disperses itself are also connected with the notion of ecstatic time. Heidegger writes:

Temporality has different possibilities and different ways of temporalizing. The basic possibilities of existence, the authenticity

³⁹Ibid., p. 220.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 222.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 223.

and inauthenticity of Dasein, are grounded ontologically on possible temporalizations of temporality.⁴²

Temporality also reveals itself as care, and care, in turn, is constituted by the three structural moments of *existentiality*, *facticity*, and *falling*. Existentiality refers to the forward thrust of Dasein as existing protentionally, taking stock of its future possibilities. Facticity, on the other hand, depicts Dasein as already abandoned and compelled to cope with the fact. Its primary existential meaning, therefore, lies in its "having-been", the past. Falling, finally, indicates the way in which Dasein relates its possibilities exclusively to things, so much so that it becomes oblivious of its estrangement from them. This is its manner of existing in the present.

Now, since inauthenticity is not Dasein's proper way of being, in so existing it is not quite itself but is "narcoleptically" the "they" (the mode of being where decisions are not made because no one is there to make them), Dasein is nonetheless summoned from its falling. As inauthentic or as the they-self, Dasein is not properly itself. Dasein has in each case *mineness* (*Jemeinigkeit*). This characteristic of mineness comes to the fore under the urgency of choice. It is in resoluteness that Dasein breaks out of the numbing shackles of average everydayness to assert its individual existence:

When resolute, Dasein has brought itself back from falling, and has done so precisely in order to be more authentically "there" in the "moment of vision" as regards the Situation which has been disclosed.⁴³

No longer is the self so absorbed in immediate possibilities that the past and the future are evaded. When fallen, the self flees from the past in that facticity is forgotten; it flees from the future in avoiding possibilities, and above all, the ultimate possibility itself: death. When, however, in wanting-to-have-a-conscience, Dasein genuinely hears the call of conscience and thereby dwells in the authentic present, it is in this "moment of vision" (*Augenblick*) free to decide or choose. Unlike the inauthentic present, the moment of vision, i.e., the authentic present, embraces the past while disclosing its intrinsic limitation. It also comprises the future, acknowledging the possibilities that remain open.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 351. "Zeitlichkeit kann in verschiedenen Möglichkeiten und in verschiedener Weise *zeitigen*. Die Grundmöglichkeiten der Existenz, Eigentlichkeit und Uneigentlichkeit des Daseins, gründen ontologisch in möglichen Zeitungen der Zeitlichkeit." SZ, 304.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 376. "Entschlossen hat sich das Dasein gerade zurückgeholt aus dem Verfallen, um desto eigentlicher im »Augenblick« auf die erschlossene Situation »da« zu sein." SZ, 328.

Since Dasein, as fallen, is in a state of irresolution, it cannot possess the coherence or constancy required by decision-making. When, however, Dasein is summoned by conscience into the moment of vision, its total situation: existentiality, facticity, and falling, is disclosed to it. And it is then that resoluteness is possible.

Now it is easier to see how inauthenticity and authenticity are indissolubly linked. Resoluteness has to be about something. And that about which Dasein resolves is its very existence genuinely and fully disclosed. In taking a stand or making a choice, Dasein emancipates itself from the "they" and achieves its integrity, which is, in fact, its authenticity. Authenticity is obviously, therefore, not only a personal achievement, but the ultimate accomplishment possible for Dasein. Resoluteness is also related to the existentialia of anxiety and guilt. How?

Anxiety rips open the stuffy, foggy chambers where Dasein dwells listlessly, lolling in alluring contentment, singles it out with the floodlights of awareness, making it luminously manifest *alone*, wherein it grasps itself in the vertiginous insecurity of solitude. Thus isolated, it ineluctably faces the authentic possibilities intrinsic to its being. Then conscience confronts it with its original guilt of being the basis of nullity. And Dasein, in loyalty to itself, responds to the agitations of conscience by choosing. But choose what? What precisely is chosen in resoluteness?

Explicating "resoluteness", Richard Schmitt writes: "Only those choices that are genuinely self-possessed, in which we do not act as if we did not know the correct category distinctions, are to be regarded as resolute choices."⁴⁴ Self-deception, for example, is out of the question. One is to act in full awareness that no external support can serve as the wherefore and wherewithal of decisions. Dasein cannot be itself and at the same time divest itself of its responsibility by imputing to any external agent the cause and consequence of its choice. It must face the fact, terrifying as it may be, that it is alone in this business of existence. And the effort to evade this most basic of facts is bound to be abortive since conscience has the prerogative of "reminding" Dasein of it. Of course, being alone in this business of existence simply means that decisions are made quite alone. Solipsism or acosmism are not being suggested. Heidegger writes:

Resoluteness constitutes the *loyalty* of existence to its own Self. As resoluteness which is ready for *anxiety* this loyalty is at the same time a possible way of revering the sole authority which a free existing can have of revering the repeatable possibilities of existence.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Richard Schmitt, *Martin Heidegger on Being Human: An Introduction to "Sein und Zeit"* (New York: 1969), p. 249.

⁴⁵BT, 443. "Die Entschlossenheit konstituiert die *Treue* der Existenz zum eigenen Selbst. Als angstbereite Entschlossenheit ist die Treue zugleich

It is worth noting that Heidegger makes no bones about it: the sole "authority" that a free individual can have, an authority, moreover, which commands reverence, is not to be sought in some "beyond" or "afar" but in Dasein itself. Properly understood, con-science is neither an instrument of divinity nor an agent of the positive morality of society. Also, it does not have the theological connotations of the medieval doctrine of *synteresis*, according to which man is naturally, although only slightly, inclined towards the good in that he is able to discern infallibly the inherent natural law. Conscience in Heidegger's sense has the meaning of "knowledge within oneself," for it is the claim of care erupting from the deepest recesses of Dasein's being, summoning it to accept itself as the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* of its acts. It is, therefore, in resoluteness that Dasein acknowledges itself as the basis of nullity and as the sole authority of its existence. This choice of itself as *solus ipse* is nonetheless the utmost achievement of Dasein. There is nothing derogatory or pessimistic about it. There is even joy in its enactment. It is a meaningful act; indeed, the most meaningful of Dasein's activities.

IV

CONCLUSION

To recapitulate: Dasein is inauthentic when it gets entangled with superficial concerns, or adopts a way of being that minimizes risks, preferring to remain comfortable with what is familiar. Since, however, it is from the world that Dasein "inherits" its possibilities, it tends to interpret them the way they have already been interpreted by the "they".

However, if Dasein merely accepts these possibilities under the auspices of the "they", there lies the danger that it might regard them as rigid actualities. Furthermore, Dasein can become so preoccupied with what is actual, busying itself so much with the actual that it begins to believe that something new is always happening as a result of such concern, that in fact it may *will* no positive possibilities at all.

The reason that this mode of being is not recommended is because it deprives Dasein of exercising its freedom in the face of possibilities disclosed by every resolute act. Not only, however, does resoluteness occasion further possibilities, but it also requires possibility as a precondition. The upshot is that Dasein is definable as freedom. But Dasein, permeated as it is by possibilities, requires a structure within itself that can account for the actualization of these possibilities, thereby rendering its existence meaningful. The principle of legitimacy in this operation - that which justifies action, which confers significance on choice

möliche Ehrfurcht vor der einzigen Autorität, die ein freies Existieren haben kann, vor den wiederholbaren Möglichkeiten der Existenz." SZ, 391.

- is care, the matrix of meaning. Care unifies the being of Dasein. It is care that endows Dasein with a structure.

Since Dasein is already a unity by virtue of care, in what way can authenticity be an ideal? Is not an ideal an ethical task as well? And what is such a task if not a guarantor of sense? Interestingly enough, it is in connection with his discussion of anticipatory resoluteness that Heidegger introduces the question concerning authenticity as an ideal (BT, 358). What Heidegger seems to be suggesting is either that authenticity offers itself to Dasein as an ideal or that the phenomenologist should regard authentic existence as an ideal. In both cases the ideal is being recommended. But in *Being and Time* the discussion preceding this passage explains that anticipatory resoluteness (*vorlaufende Entschlossenheit*), far from being an escape from death, is rather the power by means of which Dasein responds directly to the call of conscience by shunning self-deception, by avoiding *tergiversation*. In brief, anticipatory resoluteness takes action not for the sake of an ideal but rather because of the understanding implicit in resoluteness itself, namely, that in deciding to act the choice of possibilities is already claimed by care.

Finally, if the meaning of Being is authenticity, and authenticity is the ability to understand one's situation as both a moment of personal history and as occasion for decision, then authenticity as an ideal turns out to be nugatory. For an ideal by definition is an aim or endeavor, and as such functions as the wherewithal of valuation or a repository of meaning. What is more, an ideal is transcendent and heteronymous. But the measure of meaning in the case of Dasein is care, and care in Heidegger's conceptual scheme is not only immanent and autonomous to Dasein, but is a priori as well.

Therefore, since *Being and Time* supports the thesis that authenticity is the meaning of Being, I suggest that the notion of authenticity as an ideal be relegated to a mere conceptual excrescence. For implied in the understanding that an authentic situation evokes decision is the corresponding conviction that whatever the consequences of that decision, it is not definitive. It also signifies that the meaning of Dasein's existence does not culminate in the aftermath of a decision but rather unfolds in every resolute act. And this is implicit in care.