

**Conscience and Attestation:
The Methodological Role
of the “Call of Conscience” (*Gewissensruf*)
in Heidegger’s *Being and Time***

par

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Cette thèse intitulée :

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in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*

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Résumé

Cette étude vise à exposer le rôle méthodologique que Martin Heidegger attribue à la conscience (*Gewissen*) dans *Être et temps* et à faire ressortir les implications de son interprétation de « l'appel de la conscience » comme le moyen de produire l'attestation (*Bezeugung*) de l'existence authentique en tant que possibilité du *Dasein* (ou être-dans-le-monde). Notre objectif initial est de montrer comment la notion heideggérienne de conscience a évolué avant la publication d'*Être et temps* en 1927 et d'identifier les sources qui ont contribué à l'interprétation existentielle de la conscience comme « l'appel du souci. » Notre analyse historique révèle notamment que Heidegger n'a jamais décrit la conscience comme un « appel » avant sa lecture du livre *Das Gewissen* (1925) par Hendrik G. Stoker, un jeune philosophe sud-africain qui a étudié à Cologne sous la direction de Max Scheler. Nous démontrons plus spécifiquement comment l'étude phénoménologique de Stoker—qui décrit la conscience comme « l'appel du devoir (*Pflichtruf*) » provenant de l'étincelle divine (*synteresis*) placée dans l'âme de chaque personne par Dieu—a influencé l'élaboration du concept de « l'appel existentiel » chez Heidegger. Mettant l'accent sur le rôle méthodologique de la conscience dans *Être et temps*, nous soulignons aussi l'importance des liens entre son concept de la conscience et la notion de « l'indication formelle » que Heidegger a mise au cœur de sa « méthode » dans ses cours sur la phénoménologie à Freiburg et Marbourg. Alors que de nombreux commentateurs voient dans « l'appel de la conscience » une notion solipsiste qui demeure impossible en tant qu'expérience, nous proposons un moyen de lever cette difficulté apparente en tentant de faire ressortir ce qui est « indiqué formellement » par la notion même de la conscience (*Gewissen*) dans *Être et temps*. Cette approche nous permet d'affirmer que le concept de conscience chez Heidegger renvoie à un phénomène de « témoignage » qui est radicalement différent de la notion traditionnelle de *conscientia*. Guidé par les principes

mêmes de la phénoménologie heideggerienne, nous procédons à une analyse « destructrice » de l'histoire du mot allemand *Gewissen* qui nous révèle que la signification originelle de ce mot (établie dans le plus ancien livre préservé dans la langue allemande : le *Codex Abrogans*) était *testimonium* et non *conscientia*. À l'origine, *Gewissen* signifiait en effet « attestation »—ce qui est précisément le rôle assigné à la conscience par Heidegger dans *Être et temps*. Sur la base de cette découverte, nous proposons une manière de comprendre cette « attestation » comme une expérience possible : l'écoute du « témoignage silencieux » du martyr qui permet à *Dasein* de reconnaître sa propre possibilité d'authenticité.

Mots-clés : Philosophie, Heidegger, Conscience, *Gewissen*, Existence, Phénoménologie, Attestation, *Bezeugung*, Témoignage, Martyr

Abstract

This study aims to exhibit the methodological role that Martin Heidegger assigns to conscience (*Gewissen*) in *Being and Time* and to reveal the implications of his interpretation of the “call of conscience” as the means of producing the attestation (*Bezeugung*) of authentic existence as a possibility of Being-in-the-world (or *Dasein*). We begin by seeking to understand how Heidegger’s notion of conscience evolved prior to the 1927 publication of *Being and Time* and to identify the sources which contributed to his interpretation of conscience as the “call of care.” Our historical analysis notably reveals that Heidegger never once describes conscience as a “call” before reading *Das Gewissen* (1925) by Hendrik G. Stoker, a young South African philosopher who studied under Max Scheler’s direction at the University of Cologne. We specifically examine how Stoker’s phenomenological study—which describes conscience as the “call-of-duty” issued to each human being by the divine “spark” (*synteresis*) placed in his or her soul by God—contributed to shaping Heidegger’s account of the “existential call.” Focusing on the methodological role of conscience in *Being and Time*, we analyze Heidegger’s major work in light of his early lectures on phenomenology at Freiburg and Marburg. This approach confirms the relation between conscience in *Being and Time* and the concept of “formal indication” that Heidegger placed at the heart of his evolving “method” of phenomenological investigation. While many commentators have argued that Heidegger’s “call of conscience” is solipsistic and impossible to experience, we propose a way of reconsidering this apparent impasse by examining what *Being and Time* itself “formally indicates” with regard to conscience. We show that Heidegger’s conscience points to a phenomenon of existential “testimony” which is radically different from the traditional notion of *conscientia*. Guided by Heidegger’s “formal indication” of conscience, we “destructively” review the history of the German word *Gewissen* and reveal its original meaning to be “*testimonium*” not “*conscientia*.” In recognizing that *Gewissen* originally

meant “attestation,” we show how Heidegger’s existential phenomenon of conscience can be understood as Dasein’s experience of hearing the “silent testimony” of the martyr.

Keywords: Philosophy, Heidegger, Conscience, *Gewissen*, Existence, Phenomenology, Attestation, *Bezeugung*, Testimony, Martyr

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used for works by Martin Heidegger which are regularly cited or referenced in this text:

- SZ *Sein und Zeit*. 19th ed. Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 2006. The abbreviation is generally followed by the section number, page number / page number of English translation; for example, SZ §54, 267 / 312. Unless otherwise indicated, the English translation used is *Being and Time*. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.
- GA *Gesamtausgabe*. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1975-. The abbreviation is generally followed by the volume number, section number (when applicable), page number / page number of English translation (when applicable); for example GA 20, §35, 440 / 319.
- GA 7 *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 2000.
- GA 9 *Wegmarken*. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1976. English translation is *Pathmarks*. Ed. William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- GA 19 *Platon: Sophistes*. Ed. Ingeborg Schüßler. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1992. English translation is *Plato's Sophist*. Trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- GA 20 *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*. Ed. Petra Jaeger. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1979. English translation is *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*. Trans. Theodore Kisiel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.
- GA 29/30 *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1992. English translation is *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. Trans.

William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995.

- GA 54 *Parmenides*. Ed. M. S. Frings. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1982. English translation is *Parmenides*. Trans. Andre Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.
- GA 56/57 *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie*. Ed. Bernd Heimbüchel. 2 ed. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1999. English translation is *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*. Trans. Ted Sadler. London: Continuum, 2008.
- GA 59 *Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks*. Ed. Claudius Strube. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1993. English translation is *Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression*. Trans. Tracy Colony. London; New York: Continuum, 2010.
- GA 60 *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*. Eds. Matthias Jung, Thomas Regehly, and Claudius Strube. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1995. English translation is *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*. Trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004.
- GA 61 *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*. Eds. Walter Bröcker and Käte Bröcker-Oltmanns. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1985. English translation is *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research*. Trans. Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.
- GA 63 *Ontologie: Hermeneutik der Faktizität*. Ed. Käte Bröcker-Oltmanns. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1988. English translation is *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*. Trans. John van Buren. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.
- GA 64 *Der Begriff der Zeit*. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 2004.
- GA 65 *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*. Ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1989. English translation is *Contributions to Philosophy: From Enowning*.

Trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

Editorial Notes

- When directly citing or referencing texts from Heidegger’s *Being and Time* or the volumes of the *Gesamtausgabe*, we have first indicated the source and page number in the original German, followed by the page number in the English translation, when applicable.
- Given the widespread availability of Heidegger’s published texts in German, we have not always provided the full German text when citing *Being and Time* or other Heideggerian texts found in the *Gesamtausgabe*. These are generally cited as they appear in the English translations, unless otherwise indicated. However, when citing texts in other languages that have not been published in English or that are less accessible, we have generally provided the full original text in the footnotes.
- We have used square brackets to indicate any modifications made to any directly cited text.
- When directly citing texts containing ancient Greek characters, we have generally reproduced the text using Latin characters in order to enhance readability.
- Following the convention adopted by most English translators of Heidegger’s works, we have neither translated nor italicized the term “Dasein” used by Heidegger to convey his existential concept of “Being-there.” When directly citing English translations of Heidegger’s texts, these have been modified as necessary in order to ensure uniformity.
- We have generally avoided capitalizing English words that are used to translate German nouns. We have modified any direct citations of published English translations of original German works where such capitalizations appear (e.g. Interpretation, Resoluteness, Discourse, Others, etc.). The sole exception we have made is for Heidegger’s concept of Being (*Sein*), which we have capitalized in English both when this concept appears alone and when it is used in any of the composite terms coined by Heidegger to convey various existential phenomena (e.g. Being-in-the-world for *In-der-Welt-sein*, Being-towards-death for *Sein zum Tode*, etc.).

*À Francine, mon épouse,
ma partenaire dans ce projet doctoral,
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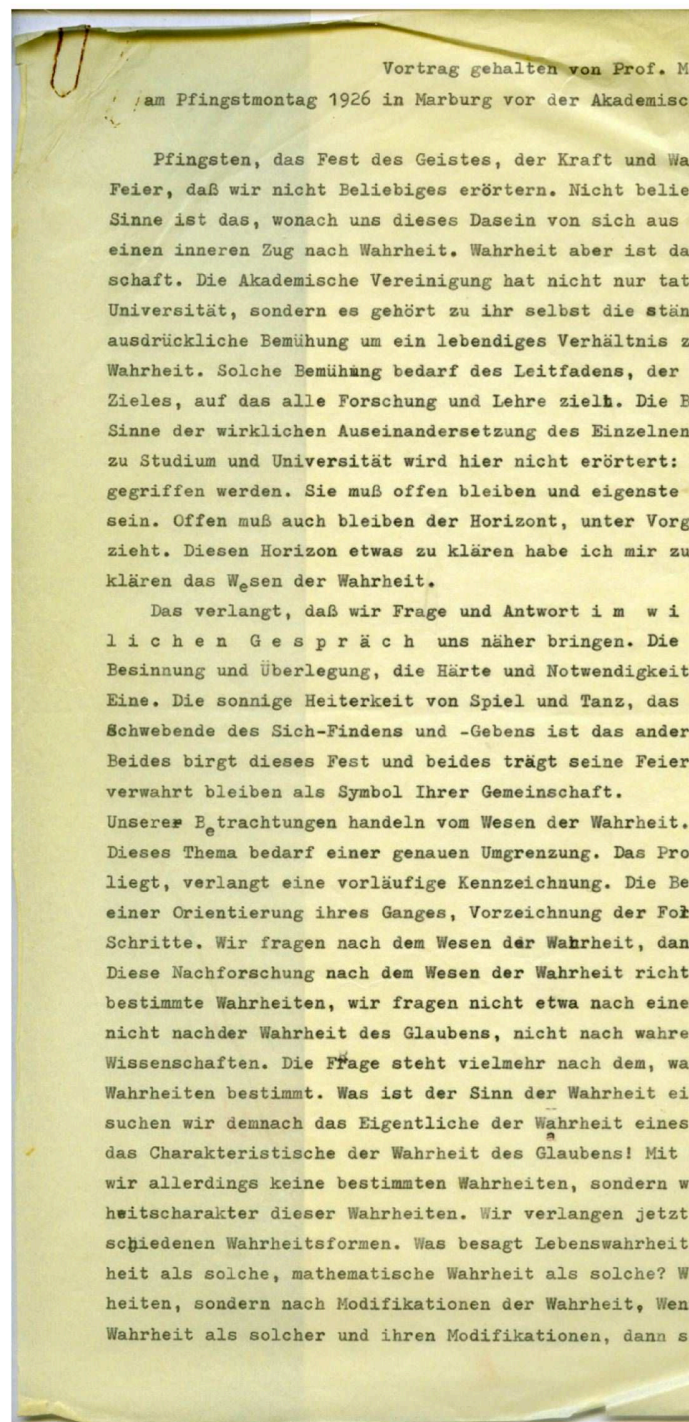
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Because we are actually unable to see the phenomena of existence today, we no longer experience the meaning of conscience and sense of responsibility that lies in the historical itself. For the historical is not merely something of which we have knowledge and about which we write books; rather, we ourselves are the historical that we ourselves bear and carry as a responsibility.

Weil wir heute die Existenzphänomene nicht eigentlich sehen, erfahren wir nicht mehr den Gewissens- und Verantwortungssinn, der im Historischen selbst liegt, das nicht nur etwas ist, wovon man Kenntnis



hat und worüber es Bücher gibt, das wir vielmehr
 selbst sind, an dem wir selbst tragen.

Martin Heidegger

From the essay “Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers *Psychologie
der Weltanschauungen*” (1920)*

* GA 9, 33-34. English translation from Heidegger, Martin. "Critical Comments on Jaspers's *Psychology of Worldviews*." Trans. Theodore J. Kisiel. *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*. Eds. Theodore J. Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, [1920] 2007. p. 141.

Introduction

When Martin Heidegger introduces the phenomenon of “conscience (*Gewissen*)” in *Being and Time*, he places one of the most morally charged and controversial concepts of philosophy, ethics and theology at the heart of his existential-ontological project. With this choice, Heidegger indicates that the question of the meaning of Being—the fundamental question of *Being and Time* that Heidegger contends has been covered up by tradition—can only be raised if the primordial experience of conscience understood as a phenomenon that “cannot be defined by morality”¹ is salvaged from the ambiguity of the myriad ways in which it is “ordinarily” described.² Indeed, Heidegger interprets conscience as an existential “call (*Ruf*)” that allows one to recognize the error of understanding this “voice” as an essentially moral phenomenon, e.g. as an internal “judge” which condemns past misdeeds or as a moral guide which urges a person towards what is good. For Heidegger, such “ordinary (*vulgär*)” ways of understanding conscience are only possible on the basis of the primordial but generally forgotten phenomenon of the “call” which initiates the experience of Dasein’s coming into its world.

Given the historical importance of *conscientia* to philosophical and religious tradition, Heidegger’s appropriation of the concept of conscience in *Being and Time* is as irreverent as it is radical. In exposing the ambiguity of “moral conscience,” Heidegger indicates that his “destruction” of *conscientia* is possible only because the existential “call of conscience (*Gewissensruf*)” allows Dasein to free itself from the bondage of “common” morality and other such “everyday (*alltäglich*)” concerns. In *Being and Time*, conscience thus serves as both the “attestation (*Bezeugung*)” of the *experience* of Dasein’s authentic disclosedness and the *phenomenological means* for exhibiting the ways in which “everyday” Dasein absorbs itself in the public concerns of the “they (*das Man*).” What is

¹ SZ §58, 286 / 332.

² SZ §59, 289 / 335.

implied by this dual role that Heidegger assigns to conscience is that the entire existential analysis depends upon Dasein's possible hearing of this "call." Rescued from the "forgetfulness" of tradition by Heidegger's interpretation, the phenomenon of existential conscience proves to be the methodological key for investigating Dasein's constitutive structures and thus for accessing the fundamental question of Being.

One of the primary objectives of our study is to show how Heidegger's conscience functions as the pivotal concept in *Being and Time* that brings Dasein into the "there" of disclosedness where the question of Being can be raised. More specifically, we seek to contribute to the understanding of how this "primordial" phenomenon of the "call of conscience" is related to the "method" of formal indication developed in Heidegger's earlier lectures and writings. As we analyze the highly unconventional interpretation of conscience that Heidegger proposes, our study will focus squarely on the *how* of experiencing conscience and of producing the required attestation of Dasein's possible authenticity and phenomenal "wholeness." Given our concern for the methodological structure of *Being and Time*, we will see that conscience—introduced at the critical moment of Heidegger's investigation where the project shifts from the analysis of Dasein to the interpretation of time—is positioned as the attesting "experience" which the legitimacy of all phenomenological research ultimately depends upon.

Our examination of conscience in *Being and Time* also seeks to address the difficulties that Heidegger faces in attempting to reveal the meaning of Being through his existential analysis of Being-in-the-world. In this regard, we open our study of Heideggerian conscience by making two principal assumptions, both of which are found in the writings of several leading commentators of *Being and Time*. Our first assumption is that the existential analysis of *Being and Time* is rendered problematic because the "attestation" of conscience promised by Heidegger in §54 is never adequately produced. This problem leads to Heidegger's eventual recognition that *Being and Time* was—as Theodore Kisiel puts it—"a failed project" and that the meaning of Being could not be

accessed through the analysis of Dasein's constitutive structures.³ On this point, we share Kisiel's conviction that the problem of understanding how Being-in-the-world can *experience* its "authenticity" demands that we reconsider Heidegger's initial "hermeneutic breakthrough" in his 1919 "war emergency semester (*Kriegsnotsemester*)" course at Freiburg⁴ where he insisted on the necessity of positing a "*preworldly* something (basic moment of life as such)."⁵ We will contend in this thesis that the existential "call of conscience" reflects Heidegger's attempt in *Being and Time* to indicate how it is possible for Dasein to *experience* its return to such a "basic moment of life." Significantly for our study, this "war emergency semester" marks the first moment in Heidegger's published philosophical work where he makes reference to conscience (*Gewissen*) as he criticizes the traditional notion of *conscientia*.⁶ Our second assumption is that Heidegger was greatly concerned about the methodology of his "hermeneutical phenomenology" deployed in *Being and Time* even though there is relatively little discussion of methodological issues in the text itself, a point that has been made convincingly by Jean-François Courtine and Walter Schulz.⁷ We believe that our understanding of these methodological questions and how they relate to the concept of conscience can be advanced by studying the development of Heidegger's phenomenological approach in the years leading up to *Being and Time*'s publication in 1927. In showing how conscience emerged as the pivotal concept in Heidegger's investigation of Dasein, we aim both to identify problems related to conscience's role of "attestation" and to specify the implications of these difficulties for the project of *Being and Time* as a whole, notably with regard to the analysis of "everyday" Dasein's constitutive phenomena in Division One.

³ Theodore J. Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). p. 458.

⁴ Ibid. p. 458.

⁵ Ibid. pp. 21-23. Based on the notes taken by Heidegger's students, the description of the "*preworldly*" in the schema is given as: "*Das vorweltliche Etwas (Grundmoment des Lebens überhaupt) Ur-etwas.*"

⁶ GA 56/57, 45 / 36-37.

⁷ Cf. Jean-François Courtine. "La cause de la phénoménologie." *Heidegger et la phénoménologie*. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1990). p. 165; Walter Schulz. "Über den philosophiegeschichtlichen Ort Martin Heideggers." *Heidegger: Perspektiven zur Deutung seines Werks*. ed. Otto Pöggeler. (Königstein: Athenäum, 1984). p. 101.

While our study exposes key problems related to Heidegger's approach, it also aims to open up new ways of thinking about the existential concept of conscience and to allow us to envision possible solutions to problems Heidegger left unresolved. In this sense, our study recognizes and responds to the widespread claim that the "attestation" proposed in *Being and Time* is insufficient and to the fact that Heidegger abandoned the concept of conscience almost immediately after this major work was published. We thus embrace the challenge issued by Paul Ricœur when he suggestively asked if the problem of the "attestation" of conscience in *Being and Time* could again be "taken up" where Heidegger had "left off."⁸ Evidently, this task of identifying alternative ways of understanding the existential notion of conscience cannot produce answers that could be regarded as "authorized" by Heidegger himself. He provides little explicit guidance in *Being and Time* with regard to the underlying methodology of his existential analysis and does not explain in much detail how the "call of conscience" *functions* within his "method" of interpretive phenomenology. As Karen Feldman argues, the originality—and "literary" merit—of *Being and Time* lies in its "profoundly figurative and specifically catachrestic" nature that "disturbs" its readers and forces them to participate in the "performance" of Heidegger's existential investigation.⁹ Rather than delivering objective factual statements or clearly communicating his "method," Heidegger presses his readers to "experience" their own dependence on the "call of conscience" as they struggle to make sense of his "unhandy, defamiliarizing" descriptions of Dasein's basic phenomena.¹⁰

While this "disturbing" and "performative" approach is perfectly suited to Heidegger's "radical" project, it significantly complicates any attempt to expose the methodological role of conscience in *Being and Time* and to reveal the problematic aspects

⁸ Paul Ricœur. "Emmanuel Lévinas, penseur du témoignage." *Lectures 3 : Aux Frontières De La Philosophie*. (Paris: Seuil, [1989] 1994). p. 95. In French: "[Est-il] possible, à partir [d'une] herméneutique du témoignage, de remettre en chantier la problématique du *Gewissen*, de la conscience morale, de l'injonction, de la reprendre au point où Heidegger l'a laissée ?"

⁹ Karen S. Feldman. *Binding Words: Conscience and Rhetoric in Hobbes, Hegel, and Heidegger*. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2006). p. 80.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 80.

of Dasein's "self-attestation" of its possibility of "authentic existence."¹¹ To complicate our investigation further, there are very few references to conscience in Heidegger's early work which document the development of his existential concept of conscience or presage its sudden appearance as *the* pivotal phenomenon of *Being and Time*. For these reasons, our study requires both an attentive review of the early Heideggerian lectures and writings on phenomenological method and a deliberate study of the historical sources which inform his approach to conscience, including both the few references explicitly provided by Heidegger and other sources which reveal themselves to be formally indicated by his existential concept.

Our assessment of the methodological role of conscience in *Being and Time* reveals that this phenomenon must be distinguished from the other supposedly "equiprimordial (*gleichursprünglich*)" phenomena which Heidegger interprets as constitutive of Being-in-the-world. Both in existential and methodological terms, the entire project of *Being and Time* turns on the success of Heidegger's interpretation of conscience in producing the "attestation" that Dasein is "something for which authentic existence is possible."¹² Without this "attestation," the project will not have shown how Dasein can actually be "whole"—which is a condition Heidegger considers to be necessary for the success of his investigation. As we will see, it is Heidegger's apparent difficulty in showing how the "call of conscience" can be experienced that leads to his abandonment both of the concept of conscience itself and of *Being and Time*'s existential-ontological approach. For our study, however, Heidegger's forsaking of conscience does not lead to a dead end: the formal indications provided in *Being and Time* can be reconsidered with an eye to opening up new ways of advancing the existential investigation. In this regard, we must keep in mind that the "call of conscience" itself formally indicates a possibility of authentic understanding which must be enacted: if Heidegger's conscience is the "attesting" phenomenon of Dasein's possible authenticity, then it must be possible as an *experience* of Dasein. Once the vital methodological role of conscience in *Being and Time* has been established and

¹¹ SZ §54, 267 / 312.

¹² SZ §54, 267 / 312.

clarified, we can explore how the “call of conscience” might be *experienced* by following up on what is formally indicated by conscience and the other key phenomena that Heidegger identifies with Dasein’s authentic mode of existence. Our goal in “taking up” this search is not to “define” the meaning of Dasein’s conscience but rather to point to a way in which Dasein can be understood to enact its authentic “self-testimony.”

Despite the fact that Heidegger’s “*self*-attestation” of conscience is problematic and that he precipitously abandoned this concept, the “call of conscience” does not have to be—and should not be—simply cast aside as a phenomenological concept. Although Heidegger’s account of conscience may not convincingly provide the “demonstration” that Dasein can find “its source” in its own “state of Being,”¹³ his interpretation of the existential call and its methodological role in *Being and Time* can be seen to point to possible solutions to this problem regarding *how* conscience can be experienced. When the analysis of Dasein is reconsidered with a focus on the role of conscience and Heidegger’s method of formal indication, it becomes possible to interpret the “call of conscience” in terms of ontical experience. As we will see, the experience of conscience can be understood as a form of authentic witnessing which makes Dasein’s disclosedness possible and thus provides the basis for all the possible ways in which the world can be understood.

Main Findings of the Study

The results of our investigation of Heidegger’s existential conscience hold several implications for the phenomenological methodology of *Being and Time*, for the existential analysis of Dasein and for the concept of conscience itself, notably with regard to the influences on Heidegger’s interpretation of conscience and to the origin and distinct history of the German word *Gewissen*. Here are some of the key findings that we will develop more fully in the course of our study:

1) The Influence of Hendrik G. Stoker’s *Das Gewissen* (1925) on Heidegger’s Interpretation of Conscience in *Being and Time*: The single most important influence on

¹³ SZ §54, 267 / 312.

Heidegger’s existential interpretation of conscience—and indeed one of the most significant sources for examining the methodological principles of *Being and Time* as a whole—is discreetly acknowledged in a footnote at the end of §55 in the second chapter of Division Two.¹⁴ Here, Heidegger comments briefly on a recently published phenomenological study of conscience entitled *Das Gewissen* written by a South African scholar named Hendrik G. Stoker and edited by Max Scheler, who had directed Stoker’s doctoral work at the University of Cologne.¹⁵ As we will see in our review of Heidegger’s published texts from 1919-1925, the young German philosopher had only developed a “primitive” sketch of conscience prior to the appearance of Stoker’s book: it is only *after* Heidegger has read *Das Gewissen* that the notion of the “call of conscience” makes its decisive appearance in his 1927 work.

While Heidegger criticizes *Das Gewissen* for lacking the radical spirit of his own existential project, he credits Stoker for making “notable progress as compared with previous interpretations of conscience” and observes “many points of agreement” between their approaches.¹⁶ What Heidegger fails to mention in his footnote—or anywhere else in *Being and Time*—is that Stoker specifically identifies a “source” of the phenomenon of conscience during the course of his investigation. Stoker contends that the experience of moral conscience—which he describes as the “call-of-duty (*Pflichtruf*) of conscience” that underlies all possible existence—reveals the necessity of an “absolute” power that lights up the soul.¹⁷ For Stoker, this “absolute source” is *synteresis*: the much disputed Christian notion of the “divine spark” which God places in the soul of each of his creatures in order to protect them from evil.¹⁸

¹⁴ SZ, Footnote to §55, 272 / 495 (note vi).

¹⁵ H. G. Stoker. *Das Gewissen, Erscheinungsformen und Theorien*. (Bonn: F. Cohen, 1925).

¹⁶ SZ, Footnote to §55, 272 / 495 (note vi).

¹⁷ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 226.

¹⁸ A wide variety of spellings of *synteresis* have been used since the term was “adopted” by the Scholastics in the middle ages. We will use the spelling “*synteresis*” in our text for three reasons: 1) This is the form most commonly used in German. 2) More specifically, this is the spelling used by Stoker in *Das Gewissen*, which we will examine in great depth and was a key reference for Heidegger as he developed his existential concept of conscience. 3) This spelling is the one that is most similar to the Greek word “συντήρησις (*sunteresin*)” that appears in the commentary of St. Jerome, the source from whom the term was appropriated by the

Despite Heidegger’s censure of Stoker for “blurring the boundaries between phenomenology and theology,”¹⁹ the South African’s investigation proves significant for our investigation of the existential concept of the “call of conscience” in two major ways. Firstly, Stoker’s work—published in September 1925 just as Heidegger was completing his first draft of the sections on Being-towards-death that precede the chapter on conscience— informs our study of the methodological role of conscience in *Being and Time*. *Das Gewissen* represents the *first ever* attempt to investigate the experience of conscience on the basis of phenomenological principles. The timing of Stoker’s publication was providential for Heidegger: it provided him with a sophisticated and original study of the phenomenon of conscience at the very moment that he was working to develop his own existential interpretation. Indeed, Stoker even included in *Das Gewissen* a detailed, critical and patently “destructive” review of the various theories of conscience proposed by poets, religious authorities, theologians and philosophers since the pre-Socratic era. Secondly, Stoker’s phenomenological study of conscience arrives at the conclusion that the “powerful” source that initiates the experience of conscience is *synteresis*, the “absolute” light of God’s spark placed in the soul that allows each individual to recognize the truth. In Stoker’s phenomenological interpretation, the “painful” nature of the experience of conscience can be explained by the incompatibility of the “relative” nature of the human being—as a creature tainted by sin and inconstancy—and the “absolute” purity of God’s spirit. Following in the footsteps of Meister Eckhart and Theresa of Avila, Stoker seeks to reclaim *synteresis* from Scholastic casuistry that he believes has sullied the divine source of existence by subjugating it to the “terrestrial” notion of *conscientia*. Clearly, Heidegger breaks with Stoker’s investigation both in terms of its method and the significance which it assigns to *synteresis*. As Heidegger writes in his footnote: “Stoker’s monograph differs from the existential interpretation...in its approach and accordingly in its results as well.”²⁰ Nonetheless, it is a deficiency of current scholarship that the influence of Stoker’s study on the development of *Being and Time* has been so widely neglected. Our study emphasizes

Scholastics. Other common spellings, such as “*synderesis*” or “*sinderesis*” in Latin and English and “*syndérèse*” in French, will only be used when we refer to or quote from texts where they appear.

¹⁹ SZ, Footnote to §55, 272 / 495 (note vi).

²⁰ SZ, Footnote to §55, 272 / 495 (note vi).

the importance of *Das Gewissen* for Heidegger's interpretation of conscience and shows how Stoker's "absolute" notion of *synteresis*—left unmentioned by Heidegger—allows us to more clearly understand the fundamental problems facing the German philosopher's existential account of Being-in-the-world's authentic experience of "attestation."

2) Conscience is the Key to Both the "Method" of Formal Indication in *Being and Time* and the Primordial Experience of Dasein's "Attestation (*Bezeugen*)": When the text of *Being and Time* is compared with Heidegger's earlier lectures on phenomenological method, it becomes evident that the analysis of Dasein's existential structures proposed in the work's Division One represents a "performative" deployment of his evolving investigative "procedure" of formal indication. By specifically emphasizing the methodological role of conscience, our study will show that Heidegger's analysis of Being-in-the-world's constitutive elements requires the possibility of an initial orientation. When Heidegger insists at the beginning of §54 that the attestation of authenticity must "have its roots in Dasein's Being," he reveals that his method of formal indication depends upon the identification of a means for initiating—or, more precisely, *renewing*—Dasein's care for its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. While Heidegger's presentation of conscience in *Being and Time* comes *after* the preliminary analysis of "everydayness," his interpretive investigation is exposed as having been dependent all along on the possibility of authentically caring for one's own Being: the phenomenon of authentically hearing the "call of conscience" thus has been silently *effective* throughout Division One. As Feldman observes, the "call of conscience" plays a "singular performative role" within *Being and Time* that goes well beyond the discussion of the call itself because the work "as a whole can be read as a performance of the call...[in that] the call of conscience breaks off Dasein's listening to the they-self (*Man-selbst*)."²¹ While *Being and Time* may be considered as a "performance" of conscience, the call cannot be understood merely as the content of Heidegger's text, as if the summons of conscience could somehow be "delivered" via theoretical assertions. Instead, the formal indication of the "silent" call serves as a reminder that "public" language cannot convey knowledge characterized by

²¹ Feldman. *Binding Words: Conscience and Rhetoric in Hobbes, Hegel, and Heidegger*. p. 102.

“certainty.” In hearing the “call of conscience,” Dasein is invited to experience the essential “uncertainty” of its existence: the “silence” of conscience exposes the inauthenticity of “everyday” discourse and allows Dasein to “hear” its possibility of coming back into authentic disclosedness.

3) The Original Meaning of the German Word *Gewissen* is Completely Different from the Latin Notion of *Conscientia*: When we follow up on what Heidegger formally indicates with regard to conscience, it becomes clear that his interpretation of *Gewissen* is not just an innovative way of denying both the tradition’s “ordinary (*vulgar*)” understanding of moral conscience and the modern philosophical notion of subjective consciousness. Rather, the original meaning and unique history of the German term *Gewissen* reveal that this concept must be distinguished—from the very start—from the Latin notion of *conscientia*, which Heidegger seeks to expose as a perversion of the primordial phenomenon of the “call of conscience.” Although Heidegger does not present much historical evidence in support of his “radical” interpretation of conscience, our investigation takes up this task and shows that the German word *Gewissen*—unlike *conscientia*—is directly related to the ancient Greek *suneidesis*, a term derived from the verb *oida* meaning “to have seen.” When we take a closer look at *conscientia*, we see that the Latin word does not emphasize the phenomenon of shared “seeing” conveyed by both the Greek and German words, but rather the possessive “cutting apart” of experience into “knowledge.” This is confirmed by the meaning of the very different Greek root of the Latin word “*scientia*”: *schizo* for “to split” or “to cleave.”²² The widespread belief that the Latin, Greek and German words are synonymous *and* share the same original meaning is thus exposed as erroneous.

While scores of philosophers, philologists and theologians in Germany and beyond have produced studies of moral conscience and its significance over the centuries, virtually no research has focused on the possibility of uncovering an original meaning of the German term *Gewissen* that might be very different from *conscientia*, the Latin notion that came to

²² Julius Pokorny. *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*. (Bern; München: A. Francke, 1959). pp. 919-921.

dominate Scholastic psychology and whose philosophical legacy includes the emergence of the modern concept of “consciousness.” Almost without exception and with few nuances, the “historical” account of *Gewissen*’s origin is faithfully reproduced in study after study: according to this “myth,” the meaning of *Gewissen* was fixed for the first time when it was used to translate *conscientia* by an anonymous glossator of Notker Labeo’s psalms commentaries at the turn of the first millennium. Although Heidegger does not directly challenge this standard “history,” his interpretation in *Being and Time* implies that the traditional account of “moral conscience” represents the corruption of a more primordial phenomenon of *Gewissen*.

Looking back critically on the historical development of the German term, our study seeks to reveal that the original meaning of *Gewissen* corroborates Heidegger’s basic insight that the word can be understood to signify a phenomenon that is radically different from *conscientia*. In addition to exposing the fact that the identification of *conscientia*, *suneidesis* and *Gewissen* is illegitimate, our research reveals that *Gewissen* was not even among the first Germanic words used to translate *suneidesis* from the original Greek texts of the Pauline letters: in the 4th century manuscript of the Gothic Bible, we find *three* other words used to translate the Greek term for conscience. While none of these words prove to be synonymous with *Gewissen*, all three emphasize the experience of “caring” in ways that are related to Heidegger’s existential concept. More significantly, none of these Gothic terms express the sense of “possessive” knowing that we find at the heart of Latin *conscientia*.

Having “destructively” shown that *Gewissen* and *conscientia* must be regarded as distinct concepts, our investigation of what is formally indicated by Heidegger’s interpretation of conscience uncovers an “original” meaning of the German word that is directly related to the function of “attestation” that we find in *Being and Time*. In the 8th century Latin-Old High German wordbook known as the *Codex Abrogans*, which is the oldest extant book produced in the German language, we find the word *kiuuizzitha*

translated as *testimonium*, meaning “witness, evidence, attestation, testimony.”²³ Quite literally, we find that the earliest extant evidence of the word *Gewissen* conveys the sense of “bearing witness” and producing an “attestation”—the very meaning that Heidegger identifies with his existential concept of conscience.

4) Experiencing Conscience as the Silent “Attestation” of Martyrdom: Despite Heidegger’s promise of a “demonstration” of how conscience produces the required “attestation” of Dasein’s authenticity in *Being and Time*, many commentators have explicitly raised doubts about whether the Heideggerian “call of conscience” is actually possible as an *experience* of Being-in-the-world. As Hent de Vries claims, the attestation produced by Heidegger’s conscience is problematically “*made possible by what it makes possible*,”²⁴ a statement that our analysis of the methodological role of *Gewissen* initially appears to confirm. But while it has been widely remarked that Heidegger’s “call of conscience” appears “impossible” on the basis of Heidegger’s existential analysis alone, our emphasis on the formally indicative nature of this attestation reveals a possible way out of this impasse: having “deconstructed” the traditional equation of *Gewissen* and *conscientia*, can we conceive of a possible way of experiencing the “original” sense of *Gewissen* as “attestation”?

In response to this question, we propose that Being-in-the-world can experience such authentic “self-testimony” when it hears the “silence (*Schweigen*)” of the other as martyr. In this experience of recognizing the “reticent” martyr as Being-towards-death, Dasein has the possibility of “breaking off” its listening to the public “they” and of reciprocating the other’s “resoluteness” with regard to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. Through the experience of martyrdom, we can see how it is possible for Dasein to experience the “attestation” of its authentic mode of existence—described by Heidegger as “anticipatory resoluteness”—without necessitating recourse to an external “absolute” source of conscience, such as God. In this sense, our identification of martyrdom as the

²³ Charlton Thomas Lewis. *An Elementary Latin Dictionary*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1891). p. 856.

²⁴ Hent de Vries. *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). p. 287.

possible experience of authentic Being-towards-death respects Heidegger's insistence that speculative metaphysical concepts that attempt to ground existence in "certainty" must be rejected, e.g. Stoker's *synteresis*. Rather than being "protected" or "guarded" by an "absolute" or "external" authority such as *synteresis*, Heidegger's phenomenon of authentic Dasein is completely dependent upon its possible experience of attesting "self-testimony," understood as the "remembering" of one's responsibility of wanting-to-have-a-conscience. The experience of "caring" for one's authenticity can be enacted through the phenomenon of "bearing witness" or "testifying" that is conveyed by the Greek word *martus*, the root of the Christian term "martyr." The recognition that the "call of conscience" implies an experience of "testimony" also informs our study regarding the essential conditions required for the enactment of this "attestation." If the existential "call of conscience" is understood as Dasein's way of experiencing the possibility of martyrdom, this implies that any "attestation" of Dasein's coming into its own authenticity necessitates an encounter with a martyred other—an encounter that we can characterize as the basic experience of "positive solicitude." While Heidegger may indicate that "the voice of the friend" is something "every Dasein carries with it" from an existential perspective, Dasein's "*existentiell*" experience of authentic "recollection"—of acknowledging its essence as Being-towards-death projected *amidst* a shared world—depends upon one's *hearing* the silent "testimony" of the other facing martyrdom.

Methodology and Itinerary of the Study

Our investigation of the role of conscience in *Being and Time* and our exploration of what is formally indicated by Heidegger's interpretation of conscience will proceed as follows:

In Part One, we will consider the evolution of Heidegger's understanding of conscience in his work during the years leading up to the publication of *Being and Time* in order to inform the question of how he came to interpret the "call of conscience" as the pivotal concept that provides the attestation of Dasein's possibility of existing authentically. On the surface, this task appears to be a relatively simple one because the

term *Gewissen* only appears on eight occasions in Heidegger's extant work produced prior to his completion of the first full draft of *Being and Time*; moreover, the most elaborate of these early "appearances" of conscience is barely more than one page in length and the majority consist of a handful of words or less. Given our focus on the central role of the "call of conscience" for the methodology of *Being and Time*, however, we will undertake a painstaking review of each of these remarks on conscience in order to understand the progressive development of Heidegger's interpretation of this phenomenon. As we will see, this analysis reveals that Heidegger was concerned with the phenomenon of conscience throughout the period from his 1919 "war emergency semester" course at Freiburg to early 1926 when he submitted the manuscript of *Being and Time* for typesetting. Notably, his remarks on conscience during this period all imply the necessity of distinguishing the primordial sense of *Gewissen* from the Latin notion of *conscientia*, which Heidegger associated with the metaphysical "ought" of "moral conscience" and the emergence of the modern notion of "consciousness (*Bewusstsein*)" as the supposed basis of scientific knowledge. Furthermore, we will identify a significant difference between Heidegger's earlier descriptions of conscience and his existential interpretation of the phenomenon in *Being and Time*: in none of the prior "appearances" of conscience in Heidegger's writings and lectures do we find any mention of the phenomenon of "calling" or any description of conscience as a "call."

In Part Two, we will consider the importance of Heidegger's reading of *Das Gewissen*, the phenomenological study of conscience written by Stoker which was published in the fall of 1925. We will seek to demonstrate that Stoker's work influenced Heidegger's existential interpretation of the "call of conscience" in at least three significant ways. Firstly, we will show how Stoker facilitated Heidegger's "phenomenological destruction" of the traditional concept of conscience by providing the author of *Being and Time* with a "wide-ranging" critique of previous theories of conscience that revealed *conscientia* to be an artificial and excessively "intellectualistic" notion. Secondly, we will exhibit how Stoker's attempt to understand how conscience is *experienced* leads him to speak of the phenomenon as a "call-of-duty (*Pflichtruf*)," an experience whereby each

human is “called” to preserve the purity of his or her relationship with God. While Heidegger certainly avoids positing this kind of metaphysical “source” of conscience, we will establish a strong parallel between Heidegger’s silent “call of care” and Stoker’s account of the “call-of-duty” that summons each person to “preserve” the purity of his or her faith but provides no guidance concerning specific “worldly” decisions. Thirdly, we will show that Heidegger—despite acknowledging that Stoker’s investigation represents great “progress” in the study of conscience—never once mentions the phenomenon which Stoker fingers as the key to interpreting conscience: *synteresis*. Although the decision to disregard *synteresis* can be easily explained by Heidegger’s criticism of *Das Gewissen* as a blend of Schelerian “personalism” with “theology,” we will show that Heidegger’s neglect of the central concept in *Das Gewissen* contributes to concealing the very present problem of the “absolute” in *Being and Time* and its relation to any possible experience of “attestation.” Our study will document that one of the first commentators of *Being and Time* to emphasize this problem was Stoker’s editor, Scheler himself, who noted that because Dasein is identified as the “source” of its own “attestation,” the “call of conscience” must be regarded as tragically solipsistic.

In Part Three, we will analyze the role of conscience in *Being and Time* beginning with an attentive reading of §§54-60 that together make up the so-called “conscience chapter” of Division Two where Heidegger identifies the “call of conscience” as Dasein’s means of producing the required “attestation” of its possible authenticity. Keeping in mind the methodological focus of our study, we will examine these sections of *Being and Time* page-by-page in order to understand how Heidegger interprets conscience as the phenomenon that allows Dasein to be accessed as *authentic* and *whole*—even though it exists “for the most part” in its “everyday” state of dispersal among the “they.” While our review will confirm the pivotal role of conscience for the existential investigation of *Being and Time*, it will also show that the problem of how one *experiences* the “call of conscience” poses a threat to Heidegger’s entire project because the notion of authenticity ultimately depends on this “attestation.” At the same time, our analysis will exhibit how conscience can be understood as the “initiating” phenomenon of Heidegger’s “method” of

formal indication, the innovative approach to phenomenology that Heidegger advocated in his courses at Freiburg and Marburg in the years preceding the publication of *Being and Time*. By emphasizing that conscience is itself a formally indicative concept, we will reveal how the possibility of experiencing the “call of conscience” is informed by Heidegger’s descriptions of the constitutive phenomena which he explicitly associates with Dasein’s authentic mode of existence in *Being and Time*: discourse, truth, solicitude and anticipation.

In Part Four, the final section of our study, we will consider what is formally indicated by Heidegger’s notion of conscience itself—more specifically, the German word *Gewissen*—as we continue our search for a possible *experience* of the “call of conscience” that can provide the “attestation” demanded by Heidegger’s existential-ontological project. Following the basic principles of Heidegger’s “hermeneutical” approach to phenomenological research, we will begin by critically examining the conventional notion of conscience as a moral phenomenon whose meaning arose out of the Latin concept of *conscientia*. This initial step of “phenomenological-critical destruction” will show that the traditional equation of *Gewissen* and *conscientia* represents a historical error: the first “translation” of *conscientia* as *Gewissen* by an anonymous monk of the Abbey of St. Gall circa 1000 obscures the distinct roots and original meaning of the German word. On the basis of our research, we will then point to the “original” sense of *Gewissen* recorded in the oldest extant book in the Old High German language, the 8th century *Codex Abrogans*, where it is identified as the translation for the Latin term *testimonium*. Reflecting on the significance of this discovery for Heidegger’s formal indication of the “call of conscience” as Dasein’s means of “attestation,” we will attempt to identify a possible *existentiell* experience of Being-in-the-world that fulfills the methodological criteria of the existential-ontological project while respecting the formal indication of the call as “testimony.” Ultimately, we will propose that this possible experience that can awaken Dasein to its authentic character as Being-towards-death is the *hearing* of the other’s “silence” in facing martyrdom.

1. The Development of Heidegger's Concept of Conscience Prior to *Being and Time* (1919-1925)

The first task of our study is to examine the evolution of Heidegger's understanding of conscience prior to his introduction of the "call of conscience (*Gewissensruf*)" as a primordial phenomenon of Dasein in Division Two of *Being and Time*. This task is a vital one in order to exhibit how Heidegger came to interpret the meaning of "*Gewissen*" in a manner so radically unlike the traditional notion of *conscientia* or moral conscience. For when Heidegger in §54 of *Being and Time* assigns conscience the pivotal role of "attesting" Dasein's authenticity "in its existentiell possibility," he unveils an innovative interpretation of conscience that is the result of at least seven years of sustained—yet largely unrecognized—philosophical effort to understand the significance of conscience and its role for his phenomenological "method." At first glance, our task appears to be a relatively simple one: our research has identified only eight texts²⁵ in which Heidegger refers to conscience as a philosophical concept in the seven-year period of 1919-1925 prior to his writing of *Being and Time*.²⁶ Furthermore, very few details regarding his understanding of conscience are provided by Heidegger in any of these eight "appearances" of the concept: his most elaborate discussion of conscience during this period is barely more than one page

²⁵ Our review of Heidegger's use of the term "*Gewissen*" prior to the publication of *Being and Time* covers the full range of his published texts from this 1919-1925 period (writings, courses, public talks and published notes), including material not published in the *Gesamtausgabe*. However, our review focuses only on the occasions where the use of "conscience" by Heidegger is meaningful in a philosophical sense. For this reason, our review does not include any incidents of Heidegger using the word "conscience" in a *purely* "colloquial" manner, e.g. his letter of January 24, 1921 to Jaspers where he recounts telling one of his "mediocre" students that he would only recommend the student's proposed doctoral project to Jaspers "if I could represent it with a good conscience." Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers. *The Heidegger-Jaspers Correspondence (1920-1963)*. trans. Gary E. Aylesworth. (Amherst, MA: Humanity Books, 2003). pp. 25-26.

²⁶ Given that Heidegger's writing of *Being and Time* was well underway by the beginning of 1926, we will not include this year as part of the period covered by our initial review. Cf. Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. pp. 480-482.

in length²⁷ and most of the remainder consist of a handful of words or less.²⁸ If all we needed to produce was a list of Heidegger's explicit references to conscience prior to *Being and Time*, their paucity would make our task a very easy one. However, what is crucial for our investigation is to understand the progressive development of Heidegger's notion of conscience that led up to his interpretation of the existential call that comes both "from me and yet from beyond me and over me"²⁹ and is the "source (*Ursprung*)" of all possible experience.³⁰ Given this very specific objective, the dearth of Heideggerian statements regarding conscience during this critical period only accentuates the urgency of rigorously examining the limited number of texts that are available in order to understand the place of this concept in his phenomenological project and to identify the key sources that influenced his interpretation of conscience.

In proceeding with our attentive review of this material in the following pages, we will reveal three major points concerning the relation between the development of Heidegger's notion of conscience in the 1919-1925 period and his proposal of the existential call in *Being and Time*. Firstly, our investigation will demonstrate that Heidegger had already recognized the potential significance of conscience for his phenomenological work at least as early as 1919 when he returned from military service after the First World War. We also see that Heidegger remained preoccupied by the "conscience" problem right up to the publication of his major work of 1927 despite the fact that he generally avoids using the term of "*Gewissen*" in his early texts and lectures—a strategy that was presumably intentional as Heidegger sought to distinguish himself from the neo-Kantian school and the "phenomenology of values" espoused by Scheler.³¹ Despite the low number of "reference points" concerning conscience in Heidegger's early work, our analysis of these occurrences will show a steady progression in the young philosopher's

²⁷ GA 20, §35, 440-441 / 318-319. The brief section of §35 on "The Phenomenon of Willing to Have a Conscience and of Being Guilty" takes up barely more than a single page in GA 20.

²⁸ GA 56/57, 45 / 36. In the "War Emergency Semester" course of early 1919, Heidegger's allusion to conscience is limited to the three words "thrust into conscience (*ins Gewissen geschoben*)."

²⁹ SZ §57, 275 / 320.

³⁰ SZ §54, 267 / 312.

³¹ Theodore J. Kisiel. *Heidegger's Way of Thought: Critical and Interpretative Signposts*. (London; New York: Continuum, 2002). p. 212.

understanding of the potential methodological importance of conscience and of its place among the essential phenomena that constitute Being-in-the-world. By exposing the common themes and references that link these various episodes together, we will be able to see how Heidegger's earliest criticism of the traditional concept of conscience (notably as it is expressed in the theories of his neo-Kantian contemporaries such as Rickert and Windelband) eventually leads to his own "positive" attempts to demonstrate the "essential" place of conscience among the basic structures of existence. Secondly, we will show how Heidegger's early remarks on conscience clearly establish the traditional idea of *conscientia* or moral conscience to be an example of philosophy's failure to respect the genuine experience of existence. By Heidegger's account, the philosophical tradition has allowed objective knowledge that can supposedly be *possessed* to conceal philosophy's original concern for the "how" of existence. As the metaphysical basis of "consciousness," the authority of *conscientia*—which Heidegger finds reverberating in the Kantian "ought"—perverts one's authentic concern for the "how" of existence and leads philosophy into the error of material "certainty" and "scientific standpoints."³² In this sense, conscience is identified from the very beginning in Heidegger's work as a potentially vital methodological means for exposing the artifice of *conscientia* and for renewing philosophy's concern for the "experiencing of living experience (*Erleben des Erlebens*)" at the "fundamental level of life in and for itself (*eine Grundsicht des Lebens an und für sich*)."³³ Thirdly—and most significantly for our investigation—this review will identify the essential distinction between Heidegger's early remarks regarding conscience and its interpretation as an existential phenomenon in *Being and Time*: prior to writing this breakthrough work, Heidegger never once relates conscience to the phenomenon of "calling." In his work from 1919-1925, Heidegger demonstrates a growing appreciation for conscience as the potential "source" of philosophy's renewed concern for the "how" of existence yet the philosopher remains hampered by his lack of a way to express this "how" as a possibility. With his characterization of conscience as a "call" in *Being and Time*, Heidegger for the first time proposes a way of understanding "how" conscience can be

³² GA 56/57, 11-12 / 9-10.

³³ GA 56/57, 117 / 89.

experienced, an advance which allows him to develop his interpretation of conscience's unique and pivotal role as the "attesting" source of Dasein's possible authenticity.

Heidegger's "Passing Mention" of Conscience During the 1919 "War Emergency Semester": Reprising Windelband's Reference to Schiller's *Xenien*

The very first appearance of "*Gewissen*" in Heidegger's published texts is found in the transcript of his University of Freiburg course on "The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview (*Die Idee der Philosophie und das Weltanschauungsproblem*)" that was given during the special "war emergency semester (*Kriegsnotsemester*)" held between February and April 1919.³⁴ During one of the early lectures of the first part of this course, the young Heidegger analyzes the "critical-teleological method" advocated by notable neo-Kantian scholars,³⁵ focusing specifically on the work of Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert, who directed Heidegger's 1916 habilitation at Freiburg on the categories of Duns Scotus. As he calls into question the groundless "presuppositions" of neo-Kantian philosophy³⁶ due to its "absolutely blind (*absoluter Blindheit*)" dependence on an "absolute ought (*absolutes Sollen*)," Heidegger refers to a satirical remark by Schiller where the poet mocks Kant and his followers for always having recourse to the mysterious phenomenon of "conscience" whenever their unprovable claims are challenged.³⁷

[Let] us inquire further into the immanent character of the sense of [the critical-teleological] method. Supposing the method were clarified to the extent of showing that...there is a new kind of lived experience of the ought, of the giving of ideals. Does a blind power announce itself in the ought experience ('thrust into conscience' (*„ins Gewissen geschoben“*)), or does this ought give itself as self-certifying (*als sich selbst ausweisendes*)? If the latter, on what basis self-certifying?³⁸

As Kisiel reports in his *Genesis*, this first use of the word "conscience" by Heidegger merely makes "passing mention" of Schiller's critique of the Kantian notion of

³⁴ Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. p. 554.

³⁵ GA 56/57, 42 / 34.

³⁶ GA 56/57, 47 / 37.

³⁷ GA 56/57, 44-45 / 36.

³⁸ GA 56/57, 45 / 36-37.

conscience.³⁹ The concept of conscience is never mentioned again in the remainder of the course.

This “mere allusion,”⁴⁰ however, represents a key moment for our study of the development of Heidegger’s existential conscience and of the major methodological role that it plays in the structure of *Being and Time*. For one, this comment confirms that when the young Heidegger returns from military service at the end of the First World War he is already highly skeptical of what he will later call the “ordinary interpretation (*vulgäre Gewissensauslegung*)” of conscience understood as an essentially moral phenomenon and related to the “value” content of worldly activity.⁴¹ Secondly, this allegation of the possible dependence of the “critical-teleological” approach of neo-Kantianism on the “blind power” of conscience is shown by Heidegger to be applicable to the “theoretical comportment” of philosophical tradition as a whole.⁴² In other words, Heidegger’s reference to Schiller directly implicates the “ought-experience”⁴³ of conscience in what the young lecturer calls “the disaster of all previous philosophy.”⁴⁴ With his “passing mention,” Heidegger fingers conscience as the so-called “experience” of the “absolute ought” whose unjustified presupposition has led to the “supra-empirical validity (*übererfahrungsmäßigen Geltung*)” and “*primordial objectivity (Urgegenständlichkeit)*” underlying all traditional science.⁴⁵ For Heidegger, the “ought” of conscience is the “foundation stone (*Grundstein*) of an entire system”⁴⁶ that has resulted in the philosophical “de-vivification” of experience.⁴⁷ Heidegger claims this “ought” of conscience must be subjected to a “refutation and radical overcoming (*Zurückweisen und radikale Überwindung*)”⁴⁸ in order to renew philosophy as “the science of absolute honesty” dedicated to accessing the “genuineness of *personal life*

³⁹ Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. p. 498.

⁴⁰ Kisiel. *Heidegger's Way of Thought: Critical and Interpretative Signposts*. p. 212.

⁴¹ SZ §59, 289-293 / 335-339.

⁴² GA 56/57, 74 / 59.

⁴³ GA 56/57, 46 / 37.

⁴⁴ GA 56/57, 12 / 9.

⁴⁵ GA 56/57, 44-45 / 36.

⁴⁶ GA 56/57, 44-45 / 36.

⁴⁷ GA 56/57, 74 / 59.

⁴⁸ GA 56/57, 49 / 39.

as such.”⁴⁹ Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly in light of conscience’s key methodological role in *Being and Time*, the young lecturer opposes to this “blind power” of conscience an alternative that is better suited to serve as a “*genuine starting-point (echter Ansatz)*” for “the method of primordial science”⁵⁰: the possibility of a “self-certifying basis” for investigating “lived experience.”⁵¹ At the very moment that Heidegger first uses the word “conscience” in his philosophical work, he exposes that all philosophy that depends on “the ought...remains obscure at its very core” and he points to the necessity of an authentic—and radically new—method oriented by the possibility of “self-certifying (*sich selbst ausweisendes*).”⁵² As we proceed with our investigation of Heidegger’s existential interpretation of conscience, we will see that this notion of “self-certifying” clearly foreshadows the pivotal methodological role played by the phenomenon of conscience in *Being and Time*: that of providing the “attestation of Dasein’s ownmost potentiality-for-Being—an attestation which *is (seiende)* in Dasein itself.”⁵³

While Heidegger does not propose a positive interpretation of conscience in his early 1919 lecture in Freiburg, his three-word allusion to Schiller’s satirical line on the Kantian “ought” reveals how he sees conscience to be implicated in the “corrupted philosophy” that he seeks to expose and “renew...by returning to the genuine origins of the spirit” and “the vitality of genuine research.”⁵⁴ As noted above, Heidegger refers to Schiller’s line on conscience at the crucial moment in his course when he criticizes the neo-Kantianism work of Rickert, Windelband and Lotze—a section of the course that he places under the heading “Misunderstanding of the Problematic of Primordial Science.”⁵⁵ In this lecture, Heidegger specifically lashes out at Rickert for his “unscientific idle talk” in positing the “presupposed...phenomenon of the ought” as the “foundation stone of an

⁴⁹ GA 56/57, 220 / 165.

⁵⁰ GA 56/57, 15-16 / 15.

⁵¹ GA 56/57, 45-46 / 36.

⁵² GA 56/57, 45 / 36-37.

⁵³ SZ §60, 295 / 341.

⁵⁴ GA 56/57, 5 / 4-5.

⁵⁵ GA 56/57, 42 / 34.

entire system.”⁵⁶ Significantly, Heidegger’s criticism focuses on Rickert’s discussion of conscience in the final section of his major work *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis* where the renowned neo-Kantian asserts a parallel between the “theoretical concept of the ‘ought’” and the “ethical standards” imposed by the “dictates of conscience.”⁵⁷ In these pages, Rickert contends that all knowledge necessitates “a criterion of truth” that must ultimately be grounded in the “absolute validity of conscience.”⁵⁸ Moreover, Rickert adds, any attempted contestation of this “absolute validity” contradicts itself because such a denial necessarily implies “a criterion of truth” that only conscience can provide; the skeptic denying the authoritative “ought” of conscience “thus implicitly recognizes what he is fighting against,” Rickert claims.⁵⁹ Just a few lines after alluding to Schiller’s remark on conscience, Heidegger quotes directly from Rickert’s text and then takes a firm stand against his habilitation director’s “value-laden and necessarily ought-related” notion of “critical-transcendental philosophy”⁶⁰:

“Whoever strives after truth subordinates himself to an ought, just like the person who fulfils his duty.”⁶¹ But is every value given to me as an ought? Clearly not. I experience value-relations without the slightest element of the ought being given. In the morning I enter the study; the sun lies over the books, etc., and I delight in this. Such delight is in no way an ought... There is, therefore, a kind of lived experience in which I take delight, in which the valuable as such is given. ... [The] value ‘is’ not, but rather it ‘values’ in an intransitive sense: in being worth-taking (*Wertnehmen*), ‘it values’ for me, for the value-experiencing subject.⁶²

⁵⁶ GA 56/57, 44-45 / 36.

⁵⁷ Heinrich Rickert. *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis: Einführung in die Transzendental-Philosophie*. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1915). pp. 439-440. An excerpt from the original text in German: “Die absolute Gültigkeit der sittlichen Pflicht ist vom wissenschaftlichen Standpunkt aus anzuzweifeln, ja die Stimme des Gewissens, die den ethischen Menschen leitet, können wir nach wie vor so ansehen, als hänge ihr Anspruch auf Geltung lediglich vom individuellen Ich ab. Dem intellektuellen Gewissen gegenüber ist dagegen solch ein Standpunkt nicht mehr möglich, da auch unser Wissen es als Kriterium der Wahrheit braucht, und jeder, der die Ansprüche dieses Gewissens auf absolute Gültigkeit bekämpfen wollte, sich zugleich darauf als Wahrheitskriterium stützen, also implicite anerkennen müßte, was er bekämpft.”

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 440.

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 440.

⁶⁰ GA 56/57, 45 / 36.

⁶¹ This first line is a direct quote of Rickert by Heidegger. Cf. Rickert. *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis: Einführung in die Transzendental-Philosophie*. p. 439.

⁶² GA 56/57, 46 / 37.

In this same section of his course, Heidegger also takes aim at two essays by Windelband wherein the “ought” is described as the validating source for the axioms of “critical-teleological philosophy” and linked to the phenomenon of conscience: “*Kritische oder genetische Methode?*”⁶³ and “*Normen und Naturgesetze.*”⁶⁴ In his “destructive” review of neo-Kantian thinking, Heidegger quotes repeatedly from these essays in order to demonstrate how Windelband’s system of “valid” and “true” knowledge is based on the presupposition that “truth [is] the goal of all thinking,” which implies that “[truth] in itself is validity and as such something valuable.”⁶⁵ Yet despite expressing his opposition to Windelband’s “teleological” system structured according to “norms [that] tell us how we ought to think,”⁶⁶ Heidegger does not specifically discuss the interpretation of moral conscience found in “*Normen und Naturgesetze*” where Windelband identifies the phenomenon of conscience as the “psychological power” at the origin of the “consciousness of norms within oneself.”⁶⁷ According to Kisiel, Heidegger’s refusal to adopt the traditional term of “moral conscience” at this point reflects an intentional choice by the young thinker who wishes to disassociate his philosophy from the normative principles of neo-Kantianism with its “ideal goal of universally valid truth.”⁶⁸

No doubt for polemic reasons, the early Heidegger will diligently avoid sanctioning the term ‘conscience’ for several years. In 1919, he merely alludes (GA Bd. 56/57, 45) to Windelband’s reference (II, 111) to a scoffing

⁶³ Wilhelm Windelband. “Kritische oder genetische Methode?” *Präludien: Aussätze und Reden zur Philosophie und ihrer Geschichte*. 9 ed. vol. 2. (Tübingen: J. C. G. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1883, 1924). pp. 99-135.

⁶⁴ Wilhelm Windelband. “*Normen und Naturgesetze.*” *Präludien: Aussätze und Reden zur Philosophie und ihrer Geschichte*. 9 ed. vol. 2. (Tübingen: J. C. G. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1882, 1924). pp. 59-98.

⁶⁵ GA 56/57, 32 / 27.

⁶⁶ GA 56/57, 35 / 29.

⁶⁷ Windelband. “*Normen und Naturgesetze.*” p. 80. Our translation. An excerpt from the original text in German: “Wenn sich also trotzdem das Bewußtsein der Normen, ohne die empirische Lebensfähigkeit und Selbsterhaltungskraft seiner Träger zu steigern, in der historischen Bewegung der Menschheit nicht nur erhält, sondern in einzelnen Hinsichten steigert, vertieft und verfeinert, so muß das auf einer direkten und selbständigen, von allen Nebenwirkungen unabhängigen Kraft beruhen, welche dem Bewußtsein der Normen als solchem innerwohnt, und welche das Gewissen, wenn es erst einmal in Kraft getreten ist, zu einer psychologischen Macht erhebt, die als neuer Faktor in die Bewegung des Seelenlebens eintritt.”

⁶⁸ GA 56/57, 38 / 31.

remark by Schiller on the Kantian tendency ‘to shove what it cannot prove into the conscience.’⁶⁹

While Heidegger does not explicitly discuss the notion of conscience so cherished by the neo-Kantians, we can see that he enlists Schiller to speak on his behalf. An attentive look at Heidegger’s “allusion” to Windelband’s reference to Schiller in “*Kritische oder genetische Methode?*” reveals that the young lecturer’s emphasis on this reference is by no means neutral. With his “passing mention” of this reference, Heidegger observes the irony of Windelband’s decision to cite Schiller while arguing for the validity of the “critical-teleological method” based on the unexplained “*givenness of the ought (Sollensgegebenheit)*.”⁷⁰ As Heidegger implies, the satirical meaning of Schiller’s poem is evidently discordant with Windelband’s conviction that all thinking requires that “the validity of these axioms must be admitted from the outset”—a discordance that Windelband recognizes and even explicitly notes in his essay.⁷¹ Yet so certain is Windelband that conscience is the “validating” source of teleological norms that he appropriates “without the slightest discomforture” Schiller’s critical remark rather than reflecting on its potential implications for his “critical-teleological method.”⁷² In the end, Windelband states with confidence, no reasonable person “would take offense” that validity must be presupposed because all thinking requires the positing of “truth.”⁷³

In a certain sense, what Schiller said about a particular Kantian doctrine also applied to the whole domain of critical philosophy: it pushes what it cannot prove “into the conscience.” Theoretical philosophy cannot prove its axioms; neither the so-called laws of thought of formal logic, nor the fundamental principles of world observation, which are developed from the categories, are in any way substantiated through experience; but logic can appeal to all: You want truth, remember, so you must recognize the value of these norms if your wish is to be granted.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Kisiel. *Heidegger's Way of Thought: Critical and Interpretative Signposts*. p. 212.

⁷⁰ GA 56/57, 44 / 35-36.

⁷¹ Windelband. "Kritische oder genetische Methode?" p. 111. Our translation.

⁷² GA 56/57, 45 / 36.

⁷³ Windelband. "Kritische oder genetische Methode?" p. 112. Our translation.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 111. Our translation. In German: “In gewissem Sinne also gilt es für den ganzen Umfang der kritischen Philosophie, was Schiller von einer besonderen Lehre der kantischen gesagt hat: sie schiebt einem,

As Roger Hofer observes in his study of neo-Kantian thought, Windelband faithfully upholds the traditional notion of the Kantian conscience that Schiller is expressly ridiculing in his satirical poem: “Windelband simply propagated the shift of the final justification of reason ‘into the conscience,’ as Schiller wrote, because the absolute necessity is itself unprovable.”⁷⁵

By pointedly emphasizing Windelband’s reference to Schiller, Heidegger indicates in his 1919 course that the satirical jab at the Kantian notion of conscience holds much more serious consequences for neo-Kantianism—and for “all previous philosophy”⁷⁶—than Windelband appears to have realized. In Heidegger’s mind, this is unsurprising given that “the [critical-teleological] method’s advocates do not see at all... its fundamental vacuity and ‘bigotry,’”⁷⁷ allowing them to continue building philosophical systems while remaining “absolutely blind to the whole world of problems implied in the phenomenon of the ought.”⁷⁸

Windelband, whose philosophical writings celebrate Schiller as one of the leading figures in the history of German philosophy, is certainly aware of the historical and philosophical significance of the verse by the “poet-philosopher” that he cites in his essay.⁷⁹ Entitled “The Philosophers,” Schiller’s poem was printed under his own name for the first time in 1803 in the second volume of his collected poems.⁸⁰ However, the 19

was sie nicht beweisen kann, „ins Gewissen hinein.“ Die theoretische Philosophie kann ihre Axiome nicht beweisen; weder die sogenannten Denkgesetze der formalen Logik, noch die Grundsätze aller Weltbetrachtung, die sich aus den Kategorien entwickeln, sind irgendwie durch Erfahrung zu begründen; aber die Logik kann zu einem jeden sprechen: Du willst Wahrheit, besinne dich, du mußt die Geltung dieser Normen anerkennen, wenn dieser Wunsch je erfüllt werden soll.”

⁷⁵ Roger Hofer. *Gegenstand und Methode: Untersuchungen zur frühen Wissenschaftslehre Emil Lasks*. (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1997). p. 131. Our translation. In German: “Windelband aber propagiert, Schiller zitierend, die Verschiebung der letzten Begründung „ins Gewissen hinein“, da die absolute Notwendigkeit selbst unbeweisbar sei.”

⁷⁶ GA 56/57, 12 / 9.

⁷⁷ GA 56/57, 47-49 / 38-39.

⁷⁸ GA 56/57, 45 / 36.

⁷⁹ Wilhelm Windelband. *An Introduction to Philosophy*. trans. Joseph McCabe. (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1914, 1921). p. 247.

⁸⁰ Friedrich Schiller. *Gedichte*. (Leipzig: Siegfried Lebrecht Crusius, 1803). The poem “Die Philosophen” is found on pages 182-188.

couplets making up this poem had earlier been published “anonymously” in the 1797 edition of Schiller’s *Musen-Almanach* as part of the *Xenien*,⁸¹ a collection of 414 “sportive and pungent” epigrams that Schiller had penned in collaboration with the poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and modeled upon the elegiac couplets of the 1st century Latin poet Martial.⁸² The “wild and reckless satire” and “clever impertinence” of the *Xenien* would cause tremendous public outcry and profoundly mark the history of German literature⁸³; by the mid-19th century, literary commentator Eduard Boas would dub the controversial affair the “*Xenienkampf*.”⁸⁴

As Luther published his Theses in Wittenberg, so Goethe and Schiller published their *Xenien*. No one before had the courage so to confront sacred dullness, so to lash all hypocrisy.⁸⁵

In the economy of the *Xenien*, “The Philosophers” marks what Schiller describes as one of the “here and there” moments when the “wild satire” of the project was “intermixed...with a flash of poetical or philosophical thought.”⁸⁶ Through his poem, Schiller mocks the inability of philosophy to explain the principles of the “real world” and closes by deriding the dependence of Kant and his philosophical disciples on the “authority” of moral conscience. The 19 couplets tell the story of a philosophy student from Jena who has ventured down to hell in search of “the *one* needful thing”; upon his arrival, he rejoices at finding a circle of philosophers—both living and dead—“*in pleno*

⁸¹ “*Xenien*.” *Musen-Almanach*. ed. Friedrich Schiller. (Tübingen: J. G. Costalischen Buchhandlung, 1797).

⁸² Emil Pallaske. *Schiller's Life and Works*. trans. Lady Wallace. (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1860). p. 273.

⁸³ *Ibid.* p. 272.

⁸⁴ Eduard Boas. *Schiller und Goethe im Xenienkampf*. (Stuttgart; Tübingen: J. G. Cotta'scher Verlag, 1851).

⁸⁵ This translated line by Boas appears in Lewes’ biography of Goethe. George Henry Lewes. *Life of Goethe*. (London: F.A. Brockhaus, 1864). p. 172. The original German line by Boas appears in the following excerpt: “Am 31. Oktober 1517 ward die kirchliche Reformation in Deutschland begonnen; im Oktober 1796 nahm die literarische ihren Anfang. Damals schlug Luther seine Thesen zu Wittenberg an, jetzt erschien der Schillersche Musenalmanach mit den Xenien. Niemals zuvor hatte Einer den Mut gehabt, alle sanktionierten Dummheiten so schonungslos aufzurütteln, die Heuchler so scharf zu geißeln. Unermeßlichen Vorteil zog das deutsche Schrifttum aus diesem Ereignis...” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Eduard Boas. *Nachträge zu Goethe's sämtlichen Werken*. (Leipzig: P. Reclam, 1846). Volume 1. p. 45.

⁸⁶ Thomas Carlyle. *The Life of Friedrich Schiller, Comprehending an Examination of his Works*. (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1825). p. 191.

assembled.”⁸⁷ Seizing the opportunity to receive counsel from a group including Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Berkeley, Leibniz, Fichte, Kant and Hume,⁸⁸ the student makes his request:

Pupil.

...So give me (I will not depart hence without it)
A universally valid principle, — one that will always avail!⁸⁹

After receiving unsatisfactory responses from seven of the assembled thinkers, the pupil expresses his disappointment and is supplied an eighth answer by an unspecified disciple of Kantian moral philosophy, whom Karl Hoffmeister in his 1840 study of Schiller’s work identifies as Karl Christian Erhard Schmid, an early advocate of Kant’s critical philosophy who in 1793 became a full professor at the University of Jena.⁹⁰ In the two couplets that follow, we find the remark that is referenced by Windelband and Heidegger:

Eighth Philosopher.

In the theoretical field, nothing more can be found,
But the practical principle still holds: Thou canst, so thou shouldst!

Pupil.

That’s what I thought! When they know of no more sensible an answer,
They shove the matter right into the conscience.⁹¹

⁸⁷ The English translation of these lines is loosely based on the version by Edgar A. Bowring that was published in the 19th century. Our translation has altered Bowring’s text in order to more accurately reflect the philosophical content and “literal meaning” of Schiller’s satirical lines, at the cost of failing to always preserve the poetic aspects (i.e. rhyme and meter). From Friedrich Schiller. "The Philosophers." trans. Edgar A. Bowring. *The Poems of Schiller*. 2 ed. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1874). pp. 285-287. The German text of the quoted verses as it appears in the first edition of Schiller’s 1797 *Musen-Almanach*:

Gut, dass ich euch, ihr Herren, *in pleno* beysammen hier finde;
Denn das Eine, was noth, treibt mich herunter zu euch.

⁸⁸ Friedrich Schiller and Karl Hoffmeister. *Nachlese zu Schillers Werken nebst Variantensammlung: aus seinem Nachlass im Einverständniss und unter Mitwirkung der Familie Schillers*. (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1840). pp. 198-203.

⁸⁹ From Schiller. "The Philosophers." In German:

... So gebt mir, ich geh euch nicht eher vom Leibe,
Einen allgültigen Satz, und der auch allgemein gilt.

⁹⁰ Schiller and Hoffmeister. *Nachlese zu Schillers Werken nebst Variantensammlung: aus seinem Nachlass im Einverständniss und unter Mitwirkung der Familie Schillers*. p. 202.

⁹¹ Friedrich Schiller. *The Poems of Schiller*. trans. Edgar A. Bowring. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1874). In German:

Ein Achter.

Auf theoretischem Feld ist weiter nichts mehr zu finden,

As we have seen, Windelband—sharing the firm conviction expressed by Schiller’s caricatured Kantian moralist—is evidently comfortable with the idea of founding his “critical-teleological method” on the basis of such an unexplained “ought.” In “*Kritische oder genetische Methode?*”, Windelband plainly announces his basic presupposition: “The recognition of axioms is conditioned throughout by a purpose that must be accepted as the ideal for our thinking, willing and feeling.”⁹² Windelband quotes Schiller’s witty line simply in order to provide his reader a good chuckle, but in no way does the philosopher regard the actual point being made by Schiller as a serious threat to his own theories. As Hofer contends, Windelband faithfully clings to the concept of teleology and in so doing continues the Kantian tradition passed down by Fichte to the neo-Kantian schools of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.⁹³ Secure in his conviction regarding the “primacy” of the “ought,” Windelband is untroubled by the problem of “how” one experiences conscience and so he refuses to doubt the “validity” of what Heidegger describes as the unclarified phenomenon of “value-giving.”⁹⁴

In reprising this very same reference to Schiller, Heidegger indicates that his developing philosophical program is radically opposed to the method advanced by Windelband and other neo-Kantians. Indeed, Heidegger’s call for a “rebirth of the genuine scientific consciousness and life-contexts” reflects an even more radical reading of Schiller’s satirical take on philosophy than what the poet himself could have ever intended.⁹⁵ For Heidegger, the problem posed by the “ought-giving” conscience is not one of finding the ultimate “fixed principle” that can be used to reveal the laws of worldly reality as Schiller’s character of the pupil believes. Instead, Heidegger’s analysis of the

Aber der praktische Satz gilt doch : Du kannst, denn du sollst !

Ich.

Dacht’ ichs doch ! Wissen sie nichts vernünftiges mehr erwiedern,
Schieben sies einem geschwind in das Gewissen hinein.

⁹² Windelband. “Kritische oder genetische Methode?” pp. 111-112. Our translation. In German: “Die Anerkennung der Axiome ist überall durch einen Zweck bedingt, der als Ideal für unser Denken, Wollen und Fühlen vorausgesetzt werden muß.”

⁹³ Hofer. *Gegenstand und Methode: Untersuchungen zur frühen Wissenschaftslehre Emil Lasks*. pp. 131-132.

⁹⁴ GA 56/57, 47-48 / 38-39.

⁹⁵ GA 56/57, 4 / 4.

“critical-teleological method” reveals that the Kantian “ought” is implicit in all traditional philosophical approaches because experience is presupposed as being built out of “value-laden” substance, whether this be material or spiritual.⁹⁶ Even at this early stage of his philosophical career, Heidegger indicates that a basic misconception regarding “Being”⁹⁷ has led philosophy to abandon its task as the “primordial science” of the “unity of genuine life itself”⁹⁸ and to become engaged in what he considers to be a misguided search for “universal validity” and permanently settled solutions to the “puzzles of life.”⁹⁹ The young Heidegger contends that the problem of the “ought” is what has blocked off the question of “Being”; this question must be brought back to the fore and investigated in a manner that respects the non-theoretical nature of genuine “lived experience.”¹⁰⁰ For Heidegger, the concern for various “worldviews” that motivated the work of his neo-Kantian contemporaries must be replaced by a “*preliminary explication of the genuine problem*,”¹⁰¹ namely the exhibition of “the original manner of value-giving upon which the ought is founded.”¹⁰² As Heidegger states:

The value ‘is’ not, but rather it ‘values’ in an intransitive sense; in being worth-taking (*Wertnehmen*), ‘it values’ for me, for the value-experiencing subject. ‘Valuing’ becomes an object only through formalization.¹⁰³

For philosophy to live up to its promise as “primordial science,” Heidegger insists on the need for a method of investigation that can allow for the return “to the genuine origins of the spirit.”¹⁰⁴ In exposing the specific errors common to both Windelband and Rickert’s approaches, Heidegger aims to show that philosophy is faced with a crucial choice: either it

⁹⁶ GA 56/57, 44-45 / 36.

⁹⁷ GA 56/57, 45-46 / 36-37.

⁹⁸ GA 56/57, 90 / 70.

⁹⁹ GA 56/57, 8 / 7.

¹⁰⁰ GA 56/57, 45-46 / 36-37.

¹⁰¹ GA 56/57, 6 / 5.

¹⁰² GA 56/57, 46 / 37.

¹⁰³ GA 56/57, 46 / 37.

¹⁰⁴ GA 56/57, 5 / 4.

yields before the “blind power” of conscience or it follows up on the “genuine” question of how lived experience can be “self-certifying.”¹⁰⁵

In his early 1919 course at Freiburg, Heidegger is evidently far from recognizing how the phenomenon of conscience itself might be interpreted as the source of this “possibility of a *methodological return* (*methodisch zurückzugehen*)” that allows philosophy as “primordial science” to “go back to the origin.”¹⁰⁶ Heidegger admits that he lacks the vocabulary to satisfactorily clarify the “philosophical problematic” of the “lived experience of the ought”: as he confesses to his students, “our language is not adequate to the new basic type of lived experience involved here.”¹⁰⁷ In §7 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger will reprise this warning regarding “language” when he states that “we lack not only most of the words but, above all, the ‘grammar’” to adequately describe the methodology of phenomenological investigation.¹⁰⁸ While he never overcomes this intractable problem of language, Heidegger nonetheless will unveil in *Being and Time* a new way of expressing the possibility of “self-certifying” that he raised in early 1919. With his existential interpretation of conscience in §54, Heidegger reveals that the “self-certifying” of the “new basic type of lived experience”¹⁰⁹ that he emphasized in the “war emergency semester” must be taken up by searching for an “attestation” of Dasein’s “authentic potentiality-for-Being” that has “its roots in Dasein’s Being” as the “call of conscience.”¹¹⁰

Conscience in the “Critical Comments on Jaspers’s *Psychology of Worldviews*” (September 1920)

Heidegger’s first use of the term “*Gewissen*” to positively express his own philosophical approach is found in his aborted book review of Karl Jaspers’s 1919

¹⁰⁵ GA 56/57, 45 / 36-37.

¹⁰⁶ GA 56/57, 24 / 21.

¹⁰⁷ GA 56/57, 45-46 / 36-37.

¹⁰⁸ SZ §7, 39 / 63.

¹⁰⁹ GA 56/57, 45-46 / 36-37.

¹¹⁰ SZ §54, 267-269 / 312-314.

publication entitled *Psychology of Worldviews*. Completed by the end of September 1920,¹¹¹ Heidegger's "treatise" on Jaspers's work¹¹² introduces the concept of conscience as being essentially related to the problem of historicity, i.e. the question of how "the full, concrete, and historically factic self [becomes] accessible in its historically concrete experience of itself (*historisch konkreten Eigenerfahrung*)."¹¹³ At the very start of his essay, Heidegger makes it clear that a proper critique of Jaspers's work cannot be accomplished without first defining "the how of such a philosophical critique" and he suggestively—if quite enigmatically—associates the undefined phenomenon of conscience with this preliminary methodological task.¹¹⁴ What is crucial, Heidegger insists, is that we examine "the proper tendency of Jaspers's work in its basic bearing and attitude" in order to reveal its "basic motives," its "approach to the task," and the "methodological means" that are employed.¹¹⁵ This is only possible, Heidegger states, if we avoid judging Jaspers's study on the psychology of worldviews according to "established criteria"; we must first take up the task of "destruction" and expose the prejudice of all "finished and securely grounded philosophy" and of "any fixed ideal of scientific method," including the notion of "truth's absolute validity."¹¹⁶

Such measures are put out of play because our critical comments are oriented toward sharpening the conscience (*diese Anmerkungen gerade das Gewissen dafür schärfen möchten*) to the need for *radical questioning* that

¹¹¹ Kisiel and Sheehan contend that Heidegger wrote the majority of this book review turned essay during and after the summer semester of 1920 and that the text, which would only be slightly revised in the following year, was essentially complete by the end of September 1920. Theodore J. Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan, eds. *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007. p. 110.

¹¹² Martin Heidegger. "Letter to Georg Misch (June 30, 1922)." trans. Theodore J. Kisiel. *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*. eds. Theodore J. Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, [1922] 2007). p. 104.

¹¹³ GA 9, 30 / 139. Note that for all references to and citations of Heidegger's "Critical Comments on Jaspers's *Psychology of Worldviews*" provided in this sub-section of our text, we have chosen to use the English translation proposed by Kisiel: Martin Heidegger. "Critical Comments on Jaspers's *Psychology of Worldviews*." trans. Theodore J. Kisiel. *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*. eds. Theodore J. Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, [1920] 2007). Also note that we have removed the emphasis added to the translated text by Kisiel whenever this emphasis is not found in the German text of GA 9.

¹¹⁴ GA 9, 2-3 / 117-118.

¹¹⁵ GA 9, 2 / 117.

¹¹⁶ GA 9, 3 / 118.

returns to the place of origin where meaning is first generated in the “history of spirit/mind” in its proper sense, which is a return to the original motives or motives *of* origin (*Ursprungsmotiven*) operative in first establishing such philosophical ideals of knowledge. ... We are convinced that such a sharpening of the conscience cannot be achieved or even initiated in a genuine way by the “invention” of a “new” philosophical program. Rather, it has to be actualized quite concretely by way of a destruction (*Destruktion des Überlieferten*) aimed directly at what has been handed down to us in the tradition of intellectual history.¹¹⁷

While he does not clarify the meaning of his new concept of conscience, Heidegger points to this “conscience-sharpening” as an “essential characteristic” of the destructive method of “explication” which reveals the bias of “traditional” philosophy and its “theoretical” approach. The actualizing of “radical” philosophical critique—which Heidegger identifies as “phenomenological critique in its most proper sense”—implies “an appropriation that repeatedly renews itself by way of destruction.”¹¹⁸ Even though Heidegger neither explains how conscience plays this role nor shows how this “sharpening” of conscience can be actualized, his introductory comments clearly establish that conscience is being assigned a key methodological role as the means for renewing philosophy’s “sense of originality (*Sinn von Ursprünglichkeit*).”¹¹⁹

[Freedom] from presuppositions [is attained] only in a factually and historically oriented self-critique (*faktisch historisch orientierter Eigenkritik*). The unceasing effort to attain freedom from presuppositions is precisely what constitutes that freedom. ... [What] is required in philosophizing is a properly articulated contestation (*Auseinandersetzung*) that dismantles and therefore lays open the history that we ourselves “are.” In the end, the way to the matters themselves is this detour through history and the understanding that actualizes it.¹²⁰

Near the end of his essay, Heidegger again takes up the concept of conscience as he explicitly identifies its role in the experienced “phenomenon of *actualization history* (*vollzugsgeschichtliches Phänomen*)” through which temporality is understood genuinely

¹¹⁷ GA 9, 3 / 118.

¹¹⁸ GA 9, 4 / 119.

¹¹⁹ GA 9, 5 / 119.

¹²⁰ GA 9, 5 / 119.

according to “the self’s *anxious concern* (*Bekümmern*) about itself.”¹²¹ On this basis, Heidegger contrasts the “essentially concerned manner of actualizing experience” with the “temporal schemata” of “objective-historical observation” that sees time as something that can be “objectively classified” according to its status in terms of “past, present and future.”¹²² What Heidegger calls conscience is defined as the “historically driven concern for the self as such” through an “actualization [that] does not take place just ‘once and for all’ in a momentary or isolated way, but rather time and again in a constant renewal of concern.”¹²³ In this regard, Heidegger specifically distinguishes his “conscience” from the “*conscientia*” of philosophical tradition:

[“Conscience”] is here understood as the actualization of conscience and thus not merely a matter of occasionally having a conscience about something (*conscientia*). Conscience in its basic sense is a historically charged way of experiencing one’s self (*Wie des Selbsterfahrens*) (the history of this “concept” has to be examined in conjunction with the problem of existence, which is not just an academic problem, even if it is already here a pressing academic problem). In indicating this conjunction of meaning between the sense of historical experience and the sense of the phenomenon of conscience, we are not expanding the concept of the historical but rather returning our understanding of it back to the proper source of its sense.¹²⁴

Heidegger criticizes the modern scientific movement for having lost contact with the authentic sense of the historical that finds its vital roots in the “unschematic sense of concern that is concerned with actualizing the experience [of life] in its how” and not in the artifice of “objective historical knowledge” where experience is approached as “an object of knowledge and curiosity.”¹²⁵ He also hints at the tragedy of those such as Nietzsche who reject “objectivity” but remain blind to the positive “phenomenon of existence” that is disclosed by the destructive explication of tradition, leading them to condemn “history” and

¹²¹ GA 9, 32 / 140.

¹²² GA 9, 33 / 140.

¹²³ GA 9, 33 / 141.

¹²⁴ GA 9, 33 / 141. We have removed Kisiel’s addition of the words “resolutely sustained” to Heidegger’s description of the “actualization of conscience.” These words do not appear in the original German text and represent a later development of Heidegger’s understanding of conscience and the “how” of experiencing this phenomenon.

¹²⁵ GA 9, 33 / 140-141.

“conscience” in the same breath. For Heidegger, such skeptics fail to recognize how the primordial phenomenon of conscience—which must be radically distinguished from the traditional conscientia with its concern for *worldly* and *moral* knowledge—can produce the “constant renewal” of the “actualization of experience [in] its fundamentally historical sense.”¹²⁶ In concluding his comments on conscience in the Jaspers review, Heidegger remarks:

Because we are actually unable to see the phenomena of existence today, we no longer experience the meaning of conscience (*Gewissen*) and sense of responsibility that lies in the historical itself. For the historical is not merely something of which we have knowledge and about which we write books; rather, we ourselves are the historical that we ourselves bear and carry as a responsibility.¹²⁷

In this, the very earliest of his interpretations of conscience, Heidegger reveals that this “fundamental” phenomenon—which represents the “historically charged way of experiencing one’s self”—is the fundamental “source” of all possible experience, i.e. it is the disclosing “source” of the “phenomenon of existence” itself.¹²⁸ Even the dominant way of experiencing the historical “almost exclusively [as] something objective, an object of knowledge and curiosity,” is shown by Heidegger to depend upon the “hidden source” of conscience: the rise of the “objective tradition” reflects the “tendency of [concrete and factic life experience] to fall away” from its responsibility to actualize conscience and to constantly renew “the self’s anxious concern about itself.”¹²⁹ Due to this obscuring tendency, *Heidegger observes that we fail to recognize that conscience is our only “source” of experience; through the efficacy of “objective tradition,” “even the motives for returning to the historical through our own history [become] inactive and hidden.”*¹³⁰

While Heidegger strongly emphasizes the urgent need to examine the relation between conscience and existence, he quickly moves on to his concluding remarks and

¹²⁶ GA 9, 33-34 / 141.

¹²⁷ GA 9, 33-34 / 141.

¹²⁸ GA 9, 32-33 / 140-141.

¹²⁹ GA 9, 33 / 141.

¹³⁰ GA 9, 33-34 / 141-142.

does not again mention the term conscience in the remainder of this essay. Despite having identified the explication of this relation as “the most crucial task (*die entscheidende Aufgabe*) in the entire complex of problems pertaining to the phenomena of existence,” Heidegger never follows through on this insight by providing the implicitly promised explication of the “how” of experiencing this “constant renewal of concern.”¹³¹ Indeed, his account seems to indicate that the “fundamental sense” of the “actualization of conscience” is something that cannot be recovered: given the overwhelming tendency of “factic life experience” to “fall away” into “objective kinds of significance,” the “hidden source” of conscience seems destined to remain essentially “inactive and hidden.”¹³² Although Heidegger subsequently states that the process of destruction can expose the “bias built into tradition,” he does not reveal how one can begin this “destruction” if the “objectifying” tradition has completely distorted this “fundamental sense” of conscience and even extinguished the “motives” that would make possible such a return.¹³³

Remarkably, this “crucial task” concerning the relation of conscience and existence is not taken up again in Heidegger’s published lectures and writings for almost three years following his completion of this review of Jaspers’s work in September 1920. Arguably, Heidegger could not provide anything more than a primitive account of the “historically charged way of experiencing one’s self” at this point because he had not yet refined his methodological approach for conducting a phenomenological investigation of existence and its constitutive phenomena.¹³⁴ Despite these limitations, Heidegger’s suggestive description of conscience at this early stage of his work—notably his explicit opposition of the “historically driven concern for the self as such” to the traditional *conscientia*’s “[occasional] having a conscience about something”¹³⁵—is rich with implications both for the development of the phenomenological method as it is deployed in *Being and Time* and for the pivotal role played by conscience in this major work.

¹³¹ GA 9, 31-33 / 140-141.

¹³² GA 9, 32-33 / 140-141.

¹³³ GA 9, 33-34 / 141-142.

¹³⁴ GA 9, 33 / 141.

¹³⁵ GA 9, 33 / 141.

Conscience in the Lecture on “The Concept of Time” for the Marburg Theological Faculty (July 1924)

Heidegger’s first public indication that the concept of conscience will perform a key role in his phenomenological investigation of existence is recorded in the text of his lecture entitled “The Concept of Time” that was given on July 25, 1924¹³⁶ at the University of Marburg under the auspices of the faculty of theology. Near the conclusion of his lecture, which according to Kisiel and Sheehan caused “a minor sensation” in German intellectual circles due to its “‘existentialist’ flair,”¹³⁷ Heidegger introduced conscience as a phenomenon related to the essential “historicality” of what he called “Dasein” and characterizes as “Being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*).”¹³⁸ The sole appearance of the word “conscience” in this short lecture is found in the following excerpt:

The study of history that thrives in the present only sees history as irrecuperable activity and busyness: what once went on. The examination of what was going on is inexhaustible. It gets lost in its material. Because this history and temporality of the present does not get at the past at all, it merely has another present. A past remains closed off from a present so long as such a present, Dasein, is not itself historical. Dasein, however, is in itself historical in so far as it is its possibility. In being futural Dasein is its past; it comes back to it in the how. The manner [how] of coming back to it is,

¹³⁶ Other than to make note of it here, we will not include in our analytical review the appearance of “conscience” in Heidegger’s 1923 summer semester lecture course (*Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*) at the University of Freiburg because the usage of the word in this course is relatively unimportant for our investigation. In §9 of this course on the topic of “‘Dialectic’ and Phenomenology,” Heidegger severely criticizes the tendency of his contemporaries to “unify” phenomenology with “dialectic”-inspired notions resulting in “schemata like form-content, rational-irrational, finite-infinite, mediated-unmediated, subject-object.” Heidegger observes that such approaches represent “what the critical stance of phenomenology ultimately struggles against. When the attempt is made to unify them, one treats phenomenology in a superficial manner. ... Perhaps called once to be the conscience of philosophy, [phenomenology] has wound up as a pimp for the public whoring of the mind, *fornicatio spiritus* (Luther). (*Berufen vielleicht, das Gewissen der Philosophie zu sein, ist sie zur Zuhälterin geworden der öffentlichen Hurerei des Geistes, fornicatio spiritus* (Luther).)” GA 63, 46 / 37. Other than this crude remark, the course contains no other reference to conscience.

¹³⁷ Kisiel and Sheehan, eds. *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*. pp. 197-198.

¹³⁸ GA 64, 112 / 204. Note that for all references to and citations of Heidegger’s July 25, 1924 lecture on “The Concept of Time” provided in this sub-section of our text, we have chosen to use the English “paraphrase” proposed by Kisiel: Martin Heidegger. “The Concept of Time (Lecture of July 24, 1924).” trans. Theodore J. Kisiel. *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*. eds. Theodore J. Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, [1924] 2007).

among other things, conscience. Only the how is repeatable. A past—experienced as authentic historicity—is anything but “dead and gone.” It is something to which I can return again and again.¹³⁹

Essentially, the meaning of conscience that is conveyed by Heidegger here is consistent with his previous use of the word in the review of Jaspers’s book: conscience is related to the “coming back” that defines the experience of historicity if it is authentically understood. However, the notion of conscience presented here is not identical with Heidegger’s earlier commentary. In this public talk about “time,” Heidegger integrates his notion of conscience *into* his new notion of “Dasein,” the term that has now replaced the word “self” that he used previously. Furthermore, Heidegger specifies that “conscience” is just one possible way “among others” that could allow for the past to be repeated in the authentic experience of time. With regard to the “how” of experiencing this coming back and the specific role of conscience, Heidegger offers no further explanation and he does not mention any of the “other ways” that might allow Dasein to experience the “coming back” of genuine historicity. Once again, the young Heidegger drops the term of conscience immediately after raising it and does not develop his interpretation of the phenomenon in any depth at this point.

Conscience in the Abandoned Review of the Dilthey-Yorck Correspondence (November 1924)

The first explicit parallel in Heidegger’s work between his early treatment of conscience and the subsequent existential interpretation found in *Being and Time* appears in a lengthy essay that he completed in November 1924 under the working title “The Concept of Time (Comments on the Dilthey-Yorck Correspondence).” For the first time, we see

¹³⁹ GA 64, 122-123 / 211-212. In German: “Die Betrachtung der Geschichte, die in der Gegenwart aufwächst, sieht in ihr nur unwiederbringliche Betriebsamkeit: das, was los war. Die Betrachtung dessen, was los war, ist unerschöpflich. Sie verliert sich im Stoff. Weil diese Geschichte und Zeitlichkeit der Gegenwart gar nicht an die Vergangenheit herankommt, hat sie nur eine andere Gegenwart. Vergangenheit bleibt so lange einer Gegenwart verschlossen, als diese, das Dasein, nicht selbst geschichtlich ist. Das Dasein ist aber geschichtlich an ihm selbst, sofern es seine Möglichkeit ist. Im Zukünftigsein ist das Dasein seine Vergangenheit; es kommt darauf zurück im Wie. Die Weise des Zurückkommens ist unter anderem das Gewissen. Nur das Wie ist wiederholbar. Vergangenheit — als eigentliche Geschichtlichkeit erfahren — ist alles andere denn das Vorbei. Sie ist etwas, worauf ich immer wieder zurückkommen kann.”

Heidegger in this text identifying the phenomenon of “willing-to-have-a-conscience (*Gewissen-haben-wollen*)”¹⁴⁰ as an essential characteristic of Dasein and assigning it a specific place among the basic elements that make up the “wholeness” of Being-in-the-world. Initially intended as a book review of the recently published correspondence between Wilhelm Dilthey and Paul Yorck von Wartenburg,¹⁴¹ this essay marks Heidegger’s earliest attempt to explicitly “position” his notion of conscience within the increasingly elaborate constitutive structures of his phenomenon of Dasein. Indeed, Heidegger’s discussion of his own philosophical concepts in this text was so detailed that the supposed “book review” bloated into a complex four-part essay of which only the first—and shortest—section focused on the Dilthey-Yorck letters. As Kisiel reports, the “review” article was never published in the *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* as planned largely because the text had grown into a “fundamental statement about Heidegger’s own work” that was “more than double its originally estimated length”; instead, it would serve as “the very first draft of *Being and Time*” and major sections of this essay would be inserted *verbatim* into his major 1927 work.¹⁴²

Heidegger’s comments on conscience in this November 1924 essay appear in its third and most substantial chapter entitled “Dasein and Temporality,”¹⁴³ which Heidegger

¹⁴⁰ GA 64, 54.

¹⁴¹ Wilhelm Dilthey, Paul Yorck von Wartenburg and Sigrid Schulenburg. *Briefwechsel zwischen Wilhelm Dilthey und dem grafen Paul Yorck v. Wartenburg, 1877-1897*. (Halle/Saale: M. Niemeyer, 1923).

¹⁴² Theodore J. Kisiel and John van Buren, eds. *Reading Heidegger From the Start: Essays in his Earliest Thought*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994. pp. 321-323.

¹⁴³ Although we will not discuss this reference in our review, it should also be noted that in the first part of this 1924 essay Heidegger quotes from a letter by Yorck to Dilthey that discusses the phenomenon of conscience. In this letter, Yorck criticizes the “radical externalization” expressed in the notion of “the so-called public conscience” and argues that the authentic historicity of a nation or community can only result when individuals decide in common to follow their *own* consciences. Unfortunately for our study, Heidegger simply includes the excerpt in his essay without providing any commentary on it. The same excerpt—along with large sections of the first part of this essay—is reproduced nearly verbatim in §77 of *Being and Time*, but again Heidegger does not contribute any commentary of his own regarding this quote. He does, however, discuss the “inauthenticity” of the notion of the “public conscience”/“world-conscience” in SZ §57, 278 / 323, one of the sections of *Being and Time* which we will examine in significant detail in the third chapter of our study. Here is the English translation of this excerpt of Yorck’s letter: “But you are acquainted with my liking for paradox, which I justify by saying that paradoxicality is a mark of truth, and that the *communis opinio* is nowhere near the truth, but is like an elemental precipitate of a halfway understanding which makes generalizations; in its relationship to truth it is like the sulfurous fumes which the lightning leaves behind. Truth is never an element. To dissolve elemental public opinion, and, as far as possible, to make possible the

opens with a lengthy note commenting on the relation between this text and his July 1925 talk before Marburg's faculty of theology that shared the same title. In this note, Heidegger recalls that at Marburg he had posed the question "What is time?" in a broad manner out of respect for his audience of theologians concerned with questions regarding "access to God, faith and the relationship to eternity."¹⁴⁴ As he begins the third section of this essay, Heidegger promises that his investigation of Dasein's temporality will now be approached in a purely "philosophical" manner and will avoid having recourse to any kind of divine absolute; more specifically, his investigation will only consider the possibility of understanding time through time itself. Having "focused" his investigation in this manner, Heidegger adopts a strategy that provides an early glimpse of the themes that will orient the two opening chapters of *Being and Time's* Division Two on Being-towards-death and conscience. Given that his study of Dasein is intended to provide access to the question of the meaning of Being, Heidegger holds that the legitimacy of his attempted interpretation requires an explanation of how the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world can be understood as a *whole*.

[How] is this entity to be perceived as a sufficient basis for this analysis in terms of an adequately *guiding* wholeness, as long as it has not come to its end? Only if it *is* what it can be is it accessible as a whole. Only in its Being-towards-the-end is it fully there. But in its Being-finished, however, it simply no longer is.¹⁴⁵

moulding of individuality in seeing and looking, would be a pedagogical task for the state. Then, instead of a so-called public conscience—instead of this radical externalization—individual consciences—that is to say, consciences—would again become powerful." In German: "Aber Sie kennen meine Vorliebe für das Paradoxe, die ich damit rechtfertige, daß Paradoxie ein Merkmal der Wahrheit ist, daß *communis opinio* gewißlich nirgends in der Wahrheit ist, als ein elementarer Niederschlag verallgemeinernden Halbverstehens, in dem Verhältnisse zu der Wahrheit wie der Schwefeldampf, den der Blitz zurückläßt. Wahrheit ist nie Element. Staatspaedagogische Aufgabe wäre es, die elementare öffentliche Meinung zu zersetzen und möglichst die Individualität des Sehens und Unsehens bildend zu ermöglichen. Es würden dann statt eines so genannten öffentlichen Gewissens—dieser radikalen Veräußerlichung, wieder Einzelgewissen, d. h. Gewissen mächtig werden." SZ §77, 403 / 454-455. Excerpted from Dilthey, Yorck von Wartenburg and Schulenburg. *Briefwechsel zwischen Wilhelm Dilthey und dem grafen Paul Yorck v. Wartenburg, 1877-1897*. pp. 249-250.

¹⁴⁴ GA 64, 45-46. Our translation.

¹⁴⁵ GA 64, 46-47. Our translation. In German: "Wie soll aber dieses Seiende einen hinreichenden Boden der Analyse gewahren im Sinne der abhebbaren *leitenden* Ganzheit, solange es nicht zu seinem Ende gekommen ist? Erst wenn es das *ist*, was es sein kann, wird es als Ganzes erfaßbar. In seinem Zu=Ende=gekommen=sein ist es erst voll da. Aber in seinem Fertig=sein ist es doch gerade nicht mehr."

To explain this constant wholeness of Being-towards-the-end, Heidegger points to Dasein's experience of death and insists that a "genuine" understanding of this phenomenon is only possible if we avoid thinking of "death" as something that "is." As Heidegger contends, Dasein's death is neither "a moment that completes the design of the whole" nor "a collapse of the sequence of related experiences and events"¹⁴⁶; such notions presuppose that Dasein's Being is a form of material presence. Although much less intricate than the account of Dasein's death found in *Being and Time*, this early description places the same emphasis on the importance of understanding death as a constant and essential "possibility" of Being-in-the-world:

"Death" does not exist. Death is in each case mine. Dasein is in each case its own death. Dasein means Potentiality-for-Being. Death is the most extreme possibility of Dasein. In its explicated mode of Being, Dasein *is* in each case its most extreme possibility.¹⁴⁷

For Heidegger, this "extreme possibility" of Dasein's own death delivers the only "certainty" of existence and provides the authentic, primordial basis of factual experience. However, he immediately recalls his earlier observations presented in the second section of the essay concerning Dasein's tendency to fall into the "objectivizing" way of understanding the world and its own Being. This tendency causes Dasein to become blind to the genuine "certainty" of its "most extreme possibility" and leads to the mistaken consideration of death as yet another "event" whose significance is determined according to the "ways of the world."

Once again, Heidegger finds himself faced with the problem of explaining the "how" that could allow Dasein—blind to the fact that it has fallen into the objective ways of the world—to return to a genuine understanding of existence in terms of its ownmost and ultimate possibility. In this November 1924 essay, Heidegger makes the case that Dasein is faced with a constant choice—a choice that revolves around whether one chooses to be concerned or to not be concerned with this very question of "how." It is in this regard

¹⁴⁶ GA 64, 47-48. Our translation.

¹⁴⁷ GA 64, 48-49. Our translation.

that Heidegger introduces the phenomenon of conscience: to be concerned with the question of the “how” of one’s existence is expressed as “willing-to-have-a-conscience,” which he also describes in terms of “Being-willing-to-be-responsible-for-itself (*Sich-selbst-verantwortlich-sein-wollens*).”¹⁴⁸ At this point, Heidegger conveys the concept of conscience strictly in terms of the will. When Dasein allows the “world” to determine its possibilities, it chooses “not to choose” and becomes absorbed in the habitual concern for worldly things as dictated by tradition. On the other hand, Dasein can choose to be “willing-to-have-a-conscience” and thereby free itself from concern for the objective “what” in order to return to the “how” that discloses its genuine possibilities.

Dasein can choose to be in the “how” of “willing-to-be-responsible-for-itself.” ... In facticity, Dasein is constituted equally by this Being-possible as choosing its “how” and by Being-falling. By concernfully getting absorbed in the environmental-world, the with-world and the self-world that make up Being-in, the “how” is forgotten. In so far as the concern that is falling (*das verfallende Besorgen*) is a way of Being, this can also be described as a falling “how.” [In this case,] the “how” takes the form of a habit, a routine of always looking concernfully at the “what.” Terminologically, the “how” simply means Being-in-the-world, in so far as it is determined through “willing-to-have-a-conscience.”¹⁴⁹

As Heidegger makes clear, the choice of “willing-to-have-a-conscience” is neither permanent nor absolute: Dasein cannot “avoid” its tendency to fall into concern for the “what.” Nonetheless, Heidegger sees Dasein to be revealing an authentic understanding of its own Being—and its temporality—when it chooses to be “willing-to-have-a-conscience” and concernfully focuses on its “how.” Indeed, the “falling” of Dasein as it exists in objective concern for “worldly things” can only occur because it is “falling *away*” from its self-responsibility of “willing-to-have-a-conscience.” Since any legitimate questioning of

¹⁴⁸ GA 64, 54. Our translation.

¹⁴⁹ GA 64, 54. Our translation. In German: “Das Dasein kann das Sein im Wie des Sich=selbst=verantwortlich=sein=wollens wählen. ... In der Fakticität ist das Dasein in gleichen durch dieses Möglichsein als Wählenkönnen des Wie und durch das Verfallensein konstituiert. Das, was als Um=, Mit= und Selbstwelt das Insein mitnimmt, lässt das besorgende Aufgehen des Wie vergessen. Sofern das verfallende Besorgen eine Weise des Seins ist, kann diese auch als das verfallende Wie angesprochen werden. Dieses Wie bildet sich als Gewöhnung, Routine immer im Hinsehen auf das »Was« des Besorgens aus. Das Wie schlechthin bedeutet terminologisch das In=der=Welt=sein, sofern es durch das »Gewissen=haben=wollen« bestimmt ist.”

Dasein's "how" necessarily implies concern for its wholeness, Heidegger sees the choice of "willing-to-have-a-conscience" reflected in Dasein's anticipatory resoluteness in the face of its ownmost "extreme possibility" of death, the indefinite but certain possibility of its impending "non-existence." In choosing to be "willing-to-have-a-conscience," Dasein reveals the specious nature of the "objective" time of tradition that values the "passing" present only because it produces the certain "knowledge" of past events: Dasein must fall into the "forgetting" of its ultimate possibility *before* the past can be mistakenly accorded "priority" over the future.

When Being-past is revealed in this way, we see that Dasein is already at every moment in the possibility of anticipating its most extreme Potentiality-for-Being, it is in every moment in the possibility of choosing between being "conscience-having" and being "conscience-less." ... However, since Dasein is characterized by falling, it has the tendency to understand itself primarily in terms of the world and to determine its "actions" exclusively in terms of the world. In such dwelling in the world, one can forget oneself, i.e. can be "conscience-less." However, such a Dasein has not actually chosen resoluteness understood as discovering anticipation; instead, it has allowed itself to be determined by that wherein it finds itself.¹⁵⁰

For the first time, Heidegger also establishes here a link between the "choosing" of "wanting-to-have-a-conscience" and the essential guilt of Dasein: even in making the choice to be "conscience-having," Being-in-the-world recognizes that it is essentially characterized by its tendency to "fall" into worldly concerns and that the "choice" of "wanting-to-have-a-conscience" cannot be permanently sustained. In the "how" of genuinely anticipating its most extreme possibility, Dasein's resoluteness is inherently colored by the guilt of its being unable to assume full responsibility for itself. While Heidegger hints at the possibility of developing an "anticipatory" counter-habit to "falling,"

¹⁵⁰ GA 64, 59-60. Our translation. In German: "Im so aufgedeckten Vergangensein liegt: das Dasein stand schon jeden Augenblick in der Möglichkeit, in das äusserste Möglichsein vorzulaufen, es stand jeden Augenblick in der Möglichkeit zu wählen zwischen »gewissenhaft« und »gewissenlos«. Das Vorlaufen deckt im Vorbei das Sein dessen, das dieses Vorbei ist, auf. Sofern aber das Dasein durch das Verfallen charakterisiert ist, liegt in ihm die Neigung, sich primär von der Welt her und einzig von ihr her im »Handeln« bestimmen zu lassen. In solchem Aufgehen in der Welt kann es sich vergessen, d. h. wissen=los werden. Die Entschlossenheit aber zeigt als entdeckendes Vorlaufen ein solches Dasein in seinem nicht eigentlich »Gewählt=haben«; es hat sich gleichsam von dem, darin es aufging, wählen lassen."

he nonetheless insists that Dasein is inevitably dependent on the “world” in which it finds itself.

In resoluteness, the thus revealed “past” of anticipating Dasein, if it understands itself, cannot be considered a worldly object. Rather, resoluteness allows Dasein itself to become guilty for “not-having-chosen.” In becoming guilty and remaining guilty, anticipating Dasein is its Being-past.¹⁵¹

While resoluteness exposes Dasein to its “guilt,” it also implies that one “resolves” upon a concrete possibility that necessarily involves being plunged back into objective “worldly” interests; the return to genuine anticipation must be actualized again and again through Dasein’s willful “choosing” of “wanting-to-have-a-conscience.”

With his remark concerning the relation between decisive action and the essential guilt of “conscience-less” existence, Heidegger provides evidence that his emerging notion of conscience as the source of disclosedness has been steadily developing at least since his encounter in 1920 with Jaspers’s *Psychology of Worldviews* (and quite possibly since his earlier studies of Nietzsche as a student of Rickert¹⁵²). For with his characterization of Dasein’s “conscience-less” activity, Heidegger alludes for the first time in his published works to Goethe’s widely quoted maxim concerning the fundamentally “conscience-less” nature of all human “activity”—a maxim that Jaspers references repeatedly in his book as we discuss below. Five months after completing this essay, Heidegger will acknowledge this reference more explicitly in the Kassel lectures of April 1925¹⁵³ and will reprise it in both his 1925 summer semester course at Marburg¹⁵⁴ and in §60 of *Being and Time*.¹⁵⁵ It is worth noting that when we review the line by Goethe as it appears in his compiled *Maxims*

¹⁵¹ GA 64, 59-60. Our translation. In German: “Die so aufgedeckte »Vergangenheit« des vorlaufenden Daseins kann in der Entschlossenheit, sofern sie sich selbst versteht, nicht weltlicher Gegenstand einer Betrachtung werden. Die Entschlossenheit lässt das Dasein vielmehr von sich selbst schuldig werden in seinem Nichtgewählthaben. Im Schuldigwerden und =bleiben ist das vorlaufende Dasein sein Vergangensein.”

¹⁵² Kisiel and Sheehan, eds. *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*. p. 1.

¹⁵³ Ibid. p. 266.

¹⁵⁴ GA 20, §35, 441 / 319.

¹⁵⁵ SZ §60, 300 / 347.

and *Reflections*, we see that Heidegger refers only to the first half of the poet's "statement" concerning conscience and that the point expressed by Heidegger evidently clashes with Goethe's apparent valorization of "beholding." As Goethe writes:

He who acts is always without conscience; no one has conscience except he who beholds.¹⁵⁶

Significantly for our investigation, Jaspers makes reference to Goethe's maxim three different times in his *Psychology of Worldviews*¹⁵⁷ and on *all* three occasions he truncates the text by leaving out the conclusion in exactly the same manner as we have seen in Heidegger's later references. By "editing" the Goethean quote in this way, Jaspers betrays his desire to emphasize the "conscience-less" nature of all forms of decisive action while avoiding any discussion of the potentially positive character of attentive "beholding." On its own, this truncating of Goethe's line would not demonstrate the direct link between Heidegger's use of the reference and his knowledge of the Jaspersian reading of it. However, what we find in *Psychology of Worldviews* is that Jaspers explicitly uses the quote to illustrate the relation between "responsibility," "inevitable guilt" and decisive action, the same themes that Heidegger links to conscience for the first time in this 1924 essay and upon which he will structure his existential concept of conscience in *Being and Time*.¹⁵⁸ In the *Psychology of Worldviews*, Jaspers writes:

Every action has...unintended consequences. Even if one follows the finest standards, every action is unavoidably accompanied by the subjective experience of guilt. As Goethe saw: Anyone who acts is without conscience. When calculation is insufficient [for determining all consequences of an action], decision is only possible for the unscrupulous agent or for one who

¹⁵⁶ Our translation. The original text of Goethe's maxim in German is: "Der Handelnde ist immer gewissenlos; es hat niemand Gewissen als der Betrachtende." Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Maximen und Reflexion: Nach den Handschriften des Goethe- und Schiller-Archivs*. (Weimar: Goethe-Gesellschaft, 1907). The most widely used English translation is that of T. Bailey Saunders who placed the emphasis on thinking rather than on beholding or observing: "The man who acts never has any conscience; no one has any conscience but the man who thinks." Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *The Maxims and Reflections of Goethe*. trans. T. Bailey Saunders. (New York; London: Macmillan and Co., 1893). p. 87.

¹⁵⁷ Karl Jaspers. *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*. (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1919). These references are found on pp. 46, 212 and 242.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 46-47.

can carry the burden of this “responsibility”; that is, for one who can take on and wants to take on this inevitable guilt.¹⁵⁹

Further illuminating our understanding of the sources related to Heidegger’s development of the concept of conscience, the reference to the Goethean maxim by Jaspers also sheds a new light on the importance of Nietzsche’s writings for Heidegger as he struggles to interpret the meaning of conscience and determine its function as an essential phenomenon of Dasein. For as soon as Jaspers introduces Goethe’s words in *Psychology of Worldviews*, he refers immediately to Nietzsche, praising the 19th century thinker for having “aptly characterized” the “fear” of those who prefer to “accept fatalism” and “shuffle off their responsibility” rather than “accepting the guilt” and “assuming the risk and the consequences” related to the pursuit of their own goals.¹⁶⁰ As we will see in the following chapter, Heidegger explicitly acknowledges Nietzsche in §55 of *Being and Time* as one of the sources that he considered while developing his concept of conscience as an existential phenomenon.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, in conducting an investigation of the “existential source” of Dasein’s historicity in §76, Heidegger refers specifically to Nietzsche’s 1874 essay entitled “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life (*Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*),” where Nietzsche “unequivocally and penetratingly” recognized that “one’s life is historical in the roots of its Being, and that therefore, as factually existing, one has in each case made one’s decision for authentic or inauthentic historicity.”¹⁶² Confirming the significance of the Goethean maxim to Heidegger’s approach to conscience, this essay—the *sole* Nietzschean text mentioned by name in *Being and Time*—marks the *only* moment in all of Nietzsche’s collected writings where this maxim is quoted and explicitly attributed to Goethe. Nietzsche writes:

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. pp. 46-47. Our translation. In German: “Jedes Tun hat...ungewollte Folgen. Bei feinsten Maßstäben hat jedes Tun so eine unvermeidliche Schuld als subjektives Erlebnis zur Begleitung. Goethe sah: Jeder Handelnde ist gewissenlos. Das Entscheiden, wo das Berechnen nicht ausreicht, ist nur möglich bei dem skrupellosen Täter oder bei dem, der es tragen kann „Verantwortung“ zu haben; das heißt, der die unvermeidliche Schuld auf sich nehmen kann und will.”

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 47. Our translation.

¹⁶¹ SZ, §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496).

¹⁶² SZ §76, 396 / 448.

The unhistorical is like an atmosphere within which alone life can germinate and with the destruction of which it must vanish. ... All [the] valuations [of the unhistorical man] are altered and disvalued; there are so many things he is no longer capable of evaluating at all because he can hardly feel them anymore: he asks himself why he was for so long the fool of the phrases and opinions of others; he is amazed that his memory revolves unwearingly in a circle and yet is too weak and weary to take even a single leap out of this circle. It is the condition in which one is the least capable of being just; narrow-minded, ungrateful to the past, blind to dangers, deaf to warnings, one is a little vortex of life in a dead sea of darkness and oblivion: and yet this condition—unhistorical, anti-historical through and through—is the womb not only of the unjust but of every just deed too; and no painter will paint his picture, no general achieve his victory, no people attain its freedom without having first desired and striven for it in an unhistorical condition such as that described. As he who acts is, in Goethe's words, always without a conscience, so is he also always without knowledge; he forgets most things so as to do one thing, he is unjust towards what lies behind him, and he recognizes the rights only of that which is now to come into being and no other rights whatever.¹⁶³

With this utterly “destructive” account of conscience, Nietzsche represents both an inspirational source and a formidable opponent for Heidegger as he attempts to determine the genuine significance of conscience. On the one hand, Heidegger recognizes the parallel between his phenomenological project and Nietzsche's violent charge against moral conscience and the tradition-bound concept of history. Although more concerned with “existence” than “life” *per se*, Heidegger is evidently sympathetic to Nietzsche's claim that

¹⁶³ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life." trans. R. J. Hollingdale. *Untimely Meditations*. ed. Daniel Breazeale. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). §1, pp. 63-64. In German: “Das Unhistorische ist einer umhüllenden Atmosphäre ähnlich, in der sich Leben allein erzeugt, um mit der Vernichtung dieser Atmosphäre wieder zu verschwinden. ... Alle Werthschätzungen sind verändert und entwerthet; so vieles vermag er nicht mehr zu schätzen, weil er es kaum mehr fühlen kann: er fragt sich ob er so lange der Narr fremder Worte, fremder Meinungen gewesen sei; er wundert sich, dass sein Gedächtniss sich unermüdlich in einem Kreise dreht und doch zu schwach und müde ist, um nur einen einzigen Sprung aus diesem Kreise heraus zu machen. Es ist der ungerechteste Zustand von der Welt, eng, undankbar gegen das Vergangene, blind gegen Gefahren, taub gegen Warnungen, ein kleiner lebendiger Wirbel in einem todten Meere von Nacht und Vergessen: und doch ist dieser Zustand — unhistorisch, widerhistorisch durch und durch — der Geburtsschooss nicht nur einer ungerechten, sondern vielmehr jeder rechten That; und kein Künstler wird sein Bild, kein Feldherr seinen Sieg, kein Volk seine Freiheit erreichen, ohne sie in einem derartig unhistorischen Zustande vorher begehrt und erstrebt zu haben. Wie der Handelnde, nach Goethes Ausdruck, immer gewissenlos ist, so ist er auch wissenlos, er vergisst das Meiste, um Eins zu thun, er ist ungerecht gegen das, was hinter ihm liegt und kennt nur Ein Recht, das Recht dessen, was jetzt werden soll.” Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. *Sämtliche Werke: kritische Studienausgabe*. (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980). Vol. 1, Part 2, §1, pp. 253-254.

“[we need history] for the sake of life and action, not so as to turn comfortably away from life and action, let alone for the purpose of extenuating the self-seeking life and the cowardly and bad act.”¹⁶⁴ On the other hand, the Nietzschean endeavor lacks the concern shown by Heidegger for the possibility of interpreting the phenomenon of conscience positively as the “source” of experiencing Being and as the means of accessing history authentically. For Nietzsche, the “conscience-less” state represents a glorious ideal and defines the ground from “which every great historical event” has arisen; theoretically, such “conscience-less” existence can “raise” an individual to a “*suprahistorical* vantage point.”¹⁶⁵ For Heidegger, such a theory—no matter how “destructive”—betrays its dependence on the “objective” concepts that it claims to reject: this is expressed clearly when Heidegger states that one can only be “without conscience” if one has fallen away from the authentic experience of conscience. In developing his “phenomenological” method of investigating existence, Heidegger turns to conscience specifically in order to exhibit the “how” of existence—a “how” that in Heidegger’s work will increasingly be seen to revolve around Dasein’s experience of “willing-to-have-a-conscience.”

While this “how” remains quite nebulous at the conclusion of his November 1924 essay, Heidegger has made it clear that the choosing of conscience is essential for any understanding of existence and that this “primordial” experience—if it can be exhibited in its “how”—represents the exclusive way of accessing the essence of time.

¹⁶⁴ Nietzsche. "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life." Foreword, p. 59. We have slightly modified Hollingdale’s translation. In German: “[Wir] brauchen [Historie] zum Leben und zur That, nicht zur bequemen Abkehr vom Leben und von der That oder gar zur Beschönigung des selbstsüchtigen Lebens und der feigen und schlechten That.” Nietzsche. *Sämtliche Werke: kritische Studienausgabe*. Vol. 1, Part 2, *Vorwort*, p. 245.

¹⁶⁵ Nietzsche. "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life." §1, p. 65. In German: “Sollte Einer im Stande sein, diese unhistorische Atmosphäre, in der jedes grosse geschichtliche Ereigniss entstanden ist, in zahlreichen Fällen auszuwittern und nachzuatmen, so vermöchte ein Solcher vielleicht, als erkennendes Wesen, sich auf einen überhistorischen Standpunkt zu erheben, wie ihn einmal Niebuhr als mögliches Resultat historischer Betrachtungen geschildert hat.” Nietzsche. *Sämtliche Werke: kritische Studienausgabe*. Vol. 1, Part 2, §1, p. 254.

Heidegger's Equating of Conscience with Aristotle's Concept of *Phronesis* in his 1924-1925 Winter Semester Course at Marburg

The most unusual—and exotic—of Heidegger's handful of brief remarks on conscience leading up to the completion of *Being and Time* is found in the reconstructed text of Heidegger's course entitled *Plato's Sophist* that was given at the University of Marburg during the 1924-1925 winter semester and published in 1992 as volume 19 of the *Gesamtausgabe*. In this course, Heidegger sought to interpret Plato's "research into Being" through the lens of Aristotle's lessons on the question of truth (*aletheuein*), particularly those found in Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the course of his survey of the various modes of *aletheuein* described by Aristotle, Heidegger establishes a remarkable connection between the concept of conscience and the Greek notion of practical wisdom: *phronesis*. The transcript of Heidegger's lecture where the term "conscience" appears reads:

[It] is to be noted that *aletheuein*, as it exists in *doxa*, in *mathesis*, and in *episteme*, has a peculiar character of fallenness. What I experience, notice, or have learned, I can forget; in this possibility, *aletheuein* is subject to *lethe* (where the stem of the verb *lanthanein* lies hidden)—what is disclosed can sink back into concealment. The ability to become forgotten is a specific possibility of that *aletheuein* which has the character of *theorein*. For the *hexis meta logou* is a *hexis* of *aletheuein* into which *Dasein* places itself explicitly. In the case of *phronesis* things are different. This is manifest in the fact that I can experience, notice, and learn what has already been experienced, noted, and learned, whereas *phronesis* is in each case new. Hence there is no *lethe* in relation to *phronesis*: *semeion d'oti lethe tes men toiautes hexeos estin, phroneseos d'ouk estin* (b28ff.). As regards *phronesis*, there is no possibility of falling into forgetting. Certainly the explication which Aristotle gives here is very meager. But it is nevertheless clear from the context that we would not be going too far in our interpretation by saying that Aristotle has here come across the *phenomenon of conscience*. *Phronesis* is nothing other than conscience set into motion, making an action transparent. Conscience cannot be forgotten. But it is quite possible that what is disclosed by conscience can be distorted and allowed to be ineffective through *hedone* and *lupe*, through the passions. Conscience announces itself again and again. (*Aber es ist doch aus dem Zusammenhang deutlich, daß man in der Interpretation nicht zu weit geht, wenn man sagt, daß Aristoteles hier auf das Phänomen des Gewissens gestoßen ist. Die*

phronesis is nichts anderes als das in Bewegung gesetzte Gewissen, das eine Handlung durchsichtig macht. Das Gewissen kann man nicht vergessen. Wohl aber kann man das, was das Gewissen aufdeckt, durch hedone und lupe, durch Leidenschaften, verstellen und unwirksam werden lassen. Die Gewissen meldet sich immer wieder.) Hence because *phronesis* does not possess the possibility of *lethe*, it is not a mode of *aletheuein* which one could call theoretical knowledge. Therefore *phronesis* is out of the question as the *arete* of *episteme* or of *techne*.¹⁶⁶

Taking issue with Aristotle's ultimate decision to prioritize the knowledge of *sophia* over *phronesis* as the highest mode of *aletheuein*, Heidegger infers that *phronesis*—which he equates with the experience of conscience—serves as the authentic mode of all lived experience. According to Heidegger, the “object” of *phronesis* is Dasein itself; it is the caring for one's existence that is the source of any possible experience of Being. In contrast with this existential experience, the speculative seeing that founds *sophia* results in the false impression that one possesses “certain” knowledge, according to Heidegger. *Sophia* is fundamentally dependent on the theoretical outlook that allows Dasein to accept the apparent “reality” of worldly objects and to accumulate “knowledge,” thereby covering up the authentic experience of existence.

What Heidegger previously called the “actualization history” of the self is lost to Dasein when it falls into its “inherent tendency to cover itself over.”¹⁶⁷ Against this tendency, the *phronesis* that Heidegger identifies with conscience struggles to keep Dasein transparent to itself. In the case of the practical sensing of *phronesis*, all experience of the world arises authentically and transparently through a constantly recalled “caring” for what is disclosed. Characteristic of the *phronesis* is that actualization can never be ultimately accomplished; here again Heidegger reminds us that one's “wanting-to-have-a-conscience” must be ever renewed. He writes: “[*Phronesis*], as soon as it is achieved, is involved in a constant struggle against a tendency to cover over residing at the heart of Dasein (*einem ständigen Kampf gegenüber der Verdeckungstendenz, die im Dasein selbst liegt*). ... Here,

¹⁶⁶ GA 19, §8, 55-56 / 39. We have modified Rojcewicz and Schuwer's English translation of “Das Gewissen meldet sich immer wieder” from “Conscience always announces itself” to “Conscience announces itself again and again.” In adopting this translation, we follow Kisiel who also uses the expression “again and again” rather than “always.” Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. p. 306.

¹⁶⁷ GA 19, §8, 51-52 / 36.

in Dasein itself, is precisely where the risk to, and the resistance against, *phronesis* lies.”¹⁶⁸ As Dasein’s mode of “truthfully” experiencing the world, Heidegger’s *phronesis* is thus a constant recalling that existence can never be grounded in or reduced to “certainty.” Conscience is the remembering of Dasein’s most profound “truth”: its essential *uncertainty*. As the “source” of the experience of disclosedness, conscience—here described by Heidegger as the experiencing of *phronesis*—is essential to the struggle to keep one’s ownmost “truth” revealed, a struggle that must counter the essential tendency of Dasein to bury itself in the “substance” of worldly concerns.

Of all the many commentaries regarding Heidegger’s linking of *phronesis* and conscience, it is Gadamer’s testimony that is most valuable to our investigation because his first-hand account conveys the impact of Heidegger’s words on his listeners. In his essay entitled “The Marburg Theology,” Gadamer recounts that:

...I met Heidegger in 1923—still in Freiburg—and took part in a seminar on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹⁶⁹ We were studying the analysis of *phronesis*. Heidegger showed us with reference to Aristotle’s text that all *techne* contained an internal limit: Its knowledge never entails a complete disclosure because the work that it knew how to produce is released into the uncertainty of a use that was not at one’s disposal (*eines unverfügbaren Gebrauchs*). And then, as a topic for discussion, he presented the distinction that separated all knowledge—especially that of mere *doxa*—from *phronesis*: *lethe tes men toiautes hexeos estin, phroneseos de ouk estin* (1140 b 29). As we groped for an interpretation of *phronesis*, uncertain about the sentence and completely unfamiliar with the Greek concepts, Heidegger explained curtly, “That is the conscience!” This is not the place to reduce the pedagogical exaggeration contained in this claim to its appropriate dimensions, and even less the place to point out the logical and ontological

¹⁶⁸ GA 19, §8, 52-53 / 36-37.

¹⁶⁹ In his essay, Gadamer recalls hearing Heidegger’s “lesson” concerning the equation of *phronesis* and conscience in a seminar at Freiburg, and not during the 1924-25 winter semester course at the University of Marburg (where we find the only published evidence of this “lesson” in Heidegger’s work). As Kisiel reports: “Among Heidegger’s early students, Oskar Becker, Walter Bröcker, and especially Hans-Georg Gadamer tell the story of Heidegger’s equating of phronetic insight with the conscience in a seminar in Freiburg and not, as our doxographical record indicates, in [the] Marburg lecture course.” Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time*. p. 541. It is certainly plausible that Heidegger could have introduced this relation between *phronesis* and conscience in one of his numerous seminars on Aristotle at Freiburg before taking up a professorial position at Marburg in 1923, however no detailed course notes or transcripts have yet surfaced to “prove” that these recollections are accurate as to the date and place of the original event.

weight that Aristotle's analysis of *phronesis* in fact carries. But what Heidegger found in this, which was also what fascinated him so with Aristotle's criticism of Plato's idea of the Good and with Aristotle's concept of practical knowledge, is clear today: Here a type of knowing (an *eidos gnoseos*) is described that admits of no reference to a final objectivity in the sense of a science—a knowing in the concrete situation of existence. Indeed, could Aristotle perhaps have helped to overcome the ontological prejudices of the Greek concept of the *Logos*, which Heidegger later interpreted temporally as being present-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*) and presentness (*Anwesenheit*)? This violent appropriation of the Aristotelian text for use with his own questions reminds one of how the call of the conscience in *Being and Time* is what first makes the "Dasein in human things" visible in its ontological and temporal event-structure.¹⁷⁰

While he recognizes that Heidegger's rhetoric may have distorted Aristotle's notion of *phronesis*, Gadamer nonetheless highlights the novelty of Heidegger's argument that the "forgotten" relationship between *phronesis* and conscience can be considered as evidence of how traditional ontology has covered up the primordial truth of experience. Furthermore, Gadamer explicitly makes the connection between Heidegger's discovery of conscience in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and the subsequent deployment of the "call of conscience" as the "source" of Dasein's disclosedness in *Being and Time*. In this sense, Gadamer's

¹⁷⁰ Hans-Georg Gadamer. "The Marburg Theology." trans. John W. Stanley. *Heidegger's Ways*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1964, 1994). pp. 32-33. In German: "Erstmals wurde mir davon etwas bewußt, als ich Heidegger 1923 – noch in Freiburg – kennenlernte und an seinem Seminar über die Nikomachische Ethik des Aristoteles teilnahm. Wir studierten die Analyse der Phronesis. Heidegger zeigte uns am Aristoteles-Text, daß alle Techne eine innere Grenze besitze: ihr Wissen sei kein volles Entbergen, weil das Werk, das sie zu erstellen verstehe, in das Ungewisse eines unverfügbaren Gebrauchs entlassen werde. Und nun stellte er den Unterschied zur Diskussion, der all solches Wissen, insbesondere auch die bloße Doxa, von der Phronesis schied: *lethe tes men toiautes hexeos estin, phroneseos de ouk estin* (1140 b 29). Als wir an diesem Satz unsicher und ganz in die griechischen Begriffe verfremdet heruminterpretierten, erklärte er brüsk: „Das ist das Gewissen!“ Es ist hier nicht der Ort, die pädagogische Übertreibung, die in dieser Behauptung lag, auf ihr Maß zu reduzieren, und noch weniger, den logischen und ontologischen Druck aufzuweisen, der in Wahrheit auf der Phronesis-Analyse bei Aristoteles lastet. Was Heidegger daran fand, wodurch ihn die aristotelische Kritik an Platos Idee des Guten und der aristotelische Begriff des praktischen Wissens so faszinierte, ist heute klar: Hier war eine Weise des Wissens (an *eidos gnoseos* (1141 b33f)) beschrieben, die sich schlechterdings nicht mehr auf eine letzte Objektivierbarkeit im Sinne der Wissenschaft beziehen ließ, ein Wissen in der konkreten Existenzsituation. Konnte Aristoteles vielleicht sogar die ontologischen Vorurteile des griechischen Logosbegriffs überwinden helfen, die Heidegger später temporal, als *Vorhandenheit* und *Anwesenheit*, interpretierte? Man denkt bei dieser gewalttätigen Heranreißung des aristotelischen Textes an seine eigenen Fragen daran, wie in *Sein und Zeit* der Ruf des Gewissens es ist, der jenes „Dasein im Menschen“ erstmals in seiner seinzeitlichen Geschehensstruktur sichtbar machte. Es war ja erst sehr viel später, daß Heidegger seinen Begriff des Daseins im Sinne der „Lichtung“ von allem transzendentalen Reflexionsdenken ablöste.“ Hans-Georg Gadamer. "Die Marburger Theologie." *Heideggers Wege: Studium zum Spätwerk*. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1964, 1983). pp. 31-32.

report indicates how the Heideggerian concept of conscience emerges as the primordial phenomenon of Being-in-the-world that represents the “source” of all possible experience and promises to open up a way of access to Dasein’s authentic temporality.

At the same time, Gadamer implies that Heidegger’s identification of *phronesis* with conscience does violence to the Aristotelian attempt to contrast *phronesis* with *sophia* as modes of *aletheuein*. While he never takes up the task of correcting Heidegger’s “pedagogical exaggeration,” Gadamer confirms with his remarks that the interpretation of conscience conveyed in the young professor’s lecture on *phronesis* remained very rudimentary at this point. By Gadamer’s account, the basic insight that Heidegger extracts from the *Nicomachean Ethics* will be fully developed only in *Being and Time* with the interpretation of the existential “call of conscience.” Most notably, Heidegger in his lecture on Aristotle makes no reference to a “call” and does not raise the methodological question of “attestation.” In this sense, Gadamer’s remarks highlight the great distance that separates Heidegger’s “violent appropriation” of *phronesis* in this lecture from the more substantially developed notion of the “attesting” conscience that appears in 1927.

Conscience in Heidegger’s Kassel Lectures (April 1925)

Heidegger provides another brief description of his evolving notion of conscience during the week of April 16-21, 1925 at Kassel, where the young professor had been invited by the local Society for Arts and Science (*Kurhessischen Gesellschaft für Kunst und Wissenschaft*) to conduct a series of lectures on his philosophical work.¹⁷¹ While the transcript of these lectures produced by his student Walter Bröcker does not reveal any substantial new insights regarding the “how” of experiencing conscience, the text confirms that Heidegger’s recognition of the primordial role of conscience for his phenomenological method is becoming increasingly concrete.¹⁷² Most importantly for our study, Heidegger

¹⁷¹ Kisiel and Sheehan, eds. *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*. p. 238.

¹⁷² The transcript of the Kassel lectures based on the notes of Walter Bröcker—discovered in the 1980’s—was initially published in the *Dilthey-Jahrbuch* as Martin Heidegger. “Wilhelm Diltheys Forschungsarbeit und der gegenwärtige Kampf um eine historische Weltanschauung (10 Vorträge: Gehalten in Kassel vom 16.N.-21.N.

here indicates that conscience is vital to understanding the distinction between his work and the phenomenology practiced by others, specifically Max Scheler, whom he also criticizes for having presupposed the Kantian “absolute ought” as the basis of all experience.¹⁷³ It is in this context that Heidegger now very explicitly refers to Goethe’s maxim as he illustrates the essentially “conscience-less” nature of human action: for Heidegger, this interpretation reveals the illegitimacy of the Kantian “ought” and all theories of “value” constructed upon it.¹⁷⁴

Having tightened up the description of his phenomenological approach for the audience of non-academics at Kassel, Heidegger even more forcefully designates conscience as the source of “resoluteness” that provides the basis for any disclosing of the world. Noting that Dasein can be accessed as a whole phenomenon only through the authentic understanding of its own death, the young professor asks:

Is there an authentic way of standing before this impending death that is not defined by publicity, but is rather a way in which Dasein stands before itself as in each instance in a manner that is individual, ownmost, and mine?¹⁷⁵

Heidegger’s answer confirms the link between resoluteness and the choosing of “wanting-to-have-a-conscience” as he establishes that the only “way” of Dasein’s coming into an authentic understanding of its existence is through “choosing responsibility for oneself.”

To have chosen to choose means to be resolved. Thus, running forward anticipatorily means choosing; to have chosen means to be resolved—not to die, but to live. This choosing and this being resolved is the choice of responsibility for itself that Dasein takes on, and consists in my making

1925, Nachschrift von Walter Bröcker)." *Dilthey-Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Geschichte der Geisteswissenschaften* 8. ([1925] 1992-93).. The English translation we have used was produced by Kisiel: Martin Heidegger. "Wilhelm Dilthey's Research and the Current Struggle for a Historical Worldview." trans. Theodore J. Kisiel. *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*. eds. Theodore J. Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, [1925] 2007).

¹⁷³ Heidegger. "Wilhelm Dilthey's Research and the Current Struggle for a Historical Worldview." p. 266.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 266.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 265. In German: “Gibt es eine eigentliche Weise der Möglichkeit dieses sich selbst Bevorstehens, die nicht durch die Öffentlichkeit bestimmt ist, sondern in der sich das Dasein als je einzelnes, eigenes und meiniges bevorsteht?” Heidegger. "Wilhelm Diltheys Forschungsarbeit und der gegenwärtige Kampf um eine historische Weltanschauung (10 Vorträge: Gehalten in Kassel vom 16.N.-21.N. 1925, Nachschrift von Walter Bröcker)." p. 168.

myself responsible through my action in each instance of my acting. Choosing responsibility for oneself means choosing one's conscience as a possibility that the human being properly and authentically is. Phenomenology's error (Scheler) lies in its misunderstanding of the properly anthropological structure of Kantian ethics. Kant saw that the basic sense of Dasein is possibility, i.e., to be possibility itself and to be able to seize it. But to choose conscience at once means to become guilty. "He who acts is always without conscience" (Goethe). Every action implies guilt. For the possibilities of action are limited in comparison to the demands of conscience, so that every action that is accomplished produces conflicts. To choose self-responsibility is thus to become guilty in an absolute sense. I am guilty, if I am at all, whenever I act.¹⁷⁶

While Heidegger does not expand on the distinction between his notion of conscience and "phenomenology's error" concerning the Kantian "ought," this critical comment in the Kassel lectures provides the first sign in Heidegger's work that Scheler represents a key figure in his ongoing—if still largely unexpressed—attempt to develop an original interpretation of conscience that successfully demonstrates "how" Dasein can come back to itself in anticipatory resoluteness. As we will see, the influence of Scheler—both directly and, perhaps even more impactfully, indirectly—will play a major role in

¹⁷⁶ Heidegger. "Wilhelm Dilthey's Research and the Current Struggle for a Historical Worldview." pp. 265-266. Note that we have removed all emphasis added to the translation that is not found in the *Dilthey-Jahrbuch* text. We have also modified the final lines of this translated citation, beginning with the quotation of Goethe. In the translation, the word "irresponsible" is added to the Goethean line, but this word appears neither in the text of Heidegger's lecture published in the *Dilthey-Jahrbuch* nor in the original text of Goethe's maxim. For comparison, here is Kisiel's translation of these final lines: "As Goethe once said, 'He who acts is always without conscience, irresponsible.' Every action is at once marked by guilt. For the possibilities of action are limited in comparison to the demands of conscience, so that every action that is successfully carried out produces conflicts. To choose self-responsibility is thus to become guilty in an absolute sense. Insofar as I truly am, I become guilty whenever I act at all." Here is the text as it appears in German in the *Dilthey-Jahrbuch*: "Die Wahl gewählt haben, besagt aber, entschlossen sein. Vorlaufen heißt also wählen, gewählt haben heißt entschlossen sein, – entschlossen nicht zum Sterben, sondern zum Leben. Dieses Wählen und dieses Entschlossensein ist die Wahl der Verantwortung, die das Dasein für sich selbst übernimmt, daß jedes Handeln so ist, daß ich mit der Handlung mich selbst verantwortlich mache. Die Verantwortung für sich selbst wählen heißt, das Gewissen wählen, als die Möglichkeit, die der Mensch eigentlich ist. Es ist ein Irrtum der Phänomenologie, daß sie die eigentlich anthropologische Struktur der Kantischen Ethik mißverstanden hat (Scheler). Kant hat gesehen, daß der Grundsinn des Daseins Möglichkeit ist, eine Möglichkeit selbst sein und ergreifen können. Das Gewissen wählen heißt aber zugleich schuldig werden. »Der Handelnde ist immer gewissenlos« (Goethe). Jede Handlung ist zugleich Schuld. Denn die Möglichkeiten der Handlung sind begrenzt gegenüber den Forderungen des Gewissens. So ergibt jede sich durchsetzende Handlung Konflikte. Wählen der Selbstverantwortung ist also Schuldig-werden in einem absoluten Sinne. Ich werde schuldig, sofern ich überhaupt bin, wenn ich überhaupt handle." Heidegger. "Wilhelm Diltheys Forschungsarbeit und der gegenwärtige Kampf um eine historische Weltanschauung (10 Vorträge: Gehalten in Kassel vom 16.N.-21.N. 1925, Nachschrift von Walter Bröcker)." pp. 168-169.

Heidegger's interpretive breakthrough regarding the existential "call of conscience" which will be proposed in *Being and Time*.

Conscience in Heidegger's 1925 Summer Semester Course at Marburg (*History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*)

The first indication of the pivotal methodological role that conscience will play in *Being and Time* comes in the concluding hours of Heidegger's course at the University of Marburg in the summer semester of 1925. Described by Kisiel as the "intermediate" draft of *Being and Time*, this course (published as volume 20 of the *Gesamtausgabe* under the title *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena to a Phenomenology of History and Nature*) begins to flesh out the method for approaching the question of Being through the investigation of Dasein and provides the basic outline of what will become the analysis of Dasein's equiprimordial phenomena in *Being and Time*'s Division One. Most importantly for our study of conscience, the course ends with its final two hours on July 30 and 31 being devoted to "the topics of death and conscience" where Heidegger went "beyond his prepared manuscript."¹⁷⁷

Heidegger's introduction of conscience at the very end of this course is striking because this phenomenon—never mentioned previously in Heidegger's lectures during the semester—is suddenly proposed as the key to accomplishing both the "task of the fundamental analysis of Dasein" and the "elaboration of the question of being itself."¹⁷⁸ In this final appearance of conscience in his work prior to *Being and Time*, Heidegger clearly establishes the fact that his embryonic concept of conscience is the only conduit that can lead Dasein back to the possibility of authentically experiencing time. Prior to unveiling the concept of conscience in this course, Heidegger presents a much more complete analysis of death as the phenomenon that reveals the wholeness of Dasein and culminates with the

¹⁷⁷ Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. p. 479. Kisiel reports that due to the extraneous nature of his talk about death and conscience at the end of this course, Heidegger was forced to rely on the notes taken by his student Simon Moser when the young professor wrote the sections of *Being and Time* devoted to these phenomena.

¹⁷⁸ GA 20, §32, 421 / 305.

problem of how this authentic wholeness—“*this constant and utmost possibility of myself (diese ständige, äußerste Möglichkeit meiner selbst)*”¹⁷⁹—can be experienced. In Heidegger’s hurried conclusion to this *Prolegomena* course, conscience is introduced as the methodological bridge between death and time, the latter of which is described as “the being in which Dasein can be its totality (*das Sein, in dem Dasein seine Ganzheit sein kann*).”¹⁸⁰ The “bridging” concept of conscience is vital for Heidegger’s developing existential schema because the authentic understanding of death is precisely what Dasein essentially tends to evade through its “absorption in...the public arena of Being-with-one-another...[where] death is an established everyday encounter.”¹⁸¹ Given that any genuine approach to the question of time requires that Dasein recognize that it is essentially “*sum moribundus*,” Heidegger’s project must secure a means of accessing Dasein’s authentic understanding of itself.¹⁸² In other words, any continued progress of Heidegger’s ontological project requires exhibiting the possibility of a return to one’s “*ownmost being (mein eigenstes Sein)*,” i.e. to what Heidegger calls the transparency of the fact that “I myself am this possibility, where death is my death.”¹⁸³

To be sure, Heidegger’s bluntly powerful description of conscience in the *Prolegomena* course lacks the refinement of the presentation in *Being and Time* where this phenomenon is explicitly assigned the methodological function of “attesting” the actual possibility of authentic disclosedness. In *Being and Time*, as we will see, conscience both completes the existential analytic by confirming Dasein’s totality as Being-towards-death and provides a way to access the question of temporality by summoning Dasein to the “situation” or authentic moment of resoluteness. Nevertheless, it is already clear in these closing paragraphs of the transcript of Heidegger’s final lecture during the summer of 1925 that the phenomenon of “willing to have a conscience (*Gewissenhabenwollen*)” provides

¹⁷⁹ GA 20, §34, 433 / 313.

¹⁸⁰ GA 20, §36, 441 / 319.

¹⁸¹ GA 20, §34, 435 / 315. In German: “In der Öffentlichkeit des Miteinanderseins ist der Tod ein festes alltägliches Begegnis.”

¹⁸² GA 20, §34, 437-438 / 317.

¹⁸³ GA 20, §34, 433 / 313. In German: “Diese Möglichkeit—der Tod als mein Tod—bin ich selbst.”

the exclusive means for Dasein to become aware of its “utmost possibility of death.”¹⁸⁴ In the very last lines of his analysis of death that lead into his comments on conscience, Heidegger notes that his project requires a way of overcoming Being-in-the-world’s essential characteristic of falling so that Dasein can be made accessible in its wholeness.

The utmost possibility of death as the being of Dasein, in which it is wholly by and of itself, has to be seized in Dasein itself. But insofar as Dasein is in everydayness, that means that it must be called back from this everydayness to the utmost possibility of the ‘I am.’ *Dasein’s running forward toward death at every moment means Dasein’s drawing back from the Everyone by way of a self-choosing.*¹⁸⁵

As this final lecture of July 31, 1925 draws to a close, Heidegger proposes a solution that enables Dasein to experience such an “authentic self-choosing (*Sich-selbst-wählen*)” so that it can seize the “indefiniteness of death (*Unbestimmtheit des Todes*)” as “a possibility for every moment (*als Möglichkeit für jeden Augenblick*).”¹⁸⁶

[In] 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*. ... [Insofar] as the issue in Dasein is to choose itself in understanding the full transparency of Dasein as a whole, there is only this one possibility of forerunning toward death, in order to choose Dasein not for the next two days but to choose it in its very being. *Forerunning is the choice of willing to have conscience.*¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ GA 20, §35, 441 / 319.

¹⁸⁵ GA 20, §34, 440 / 318. In German: “Die äußerste Möglichkeit des Todes als das Sein des Daseins, in der es ganz von ihm selbst her ist, soll im Dasein selbst ergriffen werden. Das besagt aber, sofern das Dasein in der Alltäglichkeit ist, daß es sich aus dieser Alltäglichkeit in die äußerste Möglichkeit des „Ich bin“ zurückholen muß. *Das Vorlaufen zum Tode in jedem Augenblick des Daseins bedeutet das Sich-zurückholen des Daseins aus dem Man im Sinne des Sich-selbst-wählens.*”

¹⁸⁶ GA 20, §35, 440 / 318.

¹⁸⁷ GA 20, §35, 440-441 / 319. In German: “Dasein kann in diesem Vorlaufen zu seinem Tode sich selbst verantwortlich in einem absoluten Sinne machen. Es „kann“ die *Seins-Voraussetzung seiner selbst*, nämlich *sich selbst wählen*. In dieser Wahl ist nichts anderes gewählt als das *Gewissenhabenwollen*. Diese Wahl muß sich allerdings nicht einzig in diesem Vorlaufen vollziehen. Das Gewissenhabenwollen kann sich auch sonst aktuiieren, aber sofern es im Dasein darauf ankommt, sich im Verstehen der vollen Durchsichtigkeit des Daseins als eines Ganzen zu wählen, besteht nur diese einzige Möglichkeit des Vorlaufens zum Tode, um das Dasein nicht für die nächsten zwei Tage, sondern in seinem Sein selbst zu wählen. *Das Vorlaufen ist die Wahl des Gewissenhabenwollens.*”

While Heidegger does not indicate its importance as clearly here as in *Being and Time*, the phenomenon of conscience is described in the *Prolegomena* course as Dasein's "only" means of achieving authentic understanding and accessing "the time which we ourselves are."¹⁸⁸ Heidegger notably insists that conscience reveals to Dasein that it has failed to remain transparent to itself and therefore is essentially "guilty." The phenomenon of conscience enables Dasein to break out of its absorption in "everydayness" by revealing the nullity of this public realm. Given Dasein's essential tendency to fall, however, the authentic state of "willing to have a conscience" is anything but permanent. Turning once again to Goethe, Heidegger remarks:

But he who acts, as Goethe already said, is always without conscience. ... As an active Being-with others, Dasein is *eo ipso* guilty, even when—and precisely when—it does not know that it is injuring another or destroying him in his Dasein. With the choice of willing to have conscience, I have at the same time chosen *to have become guilty*.¹⁸⁹

At this eleventh hour of his *Prolegomena* course, Heidegger springs from his remarks on conscience to his closing comments on time and Being. By disclosing both Dasein's guilt and its anticipatory possibilities, the act of "willing to have a conscience" reveals the authentic concept of time that defines existence in all its possible modes, authentic or inauthentic.

Being guilty...is the being of my ownmost *having been*. The being of having-been is the past, such that in such a being I am nothing but the *future* of Dasein and *with it its past*. The being, in which Dasein can be its wholeness authentically as being-ahead-of-itself, is *time*. Not "*time is*" but "*Dasein qua time temporalizes its being*." Time is not something which is found outside somewhere as a framework for world events. Time is even less something which whirs away inside in consciousness. It is rather that

¹⁸⁸ GA 20, §36, 442 / 320.

¹⁸⁹ GA 20, §35, 441 / 319. In contracting our excerpt, we have slightly modified Kisiel's translation. In German: "Der Handelnde ist gewissenlos, d. h. er wird im Miteinandersein notwendig „schuldig“ nicht in dem Sinne, daß er diesen oder jenen Fehltritt begeht, sondern als handelndes Mitsein mit Anderen und als solches ist das Dasein *eo ipso* schuldig, auch wenn es—und gerade dann—wenn es nicht weiß, daß es einen Anderen schädigt oder in seinem Dasein zerstört. Mit der Wahl des Gewissenhabenwollens habe ich zugleich das *Schuldiggewordensein* gewählt."

which makes possible the being-ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-involved-in, that is, which makes possible the being of care.¹⁹⁰

Reversing the traditional schema of existence structured by the “reality” of nature and its “categories,” the phenomenon of conscience reveals the absolute dependence of the spatio-temporal realm on the authentic historicity of Dasein as resolute Being-towards-death. Nature is to be understood according to the phenomenological understanding of time as experienced by Dasein, not *vice versa*. As Heidegger states in the last words of his course: “The movements of nature which we define spatio-temporally...are encountered ‘in’ the time which we ourselves are („in“ *die Zeit, die wir selbst sind*).”¹⁹¹ With regard to the key role that Heidegger assigns to conscience, this recognition that “we ourselves are” time is possible only on the basis of our willing to be self-responsible and aware of our essential guilt.

Heidegger’s Conscience Prior to *Being and Time*: Choosing Resoluteness Without Being Called

Before considering how Heidegger’s conscience “suddenly” appears in a much more developed form in *Being and Time*, let us close our review of these earlier appearances of the concept with a remarkable observation: prior to Heidegger’s completion of the manuscript of *Being and Time*, conscience is never once described as a “call” or explicitly related to the act of “calling.” Virtually every time Heidegger refers to conscience before *Being and Time*, the phenomenon is related to the force of one’s “will,” i.e. it is associated with some kind of judgment-like choosing. To describe his concept, Heidegger appears trapped in the vocabulary of the volitional ego: conscience is expressed in terms of the self’s willing, wanting, choosing, remembering, making transparent and

¹⁹⁰ GA 20, §36, 441-442 / 319-320. In German: “Das Schuldigsein, das darin mitgesetzt ist, ist das Sein des eigensten *Gewesenseins*. Das Sein des *Gewesenseins* ist Vergangenheit, so zwar, daß ich in einem solchen Sein selbst und nichts anderes als die *Zukunft* des Daseins bin *und damit seine Vergangenheit*. Das Sein, in dem Dasein seine Gänze eigentlich sein kann als Sich-vorweg-sein, ist die *Zeit*. *Nicht: Zeit ist, sondern: Dasein zeitigt qua Zeit sein Sein*. Zeit ist nichts, was draußen irgendwo vorkommt als Rahmen für Welbegebnisse; Zeit ist ebensowendig etwas, was drinnen im Bewußtsein irgendwo abschnurrt, sondern sie ist das, was das Sich-vorweg-sein-im-schon-sein-bei, d. h. was das Sein der Sorge möglich macht.”

¹⁹¹ GA 20, §36, 442 / 320.

repeating the “moment of resolution.” Even though Heidegger states his intention to overthrow the traditional *conscientia* as the basis of philosophical certainty and consciousness, his attempts to describe the existential concept of conscience prior to *Being and Time* seem stifled by the Scholastic heritage that regards conscience principally as a psychological object. Lacking the radicality of his existential call in *Being and Time*, Heidegger’s earlier interpretations of conscience continue to confine the phenomenon to its “traditional” role as a faculty or habit of the willful subject.

Upon the conclusion of the summer semester of 1925, Heidegger reportedly left Marburg and headed to “his modest mountain hut in Todtnauberg” to write; during that month of August, Heidegger worked continuously on what he then referred to as his “Time” article, a text which was mushrooming out of his unpublished 1924 essay on the published correspondence between Dilthey and Yorck.¹⁹² On August 24, 1925, Heidegger wrote from Todtnauberg to his student Löwith: “Thank you for your [postcard]. It came across my ‘writing desk’ just as I was bringing the chapter on death in my ‘Time’ to ‘termination.’”¹⁹³ At that moment, Heidegger would have found himself facing the problem of how to more satisfactorily express his primordial idea of conscience. By this point, the young professor had established that conscience represented a crucial concept for his ontological project but his insights regarding this phenomenon remained crude and incomplete, as revealed by the rough sketch he proposed in his final lecture of the summer semester at Marburg. Yet without a coherent interpretation of conscience, his ontological project was evidently unviable: Heidegger needed a way to justifiably explain how Dasein could come back to a transparent understanding of its authentic possibilities. Without a solution to this problem, the question of Being would remain essentially blocked off.

When he introduces the phenomenon of conscience in *Being and Time* less than two years later, the emphasis and the language used are vastly different than what Heidegger had sketched out previously:

¹⁹² Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. p. 480.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 480.

If we analyze conscience more penetratingly, it is revealed as a *call* (*Ruf*). Calling is a mode of *discourse*. The call of conscience has the character of an *appeal* to Dasein by calling it to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-itself; and this is done by way of summoning it to its ownmost Being-guilty. (*Der Gewissensruf hat den Charakter des Anrufs des Daseins auf sein eigenstes Selbstseinkönnen und das in der Weise des Aufrufs zum eigensten Schuldigsein.*)¹⁹⁴

As Kisiel observes:

Only in *Being and Time* does conscience receive its functional sense of ‘call’ to absolute responsibility in the only thoroughgoing development of [the] basic triad [of conscience-guilt-resolve].¹⁹⁵

While our chronological review of his texts has revealed Heidegger’s growing attentiveness to conscience, there is nothing that presages the importance of this concept—and its significant development as a “call”—that will be found in *Being and Time*. Where did this idea of the “call” come from? How did Heidegger come to “hear” conscience as a “call”?

¹⁹⁴ SZ §54, 269 / 314.

¹⁹⁵ Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. p. 498.

2. The Impact of Stoker's *Das Gewissen* (1925) on Heidegger's Interpretation of Conscience

On September 30, 1925, the Friedrich Cohen publishing house of Bonn stamped its copyright on the text of a doctoral dissertation by one of Max Scheler's students, a young South African named Hendrik Gerhardus Stoker.¹⁹⁶ Although our study has not been able to establish precisely when Heidegger put his hands on this work or when he began writing his significantly expanded and altered interpretation of conscience after the conclusion of his *Prolegomena* course at Marburg,¹⁹⁷ the publication of *Das Gewissen* marks a major—yet widely ignored—moment for the development of what would become *Being and Time*. With the appearance of Stoker's work, Heidegger was suddenly supplied with the first-ever “phenomenological” study of the experience of conscience: a detailed 280-page investigation complete with a “quasi-surgical (*gleichsam chirurgische*)”¹⁹⁸ historical review of the concept that explains how the phenomenon became obscured by artificial “theories” and “abstract thinking.”¹⁹⁹ At this key moment in the development of *Being and Time*, Heidegger fortuitously found himself furnished by Stoker with a propædeutic guide to the phenomenon of conscience specifically aimed at clearing up the ambiguity produced by centuries of theoretical philosophizing in order to retrieve the “true” essence of the experience of conscience. Despite the fact that Heidegger will complain that Stoker's “phenomenological” approach to conscience remains insufficiently radical,²⁰⁰ the investigation proposed in *Das Gewissen* nonetheless provided the German thinker with key

¹⁹⁶ *Catalog of Copyright Entries. For the Year 1926. Part 1: Books (Group 1)*. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Copyright Office, 1927). p. 334. According to the entry of the U.S. Copyright Office concerning Stoker's book, the date of copyright by Friedrich Cohen is September 30, 1925. The book was received by the Library of Congress on February 2, 1926.

¹⁹⁷ While we have not been able to pinpoint the exact dates of these events, we have established that Heidegger both read *Das Gewissen* and completed the first manuscript version of his interpretation of conscience in the period between September 1925 and April 1926.

¹⁹⁸ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 3.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 3.

²⁰⁰ SZ §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496).

insights that facilitated his interpretation of conscience as the complex phenomenon which attests to Dasein's possibility of authentic existence through its reciprocal acts of calling itself and wanting to hear this call.

In addition to the explicit comments on Stoker found in Heidegger's footnote to §55 of *Being and Time*,²⁰¹ the influence of *Das Gewissen* on the Heideggerian interpretation of conscience can be detected in the methodological approach deployed in order to investigate Dasein's existential phenomena. When we examine the contrast between Heidegger's earlier descriptions of conscience and what appears in *Being and Time*, we find—as we will establish below—evident signs that Heidegger's more elaborate interpretation of conscience benefited from Stoker's prior experimentation with a phenomenological approach to the concept. There can be no doubt that Stoker's study represented something very new for the phenomenological movement: Stoker himself admits to having been surprised that he was “forced” to completely alter the course of his project in mid-stream after he realized that an “intellectualistic and relativistic” approach to conscience was inappropriate and that an alternative method was required for the examination of this peculiar phenomenon.²⁰² Explaining the methodological problem he faced, Stoker describes the need to transgress the conventional limits of “strictly formal research” and to produce both a “detailed phenomenological study” and “a historical-critical study” in order to access the “core” of conscience.²⁰³ In this sense, the approach adopted by Stoker in his innovative study of conscience closely resembles Heidegger's “destructive” method in *Being and Time* and provides a model for how conscience can be examined phenomenologically. Moreover, the Stokerian study winds up demonstrating how the phenomenon of conscience can be understood as the very basis of a person's existence—a demonstration that we also find in the Heideggerian interpretation of Dasein's existential conscience in *Being and Time*.

²⁰¹ SZ §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496).

²⁰² Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. XII.

²⁰³ *Ibid.* p. XII.

Remarkably, Stoker's book is the only source that Heidegger acknowledges in *Being and Time* as even having anything in common with his own interpretation of conscience. Although Heidegger provides a list of secondary readings on conscience in his footnote to page 272 in the second chapter of Division Two, Stoker's work is the sole reference that he explicitly recognizes as having influenced his own interpretation of the phenomenon.²⁰⁴ In typically Heideggerian fashion, his acknowledgement of the great merit of Stoker's investigation is outweighed by his criticism of this work and his final determination that *Das Gewissen* lacks the required radicality of his own approach. But whatever the limitations of Stoker's theologically inspired approach to phenomenology, *Das Gewissen* provides our investigation of conscience in *Being and Time* with direct evidence of how and maybe why Heidegger came to interpret the much disputed notion of conscience as the attesting "source" in his existential analysis of Dasein. Indeed, Stoker's work furnishes us—as it did Heidegger—with a comprehensive historical review of the evolving sense of conscience from the dawn of Christianity to the 20th century (a review which covers each and every one of the sources mentioned in Heidegger's analysis of conscience in *Being and Time*, as well as dozens of others) and it contributes to explaining how Heidegger came to propose his "radical" interpretation of the phenomenon. Given the phenomenological orientation of Stoker's work, *Das Gewissen* discloses remarkable clues that help us to establish the importance of Heidegger's understanding of conscience for the development and deployment of his own innovative "method" of phenomenology in *Being and Time*.

Furthermore—and arguably most importantly for our investigation—our examination of Stoker's work reveals that the most vital concept in *Das Gewissen* is utterly absent from *Being and Time*: nowhere in Heidegger's work do we find any mention of *synteresis*, a fundamental concept of Western moral philosophy which plays a role in virtually all Christian theories of conscience that have been proposed since the Middle Ages. In *Das Gewissen*, Stoker concludes that *synteresis*—described as the "spark" placed in the soul by God that allows one to distinguish good from evil—is more important for a

²⁰⁴ SZ §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496).

phenomenological understanding of conscience than the Scholastic idea of *conscientia*. Yet remarkably, despite the importance of *synteresis* for Stoker's phenomenological study and for the historical development of conscience as a philosophical concept, Heidegger never even alludes to *synteresis* in his analysis of conscience in *Being and Time* (nor does he do so in any of his other philosophical texts). This neglect of *synteresis* by Heidegger is even more confounding given his theological roots and his great interest in the Scholastic period, the historical era in which the concept of *synteresis* emerged as one of the central topics of theology and morality. Indeed, the modern understanding of conscience as a faculty of the human mind arose out of the Scholastic debate regarding the interaction of human *conscientia* and divine *synteresis*, the latter being described by many medieval commentators as the exclusive source of absolute certainty concerning good and evil. As we will see, one of the clearest examples of Stoker's influence on *Being and Time* is seen in the way that Heidegger was able to extract his existential concept of conscience without first conducting an extensive historical review of conscience of his own. With his detailed—if quite condensed—account of the evolution of conscience theories since the days of ancient Greece, Stoker had adequately completed this task for Heidegger, allowing the German thinker to avoid even mentioning the key concept of *synteresis* in *Being and Time*.

Given that it is the only indication that Heidegger provides in *Being and Time* concerning the sources for his interpretation of conscience, let us immediately review Heidegger's footnote to §55 where he ranks Stoker's 1925 study as the most pertinent of the various "interpretations of conscience" that have been proposed up to that point:

Besides the interpretations of conscience which we find in Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, one should notice M. Kähler's *Das Gewissen, erster geschichtlicher Teil* (1878) and his article in the *Realenzyklopädie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche*. See too A. Ritschl's 'Über das Gewissen' (1876), reprinted in his *Gesammelte Aufsätze, Neue Folge* (1896), pp. 177 ff. See finally H. G. Stoker's monograph, *Das Gewissen*, which has recently appeared in *Schriften zur Philosophie und Soziologie*, vol. II (1925), under the editorship of Max Scheler. This is a wide-ranging investigation; it brings to light a rich multiplicity of conscience-phenomena, characterizes critically the different possible ways of treating this phenomenon itself, and

lists some further literature, though as regard the history of the concept of conscience, this list is not complete. Stoker's monograph differs from the existential interpretation we have given above in its approach and accordingly in its results as well, regardless of many points of agreement. Stoker underestimates from the outset the hermeneutical conditions for a 'description' of 'conscience as something which subsists objectively and actually' (p. 3). This leads to blurring the boundaries between phenomenology and theology, with damage to both. As regard the anthropological foundation of this investigation, in which the personalism of Scheler has been taken over, cf. Section 10 of the present treatise, H. 47 ff. All the same, Stoker's monograph signifies notable progress as compared with previous interpretations of conscience, though more by its comprehensive treatment of the conscience-phenomena and their ramifications than by exhibiting the ontological roots of the phenomenon itself.²⁰⁵

As is evident from Heidegger's acknowledgement in this footnote, Stoker's unique phenomenological study of conscience provided the author of *Being and Time* with the richest insights with regard to his own existential analysis of Dasein. As Heidegger observes, Stoker's approach to conscience is exceptionally broad in scope: the investigation of *Das Gewissen* attempts to explore a wide range of ways in which the *experience* of conscience has been described, as opposed to identifying a set of "authoritative" moral theories and then attempting to determine which one of these selected "metaphysical systems" best accounts for the phenomenon of moral conscience. In seeking to avoid the

²⁰⁵ SZ §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496). In German: "Außer den Gewissensinterpretationen von *Kant*, *Hegel*, *Schopenhauer* und *Nietzsche* sind zu beachten: *M. Kähler*, *Das Gewissen*, erster geschichtlicher Teil 1878, und der Artikel desselben Verfassers in der *Realenzyklopädie f. prot. Theologie und Kirche*. Ferner: *A. Ritschl*, *Über das Gewissen*, 1876, wieder abgedruckt in den *Gesammelten Aufsätzen*. Neue Folge 1896, S. 177 ff. Und schließlich die eben erschienene Monographie von *H. G. Stoker*, *Das Gewissen* (Schriften zur Philosophie und Sociologie, herausg. von *Max Scheler*. Bd. II.) 1925. Die breit angelegte Untersuchung stellt eine reich Mannigfaltigkeit von Gewissensphänomenen ans Licht, charakterisiert kritisch die verschiedenen möglichen Behandlungsarten des Phänomens und verzeichnet weitere Literatur, die bezüglich der Geschichte des Gewissensbegriffes nicht vollständig ist. Von der obigen existenzialen Interpretation unterscheidet sich *St.s.* Monographie schon im Ansatz und damit auch in den Ergebnissen, ungeachtet mancher Übereinstimmungen. *St.* unterschätzt von vornherein die hermeneutischen Bedingungen für eine „Beschreibung“ des „objektiv wirklich bestehenden Gewissens“ S. 3. Damit geht die Verwischung der Grenzen zwischen Phänomenologie und Theologie—zum Schaden beider—zusammen. Bezüglich des anthropologischen Fundaments der Untersuchung, die *Scheler's* Personalismus übernimmt, vgl. die vorliegende Abhandlung §10, S. 47 ff. Die Monographie *St.s.*, bedeutet gleichwohl einen beachtenswerten Fortschritt gegenüber der bisherigen Gewissensinterpretation, aber mehr durch die umfassende Behandlung der Gewissensphänomene und ihrer Verzweigungen als durch die Aufweisung der ontologischen Wurzeln des Phänomens."

constraints of any single pre-determined theological or ethical perspective, Stoker aims with his pioneering study to disclose a phenomenological understanding of conscience that is free from historical distortion: his goal is to identify the *necessary* conditions and structures underlying all moral experience.

Ironically, it is Heidegger's criticism of the incompleteness of Stoker's analyses of earlier theories of conscience that highlights the dependence of *Being and Time* on the historical review found in *Das Gewissen*. Every single one of the other sources mentioned by Heidegger in his interpretation of conscience are considered explicitly—and in much greater depth—in the course of Stoker's study. Furthermore, all of these other sources fall into the category of what Heidegger calls “naïve” or “ordinary” interpretations of conscience since they treat conscience primarily as an object that can be scientifically investigated and placed into a theological or philosophical system. Standing apart from all the other sources mentioned by Heidegger, Stoker alone attempts to approach conscience first by eliminating the ambiguity caused by theoretical speculation and then by seeking to retrieve the original phenomenon that has been lost.²⁰⁶

2.1. Evidence of Stoker's Influence on *Being and Time*

The importance of Stoker's *Das Gewissen* for the development of the Heideggerian concept of conscience can be seen in three specific ways that contribute to shaping the structure, methodology and content of *Being and Time*. First of all, Heidegger appears to rely on the “destructive” historical review provided in *Das Gewissen* to reject virtually all the previous theories of conscience that have been proposed by philosophers, theologians and scientists throughout history. In this sense, Stoker's review of conscience theories has already done the heavy lifting to clear the way for Heidegger's innovative—and

²⁰⁶ For example, Stoker incorporates the theological work of both Kähler and Ritschl in his investigation of the “moral conscience” but avoids adopting their shared presupposition that any “authoritative” understanding of conscience must necessarily be validated by religious—and specifically Christian—texts, e.g. the Pauline epistles.

unprecedented—interpretation of conscience that is radically liberated from any moral considerations. Secondly, Stoker supplies Heidegger with a novel approach to investigating conscience that seeks to liberate the phenomenon from the theoretical speculation that has marked its history. While less hostile to modern science—particularly psychology—than Heidegger with his radical ontological investigation, Stoker provides the young German thinker with a methodological prototype that aims to determine the essential conditions of the “how” of the conscience experience—conditions that will also apply to any attempt to understand the “how” of Dasein’s disclosedness. Thirdly, Stoker’s recovery of the Christian notion of *synteresis* can be seen to help explain how Heidegger’s concept suddenly emerges as the “call of conscience” in *Being and Time*. Despite Heidegger’s silence concerning *synteresis*, the significant development of the Heideggerian conscience as the “call [that] comes *from me* and yet *from beyond me and over me*” reflects a response to Stoker’s basic insights with regard to the essential relation between the self and the absolute light of God’s spirit that illuminates the human soul.²⁰⁷

Stoker’s “Accidental” Adoption of the Phenomenological Method

While Stoker does report that the “psychological” understanding of conscience is “unfortunately...usually subordinated to the philosophical” one, he doesn’t advocate the adoption of any specific point of view of conscience as the correct way to understand the phenomenon.²⁰⁸ Rather, Stoker states in his preface that his investigation led him to realize the wrong-headedness of proceeding with a study of conscience based on a pre-established hypothesis in the spirit of traditional science:

At first it was my view that the intellectualistic or relativistic view of conscience was the right one, but I found [in conducting the research] that I was forced to pursue a detailed, phenomenological study of the phenomenon of conscience followed by a historical-critical study of theories of conscience in order to understand the deepest emotional core of conscience. My further research showed that a strictly formal approach, through which the conscience has usually been determined, for example as an act of reason,

²⁰⁷ SZ §57, 275 / 320.

²⁰⁸ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. xii.

intuition, judgment, impulse, will, urge and the like, cannot grasp the conscience phenomenon in its deepest sense and understand it in its unity and uniqueness.²⁰⁹

While Heidegger justifiably distinguishes his phenomenological approach from that espoused by Stoker, the author of *Being and Time* nonetheless acknowledges the originality of the latter's comprehensive assessment of conscience based on how the phenomenon has appeared in the light of a "rich multiplicity" of historical perspectives. Stoker's approach opens up the study of conscience to an analysis of the conditions required for any possible experience of the phenomenon, i.e. it opens the door to the existential analysis of conscience proposed by Heidegger. As Stoker writes:

After all the history-bound, relative and random conditions were peeled off, the core of conscience appeared as a supra-biological fact... One cannot see more clearly that the conscience is embedded in and thus representative of the concrete fullness of life.²¹⁰

Stoker thus aims to protect his approach from being dominated by a "specific" interpretation of conscience so that he can seek out "conscience as a genuine and unique group of symptoms in its true depth."²¹¹ For Stoker, this attempt at a phenomenological interpretation requires rejecting the authority of "religious conscience" or of any moral ideology: only after clearing away all distortions of dogma can one proceed to search for "substantive material" proof of the phenomenon "using only objective, rational facts...[regarding where, when and how] the conscience stirs."²¹²

²⁰⁹ Ibid. pp. xii-xiii. In German: "Anfangs war es meine Ansicht, daß die intellektualistische und relativistische Auffassung des Gewissens die richtige war, ich fand mich aber nach eingehender, phänomenologischer Forschung der Gewissenserscheinungen und nach einer historisch-kritischen Untersuchung der Gewissenstheorien genötigt, den tiefsten Gewissenskern emotionell zu verstehen. Noch weitere Untersuchungen ergaben, daß die Gewissenserscheinungen in ihrem tiefsten Sinn, in ihrer Einheit und Eigenart primär nicht von der formellen Seite her verstanden werden können, wie man gewöhnlich das Gewissen zu bestimmen versucht, wenn man z. B. das Gewissen als Akt der Vernunft, Intuition, Urteil, Trieb, Wille, Gefühl oder dergl. erfaßt haben will."

²¹⁰ Ibid. p. xiii. In German: "Der Kern des Gewissens ergab sich, nachdem alle zeitlichen, relativen und zufälligen Bedingungen abgeschält waren, als ein über-biologisches Faktum... Man kann das Gewissen nicht genug in der konkreten Fülle des Lebens eingebettet und damit verkörpert sehen."

²¹¹ Ibid. p. xiii.

²¹² Ibid. p. xiii.

As Scheler comments in the “Editor’s Foreword” to *Das Gewissen*, Stoker’s work represents a high point for the philosophical analysis of conscience because it avoids the “unilateralism” of great ethical systems and novel psychological interpretations (e.g., Nietzsche and Freud) while not dismissing any of these sources. Indeed, Scheler’s only major complaint—expressed in very direct terms in his brief comments—is that Stoker concludes by advocating a religiously-oriented interpretation and doesn’t incorporate an even broader range of insights regarding conscience, notably the latest results of work in the fields of developmental psychology and sociology. Despite his reservations, Scheler praises Stoker for recognizing that conscience is “surrounded on all sides” by “the psychological, the onto- and phylogenetical, the metaphysical and religious-philosophical...even the patho-psychological...”²¹³ In Scheler’s eyes, Stoker breaks through the historical ambiguity concerning the phenomenon and “distinguishes the most basic elements of experience” from “all arbitrary rational interpretations” of conscience; Scheler ultimately congratulates his student for having successfully exposed the “vital nerve center (*Lebensnerv*)” of conscience.²¹⁴

In his criticism of Stoker in the footnote to §55, Heidegger takes aim as much at Scheler as at the young author of *Das Gewissen* himself for failing to consider that the ontological question must lead any proper phenomenological investigation. By proceeding immediately “with the objective reality of the experienced ‘conscience’ as a starting point (*die objective Wirklichkeit, das wirklich erlebte „Gewissen“ als Ausgangspunkt zu nehmen*),” Stoker would betray his insensitivity to the radical question of the “ontological roots” of conscience—the question upon which the very possibility of Dasein coming into

²¹³ Ibid. pp. ix-x. Cited from the lines of Scheler’s “Foreword” which in German read: “Verglichen mit dem Bestande streng wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten, die wir in deutscher Sprache über das Gewissen, seinen Ursprung und Geltungswert besitzen (der Verfasser führt sie fast vollständig auf und wägt ihren Wert ab), ist des Verfassers Untersuchung nicht nur die analytisch tiefdringendste, sondern auch die allseitigste, und was die kritische Verwertung alter, neuer und neuester Literatur betrifft auch vollständigste Arbeit, die wir über den schon wie der Verfasser eingehend zeigt sprachlich so vieldeutigen und schwer abgrenzbaren Tatbestand der „Gewissens“-phänomene besitzen. Die allseitigste nenne ich sie, da sie das Problem gleichzeitig sprach-psychologisch, Wesens- und deskriptivphänomenologisch, onto- und phylogenetisch, metaphysisch und religions-philosophisch von allen Seiten her gleichsam umringt, auch die tief-psychologische und entwicklungs-psychologische, ferner die patho-psychologische Seite der Sache zwar keineswegs erschöpft, aber doch in höchst wertvoller Weise fördert.”

²¹⁴ Ibid. p. x.

disclosedness ultimately depends.²¹⁵ Heidegger feels that Stoker falls into a “values-based” understanding of existence due to the influence of Scheler’s personalistic value-ethics and that, as a result, the Stokerian interpretation of conscience fails to question the fundamental conditions for any possible experiencing of conscience in the first place.²¹⁶ Unattuned to the ontological questions that drive Heidegger, Stoker is primarily concerned with overcoming the limitations of religious doctrine in his research of conscience: the very decision to step beyond the domain of theology was already a radical step for Stoker, as can be seen in his “defense” of the choice to consider conscience as a moral phenomenon rather than as a religious one:

While it may seem that the “religious conscience” perhaps conveys the “more subtle,” “more sensitive,” “purer,” “deeper,” or “more appropriate” sense in terms of the nature of conscience, this work focuses mainly on the so-called “moral conscience” because what is most difficult is to distinguish the conscience as a moral phenomenon from other moral phenomena. Only

²¹⁵ Ibid. p. 3.

²¹⁶ It is worth noting that Stoker appears to be caught in the crossfire between Heidegger and Scheler with regard to their “rival” phenomenological approaches, notwithstanding the considerable amount of praise he receives from both German thinkers. On one side, Heidegger raps Stoker for faithfully replicating Scheler’s personalism and for, despite his stated intentions, allowing conscience to remain under the yoke of theological interpretation (because he fails to establish the radical priority of the ontological question). On the other side, Scheler in his “Editor’s Foreword” criticizes how Stoker assesses Scheler’s own writings on the concept of conscience. Scheler insists that his attempt to establish a material value-ethics is more “scientific” than his student seems to believe. Indeed, Scheler implies that his South African student, having been raised within “the religious and cultural life circle of Dutch-Afrikaner Calvinism,” remains overly sympathetic to theological interpretations of conscience and underestimates vital “social...[and] evolutionary factors.” Ibid. p. xi. In German: “Die Herkunft des Verfassers aus dem religiösen und kulturellen Lebenskreis des holländisch-burischen Calvinismus prädisponierte ohne Zweifel den Verfasser in hohem Maße für die Untersuchung einer inneren und individuellen Lebensmacht, die kaum je in der Welt in solcher Reinheit, Strenge, Kraft und Tiefe empfunden worden ist als in den besten Zeiten jenes religiös-christlichen Heroismus, den die Religionsgeschichte an den Namen Calvins knüpft. Eine diskrete Färbung dieser Art und Form eines ebenso herben und souveränen, als in den inneren individuellen Mächten des Gemütes fast ausschließlich gottgebundenen Lebens- und Weltgefühls liegt auch über den Untersuchungen des Verfassers. Wie immer man wertend stehe zu diesem gewaltigen historischen Lebenskreise - für eine Untersuchung der Gewissensphänomene ist er sicherlich eine günstige Disposition. Freilich ist in ebenderselben Tatsache vielleicht auch mancherlei Grenze gegründet, die der Untersuchung des Verfassers nach der Überzeugung des Herausgebers zukommt. Trotz seiner streng wissenschaftlichen Haltung unterschätzt der Verfasser unseres Erachtens ebensosehr den sozialen als den evolutiven Faktor, der dem Gewissen - auch wenn man von dem Inhalt und objektiven Wert seiner sog. „Aussagen“ absieht - zukommt; er überschätzt ebendamit vielleicht auch die Konstanz und die Eindeutigkeit seiner geschichtlichen Erscheinung und würdigt jene Gruppe von moralischen Gefühls - und Wertblinden nicht genügend, denen das Gewissen wirklich und ernsthaft vollständig zu fehlen scheint.”

this definition can give us the conscience in its peculiar and unique character.²¹⁷

For Heidegger, conscience remains a groundless object at the conclusion of Stoker's study despite its many merits precisely because the author equates "objective reality" with "truth" that can be obtained by simply "looking to what is offered in the phenomenon itself."²¹⁸ The assumption that the essence of conscience can be extracted through some "pure" mode of observation and description only perpetuates the historical neglect of the question of Being that Heidegger wishes to correct.

Stoker's "Quasi-Surgical" Investigation of Conscience

Despite his reservations regarding *Das Gewissen*, Heidegger relies heavily on the groundwork accomplished by Stoker in his investigation—benefiting from what the South African describes as the "quasi-surgical work" that must be done to "slice through the ambiguity and confusion" that has transformed conscience into a semantic "labyrinth" (*Vieldeutigkeitslabyrinth*).²¹⁹ Unwittingly anticipating the importance of his study for Heidegger's project, Stoker notes that it is only at the conclusion of this preliminary work that the "problem [of proposing an interpretation of the phenomenon of conscience can] even be advanced."²²⁰ While Stoker's objectives and methods for phenomenologically investigating conscience in *Das Gewissen* are certainly different from Heidegger's in *Being and Time*, both thinkers approach conscience out of a common concern for the genuinely historical and both identify this phenomenon in their respective works as the "source" that provides the access required in order to raise fundamental philosophical questions

²¹⁷ Ibid. p. xii. In German: "Obwohl das „religiöse Gewissen“ vielleicht eine „zartere“, „feingefühligere“, „reinere“, „den tieferen Sinnbedingungen des Wesens des Gewissens mehr entsprechendere“ Erscheinung sein könnte, hat diese Arbeit sich hauptsächlich dem sog. „moralischen Gewissen“ zugewandt, weil es eben am schwierigsten ist, das Gewissen als moralisch es Phänomen von den übrigen moralischen Erscheinungen zu unterscheiden; erst diese Abgrenzung kann uns das Gewissen in seinem eigenartigen und einzigartigen Charakter geben."

²¹⁸ Ibid. p. 3.

²¹⁹ Ibid. p. 3. In German: "Vorher muß leider eine gleichsam chirurgische Arbeit geschehen. Das Wort und der Begriff „Gewissen“ ist durch so große Vieldeutigkeit und Verworrenheit belastet, das geschnitten werden muß. Vieles, was gewöhnlich unter „Gewissen“ verstanden wird, hat nichts damit zu tun."

²²⁰ Ibid. p. 3. In German: "Dann kann zum Problem selbst fortgeschritten werden."

concerning existence itself. While Stoker believes that conscience can reveal how all human experience is necessarily shaped by moral understanding, Heidegger holds that conscience—understood as a “pre-moral” existential phenomenon—is the primordial “source” of disclosedness upon which all experience depends. Rather than rejecting conscience due to its ambiguity as a historical concept, both Stoker and Heidegger share the conviction that this great confusion betrays the fact that something vital about this phenomenon is being hidden from view. As Heidegger notes, “all this might only mislead us into dismissing this phenomenon if the very ‘doubtfulness’ of this fact—or of the way in which it has been interpreted—did not *prove* that here a *primordial* phenomenon of Dasein lies before us.”²²¹ Heidegger’s words echo the sentiment expressed by Stoker who decries the way conscience has been commonly dismissed as an object of scientific study due to the ambiguity surrounding the concept. As Stoker writes:

Conscience is neither a common nor superficial phenomenon. Rather, it touches the deepest core of our person... It is not a vague, incomprehensible, unperceived or mystical experience, but rather a concrete, individual, intense, strong and clear phenomenon that presents itself to us.²²²

Stoker’s phenomenological project is specifically motivated by his desire to salvage the experience of conscience from the ambiguity that has resulted from its misunderstanding—especially in its forms of the “guilty” or regretful conscience—by philosophical and theological theorists promoting speculative doctrines.

For Stoker, the key to achieving semantic clarity is to constantly keep in mind that “the ‘essence,’ the ‘shape,’ the ‘complex unity,’ the ‘structural unity’” of the phenomenon must “be examined as a ‘whole’ (*als „Ganzheit“ untersucht werden müssen*).”²²³ In this regard, Stoker claims his study is aligned with the work done by a wide range of progressive psychological and phenomenological researchers, among whom he names

²²¹ SZ §54, 268 / 313.

²²² Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. pp. 1-2. In German: “Es ist kein alltägliches Phänomen, kein oberflächliches, es berührt den tiefsten Kern unserer Person... Es ist kein vages, unbemerkbares oder mystisch unfaßbares Erlebnis, nein, konkret, individuell, persönlich, intensiv, kräftig und deutlich regt sich dieses Phänomen in uns.”

²²³ *Ibid.* p. 2.

Wertheiners, Kohler, Koffka, Freud, McDougall, Scheler, Buytendijcks and Pfänder.²²⁴ By keeping the focus on conscience as a “whole” phenomenon, Stoker confidently believes that the historical deterioration of the concept can be reversed. At any event, he rejects the argument that conscience should be eliminated from scientific discourse because its signification has become too ambiguous or complex; if the phenomenon’s meaning has become unclear due to the accumulation of misconceived theories, Stoker demands that science correct this travesty rather than turn away from the problem, especially given the urgent need in war-ravaged Europe for improved ways of treating the “conscience-plagued (*Gewissensgeplagten*)” who suffer from “overwhelming” if “enigmatic” mental anguish and pain.²²⁵

In taking up Stoker’s study, Heidegger commits himself to employing the same initial strategy as that proposed by the South African scholar when it comes to conscience: the solution to this enigma requires a demonstration of how this phenomenon can be experienced in its “wholeness.” To achieve this objective, the ambiguity caused by theoretical manipulation and linguistic abuse must be revealed and “cut away” so as to obtain a proper understanding of the phenomenon. While he critiques Stoker’s naïveté in assuming that the “personal experience” of moral conscience can provide direct access to the phenomenon, Heidegger nonetheless adopts a similar strategy as he seeks the attestation of Dasein’s authentic wholeness: both Heidegger and Stoker share the conviction that the “core” of conscience can be accessed by retrieving the experience of the “whole” phenomenon. Common to both their approaches is the belief that a properly “phenomenological” study can expose the confused and contradictory notions of conscience that abound both in “everyday” language and in the vocabularies of various theoretical domains; once this task is accomplished, the revealed “wholeness” of conscience will become accessible to study.

As Heidegger makes clear in his brief remarks on Stoker’s work, he considers this phenomenological task to be much more complex and radically “existential” than what

²²⁴ Ibid. p. 2.

²²⁵ Ibid. p. 1.

Stoker proposes in *Das Gewissen*'s investigation of "moral conscience." Heidegger contends that Stoker—by leaving fundamentally unquestioned the validity of "direct" experience—simply takes up Scheler's theories concerning ethical values and then investigates conscience on this basis. Heidegger thus believes that Stoker remains trapped in the ontological tradition, even if his rigorous study indeed surpasses all previous attempts to interpret conscience "theoretically" or "thematically." In pursuing the "wholeness" of conscience, Heidegger seeks primarily to find evidence for the "possibility" of existence rather than a confirmation of the characteristics of conscience as an essentially moral experience. Through a proper interpretation of conscience's "overwhelming" and "inescapable" nature, Heidegger sees a way to build on Stoker's initial insights in order to show how Dasein can be retrieved from its dispersal in material concerns and grasped as an authentic whole. This possibility of retrieving the "whole" of Dasein promises to ground the ontological project by establishing the experience of conscience as the phenomenon that provides access to—and the necessary attestation of—the existential structures of Being-in-the-world. In Heidegger's recuperation of the phenomenological investigation initiated by Stoker, the fundamental role of conscience for the existential analysis of Dasein in *Being and Time* is confirmed: Heidegger's methodology turns on the recovery of conscience as a "whole" phenomenon.

Stoker's "Preparatory" Review of Conscience Theories: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche

Although factually correct, Heidegger's remark that Stoker's review of "the history of the concept of conscience...is not complete" downplays the dependence of *Being and Time* on the extensive research contained in *Das Gewissen*, especially since the former does not propose any "further literature" that could fill the identified void.²²⁶ As it stands, Heidegger's single footnote to §55 is all that is provided in *Being and Time* in terms of explicit references related to the development of his existential "call of conscience." Even in this footnote, the remarks are limited to the recognition of Stoker's "notable progress"

²²⁶ SZ §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496).

and the list of the names of seven other thinkers: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Kähler, Ritschl and Scheler.²²⁷ As we will see, Heidegger clears the way for his own phenomenological interpretation of conscience by subjecting the theories of all these philosophers to “destruction” in order to show how they “miss the phenomenon [of genuine conscience] and...conceal it.”²²⁸ For Heidegger, these concepts stand together as classic examples of “anthropological, psychological, and theological theories of conscience...based upon” the “everyday understanding of conscience.”²²⁹ The only partial exception to Heidegger’s proscription of other studies of conscience is Stoker’s “wide-ranging investigation,” an investigation that serves as the basis for Heidegger’s own destruction of “ordinary conscience.” That being said, Heidegger minimizes the importance of the “many points of agreement” he shares with Stoker and arrives at the conclusion that the South African’s description of conscience represents yet another manifestation of the “ordinary” understanding of the phenomenon that is criticized in *Being and Time*.²³⁰

Given that Stoker himself adopts a “destructive” approach in undertaking his historical analysis of conscience, he is arguably subjected in *Being and Time* to poetic justice following the Christian proverb: “Live by the sword, die by the sword.”²³¹ In *Das Gewissen*, Stoker condemns the conscience theories that developed in philosophy and sapped the “rich and originally emotional color and vibrancy (*ursprünglich emotionelle Färbung und Vibration*) of the phenomenon” of conscience in order to “one-sidedly emphasize the knowledge-aspect (*Wissensaspekt*).”²³² While Stoker shows how the

²²⁷ Heidegger offers nothing more than this short list of names before proceeding to destructively critique “the way in which conscience is ordinarily interpreted” and “conceptualized as a ‘theory’ of conscience.” In the remainder of the sections devoted to the phenomenon of conscience, Heidegger limits himself to only two explicit references and both of these refer to thinkers already mentioned in this footnote. The first reference contests Kant’s description of conscience as a “court of justice” (§55, 271 / 316 and §59, 293 / 339). The second criticizes Scheler’s observation that the “good” conscience does not exist and is rather “an experienced lack of a ‘guilty conscience,’” a notion which Heidegger derides as a “supposed experience...[that] is rather a making certain” (SZ §59, 292 / 338). As we will see below, this criticism of Scheler is also found in Stoker’s *Das Gewissen*.

²²⁸ SZ §59, 290 / 336.

²²⁹ SZ §59, 290 / 336.

²³⁰ SZ §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496).

²³¹ Paraphrase of the Gospel of Matthew, 26:52.

²³² Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 14.

phenomenon of conscience was subjected to the speculation of ancient Greek philosophers and later appropriated by early Christians, he considers the Scholastic period to be the most significant historical period for the emergence of modern theories concerning conscience and consciousness. For Stoker, the medieval era marks the moment when divine *synteresis* was fatefully related to moral knowledge and ultimately subordinated to human *conscientia*. In analyzing the conscience experience, the Scholastics came to distinguish God's spirit from the human mind and grasped these two concepts as objects that they associated with *synteresis* and *conscientia*, respectively. In Stoker's estimation, this analytical approach tragically obscured the fundamental experience of conscience itself. By splitting the "whole" emotional experience of conscience into separate entities, Scholasticism led to philosophy's prioritizing of the self's "moral consciousness" over the divine source of this experience, resulting in the "intellectualized" corruption of the original phenomenon. For Stoker, the legacy of this "perversion" of conscience is seen in the multiplicity and ambiguity of ethical systems and theories that have been proposed since the Middle Ages, most particularly in the modern era.

While the South African may be slightly less disparaging of previous theories of conscience than Heidegger, all of the philosophical sources mentioned in the footnote to §55 of *Being and Time* are also criticized by Stoker in *Das Gewissen* for having contributed to the deterioration of a proper understanding of the "true" experience of conscience. As Stoker writes:

If we open up the works of Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche to see what each of these thinkers mean by conscience, then we immediately realize two things: a) we are dealing with a system, and b) in this system, conscience is assigned a specific position within the whole structure of system. It is not conscience but the system that is primary. Through the tyranny of the system, the fact of conscience is subjugated by the ideological schema. The conscience does indeed still have a very important and central place in this edifice, but it now appears to us in a totally new, unfamiliar, completely artificial and unnatural costume. Instinctively, one wonders if these thinkers really intend to describe conscience; the impression cannot be suppressed that conscience seems to defy their systems. The full, concrete reality of conscience that is such a vibrant, powerful and profound

experience finds itself somehow stunted and crippled when it is tied down by the one-sided, unnatural, mechanized and inauthentic system.²³³

In his detailed analyses of these and other philosophical systems, Stoker points out how the phenomenon of authentic conscience can nevertheless be detected underneath the dominating theoretical structures. Approaching these theories in a fashion similar to that later advocated by Heidegger, Stoker seeks to reveal how the “true” experience of conscience is necessary as the *a priori* basis of all such theoretical interpretations regarding the nature of morality, even if this basis goes unacknowledged. For example, Stoker decries how Kant diminishes his own “inspired, visionary and concrete” understanding of conscience as the inescapable and “terrible voice” in order to prioritize the “sharply analytic, critical-theoretical” concept of the categorical imperative.²³⁴ Making the same point that Heidegger repeats in *Being and Time*, Stoker disapproves of Kant’s assigning conscience the task of presiding over the moral “court” in each person’s soul and passing judgment on specific acts.

Similarly, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Hegel are scolded by Stoker for failing to preserve the priority of the conscience experience as the fundamental means of moral orientation. In Stoker’s mind, Schopenhauer remains blinded by “strict determinism” in describing conscience as accumulated self-knowledge that gradually increases with one’s experience of life and serves to restrain the destructive will.²³⁵ Here again we see Stoker providing Heidegger with material that the latter will utilize in his interpretation of conscience in *Being and Time*. For example, Heidegger glosses two quotes from

²³³ Ibid. p. 22. In German: “Wenn wir die Werke von Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche usw. aufschlagen, um zu sehen, was diese Denker unter dem Gewissen verstehen, dann fällt uns sofort zweierlei auf: a) wir haben es mit einem System zu tun, b) in diesem System nimmt das Gewissen eine besondere mit dem ganzen System kongruierende Stellung ein. Nicht das Gewissen, sondern das System ist primär und unter der Tyrannei des Systems, des Weltanschauungsschemas wird die Tatsache des Gewissens unterjocht. Das Gewissen nimmt wohl zwar immer eine sehr wichtige und zentrale Stelle in diesem Gedankengebäude ein, aber es erscheint uns doch in einem ganz neuen, ungewohnten, einem meist künstlichen, unnatürlichen Kleid. Unwillkürlich fragt man sich, ob das nun wirklich das Gewissen vorstellen soll; der Eindruck läßt sich nicht unterdrücken, daß die volle, konkrete Realität so vielseitig, lebendig und reich ist, daß sie uns, unter welchem System sie auch zusammengeschnürt wird, immer einseitig, unnatürlich, mechanisiert und unecht, irgendwie verkümmert und verkrüppelt im System entgegentreten wird.”

²³⁴ Ibid. p. 33.

²³⁵ Ibid. p. 35.

Schopenhauer's *On the Basis of Morality* that are already highlighted by Stoker in *Das Gewissen*: 1) the description of conscience as a "register of deeds" that determines one's "moral" essence²³⁶ and 2) the satirical "recipe" of conscience that Schopenhauer proposes in criticizing the popular understanding of the phenomenon.²³⁷ On numerous occasions in

²³⁶ Ibid. p. 35. Stoker critically refers to the following remarks by Schopenhauer: "Therefore how could guilt and merit lie anywhere else than in *what we are? Conscience* is the acquaintance with ourselves which becomes ever more complete; it is the *register of deeds* that becomes more and more filled up." Arthur Schopenhauer. *On the Basis of Morality*. trans. E. F. J. Payne. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965). §20, p. 196. In German: "Wie sollte also nicht in dem, was wir find, Schuld und Verdienst liegen? – Die immer vollständiger werdende Bekanntschaft mit uns selbst, das immer mehr sich füllende Protokoll der Thaten ist das Gewissen." Arthur Schopenhauer. "Der Grundlage der Moral." *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik: behandelt in zwei akademischen Preisschriften*. (Frankfurt am Main: Johannes Christian Hermannsche Buchhandlung, 1840, 1841). §20, p. 260. In §59 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger refers repeatedly to the error of the "ordinary understanding" of conscience in terms of "debt" or as something that can be "managed and reckoned up," "balanced off in an orderly manner," made "*available and calculable*" and "subsumed under the idea of a business procedure that can be regulated." SZ §55, 289, 293-294 / 336, 340.

²³⁷ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 36. Stoker quotes in full Schopenhauer's "recipe" and also includes his quip about "the Englishman" alluded to by Heidegger in *Being and Time*: "Many a man would be astonished if he saw how his conscience, which seems to him such an imposing affair, is really made up. It probably consists of one-fifth fear of men, one-fifth fear of the gods, one-fifth prejudice, one-fifth vanity, and one-fifth habit; so that he is essentially no better than the Englishman who said quite frankly, 'I cannot afford to keep a conscience.'" Schopenhauer. *On the Basis of Morality*. §13, p. 127. In German: "Mancher würde sich wundern, wenn er sähe, woraus sein Gewissen, das ihm ganz stattlich vorkommt, eigentlich zusammengesetzt ist: etwa aus einem Fünftel Menschenfurcht, einem Fünftel Deisidämonie, einem Fünftel Vorurteil, einem Fünftel Eitelkeit und einem Fünftel Gewohnheit: so daß er im Grunde nicht besser ist als jener Engländer, der geradezu sagte: *I cannot afford to keep a conscience* (ein Gewissen zu halten ist für mich zu kostspielig)." Schopenhauer. "Der Grundlage der Moral." §13, p. 196. The "Englishman" in question is the British cleric and philosopher William Paley, 1743-1805, an influential proponent of utilitarianism and author of the widely-read *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (1785). In the midst of the "subscription controversy" of 1772 in England, Paley—who taught philosophy at Christ's College (University of Cambridge) before becoming Archdeacon of Carlisle—reportedly responded "I cannot afford to keep a conscience" when asked to sign the "Feathers Tavern" petition to the British Parliament calling for the relaxation of the terms of subscription to the state's "39 Articles of Religion," this despite having anonymously published a tract favoring increased religious freedom. D. S. Wayland. "Biographical Sketch of William Paley." *The Works of William Paley, D.D.* vol. 1. (London: George Cowie and Co., 1837). pp. xi-xii. In the section of Schopenhauer's essay conveying his "Skeptical View" of ethics, the German philosopher also scathingly observes that physical property is the "central point in human life on which life's energy and activity mainly turn." Schopenhauer. *On the Basis of Morality*. p. 123. Near the beginning of §55 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger alludes to these lines, especially the notion that conscience can be perceived in terms of cost: "Everydayness takes Dasein as something ready-to-hand to be concerned with—that is, something that gets managed and reckoned up. 'Life' is a 'business,' whether or not it covers its costs. (*Das „Leben“ ist ein „Geschäft“, gleichviel ob es seine Kosten deckt oder nicht.*)" SZ §59, 289 / 336. The quip attributed to Paley continued to enjoy broad use in English literature, especially in religious and social commentaries. According to a sermon published by a British journal in 1874: "Morality, in some quarters, is supposed to be the very antipodes of trade. Business men often tell us as an excellent joke that they cannot afford to keep a conscience." W. H. Lyttleton. "The Morals of Trade." *The Literary World* 10. (1874). p. 196. Already in 1805, the anonymous writer of a "letter to the editor" in a London journal had complained that Paley's saying was "too often repeated in the universities." Anonymous. "Anecdotes of Dr. Paley." *The Universal Magazine* IV. XXV (1805). p. 511.

Das Gewissen, Stoker also criticizes Nietzsche for privileging the development of a theoretical system over a properly phenomenological approach that respects the “true” experience of conscience. For Stoker, Nietzsche’s theory proposed in *On the Genealogy of Morals* that the guilty conscience arose as the evolutionary product of mankind’s fear of punishment fails to respect the original source of conscience and inverses the “actual” situation. Where Nietzsche sees moral conscience and fear of God as being imposed on the individual through the rise of civilization with its “cruel religious rites” and its “harsh criminal laws,”²³⁸ Stoker insists that conscience itself is the original experience through which the individual’s existence is disclosed by the “illuminating” light of God. For Stoker, this personal relationship between God and each individual provides the basic sense of direction for one’s involvement with others in the world. Stoker holds that the “revenge impulse” and the “experience of debt” emphasized by Nietzsche are secondary experiences that surface only after one has become involved in worldly affairs; in stark contrast to such “external” notions, the “primary experience of an evil conscience” is the internal recognition of evil that exists within the person.²³⁹ Compared to Stoker’s comments on the three philosophers mentioned above, his assessment of the Hegelian understanding of conscience is significantly less developed yet ultimately just as severe. Rather than rejecting Hegel’s approach to conscience outright, Stoker initially lauds the German idealist for comprehending that “the genuine conscience...is absolutely certain about its content.”²⁴⁰ Stoker then contrasts Hegel’s interpretation of conscience with what he considers the most vital element of the phenomenological concept of conscience: the absolute source of *synteresis*. According to Stoker, Hegel should have recognized the relation between his “absolute conscience” and the “spark” of God’s love: consciousness

²³⁸ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. pp. 38-39. Stoker here quotes at length from Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. trans. Walter Arnold Kaufmann. (New York: Vintage Books, 1967). Essay 2, §3, p. 61. / KSA, Vol. 5, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, Part 2, §3, p. 295. The following excerpt in German is taken from the section of Nietzsche’s text cited by Stoker: “Es gieng niemals ohne Blut, Martern, Opfer ab, wenn der Mensch es nöthig hielt, sich ein Gedächtniss zu machen; die schauerlichsten Opfer und Pfänder (wohin die Erstlingsopfer gehören), die widerlichsten Verstümmelungen (zum Beispiel die Castrationen), die grausamsten Ritualformen aller religiösen Culte (und alle Religionen sind auf dem untersten Grunde Systeme von Grausamkeiten) – alles Das hat in jenem Instinkte seinen Ursprung, welcher im Schmerz das mächtigste Hilfsmittel der Mnemonik errieth.”

²³⁹ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. pp. 247-248.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 103.

can only arise out of the “painful” experience of fallible human judgment coming into contact with the divine “absolute.” In Hegel’s “absolute moment” that founds human consciousness, Stoker sees Hegel reifying the “point of contact” between existence and its divine source rather than according priority to the *experiencing* of this contact; for this reason, Stoker considers the Hegelian opus as a tragic example of how philosophical systems have denied the “objective truth” of conscience.²⁴¹ As Stoker argues, even those theorists like Hegel and Kant who describe conscience in the most vivid terms and celebrate its philosophical importance fail to respect the legitimate priority of the phenomenon as they advance their respective doctrines. Using language similar to that found in Heidegger’s work, Stoker takes aim at all advocates of “pure” ideologies—whether they be realists or idealists—and holds that the root phenomenon of conscience must be rediscovered by identifying the conditions necessary for its being experienced. For Stoker, only an appropriately phenomenological approach can recover the “truth” of conscience and subsequently allow for the development of a scientific understanding of morality.

2.2. *Synteresis* as the Key to Stoker’s “Call-of-Duty” of Conscience

Given their mutual conviction that the wholeness of conscience must be accessed, it is strange that Heidegger—who admits to sharing many “points of agreement” with his contemporary—leaves completely unsaid what Stoker determines to be the *most basic* and *absolutely necessary* element for the unity of conscience: the concept of *synteresis*, which Stoker calls the “unspoiled spark in man” and describes as the source of the “absolute moment” of conscience.²⁴² Before proceeding with our study of how Stoker’s interpretation of *synteresis* may have influenced the development of Heidegger’s concept of conscience, let us first consider how Stoker presents *synteresis* in *Das Gewissen*. At numerous points in

²⁴¹ Ibid. p. 22.

²⁴² Ibid. p. 265.

his work, Stoker makes explicit that he believes the phenomenon of conscience finds its origin in *synteresis* and not in *conscientia*, as has been widely claimed in both the theological and philosophical traditions. This conviction explains to a large extent Stoker's call for a "destructive" approach that must eliminate the accumulated layers of speculation about conscience in order to yield the true and "whole" phenomenon. Stoker most emphatically rejects the work of the Scholastics who find the essence of conscience in the "relative moment of *conscientia*" that applies the "law of God" to "specific cases" of moral choice: this promotion of human judgment above the divine "guardian" and "keeper" of each soul demonstrates, in Stoker's view, that the authentic understanding of conscience has been lost.²⁴³ In resistance to this error, Stoker declares that *synteresis* "is ultimately the condition of *conscientia* [and] is much closer to being the experience of 'genuine conscience' than *conscientia* itself," the latter characterized by what he calls its "heartless syllogistic *applicatio*."²⁴⁴ Stoker reiterates and builds upon this statement in the concluding chapter of his study:

[*Synteresis*] recognizes God's law, drives us to good and holds us away from evil. It is the unspoiled spark in man, which remains in him even after his fall in Paradise... *Synteresis* is absolutely infallible; *conscientia* is fallible and relative. Yet [for in the Patristic and Scholastic doctrine] it is only this—*conscientia* as act—that is for them conscience *par excellence*. Strange; because for us *synteresis* is infinitely closer to the true conscience than *conscientia*.²⁴⁵

Stoker argues that the Scholastic intellectualization of conscience exemplifies the tendency of humankind to elevate the faculty of thinking above the fundamental "value-feeling" and the loving "impulse towards good" that is the "source" of existence found within the

²⁴³ Ibid. pp. 28-29. Here Stoker specifically criticizes Antoninus of Florence, the 15th century Dominican Archbishop and theologian, for interpreting "the relationship of *conscientia* to *synteresis* as syllogistic" and thus "opening up a field that was fruitful for hair-splitting decisions (*fruchtbar für spitzfindige Entscheidungen*)..."

²⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 30.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 265. In German: "[Die *Synteresis*] erkennt die Gesetze, treibt uns an zum Guten und hält uns ab vom Bösen. Sie ist das unverdorbene Fünkeln im Menschen, welches er nach seinem Fall im Paradiese noch behalten hat; das relative Moment erblicken sie in, der *Conscientia*, der Anwendung der in der *Synteresis* verwahrten Gesetze, Normen usw. auf Spezialfälle. Jene ist unfehlbar, absolut; diese fehlbar, relativ. Nur diese, die *Conscientia* als Akt, ist für sie das Gewissen *kat'exochen*. Merkwürdig; denn für uns steht die *Synteresis* dem echten Gewissen unendlich viel näher als die *Conscientia*."

soul.²⁴⁶ For Stoker, conscience properly understood is the experience of “seeing” existence illuminated by this inner light that marks each living soul as a creation of God. According to Stoker, all forms of theoretical understanding of conscience would corrupt this basic experience of dependence and lead to the devaluation of morality as the basis of existence. In this regard, it is not only Scholastic dogma that has failed to respect the authority of *synteresis*: Stoker contends that virtually all historical concepts of conscience fail to respect the experience of the phenomenon because they prioritize the rational aspect of morality over divine law.

By Stoker’s account, his phenomenologically obtained proof of God’s authority differs from moral theorizing because each individual must constantly renew the basis of this experience by heeding the “call-of-duty (*Pflichtruf*)” of conscience.²⁴⁷ While God’s authority may be absolute, the individual’s personal relationship with God that is experienced through conscience must be constantly actualized by heeding the “call-of-duty” and carefully preserving the “wholeness” of this phenomenon:

If man were absolutely good, then there would be no such requirement [to examine oneself and seek to refine one’s sensitivity to the evil within oneself]. But since he is also evil, since he is what he should not be, here man is called to face a demand, an objectively established duty, that he lovingly surrender to the cleansing of his heart and character. Of course, it is conscience from which all duties arise and that transcends any duty, so conscience-constancy remains the absolute limit for all objective calls-to-duty. There is no conscience-duty, but only a duty of conscience-constancy; obeying this call-of-duty (*Pflichtruf*) out of love (and not out of a sense of obligation) is the highest moral act of self-education in man.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 274.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 276.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 276. In German: “Wäre der Mensch absolut gut, dann wäre die Forderung nicht da. Da er aber auch böse ist, da er ist, was er nicht sein soll, ruft ihn hier eine Forderung, eine objektiv gegründete Pflicht, sich liebevoll hinzugeben an die Reinigung seines Herzens und seines Charakters. Ist das Gewissen selbstverständlich über alle Pflicht erhoben und jeder Pflicht als solcher transzendent, so bleibt die Gewissenhaftigkeit in den Grenzen des objektiven Pflichtrufes; — es gibt keine Gewissenspflicht, wohl aber eine Pflicht zur Gewissenhaftigkeit; — in Liebe (nicht in Pflichtgefühl) diesem Pflichtruf zu gehorchen, ist höchste sittliche Tat der Selbsterziehung im Menschen.”

Contesting the traditional notion that conscience is a psychological faculty, Stoker considers that his analysis of the experience of conscience has produced phenomenological proof that all existence is disclosed by the light of “God’s spark” and necessarily imbued with moral principles. Much like Heidegger with his existential interpretation of conscience, Stoker emphasizes the individual’s responsibility to respond to the “call-of-duty” as the unique way of caring for the “wholeness” and “inner purity” of his or her soul, notwithstanding the fact that the South African’s work lacks the ontological orientation of *Being and Time*. Stoker shares Heidegger’s conviction that “objective knowledge” spawned through theoretical detachment represents a dangerous illusion that inhibits one’s ability to “see every time anew”; in Stoker’s mind, the “intuitive insight” of the “true conscience” is superior to such knowledge because the former has “the advantage that it is alive, real, concrete and direct.”²⁴⁹

Stoker’s Analogy of the “Intersecting” Perspectives

In the concluding chapter of *Das Gewissen*, Stoker provides a religious analogy to advance his argument that the traditional view of conscience misses the “whole” phenomenon because the dependence of existence on the light of *synteresis* has been neglected. Stoker holds that the primordial intentionality of experiencing one’s relationship with God—the interactive event that reveals all moral principles—cannot be reduced to a simple act of judgment in *conscientia*. To demonstrate this, Stoker describes how a church located on a mountainside can be seen from two different perspectives. “From below,” the church tower seems to point toward the mountain’s peak, toward the sky, “up toward God”—according to Stoker, this is the perspective of the believer who understands that God must be obeyed and worshipped.²⁵⁰ However, there is also the perspective “from

²⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 273. In German: “Die intellektuelle moralische Erkenntnis kann vermehrt und vertieft werden und hat gegenüber der intuitiven Einsicht (Wertföhlung) das voraus, daß sie ein Residuum aus der Lebenserfahrung behält, daß sie eine Art Niederschlag der früheren Erkenntnis ist, und also diese Erkenntnis zur Verfügung hat, während die intuitive Einsicht jedesmal neu einsehen muß. Diese aber hat wieder den Vorzug, daß sie lebendiger, reeller, konkreter und direkter ist als jene.”

²⁵⁰ Ibid. pp. 265-266. Here is the German text from Stoker’s *Das Gewissen* related to this footnote and the four that follow: “Eine Analogie zwischen diesen beiden Blickrichtungen der Synteresis und unserer Gewissensauffassung, also „von oben“ und „von unten her“, gibt bildlich und sehr deutlich das folgende

above”: a person perched at the mountain’s summit sees the church on the slope below “against the background of a small town at the foot of the mountain” and understands that “the church is there to lead people to God” who will judge them.²⁵¹ According to Stoker’s interpretation of this analogy, the true phenomenon of conscience is the “intersection” of these two perspectives: it is the “between” where “‘from below’ and ‘from above’” co-exist.²⁵² Interpreting the meaning of his analogy, Stoker describes the phenomenon of conscience as follows:

It is the meeting place between God and man, like the church is, but in conscience it is where guilt-ridden man faces God. It is the experience of divine revelation in contact with God. Conscience reveals God as both just, merciful and gracious in judging the faults of man (as seen from below) and as the rescuer, custodian and *Aegis* of man through God’s fatherly love and concern (as seen from above). Medieval philosophy approached conscience not from the “lower” but only from the “top” position, on the basis of their religious attitudes and dogmas...²⁵³

Stoker sees the philosophical tradition transforming conscience into a superior faculty of human judgment and forgetting the necessity of a protecting God; by Stoker’s account, the validity of any act of judgment depends upon a source of divine guidance that can orient conscience. For Stoker, the phenomenon of conscience proves that the soul of each person is illuminated by the absolutely infallible light of God. Indeed, this light is what reveals that

Beispiel: Wenn ich unten an einem Berg stehe und gegen den Hang des Berges eine Kirche sehe, dann zeigt der Kirchturm sowie der ganze Berg immer höher, nach oben, nach Gott: die Kirche ist da, um Gott zu verehren und ihm zu dienen. Stehe ich aber auf der Spitze des Berges und sehe nun die Kirche gegen den Hang des Berges unter mir, auf dem Hintergrunde eines Städtchens am Fuße des Berges, dann sagt das Bild mir: die Kirche ist da des Menschen wegen, um die Menschen zu Gott zu führen. So auch stellt das Wesen des Gewissens „von unten her“ gesehen den Menschen vor seinen heiligen Richter; „von oben her“ gesehen aber ist es des Menschen wegen da, um ihn zu retten, zu verwahren, vor dem Fallen zu behüten und zu warnen. Im Gewissen schneiden sich die beiden Blickrichtungen „von oben nach unten“ und „von unten nach oben“. Das Gewissen steht zwischen dem „unten“ und dem „oben“; es ist der Treffpunkt von Gott und Mensch, wie auch die Kirche es ist, aber so, daß der Mensch dort durch seine Schuld Gott gegenübersteht, hier aber durch göttliche Offenbarung mit Gott in Verbindung tritt. Das Gewissen offenbart zugleich Gott als gerechten, barmherzigen und gnadenhaften Richter gegenüber des Menschen Schuld (von unten gesehen) sowie die Rettung, Verwahrung und Behütung des Menschen durch Gottes väterliche Liebe und Sorge (von oben gesehen). Die mittelalterliche Philosophie ging nicht von dem „unteren“, sondern von dem „oberen“ Standpunkte aus auf Grund ihrer religiösen Einstellungen und Dogmen...”

²⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 265-266.

²⁵² Ibid. pp. 265-266.

²⁵³ Ibid. pp. 265-266..

all human knowledge is relative and uncertain, tainted by the inconstancy of *conscientia*. The divine spirit within the “breast of each man” exposes one to the guilt of having failed to respect God’s law in the pursuit of worldly interests. In this sense, the pain of conscience is both a punishment for having failed to preserve one’s purity and a loving personal reminder from the Creator that one’s “wholeness” can be recovered: the experienced pain can serve as a positive “warning” to stop “falling” and to seek salvation.²⁵⁴

Stoker on the *Synteresisfrage*: Saint Jerome’s Commentary on Ezekiel’s Vision

While Heidegger himself notes that his study of conscience has much in common with Stoker’s investigation, the South African’s emphasis on *synteresis* is one of the strongest examples of how the theological emphasis of *Das Gewissen* is incompatible with the existential interpretation proposed in *Being and Time*. Before elaborating on the specific differences between their approaches, however, let us first examine how Stoker comes to regard the concept of *synteresis* as the key to understanding the phenomenon of conscience in a quite different manner than that seen in the philosophical or theological traditions. Indeed, what is most significant to our study is that Stoker introduces *synteresis* specifically in the process of conducting his “destructive” historical review of the ways in which conscience has been understood. In this sense, his attempt to recover the authentic phenomenon behind the term of *synteresis* is remarkably similar to Heidegger’s method of phenomenological investigation in *Being and Time*. Notably, Stoker does not open his historical review with the traditional notion of conscience at all but rather with the neglected concept of *synteresis*. Indeed, Stoker’s first objective is to expose tradition’s fundamental error of having privileged *conscientia* to the detriment of *synteresis*. After analyzing how theoretical approaches led to the contamination of conscience, Stoker concludes that the “true” experience of conscience depends primarily on *synteresis* and that any proper study of morality must begin by acknowledging the existential priority of each soul’s contact with the spirit of God.

²⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 266.

As has been the case with virtually all terms used to convey the phenomenon of conscience, the meaning and origin of the Latin word “*synteresis*” has proven to be a source of great controversy. During the period of the 19th and early 20th centuries alone, dozens of theological and philological studies were devoted to the debate regarding how the word “*synteresis*” emerged in the Middle Ages as the central concept that served to orient all Scholastic discourse concerning conscience. While many matters related to this debate remain unsettled, the majority of scholars concur that the first appearance of the term is found in the manuscripts of Saint Jerome’s commentary on the vision of Ezekiel in the Old Testament.²⁵⁵ In this commentary, Saint Jerome criticizes those who—under the influence of Greek philosophy—seek to understand Ezekiel’s vision according to the model of Plato’s tripartite soul. Jerome writes:

Most people interpret the man, the lion and the ox as the rational, emotional and appetitive parts of the soul, following Plato’s division, who calls them the *logikon* and *thumikon* and *epithumetikon*, locating reason in the brain, emotion in the gall-bladder and appetite in the liver. And they posit a fourth part which is above and beyond these three, and which the Greeks call *sunteresin* (συντήρησιν): that spark of conscience which was not even extinguished in the breast of Cain after he was turned out of Paradise, and by which we discern that we sin, when we are overcome by pleasures or frenzy and meanwhile are misled by an imitation of reason. They reckon that this is, strictly speaking, the eagle, which is not mixed up with the other three, but corrects them when they go wrong, and of which we read in Scripture as the spirit ‘which intercedes for us with ineffable groaning’ (Romans 8:26). ‘For no one knows what a man is really like, except the spirit which is in him’ (I Corinthians 2:11). And, writing to the Thessalonians, Paul also entreats for it to be kept sound together with soul and body (I Thessalonians 5:23).

²⁵⁵ The key text of Ezekiel’s vision related to the appearance of “*synteresis*” in Saint Jerome’s commentary (Ezekiel 1:4-10) reads as follows: “4 And I saw, and behold a whirlwind came out of the north: and a great cloud, and a fire infolding it, and brightness was about it: and out of the midst thereof, that is, out of the midst of the fire, as it were the resemblance of amber: 5 And in the midst thereof the likeness of four living creatures: and this was their appearance: there was the likeness of a man in them. 6 Every one had four faces, and every one four wings. 7 Their feet were straight feet, and the sole of their foot was like the sole of a calf’s foot, and they sparkled like the appearance of glowing brass. 8 And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides: and they had faces, and wings on the four sides, 9 and the wings of one were joined to the wings of another. They turned not when they went: but every one went straight forward. 10 And as for the likeness of their faces: there was the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side of all the four: and the face of an ox, on the left side of all the four: and the face of an eagle over all the four.” *The Holy Bible, Douay-Rheims Version*. Ed. Richard Challoner. (Baltimore, MD: John Murphy Company, 1899.) Ezekiel 1:4-10.

However, we also see that this conscience is cast down in some people, who have neither shame nor insight regarding their offences, and loses its place, as is written in the book of Proverbs: ‘When the wicked man reaches the depths of sin, he doesn’t care a damn.’ (Proverbs 18:3). So they deserve to be told: ‘You have acquired the face of a prostitute, you refuse to blush’ (Jeremiah 3:3).²⁵⁶

Although “συντήρησιν (*sunteresin*)” is what appears in the preserved scribal manuscript of this text, there has been considerable debate as to whether Saint Jerome actually used this unusual word when he wrote his commentary or whether “*sunteresin*” is actually a transcription error that should have read “συνείδησις (*suneidesis*).” Most theologians hold the belief that Saint Jerome actually used the word “*suneidesis*”—the original Greek word for conscience—and that this word was mistakenly copied as “*sunteresin*” by an anonymous scribe.²⁵⁷

The hypothesis that “*sunteresin*” should read “*suneidesis*” was greatly advanced at the close of the close of the 19th century by the theologian Friedrich Nitzsch. In 1898 and 1899, he published two influential articles in the *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* arguing that Saint Jerome did not write “*sunteresin*” and documenting how a number of early Church manuscripts (notably the 4th or 5th century *Codex Veronensis* and the 8th or 9th century *Codex Laurensis*) contained a wide variety of spellings of the Greek “*suneidesis*” due to transcription errors.²⁵⁸ The French theologian De Blic followed up with a study of more than 20 additional manuscripts he found to be consistent with Nitzsch’s study and that he claimed as proof of “the incontestable correctness of the *suneidesis* reading (*les droits incontestables de la leçon suneidesis*).”²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ Timothy C. Potts. *Conscience in Medieval Philosophy*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). pp. 79-80. Translation of Saint Jerome’s Commentary on Ezekiel, 1.7.

²⁵⁷ This scenario recalls the introduction of the new word “*gewizzani*” in Old High German by Notker’s glossator, an incident whose implications for our study of Heidegger’s *Gewissen* will be considered in chapter 4 below.

²⁵⁸ Cf. The first article: Friedrich August Berthold Nitzsch. "Eine bestätigte Konjectur: Historischer Beitrag zur Lehre vom Gewissen." *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* XVIII. (1898). The second: Friedrich August Berthold Nitzsch. "Der gegenwärtige Stand der Streitfrage über die Synteresis." *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* XIX. (1899).

²⁵⁹ Jacques De Blic. "Syndérèse ou conscience ?" *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique* 25. (1949). pp. 152-154.

However, this hypothesis of a transcription error is opposed by many others, most notably Josef Hebing who in 1922 contributed a major article to the *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* on the historical evolution of the meaning of *conscientia*.²⁶⁰ Researchers in this opposing camp insist that Saint Jerome did write the word “*sunteresin*,” a word springing from the Greek verb “συντηρέω (*suntereo*)” meaning “to preserve, guard, protect” someone or something from perishing or being lost.²⁶¹ While there are very few appearances of the verb “*suntereo*” in the New Testament, these do arguably support the case that this meaning of “preserving” fits with the interpretation of Ezekiel’s vision reported by Saint Jerome. For example, the verb appears in the Gospel of Luke when Mary hears the reports of the shepherds who were visited by the Angel of God and informed that a Savior had been born. Using the word “συνετήρει (*sunterei*),” Luke 2:18-19 describes Mary as having received this divine message differently than all the others who heard it.

*18 kai pantes oi akousantes ethaumasán peri ton lalethenton hupo ton poimenon pros autous. 19 he de Mariam panta suneterei ta remata tauta sumballousa en te kardia autos.*²⁶²

18 And all that heard, wondered; and at those things that were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.²⁶³

Two other usages of the verb in the New Testament (Matthew 9:17, Luke 5:38) relate to Christ’s analogy of preserving “new wine in new bottles,” conveying the message that God’s word must be properly received through the experience of personal renewal and preserved in “pure faith.”²⁶⁴ While these references do not relate the verb “*suntereo*” to any notion of moral oversight by God, Hebing and many others—including Stoker—contend that this sense of preservation and protection is precisely what Saint Jerome meant when he

²⁶⁰ Josef Hebing. "Ueber conscientia und conservatio im philosophischen Sinne bei den Römern von Cicero bis Hieronymus." *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 35. (1922).

²⁶¹ *Greek Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 8, p. 151.

²⁶² *The Greek New Testament: Stephanus Textus Receptus*. Ed. Robert Stephanus (Estienne). 3rd ed, 1550. Luke 2: 18-19.

²⁶³ *The Holy Bible, Douay-Rheims Version*. Ed. Richard Challoner. (Baltimore, MD: John Murphy Company, 1899.) Luke 2: 18-19.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Matthew 9:17, Luke 5:38.

reported that Ezekiel's eagle had been interpreted by some as the symbol for what appears in the text as "*sunteresin*."

This attempt at proving that Saint Jerome was personally responsible for the emergence of *synteresis* as a central term for the concept of conscience has been vehemently condemned by those sharing Nietzsche's position. Consider the later assessment of the Irish theologian M. B. Crowe with regard to the "sharp controversy...mainly in Germany" concerning *synteresis*: "[In] quite recent years...the study of the manuscript tradition of Jerome's *Commentary* finally demolished the case for the authenticity of *synderesis* [which was] already seriously undermined."²⁶⁵ For one, the backers of Nietzsche's position observe that the word never emerged in any of the numerous texts on conscience written in the centuries preceding its Scholastic "resurrection" in the late 12th century and early 13th century.²⁶⁶ Despite the great importance of conscience for many thinkers including Saint Augustine and the writers of the school of Anselme de Laon who wrote during the span of more than six centuries between Saint Jerome's death and the "reappearance" of *synteresis*, the term does not appear a single time in any extant texts from this period. Whenever the idea of God's spirit within each person is discussed in these texts, we find the Latin expression "*scintilla conscientiae*" used instead.

In addition to the argument that little textual evidence exists to confirm that Saint Jerome meant to introduce the new conscience term of *synteresis*, several theological commentators also express doubt that he would have even been able to invent such a notion. For example, Kries contends that Saint Jerome's comment regarding those who "follow Plato" is an attack directed at Origen and his attempt to interpret the Bible through

²⁶⁵ Michael B. Crowe. "The Term *Synderesis* and the Scholastics." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 23. (1956). p. 153.

²⁶⁶ Some of the earliest users of the term *synteresis* were the medieval commentators Pierre Lombard, Simon de Bisignano, Étienne Langton and Godefroid de Poitiers. Their work led to the subsequent interventions by Saint Bonaventura, Saint Thomas Aquinas and dozens of others who expounded upon the disputed relation between *synteresis* and *conscientia*. For considerably more detail on these commentaries, see Lottin's extensive study of the medieval *conscientia-synteresis* debate: Odon Lottin. "Syndérèse et conscience aux XIIIe et XIIIe siècles." *Psychologie et morale aux XIIIe et XIIIe siècles*. vol. 2. (Gembloux: Duculot, 1942).

the prism of Greek philosophy.²⁶⁷ While Jerome intended to criticize those who interpreted Ezekiel's eagle using Platonic notions, the ultimate legacy of his commentary is that it actually perpetuated Origen's interpretation and led to the adoption of *synteresis* by the Scholastics. As Kries reports:

[In] a blunder of remarkable proportions, the fact that in this passage Jerome was reporting not his own view but that of those who follow the "foolish wisdom of the philosophers" was overlooked, presumably because the passage from Jerome had been incorporated into the *glossae* without the warning that preceded it in the original *Commentary*. The masters were thus left with the mistaken impression that the interpretation recorded by Jerome was held by Jerome himself, and he was now frequently enlisted in support of the very teaching that he had criticized. It is no small irony that Jerome, a great and sometimes vehement critic of Origen, passed on to the medieval period an account of his adversary's theory of conscience under the authority of his own illustrious name.²⁶⁸

For his part, De Blic rejects the hypothesis that Saint Jerome could have intended to introduce a new concept of conscience because early Christianity was unconcerned by the psychological questions that led to the later emergence of *synteresis* as the necessary complement to *conscientia* in the Middle Ages.²⁶⁹ De Blic criticizes Hebing for wasting "a

²⁶⁷ The passage where Origen comments upon the "four faces" in Ezekiel's vision is found in §16 of his First Homily on Ezekiel and reads: "'Wherever the spirit went, the living creatures also went' [Ezek 1:12]. These living creatures have this 'likeness over themselves of a man,' though they are 'of four faces' [Ezek 1:5]. It is not said at the beginning that they are of four faces, but since among the four faces a human face rises above and holds precedence, it is described. It is also called 'a human face and the face of a lion on the right of the four parts, and a face of a calf to the left of the four, and a face of an eagle to the four parts' [Ezek 1:5, 10]. Let us see, then, whether it signifies the tripartite soul concerning which it has also been discussed in the doctrines of others. Let us see whether in the tripartite soul another part, the fourth, that is, force, presides. What is the tripartition of the soul? By 'man' its rational part is being indicated; by 'lion' its irascible part; by 'calf' its desirous part. But the 'spirit' who presides to help is not 'to the right,' as the man and the lion, he is not 'at the left,' as the calf, but he is over all three faces. For in another passage the eagle is declared [Ezek 1:4, 10], so that through the eagle he signifies the presiding spirit of the soul. But I am speaking of the 'spirit of man who is in him' [cf. 1 Cor 2:10]. And thus all things are led by the will of God, 'the heavenly things, the earthly things, the things below' [Phil 2:10], and the things that are above the heavens. And we all become Cherubim that are under God's feet, to which the wheels of the world are connected, and they follow these things [cf. Ezek 10:9]. For we are not now found under the wheel nor under the domination and affairs of the world, since we have already been delivered through the passion of Christ from the occupations of the world [cf. Gal 1:4]." Origen and Thomas P. Scheck. *Origen: Homilies 1-14 on Ezekiel*. trans. Thomas P. Scheck. (New York: Newman Press, 2010). pp. 44-45.

²⁶⁸ Douglas Kries. "Origen, Plato, and Conscience (*Synteresis*) in Jerome's Ezekiel Commentary." *Traditio* 57. (2002). pp. 82-83.

²⁶⁹ De Blic. "*Syndérèse ou conscience ?*" p. 157.

considerable amount of erudition to bring out the role played by the idea of *conservatio* (equivalent to *sunteresis*) in the morality of antiquity” in order to prove that Saint Jerome was responsible for introducing the notion of *synteresis*.²⁷⁰

According to Hebing, the word *sunteresis* responds very well to the function symbolized by the eagle: to preserve, like a dependable guide, the equilibrium of the other faculties. But this interpretation too readily glosses over the fact that these notions were incompatible in Jerome’s cultural milieu; the term is nothing more than an erroneous and random variation, due to the negligence of a scribe.²⁷¹

Praising De Blic’s evidence as conclusive, Åke Petzäll proclaims:

Saint Jerome didn’t introduce a new and dubious term when he spoke of the eagle. He was too good a linguist and too little a philosopher to have done so!²⁷²

Important for our study of Heideggerian conscience is the fact that Stoker sides with Hebing and challenges this general consensus that emerged as a result of the theologian Nietzsche’s groundbreaking study. For Stoker, it is unlikely that *synteresis* is the product of scribal “inadvertence” and he refuses to consider the word as a mere “synonym” for “*suneidesis*.” Rejecting Nietzsche’s theory that the “metamorphosis of the word [is] a bit too forced” and “artificial,” Stoker argues that “what makes more sense is the view of those...who see συντήρησις (*sunteresis*) going back to [the verb] συντηρεῖν (*sunterein*, for watching, preserving).”²⁷³ While he concedes that it is difficult to explain how Saint

²⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 152. In French: “Hebing a dépensé une somme considérable d’érudition à faire ressortir le rôle joué par l’idée de *conservatio* (équivalent de *sunteresis*) dans la morale de l’antiquité...”

²⁷¹ Ibid. p. 152. In French: “D’après [Hebing], le mot *sunteresis* répond très bien à la fonction symbolisée par l’aigle : sauvegarder, comme guide sûr, l’équilibre des autres facultés ; il condense trop heureusement des notions éparses dans le milieu culturel qui était celui de Jérôme pour n’être qu’une variante erronée et fortuite, due à la négligence d’un scribe.”

²⁷² Åke Petzäll. “La syndérèse : De l’Aigle d’Ezéchiel à la conscience morale par le Commentaire de Saint Jérôme.” *Theoria* 20. 1-3 (1954). p. 75. In French: “Saint Jérôme n’a pas introduit un terme nouveau et douteux quand il parle de l’aigle. Pour cela il était trop bon linguiste et trop peu philosophe !”

²⁷³ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 26. Here is the German text from Stoker’s *Das Gewissen* related to this footnote and the two that follow: “Zu Recht lehnt Gaß diese künstliche Konstruktion gänzlich ab, weil die Notwendigkeit zu diesem Entschluß nicht besteht und die innere Evidenz zeigt, daß das gewöhnliche Gewissen nichts mit einem Adler zu tun hat, die συντήρησις, wenn von συντηρεῖν (bewachen, verwahren) abgeleitet wohl und weil Nietzsches Metamorphose des Wortes etwas allzu stark ist. Sinnvoller ist die Ansicht von jenen, wie Gaß und Zahnel, welche συντήρησις auf συντηρεῖν (bewahren, beobachten) zurückgehen

Jerome came to use the word “*sunteresin*,” Stoker contends that the burden of proof lies with those who wish to deny the Doctor’s authority and not *vice versa*. Since the “internal evidence shows that the common conscience has nothing to do with an eagle,” Stoker holds that Nietzsche and his camp have failed to produce the proof required to validate their claim.²⁷⁴ Furthermore, Stoker insists that the few appearances of the term in the Gospels—“which were of course well known to Jerome”—fit perfectly with the Doctor’s discussion of the term; for Stoker, it is the commentary of Saint Jerome that presents us with the “*synteresis* as conscience; precisely as the guardian, the protector of the divine laws within us, which are symbolized by the eagle.”²⁷⁵

Beyond the “internal” or semantic justification for the use of “*sunteresin*” by Jerome, Stoker believes that the philological dispute over how the term first appeared in the scribal manuscripts of the Doctor’s commentary is of minor importance compared to the phenomenological significance of the word. Despite the fact that “we do not know exactly how the word *synteresis* originated...[and] received its moral character,” the term communicates an essential distinction between an individual’s intellectual judgment and the “spark of conscience, the spirit that remained in man even after Adam left Paradise.”²⁷⁶ As Stoker emphasizes, the lesson found in Jerome’s text is that *synteresis* “[stands] above

lassen, welches Wort schon in der häufigeren Wurzel und Grundform des τηρεῖν, τηρτικός bei den klassischen griechischen Schriftstellern zu finden ist, in der doppelten Bedeutung: a) des genauen Beobachtens, und b) des Bewahrens. Auch ist dieses Wort in der zusammengestellten Form des συντηρεῖν sehr häufig in den Evangelien zu finden, die Hieronymus selbstverständlich bekannt waren; sinnvoller ist diese Ansicht überdies noch, weil der Sinn der Bedeutung des Wortes genau übereinstimmt mit dem, was Hieronymus sagen will ; das Gewissen als συντήρησις ist eben der Bewahrer, Behüter der göttlichen Gesetze in uns, wie der Adler schon symbolisiert und wie ausdrücklich in der oben zitierten These des Hieronymus (5,23) geschrieben ist, wo für „Servari“ das Wort τηρηθῆναι (von τηρέω) gebraucht ist.”

²⁷⁴ Given his phenomenological approach to the experience of conscience, Stoker would no doubt have maintained this stance in the face of the additional studies of ancient manuscripts produced by De Blic and others in support of Nietzsche’s position, as these basically just extended Nietzsche’s analysis to cover a wider range of texts without advancing any significantly new arguments.

²⁷⁵ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 26.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 27-28.

the [mental, appetitive and emotional] faculties [of humans], not mixing with them but correcting their mistakes” and allowing for the “perception that we sin.”²⁷⁷

While not unconcerned with the question of Saint Jerome’s authority, Stoker nonetheless insists that it is the Scholastic period—and not when the term was first recorded—that represents the vital historical moment for explaining how Western civilization lost touch with the genuine experience of conscience. Indeed, Stoker regards the unparalleled concern demonstrated by early Christians for the purity of their faith as the strongest evidence that the authentic phenomenon has been lost; his study seeks to strip away the misguided theoretical approaches to conscience specifically in order to recover this fundamental experience of the “call” to self-preservation through “pure faith” that all morality depends upon. Stoker contends that when the word *synteresis* was adopted in medieval times, the Schoolmen were not primarily concerned with the experience of faith but had instead become obsessed with a philosophical puzzle: how to fit the knowledge of God’s laws within the system of “Aristotelian psychology.” After centuries of neglect, the concept of *synteresis* “reemerged” in the Middle Ages only to find itself subjected to a debate regarding its “function” within the “practical intellect” and its relation to *conscientia*.²⁷⁸

Stoker’s Review of *Synteresis* and *Conscientia* in the Scholastic Period

Despite the potential value of such an exercise, we will not here analyze Stoker’s brief review of the evolution of what he calls the “*Synteresisfrage*” during the Scholastic period.²⁷⁹ This for two reasons: for one, Stoker’s review is superficial compared to several much more complete theological studies of this question conducted before and after, most

²⁷⁷ Ibid. pp. 27-28. In German: “Hieronymus versteht, wie wir gesehen haben, unter „Synteresis“ das Gewissensfünklein, den Geist, welcher im Menschen überblieb, nachdem er das Paradies verlassen hatte; es steht über den anderen drei Seelenvermögen, vermischt sich nicht mit ihnen, sondern berichtigt sie in ihrem Irrtum; durch dasselbe nehmen wir wahr, daß wir sündigen...”

²⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 28.

²⁷⁹ Ibid. pp. 28-30. In this first part of his historical review, Stoker sketches out the interpretations of conscience proposed by Alexander of Hales, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas and Antoninus of Florence, a few of the dozens of medieval commentators who discussed the relation between *synteresis* and *conscientia*.

notably the major work of Odom Lottin who documented and analyzed in great detail the evolution of both *conscientia* and *synteresis* in hundreds of preserved manuscripts from the 12th and 13th centuries.²⁸⁰ As Heidegger's footnote to §55 in *Being and Time* suggests, the reader seeking a "complete" review of what has been written on moral conscience throughout history will not be satisfied with Stoker's study alone. Secondly, our study of Stoker's influence on the Heideggerian concept of conscience is informed less by how Stoker viewed each of the medieval texts that he discussed than by how the South African's specifically *phenomenological* approach to conscience resulted in his own innovative interpretation of *synteresis*.

The major conviction that Stoker shares with virtually all 19th and 20th century commentators of the medieval recovery of *synteresis* is that, regardless of what the "true" origin of the word might be, the concept is vital to any understanding of how the Scholastics came to interpret conscience. While scholars such as De Blic, Petzäll and Kries may reject Stoker's claim that *synteresis* "is and remains a patristic heirloom (*ein patristisches Erbstück*),"²⁸¹ they all recognize that the concept represented a major and unavoidable problem for medieval thinkers seeking a foundation for morality that could satisfy both Church doctrine and the philosophical "laws of reason." The perceived urgency of this problem is revealed by the sheer volume of the debate over *synteresis* in the 12th and 13th centuries: the advocates of rationalism were determined to produce a satisfactory solution to the question of how to understand the presence and function of God's spirit in the human soul. Analyzing Saint Jerome's critique of Origen in the commentary on Ezekiel's vision, Kries observes that the Origenist interpretation of conscience thus represented a difficult challenge for those attempting to develop the Church's philosophical doctrine in the medieval period:

Origen bequeathed to Christianity a sophisticated anthropology in which the Pauline conscience is elevated far beyond soul and achieves an extraordinary independence from soul, however Platonic and tripartite the latter may or may not be. It was with this Origenist notion of a conscience transcending

²⁸⁰ Cf. Lottin. "Syndérèse et conscience aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles."

²⁸¹ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 27.

soul that the medieval Scholastics studied by Lottin would have to contend, and the medieval Aristotelians did not find it particularly easy to force Origen's idea into their Peripatetic anthropology.²⁸²

De Blic agrees with Kries on this point but emphasizes that the fate of *synteresis* in the medieval period was ultimately determined by the emphasis of the Schoolmen on the rigorous definition of concepts, which prioritized intellectual precision over lived experience. The intellectualization of *synteresis* described by De Blic is what Stoker believes to be responsible for the loss of the authentic phenomenon of conscience and the debasing of the believer's personal contact with God:

In the end, from the point of view of philology and doctrinal history, the Scholastic notion of *synteresis* is an accident. But some accidents can be positive ones, at least in certain ways. And there is no doubt that by helping to distinguish fallible moral judgments from truly universal ones, the concept of *synteresis* contributed significantly to giving to Latin Scholasticism's doctrine of conscience the rigor and precision that had been sought for in vain everywhere else.²⁸³

Following De Blic, Petzäll concludes that:

...*synteresis* owes its birth to a misadventure, but once created it was found to fit perfectly with a notion that was in search of a name. And this name arrived at just the right moment.²⁸⁴

While Petzäll dismisses the arguments of those like Stoker who contend that *synteresis* was introduced by Saint Jerome, both scholars wholeheartedly agree that the sustained efforts of the Scholastics to fit *synteresis* into various doctrinal systems contributed to the

²⁸² Kries. "Origen, Plato, and Conscience (*Synderesis*) in Jerome's Ezekiel Commentary." pp. 82-83.

²⁸³ De Blic. "*Syndérèse ou conscience ?*" p. 157. In French: "En somme, du point de vue de la philologie et de l'histoire doctrinale, l'enseignement scolastique de la *synderesis* est un accident. Mais il y a des accidents heureux, au moins sous certains rapports. Et nul doute qu'en aidant à délimiter la zone faillible et la zone vraiment universelle des jugements moraux, la dénomination de « *syndérèse* » n'ait beaucoup contribué à donner à la doctrine de la conscience de la scolastique latine la fermeté et la précision qu'on cherchait en vain partout ailleurs."

²⁸⁴ Petzäll. "La *syndérèse* : De l'Aigle d'Ezéchiël à la conscience morale par le Commentaire de Saint Jérôme." p. 75. In French: "...la *syndérèse* doit sa naissance à une mésaventure, mais une fois créé il s'est trouvé convenir à une notion qui cherchait un nom. Et ce nom est arrivé au bon moment."

fragmentation of conscience and the loss of its “wholeness” as a concept, which is the primary problem that both Stoker and Heidegger’s investigations seek to remedy.²⁸⁵

For Stoker, the medieval studies of conscience fail to respect the absolute superiority of *synteresis* that is conveyed by the two analogies found in Saint Jerome’s text: those of the eagle tasked with guarding one’s purity and of the illuminating spark placed within the soul by God. Despite the fact that they praise *synteresis* as the highest spiritual force known to mankind, the earliest commentators of the *scintilla conscientiae* such as Alexander of Hales and Albertus Magnus nevertheless conceptualize the divine spirit in a manner clearly intended to accommodate human reason. In their collective effort to grasp the relationship between mind and the spirit of God, the Scholastics argued over the psychological status of *synteresis* in a sustained “dispute as to whether *synteresis* is a ‘habit,’ an ‘actus’ or a ‘potentia.’”²⁸⁶ For example, Alexander of Hales considered *synteresis* as “an enduring, steady, certain habit” and *conscientia* as a “‘potentia,’ which is changeable and fallible” while Albertus Magnus contended that *synteresis* is only a “‘potentia’ urging towards good which requires the habit of “conscientia” in order for the urge to be completed.²⁸⁷ Noting his agreement with the theologian Friedrich Jodl, Stoker names Thomas Aquinas as Scholasticism’s “key authority” for the identification of *synteresis* with “practical reason as the manifestation of natural moral law.”²⁸⁸ For Stoker,

²⁸⁵ Ibid. Seemingly in agreement with Stoker’s phenomenological approach, Petzäll writes of both the medieval commentators and those who followed them: “Une esquisse d’interprétation allégorique à peine interrompue par quelques petites notes savantes données sans aucune prétention à la profondeur d’une pensée philosophique est devenue la base d’une doctrine. On peut vraiment dire—pour travestir un mot célèbre—que rarement dans l’histoire aussi peu de mots ont fait l’objet de tant d’interprétations par autant de savants et pour être comprises par aussi peu.” p. 70. However, it must be clarified that while Petzäll and Stoker both believe the work of the Scholastics is largely responsible for the persistent confusion surrounding the terms *synteresis* and *conscientia*, the two men’s conclusions concerning *synteresis* are diametrically opposed. While Stoker presents *synteresis* as the key to accessing the authentic phenomenon of conscience, Petzäll aims primarily to demonstrate that scientific progress in the field of morality has been hindered by theology and its “enigmatic” notions, including *synteresis* and natural law. As Petzäll states in the concluding sentence to his article: “Il est à peine une autre doctrine, dans toute la spéculation éthique si pleine de contradictions, qui témoigne si nettement du fait que la philosophie a pendant mille ans été la servante de la théologie et que cette pauvre domestique a bien du mal à se libérer des habitudes qu’elle a contractées pendant un aussi long service comme une sorte de déformation professionnelle.” p. 77.

²⁸⁶ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 28.

²⁸⁷ Ibid. pp. 28-30.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. pp. 28-29.

the result of all this “investigative hair-splitting” in the Middle Ages was that the absolute authority of *synteresis* became reduced to a mere syllogistic premise; conscience was formulaically understood as the end result of *conscientia*’s judgment regarding the application of the moral laws of *synteresis* to specific cases.²⁸⁹ By Stoker’s account, what phenomenologically reveals itself as the fundamental source of moral knowledge thus became transformed into an object of casuistry. As Stoker reports:

By trying in its doctrine of conscience both to preserve the eternal, infallible, absolute moment and also to fully recognize the empirical, erring, relative moment, Scholasticism established a quite artificial conscience theory. It could not keep these two moments combined together, so they developed either in the direction of casuistry or of mysticism.²⁹⁰

While Stoker concludes that the “objective reality of the phenomenon” of conscience was lost in the work of the Scholastics, he adds that neither *conscientia* nor *synteresis* “hits upon the true conscience, which arises after the ‘applicatio.’”²⁹¹ For Stoker, conscience is the oppressive sensation of inner condemnation for acts already performed and the subsequent wanting to regain one’s moral purity: it arises out of the person’s contact with the absolute purity of *synteresis*. Stoker rules that the Scholastic heritage has cut Western civilization off from the experience of mankind’s contact with the absolute good of the divine. For Stoker, the “spark of conscience” was snuffed out by the rationalistic dissection of the phenomenon of conscience:

With a host of ingenious concepts, they have given us a structure that is overly determined by concepts and conceptual terms and not determined enough by the objective reality of the phenomenon. The sharp conceptual thinking [of the Scholastics] splits, fragments and takes the life out of what it

²⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 30.

²⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 30. In German: “Durch den Versuch, in ihrer Gewissenslehre sowohl das ewige, unfehlbare, absolute Moment zu bewahren und zugleich das empirische, irrende, relative Moment völlig anzuerkennen, hat die Scholastik eine durchaus künstliche Gewissenstheorie aufgebaut. Sie konnte diese beiden Momente aber nicht zusammenhalten, und nun entwickelten sie sich entweder in der Richtung der Kasuistik oder der Mystik.”

²⁹¹ Ibid. p. 30.

analyzes, and so we receive from these thinkers not a description of the specific, real phenomenon but something mechanical, abstract, unreal.²⁹²

Saving the Spark of *Synteresis* from Scholastic Casuistry

What then is Stoker's understanding of *synteresis* and how does it inform his phenomenological concept of conscience that was evidently influential for Heidegger's interpretation of the existential call? By Stoker's account, *synteresis* is the illuminating source within each person's soul that allows for the recognition of evil in one's thoughts and actions. Through his destructive review of the history of conscience theories and his analysis of conscience as it is experienced psychologically, Stoker establishes that the phenomenon of conscience—distinct from but dependent upon *synteresis* itself—is the subject's experience of personal contact with this absolute light that exists “in the breast of each man”: conscience is the intense, inescapable pain of regret or inner condemnation when one's thoughts or actions are exposed as evil by *synteresis*.

The first and most essential aspect of Stoker's interpretation of conscience is that the phenomenon arises only in response to past acts or thoughts. With its absolute knowledge of good, *synteresis* serves to protect and preserve the soul but does so indirectly: the actual experience of one's relationship with this divine guardian within the soul is *experienced* uniquely as a result of sin. Conscience is essentially the experience of painful guilt for one's having already failed to remain pure.

By Stoker's account, *synteresis* is not the only necessary element for conscience because the intensity and meaning of this contact with God's spirit depends upon one's willingness to accept its authority: one must obey the “call-of-duty” of conscience to genuinely experience one's guilt as a sinner. While Stoker retrieves from the Scholastic debates the position stated in Saint Jerome's commentary that the spark of *synteresis* is

²⁹² Ibid. p. 30. In German: “Mit einem Heer von scharfsinnigen Begriffen haben sie uns eine Konstruktion gegeben, welche zuviel durch Begriffe und begriffliche Voraussetzungen und zuwenig durch die objektive Realität des Phänomens bestimmt war. Das scharfe begriffliche Denken spaltet, zersplittert und tötet in der Analyse, und so empfangen wir von diesen Denkern nicht eine Beschreibung des konkret wirklichen Phänomens, sondern etwas Mechanisiertes, Abstraktes, Unwirkliches.”

impossible to extinguish, he fully recognizes the essentially relative and fallible nature of the individual's "experiencing" of conscience. Unlike the absolute light of *synteresis*, the experience of conscience by the individual is dependent on the quality of his or her faith: any "knowledge" produced by one's contact with this light can only be relative and fallible because it is distorted by the impurities of one's faith. While the sinner cannot completely avoid this painful contact with *synteresis*, Stoker holds that the soul can become numb to this experience and—through the perversion of individual judgment—come to misrepresent the true significance of this pain. While such a person still feels the pain of conscience when *synteresis* exposes one's past action or thought as evil, Stoker notes human judgment in its most depraved state can deny that this pain is related to one's immoral conduct and instead seek to blame something or someone else for one's "mental" anguish.

Here we see the reason for Stoker's strong insistence that psychological research must be given a greater role in the study of conscience: to advance moral understanding and promote good in the world, Stoker contends that objective psychological data must be produced to counterbalance theological and philosophical dogmas that have concealed the role of *synteresis*. For example, Stoker proposes that practitioners of clinical psychology should investigate the relationship between the mind and *synteresis* in order to harvest insights into pathologies. He holds that such "objective" approaches promise to reveal the principles necessary in order to reinforce moral behavior and to confirm the necessity of faith and submission to God's authority. Given the incompatibility of such proposals with the existential project of *Being and Time*, and with objective science itself, it is clear why Heidegger derided Stoker's "underestimation" of the ontological problem and criticized his blending together of theological and phenomenological notions.

Conscience and the Development of Morality

While Stoker regards the phenomenon of conscience as essentially related to past acts and thoughts, his interpretation of *synteresis* also reveals how conscience contributes to promoting moral good in the future. While conscience can only be perceived as painful remorse over what has already been done, this inescapable experience is universal to all of

mankind. Every person exists in a necessarily imperfect and fallen state due to the very nature of the human condition: in Stoker's opinion, it is impossible for a person to be free of guilt and thus everyone experiences the pain of conscience. According to Stoker, this pain results from the friction of our soul's impurities coming into contact with the pure spirit that God placed within us. Memory is essentially shaped by conscience: this lingering pain of essential guilt—which Stoker observes has been poetically described as the “murmuring” voice of conscience—reverberates in the mind and constantly calls each person to preserve the purity of his or her soul so as to keep the overwhelming pain of conscience from flaring up anew.

As does Heidegger, Stoker vehemently rejects any notion that conscience would provide actual guidance with regard to specific moral questions encountered by an individual going about his or her activities in the world. The remembering that arises from the painful experience of conscience is not a source of information regarding how to make moral decisions but rather an unavoidable reminder of the authority of *synteresis* and of the consequences that follow moral error. Characterizing conscience in a way that Heidegger will replicate in *Being and Time*, Stoker asserts that no moral knowledge concerning future acts can be derived from the experience of conscience or obtained directly from God's spark placed in the soul. All that can be learned from conscience is that the person must constantly submit oneself to the authority of *synteresis* by heeding God's “call-of-duty.” Specific moral choices remain entirely the responsibility of the individual: Stoker makes it explicitly clear that one can neither “ask” God to choose on one's behalf nor succeed in “willing” oneself free of conscience. The painful, overwhelming regret of recognizing one's incompatibility with God's pure love is inevitable. As Stoker writes:

[The] voice is heard again and again and again, claiming the whole person...the will is definitely powerless against the conscience. ... The power of the will is limited to the peripheral layers of experience, in that which lives on the surface of mental life. When the conscience intervenes, it

suddenly bursts forth from the deepest layers of love, and against this love the will is powerless.²⁹³

Concretely, the best that each person can do is to attempt to learn the painful lessons of conscience and to lovingly care for the purity of his or her faith. (Alternatively, Stoker advises that in moments of moral doubt one can also look to recognized “authorities,” such as the “highest of the religious people” who can “see more profoundly and objectively” when considering moral questions.²⁹⁴) What is clear to Stoker is that conscience itself issues no “command” regarding the execution of any specific action; it only offers a powerful reminder that we have failed to live according to God’s laws and that our purity has been lost. To overcome the pain of conscience, one must faithfully seek God’s grace for having fallen and accept the authority of the divine guardian who punishes us from within.

While honoring God cannot in itself guarantee one’s moral rectitude, Stoker argues that it represents the only hope for anyone who aspires to receive God’s grace and wishes to improve his or her moral conduct. Whereas Heidegger will describe conscience as the silent call that summons Dasein to return from its inauthentic dispersal in worldly affairs, Stoker’s conscience is the painful experience of remorse that rebukes sinners for past transgressions and serves as a constant reminder of God’s concern for the purity of his creatures’ souls. Stoker’s conscience is the stinging point of contact between fallible, mortal humanity and the pure authority of God.

²⁹³ Ibid. pp. 105-106. In German: “[Die] Stimme läßt sich immer wieder hören und beansprucht immer wieder die ganze Person...der Wille ist endgültig machtlos ihm gegenüber. ... Die Macht des Willens ist beschränkt auf die peripherischen Erlebnisschichten; in das, was an der Oberfläche des psychischen Lebens liegt, kann der Wille eingreifen; gegenüber einer plötzlich aus den tiefsten Schichten hervorbrechenden Liebe ist er machtlos.”

²⁹⁴ Ibid. pp. 269-272.

2.3. Heidegger's Criticism of Stoker's Approach to Conscience

Despite considering Stoker's work to be a positive development in the philosophical study of conscience, Heidegger expressly remarks that the South African "underestimates from the outset the hermeneutical conditions for a 'description' of 'conscience as something which subsists objectively and actually.'"²⁹⁵ While he recognizes that many elements of his own approach are also found in Stoker's work, Heidegger insists more forcefully on the differences that separate their two projects; ultimately, the German thinker conflates the Stokerian notion of conscience with the "ordinary interpretation of conscience" that he subjects to destructive analysis.²⁹⁶

Nevertheless, it is Heidegger's explicit and implicit criticisms of *Das Gewissen* that ironically provide, as we will attempt to show, the most solid evidence of Stoker's influence on the existential concept of conscience and the phenomenological method of *Being and Time*. This can be seen by examining the three principal arguments conveyed in Heidegger's critical assessment of *Das Gewissen*, namely 1) that Stoker's investigation of conscience is basically dependent on the "personalism" developed by his doctoral supervisor, Max Scheler, 2) that Stoker's concept of conscience is inauthentic because the South African fails to respect the "hermeneutical conditions" vital to the existential-ontological project of *Being and Time*, and 3) that Stoker fails to break free of theological dogma and is guilty of "blurring the boundaries between phenomenology and theology, with damage to both." In examining these three arguments, our study will indicate how Stoker's investigation of conscience—most notably his "unexpected discovery" that conscience can only be recovered by adopting a phenomenological approach—may have influenced the methodology and interpretation of conscience we find proposed in *Being and Time*.

²⁹⁵ SZ §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496).

²⁹⁶ SZ §59, 289 / 335.

a) Stoker's Alleged Dependence Upon Scheler

In comparison to his brief acknowledgement of Stoker's work in a single footnote to §55, Heidegger's assessment of the phenomenological work of Max Scheler is granted a much more prominent place in the main text of *Being and Time*. In the course of his analysis of Dasein, Heidegger specifically addresses two major Schelerian concepts that are related directly to the existential-ontological project of *Being and Time*: 1) Scheler's phenomenological "interpretation of personality," and 2) his theory of reality.

Conceding that the investigation of Dasein resembles Scheler's "personalist" approach in some respects, Heidegger commends Scheler for the way he "emphasizes personal Being explicitly as such" in his phenomenological work and thereby contrasts "the specific Being of acts...with anything 'psychical.'"²⁹⁷ In the years leading up to the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger had indeed demonstrated a great interest for Scheler's advances concerning the understanding of the "being of the person (*Sein der Person*)" and of "acts themselves."²⁹⁸ During his 1925 summer semester course at Marburg, Heidegger noted that Scheler "has made the furthest advances to date" with regard to the question of "the connection of the psychic with corporeality"²⁹⁹ and affirmed that Scheler "wants nothing to do with the specifically rationalistic orientation of Husserl," a stance that Heidegger himself was personally adopting more and more publicly.³⁰⁰ Of course, Heidegger wasn't simply validating the Schelerian approach; indeed, he criticized Scheler's "personalism" as severely as any of the other philosophical approaches that he

²⁹⁷ SZ §10, 47 / 73. Heidegger here specifies that he has chosen Scheler's interpretation, and not Husserl's, as his example of how "personality" has been interpreted in phenomenology up to that point. While the fact that Scheler's work is "accessible in print" is given as one of the reasons for this choice, Heidegger also implies that Scheler has recognized more clearly than Husserl that the "person is not a Thing, not a substance, not an object." Heidegger continues: "Here Scheler is emphasizing what Husserl suggests when he insists that the unity of the person must have a Constitution essentially different from that required for the unity of Things of Nature." Given that Heidegger states just lines earlier that "Husserl and Scheler...differ in their respective inquiries, in their methods of conducting them, and in their orientations towards the world as a whole," there can be little doubt that his choice of Scheler's "phenomenological interpretation of personality" was not a neutral one. SZ §10, 47-48 / 73.

²⁹⁸ GA 20, §13e, 175 / 126.

²⁹⁹ GA 20, §13e, 177 / 128.

³⁰⁰ GA 20, §13e, 174-175 / 126.

subjected to “destruction.” Despite the fact that Scheler had made “some essential progress (*wesentliche Fortschritt*)” with regard to questions “defined within generally traditional horizons (*allgemeine traditionellen Horizonten*),”³⁰¹ Heidegger determined that his contemporary “basically does not take us any further” with his investigation of intentionality focused on the individual person and its performative acts.³⁰² While his approach appears promising, Scheler would fail to meaningfully advance matters in Heidegger’s eyes because he neither answers nor even properly poses the fundamental question of the meaning of Being. As Heidegger tells his students in Marburg:

[When] we positively ask [of Scheler], how then does the Being of acts get defined and what is the Being of the person, the Being of lived experience and the unity of such experiences, the only thing left to be said is: Acts get performed and the person is the performer (*Akte werden vollzogen, und die Person ist der Aktvollzieher*). *On the mode of being of the act-performance and the mode of Being of the performer of the act, silence reigns. (Über die Seinsart des Aktvollzuges und die Seinsart des Aktvollziehers herrscht Schweigen.)* ... [When] we ask fundamentally about the structure intended for Being and about the conceptuality in terms of which this Being is questioned, we find that the inquiry comes to a halt in these two vague determinations, performance and performer (*in diesen vagen Bestimmungen Vollzug und Vollzieher stehen*).³⁰³

Scheler’s inability to directly confront the question of Being is also blamed by Heidegger for the “ontological indefiniteness of [the] foundations” that support his theory of reality, a theory that Heidegger claims has been borrowed from Dilthey.³⁰⁴ While Heidegger accepts that “reality is never primarily given in thinking and apprehending (*Denken und Erfassen*),” he rejects the Schelerian thesis that the “Being of objects is given immediately only in the way it is related to drive and will (*in der Trieb- und Willensbezogenheit unmittelbar gegeben*).”³⁰⁵ Having failed to recognize the problem of the Being of “disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*),” Scheler would allow his personalism to fall into a form of subjectivism where the performer of acts is “understood in the Kantian sense

³⁰¹ GA 20, §13e, 177 / 128.

³⁰² GA 20, §13e, 174 / 126

³⁰³ GA 20, §13e, 177 / 127-128.

³⁰⁴ SZ §43b, 210 / 253.

³⁰⁵ SZ §43b, 210 / 253.

as Being-present-at-hand.”³⁰⁶ As Heidegger emphasizes in *Being and Time*: “The experiencing of resistance—that is, the discovery of what is resistant to one’s endeavours—is possible ontologically only by reason of the disclosedness of the world (*auf dem Grunde der Erschlossenheit von Welt*).”³⁰⁷ Here Heidegger builds upon the assessment he shared with his students at Marburg in July 1925:

[The] phenomenon of resistance is not the original phenomenon. Rather, resistance in its turn again can only be understood in terms of meaningfulness. The authentic correlation of world and Dasein (if we can speak here of a correlation at all, which it is not in my opinion) is not that of impulse and resistance or, as in Scheler, will and resistance, but rather *care and meaningfulness*. This correlation is the basic structure of life, a structure which I also call *facticity*.³⁰⁸

While he more than hints that Scheler’s approach represents a surpassing of the Husserlian model of intentionality, Heidegger nonetheless proclaims that Scheler has failed to break out of the “horizons of inquiry...[of] traditional philosophy”³⁰⁹ and has left “the existential-ontological foundations of the phenomenon of the act...still obscure.”³¹⁰

In his footnote to §55 regarding previous theories of conscience, Heidegger explicitly ties Stoker’s fate to that of Scheler when he concludes that the South African has obediently adopted the basic principles of Scheler’s “personalism” and applied them to conscience. In just four short lines, Heidegger hands down his devastating judgment that Stoker—like Scheler—has fallen into the fallacy of “objective” and “actual” subsistence: the “phenomenology” deployed by Stoker is contaminated with presuppositions concerning “objectivity” and naïvely built on an “anthropological foundation” borrowed from

³⁰⁶ SZ §43b, 210 / 253.

³⁰⁷ SZ §43b, 210 / 253.

³⁰⁸ GA 20, §24e, 304 / 221. In German: “Trotzdem ist zu sagen, daß das Widerstandsphänomen nicht das ursprüngliche Phänomen ist, sondern daß Widerstand seinerseits wieder nur aus der Bedeutsamkeit verstanden werden kann, und daß die eigentliche Korrelation von Welt und Dasein (wenn man hier von Korrelation überhaupt sprechen kann, was nicht meine Meinung ist) nicht die von Impuls und Widerstand oder, wie bei *Scheler*, Wille und Widerstand ist, sondern *Sorge und Bedeutsamkeit*. Diese Korrelation ist die Grundstruktur des Lebens, die ich auch als die *Faktizität* bezeichne.”

³⁰⁹ GA 20, §10a, 129 / 94.

³¹⁰ SZ §29, 139 / 178.

Scheler.³¹¹ Heidegger's assessment of Stoker here recalls his disparaging comments expressed two years earlier in Marburg regarding the "biological orientation" of Scheler, wherein Heidegger condemned Scheler's "reverse procedure" of relying upon observations of "primitive life forms down to single-celled animals (*primitiven Lebewesen bis zu einzelligen Tieren hinunter*)" in order to explain the givenness of the world to the human person.³¹² In criticizing Stoker for "taking up" Scheler's project, Heidegger essentially repeats in condensed form the same complaints that he had earlier directed at Scheler: while Stoker is praised for having produced a "wide-ranging" study that "signifies notable progress as compared with previous interpretations," Heidegger condemns him for failing to recognize the need to exhibit "the ontological roots of the phenomenon itself."³¹³ Scheler's student, like his master, would remain blind to the ontological presuppositions of the philosophical tradition and thus perpetuate this bias in his work, according to Heidegger.

But is Heidegger's strategy of dismissing Stoker's study of conscience by linking him to Scheler legitimate, let alone fair? There are at least two reasons indicating that this might not be the case:

First of all, the sustained interest that Heidegger bears for Scheler's work during the period when he developed the ideas contained in *Being and Time* appears to speak more loudly than any explicit criticism of Scheler contained in the book's pages. While Heidegger correctly states that his existential-ontological project is radically different from Scheler's "personalism," the young professor arguably downplays the similarities between the *thematic content*—as well as some of the *results*—of their respective projects. To provide just one such example, one only needs to compare Heidegger's description of

³¹¹ SZ §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496).

³¹² GA 20, §24d, 305 / 222. It is worth noting that Heidegger's other complaint regarding Stoker's blending of theology and phenomenology—which we will examine in detail below—also closely resembles another of Heidegger's earlier critiques of Scheler. In his 1923 summer semester course at Freiburg, Heidegger stated that Scheler "ruins (*verdirbt*) both theology and philosophy" in the way he "haphazardly picked up and used" concepts taken from "ancient theology" in order to describe his philosophical notion of man. GA 63, §4, 25 / 21.

³¹³ SZ §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496).

Dasein “loyally following in the footsteps of that which can be repeated” by choosing “its hero” with Scheler’s remarks in 1925 on the importance of the “hero” for “true culture.”³¹⁴ In this lecture published under the title “The Forms of Knowledge and Culture”—a text that Heidegger specifically refers to in his *Prolegomena* course of 1925³¹⁵—Scheler states:

One does not “choose” such a model. One is captivated by it because it seduces, invites, and attracts us imperceptibly. National heroes, exemplary members of our profession, moral and artistic models, finally, the rare example which this world has witnessed of the purest and highest human culture itself, the very small number of saints, of pure and complete persons—these are our steppingstones and also the trailmakers. They explain and clarify the individual’s *own* purpose. ... The spiritual person in man is an *individual, unique self-concentration* of the divine spirit. For this reason, heroes do not require imitation or blind submission, as is so often advocated in our Germany that yearns for authority. Heroes are only precursors, enabling us to hear the calling of *our particular* person. They are the dawn in the sunny day of our *individual* conscience and principle.³¹⁶

Evidently, the phenomenological interpretations of existence proposed by Heidegger and Scheler are not identical; indeed, they appear largely incompatible. At the same time, much is shared by the two thinkers in terms of their concern for both philosophical and theological questions and their attempts at phenomenological innovation. As seen in texts drafted by both Heidegger and Scheler during the period from 1925 until Scheler’s death in 1928, the two men recognized the importance of each other’s contributions and were remarkably attentive to the evolution of the other’s ways of thinking. Heidegger finds in

³¹⁴ Max Scheler. “The Forms of Knowledge and Culture.” trans. Oscar A. Haac. *Philosophical Perspectives*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1925, 1958). pp. 32-33. / Max Scheler. “*Die Formen des Wissens und die Bildung.*” *Philosophische Weltanschauung*. (Bonn: F. Cohen, 1925, 1929). pp. 105-107.

³¹⁵ GA 20, §24d, 303 / 220-221. Footnotes 3 and 4.

³¹⁶ Scheler. “The Forms of Knowledge and Culture.” pp. 32-33. “Ein solches Vorbild „wählt“ man nicht. Man wird von ihm erfaßt, indem es lockt und ladet, unmerklich uns an seinen Busen zieht. Nationale Vorbilder, Berufsvorbilder, sittliche, künstlerische Vorbilder, schließlich die wenigen Vorbilder der reinsten und höchsten Menschenbildung selbst, die sehr wenigen Heiligen, Reinen und Ganzen, die diese Erde sah – das sind die Stufen und zugleich die Wegbereiter, die jedem Menschen seine Bestimmung klären und verdeutlichen, an denen wir uns messen und zu uns, zu unserm geistigen Selbst, emporingen können, die uns unsere wahren Kräfte kennen und sie tätig gebrauchen lehren ... Die Person im Menschen ist eine individuelle einmalige Selbstkonzentration des göttlichen Geistes. Daher sind auch die Vorbilder nicht Gegenstand der Nachahmung und der blinden Unterwerfung – wie so oft in unserm autoritätssüchtigen deutschen Lande. Sie sind nur Wegbereiter zum Hören des Rufes unserer Person; sie sind nur anbrechende Morgenröten des Sonnentages unseres individuellen Gewissens und Gesetzes.” Scheler. “*Die Formen des Wissens und die Bildung.*” pp. 105-107.

Scheler not just another target to be criticized, but a like-minded investigator who is concerned with “fundamental phenomenological considerations which go beyond the special domain of ethics (*grundsätzlich phänomenologischen Betrachtungen, die über das besondere Gebiet der Ethik hinausgehen*)”³¹⁷ and whose work has eclipsed the Husserlian quest to secure “consciousness (*Bewußtsein*)...[as] *the possible object of an absolute science (möglicher Gegenstand einer absoluten Wissenschaft)*.”³¹⁸ Notwithstanding his many reservations about the Schelerian approach to phenomenology, Heidegger shows more concern for the developing ideas of Scheler than for those of any other contemporary source mentioned either in his *Prolegomena* course or in *Being and Time*.

During one of his lectures during the summer of 1925, Heidegger confirms his attentive reading of Scheler’s work when he suspiciously responds to a footnote that appeared in the published transcript of the University of Cologne professor’s address to the Lessing Institute of Berlin on January 17, 1925. This lengthy footnote by Scheler begins:

For seven years I have been proposing the following ideas in my lectures, as a *basis* for my theory of knowledge. Consciousness (a translation of *conscientia*) is only one form of knowledge. There also exists preconscious, ecstatic knowledge (therefore, knowledge is, in no way, a function of “consciousness”). Knowledge itself is, however, an *ontological* relationship. The circumstantial presence of what is can simultaneously be *in mente* and *extra mentem*, but existence is always *extra mentem*. Furthermore, the fact that we possess existence as such is *not* at all based on intellectual factors (whether perception or thought), but solely on the *resistance* of what is, originally experienced only in the act of striving and in the dynamic factors of attention.³¹⁹

³¹⁷ GA 20, §10a, 128 / 94.

³¹⁸ GA 20, §11d, 147 / 107.

³¹⁹ Scheler. "The Forms of Knowledge and Culture." Note 24. p. 134. In German: “Die Lehre, daß Bewußtsein (Übersetzung von *conscientia*) nur eine Art des Wissens ist, daß es auch vor-bewußtes ekstatisches Wissen gibt (Wissen also keineswegs eine Funktion des „Bewußtseins“ ist); daß Wissen selbst aber ein Seins-Verhältnis ist; daß das Sosein eines Seienden in *mente* und *extra mentem* zugleich sein kann, das Dasein aber stets *extra mentem* ist; daß ferner das Haben von Dasein als Daseiendem überhaupt nicht auf intellektualen Funktionen (sei es der Anschauung oder des Denkens) beruht, sondern allein auf dem im Akte des Strebens und der dynamischen Faktoren der Aufmerksamkeit allein ursprünglich erlebten Widerstand des Seienden, trage ich seit 7 Jahren als das erste Fundament meiner Erkenntnistheorie vor.” Scheler. "*Die Formen des Wissens und die Bildung*." p. 143.

Scheler goes on in this footnote to criticize Nicolai Hartmann's ontological theory of knowledge for ignoring the "will-directed" nature of existence and to condemn all forms of "idealism of consciousness (*Bewußtseinidealismus*)" for perpetuating "the false assumption...that existence and the circumstance of things, as related to the intellect (perception, thought, memory) are *inseparable from each other*."³²⁰ In response to Scheler's claim concerning the chronology of his theory of "will-directed" existence, Heidegger remarks to his students that:

Scheler here has a special need to note the time when he first presented this ["voluntative" theory of existence]. In this regard I want to stress that I also have proposed this theory already for seven years.³²¹

Thanks to Heidegger's attempt to explicitly counter Scheler's retroactive claim, we have solid evidence that Heidegger would have first become aware of Stoker's research on the phenomenon of conscience no later than the summer of 1925 and—as we will show below—would have been anticipating the publication of *Das Gewissen* that September. For in an earlier footnote to this same text published by Scheler in June 1925, the director of Stoker's doctoral work specifically mentions the upcoming publication of *Das Gewissen* that fall, providing advance publicity for a work he describes as an "excellent study" on conscience "edited by myself."³²² For all his criticism of the Schelerian "anthropological"

³²⁰ Scheler. "The Forms of Knowledge and Culture." Note 24. p. 134. / Scheler. "*Die Formen des Wissens und die Bildung*." p. 143.

³²¹ GA 20, §24e, 303 / 221. In German: "*Scheler hat hier ein besonderes Bedürfnis, die Zeit zu markieren, seit wann er diese Theorie vorträgt. Ich möchte demgegenüber betonen, daß ich diese Theorie auch schon seit sieben Jahren vortrage...*"

³²² In the ninth footnote to the published text of this talk entitled "The Forms of Knowledge and Culture" (a text that Heidegger refers to repeatedly during the 1925 summer semester and in *Being and Time*), Scheler claims that if we accept that "the values of biological life [to be] the *highest*, we would logically have to accept the consequences...[of] my book *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*. Actually, all human spiritual aspirations which ever existed are based on the assumption that biological life is *not* the highest of values. Neither the value of ethics nor those of knowledge or esthetics can be biologically justified, nor can we derive value *judgments* from biology or vitalistic psychology (as Spencer, Nietzsche, J. M. Guyau, and others believed). The study of the theory of value proves the *autonomy of the spirit* in man, no less clearly than logic, the theory of knowledge, and ontology, and does so quite independently from these disciplines. Concerning 'conscience,' cf. the excellent study by H. Stoker, 'Das Gewissen' (Bonn, 1925), in *Schriften zur Philosophie und Soziologie*, edited by myself." Scheler. "The Forms of Knowledge and Culture." p. 129 / Scheler. "*Die Formen des Wissens und die Bildung*." p. 145. Scheler gave the speech at the Lessing Institute of Berlin on January 17, 1925. The printed version published by Bonn's Friedrich Cohen publishing house received its copyright on June 15, 1925—which means it would have become available just in time for

approach to phenomenology, Heidegger is evidently inspired by and vigilant of Scheler's work right down to the footnotes of his contemporary's most recently published lectures, as we see confirmed by Heidegger's reading of this new book by Scheler's foreign graduate student within a few months, if not weeks, of its being printed. In this light, should we perhaps take with a grain of salt Heidegger's criticism of Stoker's work on the grounds that it is supposedly based on Schelerian principles? Even if Stoker was guilty of having "taken over" Scheler's personalism in *Das Gewissen*—which, as we will see, he clearly is not—is it possible that Heidegger is more indebted to both Scheler *and* Stoker than the overt criticisms found in *Being and Time* might lead us to believe?

In any case, Heidegger's assessment that Stoker submissively adopted his master's "anthropological" principles in conducting his investigation of conscience disregards the fact that Stoker's approach is fundamentally different from—and ultimately irreconcilable with—what Scheler advocates. At a superficial level, Heidegger could no doubt make a case for several similarities between Scheler's work and the Stokerian analysis of conscience. For one, Stoker refers to Scheler in *Das Gewissen* almost *twice* as many times as he does to any other single thinker.³²³ Stoker notably uses Scheler's work as his foil for demonstrating the problems of the Kantian categorical imperative and devotes two distinct sections of his text to relatively uncritical descriptions of Schelerian theories related to conscience, notably those involving the concepts of value-perception and sympathy. It

Heidegger to use in his lectures on "Being-in-the-world" during the second half of his summer course, which concluded at the end of July. As mentioned previously in our study, Stoker's book *Das Gewissen* was copyrighted on September 30, 1925. Slightly over a year later, in December 1926, Scheler once again confirms his pride in Stoker's work (despite again expressing his lingering frustration with regard to his student's critical reading of Scheler's own concept of conscience) when he reports on the book's success in the foreword to the third edition of *Der Formalismus*: "*Formalism in Ethics* and other ethical writings of mine have been elaborated upon and deepened (but in a manner different from Hartmann's) by H. G. Stoker, a South African student of mine. His *Das Gewissen* (Bonn: Verlag Friedrich Cohen, 1925), very well received by critical readers, represents, despite the many critical comments one can make concerning some details of my ideas, the most precise and minute analysis on the phenomenon of conscience that we have today (see my preface to his work). This work has also been recognized on various occasions by eminent critics (e.g., K. Groos)." Max Scheler. *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*. trans. Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973). pp. xxxi-xxxii. / Max Scheler. *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik: neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethnischen Personalismus*. (Bern: A. Francke, 1954). p. 23.

³²³ In the index to *Das Gewissen*, Stoker identifies 43 pages in his work where he makes reference to Scheler. Kant ranks second with 22.

bears remembering, however, that Scheler was both the director of the visiting South African's doctoral studies at the University of Cologne and the editor of the published version of *Das Gewissen*, which was printed by Bonn's Friedrich Cohen publishing house as the second volume of Scheler's series entitled "Schriften zur Philosophie und Soziologie." Under these circumstances, Stoker's decisions to prominently feature Scheler's work in his review of the historical development of the concept of conscience and to avoid any direct criticism of Schelerian notions seem quite understandable. In any case, the mere inclusion of Scheler's concepts in *Das Gewissen*—no matter how extensively presented—cannot be considered as proof that Stoker simply adopted the same theoretical principles proposed by his master. To justify such a conclusion, one would have to show that Stoker's investigation both remains faithful to these principles and produces results that are consistent with them, which is evidently not the case in *Das Gewissen*.

One doesn't have to look far in *Das Gewissen* itself for evidence undermining this allegation made by Heidegger. Ironically, this evidence comes directly from the pen of the person most concerned by the question: Scheler himself. In his "Editor's Foreword" to Stoker's work, Scheler distances himself from Stoker with regard to the conclusions of the young South African's study. Despite taking obvious pride in the work of his student, whom he commends for having "excellent command of the methods"³²⁴ of phenomenological analysis and for producing a "detailed and deeply penetrating treatment of the problem"³²⁵ of conscience, Scheler balks at Stoker's elevation of a specifically religious conception of conscience described in absolute terms, observing that his student's Afrikaner roots make him "predisposed" to view conscience in terms of the "purity, rigor, power and depth...of the religious-Christian heroism" personified by Calvin.³²⁶ While respectful—and perhaps even admiring—of his student's strong religious convictions, Scheler affirms that Stoker should have paid more heed to the differences in how conscience has been understood, e.g. in different nations and cultures, in different social environments, in different historical situations. In Scheler's opinion, Stoker fails to

³²⁴ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. From the "Editor's Foreword" by Max Scheler. p. x.

³²⁵ Ibid. From the "Editor's Foreword" by Max Scheler. p. xi.

³²⁶ Ibid. From the "Editor's Foreword" by Max Scheler. p. x.

recognize the full importance of the “social and evolutionary” factors of conscience because his personal religious beliefs have tainted his study and interfered with his “strictly scientific attitude.”³²⁷ By failing to preserve the formalism of his investigation, Stoker “falls short” of the universality demanded by Scheler in conducting his own phenomenological work: rather than upholding the universal “person” and the full range of possible experiences of conscience, Stoker allowed his study to be skewed by his own specific cultural outlook, leading to his “overestimating the constancy and the uniqueness of the historical appearance (*überschätzt...die Konstanz und die Eindeutigkeit seiner geschichtlichen Erscheinung*)” of conscience.³²⁸ While Scheler recognizes that the “disregarding of the content [of conscience] and the objective value of its so-called ‘information’” is critical to phenomenological analysis, he insists that a “truly complete” study of conscience would have placed greater emphasis on the “person” and “psychological observation.”³²⁹

Scheler identifies very explicitly what he believes Stoker emphasized too much in *Das Gewissen*: the metaphysical and religious aspects of conscience. As a result, Scheler contends that Stoker’s belief in an absolute source of conscience—understood in manifestly theistic terms—somewhat spoils the work’s phenomenological spirit. While he closes his remarks by saluting *Das Gewissen* as a “significant milestone” and is largely congratulatory toward Stoker in his comments, Scheler evidently disapproves of his student’s inchoate approach to phenomenology and notes that a “vast” amount of research remains to be done.³³⁰ While Heidegger may claim that Scheler’s “personalism” is the theoretical foundation of *Das Gewissen*, the “Editor’s Foreword” that appears in the very first pages of Stoker’s book itself shows that Scheler strongly disagrees with this assessment. What we read is a clear message from Scheler that—despite Stoker’s laudable effort to salvage the genuine meaning of conscience—his student has not quite lived up to

³²⁷ Ibid. From the “Editor’s Foreword” by Max Scheler. p. xi.

³²⁸ Ibid. From the “Editor’s Foreword” by Max Scheler. p. xi.

³²⁹ Ibid. From the “Editor’s Foreword” by Max Scheler. p. xi.

³³⁰ Ibid. From the “Editor’s Foreword” by Max Scheler. p. xi.

the professional standards that are to be expected of any phenomenological investigation of the “person.”

b) Heidegger’s Destruction of Stoker’s “*Vulgar*” Conscience

Keeping in mind our focus on Heidegger’s criticism of Stoker, let us consider the moment in §59 of *Being and Time* where the “existential interpretation of conscience” is contrasted with “the way conscience is ordinarily interpreted.”³³¹ In this key section, Heidegger struggles with the problem of showing how his existential interpretation of conscience as a silent call from Dasein to itself is *ontically possible*. As Heidegger states in no uncertain terms, producing evidence of such a possibility is a basic requirement of his idea of phenomenological investigation. In this sense, §59 represents a decisive methodological requirement, but perhaps also a trap that Heidegger has laid for himself. To respect the radical difference between his project and the forgetfulness of philosophical tradition, Heidegger must—and successfully does—maintain the absolute distinction between his interpretation of conscience and the ordinary ones that have been previously formulated. However, if Heidegger’s destruction of ordinary conscience also eliminates any possibility of experiencing the authentic phenomenon, then he remains confronted with the same methodological problem that has haunted his existential project from the very start: how can one actually experience existence authentically?

Heidegger’s destruction of this indefinite “target” of the “ordinary” (*vulgar*) interpretation of conscience—a conglomerate of all the previous ways in which conscience has been understood (evidently including what Stoker proposes)—leaves the existential conscience of Dasein alienated from the “everyday” world. However, such an existential conscience appears impossible because Heidegger appears to have denied it any way of being experienced. To resolve this problem, he must either produce such an attestation via an alternative experience of conscience which is completely unrelated to the “ordinary” interpretation or he must identify a positive element in his “destruction” of moral

³³¹ SZ §59, 289 / 335.

conscience which can allow for an authentic possibility of experiencing conscience to be salvaged. Given this problematic situation, our examination of the relation between Heidegger's destruction of ordinary conscience in §59 and his criticism of the Stokerian interpretation in *Das Gewissen* takes on new significance. Is there a possibility of an authentic experience of the existential conscience which Heidegger might have passed over in his destruction of all previous interpretations? Is it possible that Stoker's work—apparently so influential for the development of Heidegger's own concept of conscience—might reveal an alternative to the “ordinary conscience” which can provide the “attestation” required in *Being and Time*?

Let us review the four specific objections to Heidegger's existential concept of conscience that are discussed in §59 in light of our concern for Stoker's interpretation of *synteresis* and its possible influence on *Being and Time*:

The first potential objection to his interpretation of conscience that Heidegger considers is the claim “that the function of conscience is essentially critical.”³³² To counter this objection, Heidegger argues that anyone who claims that conscience must be critical expects it to deliver information regarding practical affairs. For Heidegger, this “everyday” expectation arises out of our tendency to “[subsume existence] under the idea of a business procedure that can be regulated.”³³³ While Heidegger concedes that conscience “discloses nothing which could be either positive or negative” in terms of worldly things, this is precisely because “what it has in view is a Being which is ontologically quite different—namely, *existence (Existenz)*... [It] gives us that which in the existential sense in the ‘most positive’ of all.”³³⁴

While Heidegger's response to this first potential “objection” does effectively “destroy” the notion of “ordinary conscience,” it does not apply to our reading of Stoker's interpretation proposed in *Das Gewissen*. While Stoker does consider “everyday”

³³² SZ §59, 290 / 336.

³³³ SZ §59, 294 / 340.

³³⁴ SZ §59, 294 / 340-341.

interpretations of conscience in his study, he concludes that the phenomenon of conscience cannot be explained in terms of the content of specific acts or judgments. Noting that “[much] of what is usually meant by ‘conscience’ has nothing to do with it,”³³⁵ Stoker describes conscience as a content-free “personal renewal”³³⁶ that arises through one’s awareness that God’s absolute love is incompatible with evil. The only “message” of conscience is that “I am guilty” of not being able to preserve this absolute purity; the “guilt” conveyed by Stoker’s conscience is seen to color all possible experience and in this sense closely resembles the existential notion of guilt found in *Being and Time*.³³⁷ For Stoker, conscience itself offers no specific direction to the “conscience-plagued (*Gewissensgeplagten*)”: the individual suffering from such anguish has no alternative for resolving this inner conflict other than to renew his or her personal relationship with God. With regard to this first “objection,” any advocate of what Heidegger calls “ordinary conscience” would regard both Stoker’s and Heidegger’s interpretations of conscience as equally “negative” due to their silence concerning all specific worldly questions.

The second objection to his interpretation of conscience that Heidegger considers is the argument “that conscience always speaks in a way that is relative to some definite deed which has been performed or willed.”³³⁸ In his response to this objection, Heidegger contests any form of thinking that would reduce conscience to the recognition of “bad” deeds as though they were “‘facts’...which are present-at-hand (*vorhandene*).”³³⁹ To support his position, Heidegger alludes to Schopenhauer’s analogy of filling in the “register of deeds” of conscience, an analogy that Stoker had pointedly criticized in *Das Gewissen*. Heidegger adopts the position already laid out by Stoker when the former scoffs that it “would be as if Dasein were a ‘household’ whose indebtednesses (*Verschuldungen*) simply needed to be balanced off in an orderly manner so that the self may stand ‘by’ as a

³³⁵ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 3.

³³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 189.

³³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 190.

³³⁸ SZ §59, 290 / 336.

³³⁹ SZ §59, 293 / 340.

disinterested spectator while these experiences run their course.”³⁴⁰ Like Heidegger, Stoker refutes the “common” notion that conscience condemns specific acts and believes, rather, that it simply “reveals...the real personal evil in us.”³⁴¹ For this reason, Stoker holds that conscience cannot provide “guidance” with regard to the moral “content” of a given situation: “How and when this [evil] has come upon us, [conscience] tells us as much and as little as a corporeal disease symptom tells us about its source.”³⁴² While Heidegger’s response to this second objection exposes the inauthenticity of “ordinary conscience,” the Stokerian concept cannot be discarded on these grounds: not only is Stoker’s notion incompatible with the “ordinary conscience” in this regard, it actually appears quite similar to what Heidegger proposes.

The third potential objection to his “call of conscience” that Heidegger considers is the claim “that when the ‘voice’ is experienced, it is never so radically related to Dasein’s Being” as the existential call proposed in *Being and Time*.³⁴³ Heidegger’s strategy for responding to this objection is to accept it without reservation. In his mind, it is precisely because the philosophical tradition has devalued the phenomenon of existential guilt that “the everyday experience of conscience (*alltägliche Gewissenserfahrung*) has no acquaintance with anything like getting summoned to Being-guilty (*Aufgerufenwerden zum Schuldigsein*).”³⁴⁴ Heidegger explicitly points to Kantian morality with its emphasis on obeying laws and to Scheler’s theory of value as prime examples of how the “call of conscience” gets mediated and transformed into “an arbiter and admonisher, with whom Dasein reckons and pleads its cause.”³⁴⁵ To understand how this response might be applied to Stoker’s conscience, let us look more closely at Heidegger’s remarks regarding Schelerian value ethics. Heidegger writes:

³⁴⁰ SZ §59, 293 / 340.

³⁴¹ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 183.

³⁴² Ibid. p. 183. In German: “Es offenbart uns die Anwesenheit des „bösen Dranges“ des reell personal Bösen in uns. Wie und wann dieser in uns hineingekommen ist, sagt es uns ebensowenig und ebensoviel, wie ein körperliches Erkrankungssymptom uns über seine Herkunft sagt.”

³⁴³ SZ §59, 290 / 336.

³⁴⁴ SZ §59, 292 / 339.

³⁴⁵ SZ §59, 292 / 339.

Even the theory of value, whether it is regarded formally or materially, has as its unexpressed ontological presupposition a ‘metaphysic of morals’—that is, an ontology of Dasein and existence. Dasein is regarded as an entity with which one might concern oneself, whether this “concern” has the sense of ‘actualizing values’ or of satisfying a norm.³⁴⁶

This rebuttal to the third objection would apply to Stoker only if Heidegger’s claim that Stoker had simply “taken up” Scheler’s “personalism” and assumed the validity of his theory of universal “values,”³⁴⁷ but we have already demonstrated that this is not the case. While Stoker may have been influenced by Scheler in many ways, it is evident that the South African scholar’s phenomenon of conscience must be distinguished from any “theory of values”—including the one proposed by Scheler—and that Stoker’s approach is irreconcilable with any “metaphysics” that would attempt to understand conscience as a theoretical object. To be clear, it is evident that Stoker *does* present an interpretation of conscience inspired by religious concepts, most explicitly in his comments regarding the primordially of the personal relationship between each person and God. On these grounds, it could be easily argued that the religious orientation of Stoker’s interpretation results in *Das Gewissen* becoming tainted by theological tradition and metaphysical dogma—and we will consider such implications below. But for the moment let us remain focused strictly on Heidegger’s third proposed “objection” and how it relates to the Stokerian concept of conscience. Here Heidegger is arguing that “ordinary conscience” is “never so radically related to Dasein’s Being” and fails to disclose the individual’s essence of “Being-guilty.”³⁴⁸ Once again, Stoker’s conscience with its emphasis on the personal disclosure of one’s essential guilt proves to be incompatible with such an “ordinary interpretation” of the phenomenon and actually appears to be quite similar to the Heideggerian concept in this regard.

The fourth and final potential “objection” to his existential conscience that Heidegger considers is the claim “that our [existential] interpretation takes no account of the basic forms of the phenomenon—‘evil’ conscience and ‘good,’ that which ‘reproves’

³⁴⁶ SZ §59, 292 / 339.

³⁴⁷ SZ §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496).

³⁴⁸ SZ §59, 290 / 336.

and that which ‘warns’ (*dem „bösen“ und „guten“, dem „rügenden“ und „warnenden“ Gewissen*).³⁴⁹ Of the four potential “objections” considered by Heidegger, this last one is the most comprehensive and multi-faceted—and also appears to be the most problematic for Stoker’s notion of conscience. In Heidegger’s case, the task of defending his existential concept of conscience from such an argument is simplified by the fact that his “radical” approach is intentionally designed to distinguish existential phenomena from common “everyday” notions, including “moral” obligations. Whereas “ordinary conscience” is concerned with the accumulation of guilt tied to past acts, Heidegger proposes that conscience is not the mere remembering of “evil” things but a recalling of one’s essence as fundamentally guilty—it “calls [one] forth to *Being*-guilty, as something to be seized upon in one’s own existence... [It] points forward as it calls one back into one’s thrownness (*es eher vorweisend in die Geworfenheit zurückruft*).”³⁵⁰ Since the existential conscience he proposes is radically separated from any kind of concern for worldly activities and material “indebtedness,” Heidegger can disregard notions such as “evil,” “good,” “reproving,” and “warning”; his “phenomenon of the summons” cannot be characterized by such “moral” terms.³⁵¹

In Stoker’s case, the Heideggerian destruction of this fourth “objection” seems to hold much more significant implications than any of the previous ones that are considered in *Being and Time*. At face value, it seems that Stoker’s interpretation of conscience must be classified among the “basic forms” of “ordinary conscience” that Heidegger describes: Stoker’s book is replete with detailed phenomenological analyses of such “ordinary” manifestations of conscience and with critical reviews of theories related to them. However, a closer inspection of Heidegger’s argument regarding these forms of “ordinary conscience” reveals that Stoker’s notion cannot be lumped in with the theories of those who insist that the “stirring of conscience [is something] which *follows after*”³⁵² a sinful act based on the presupposition that time is an “interconnected sequence of successive

³⁴⁹ SZ §59, 290 / 336.

³⁵⁰ SZ §59, 291 / 337.

³⁵¹ SZ §59, 292 / 338.

³⁵² SZ §59, 290 / 337.

experiences.”³⁵³ Running through Heidegger’s series of claims regarding the inauthentic notion of time upon which “ordinary conscience” is founded, it becomes clear that they do not apply to Stoker’s notion of the phenomenon. While Stoker’s study does emphasize one’s regret for *past* acts, his understanding of this regret is not limited to any specific worldly act or any isolated moment of “worldly” time. Stoker’s notion of “evil” is existential: the regret conveyed by conscience arises out of the recognition that mankind is essentially “impure” and thus fundamentally “guilty,” making it impossible for the spark of God’s light to illuminate the “whole” of each person. Notwithstanding the evidently religious character of Stoker’s interpretation, his concept of “evil” is something that is essential to each soul and, in this sense, closely parallels the Heideggerian notions of “inauthenticity” and “falling.”

The difference between Stoker’s notion of “evil” and the notion of “evil conscience” subjected to destruction in *Being and Time* is highlighted by Heidegger himself when he rhetorically asks whether the “[ordinary] interpretation of the ‘evil’ conscience’...goes only half way?”³⁵⁴ This question appears to be virtually inspired by Stoker’s claim in *Das Gewissen* that the “true” phenomenon of conscience is neither the relative judgment of *conscientia* nor the absolute purity of divine *synteresis* but rather the “between,” the “meeting place,” the “intersection of two directions.”³⁵⁵ Stoker states that to recognize this “truth” of “guilt-ridden man” experiencing one’s contact with the “justice, mercy, grace and...fatherly love and concern” of God requires that we overcome the one-sidedness of the “theoretical” mindset.³⁵⁶ For Stoker, “true conscience is not subsumed in a knowledge as such, whether discursive or intuitive in nature” because—while the “ontic experience” of conscience may produce “knowledge”—this information is derived from the existential phenomenon and cannot be considered “the essence of conscience.”³⁵⁷ Upon

³⁵³ SZ §59, 291 / 337.

³⁵⁴ SZ §59, 290 / 337.

³⁵⁵ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 266.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 266.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 106.

completing his review of numerous conscience theories, Stoker ultimately rejects both the notions of a “good” and a “bad” conscience, just as Heidegger will in *Being and Time*.

In one of the most explicit cases where we see Stoker taking his distance from Scheler, the young South African diplomatically points out the problematic nature of Scheler’s explanation that the perception of having a “good” conscience is actually the “experienced lack of a ‘guilty conscience,’”³⁵⁸ an idea that Heidegger condemns in *Being and Time*.³⁵⁹ In a manner consistent with Heidegger’s existential interpretation despite its religious tone, Stoker proposes that conscience can only propose a “road to recovery and healing” that allows the “conscience-plagued [to] see his guilt...[and recognize] that gap separating” the individual from the purity of God’s love.³⁶⁰ In Heidegger’s account, the “warning” conscience “seems, of course, to come closest to the phenomenon of the summons,” but he dismisses this “agreement [as] just an illusion (*diese Zusammenstimmung ist doch nur Schein*)” because the warning relates to a “deed which has been willed, from which it seeks to preserve us.”³⁶¹ In other words, the “ordinary” notion of this warning involves a looking back on the content of what has been willed rather than a “calling forth” to one’s own Being-guilty where authentic possibilities are disclosed. Rather than warning the individual about “bad” things, Stoker’s conscience reminds each individual to recognize God’s authority and to respond lovingly to this “call-of-duty” through faith. While Heidegger certainly breaks with Stoker concerning the divine source of conscience, it is Stoker who actually precedes the author of *Being and Time* in

³⁵⁸ Ibid. pp. 193-194. Commenting on Scheler’s interpretation of “good” conscience, Stoker expresses his doubts regarding the legitimacy of such a concept. After quoting Scheler’s remarks, Stoker notes the following: “Dann betont [Scheler] sicherlich eine Urtatsache, die das Phänomen selbst uns darbietet: ob dagegen das gute Gewissen nur das erlebte Fehlen und der erlebte Mangel des schlechten Gewissens ist, und selbst nicht einen positiveren Inhalt hat, ist vielleicht zweifelhaft.” Scheler’s remarks on “the experienced absence and the experienced lack of a ‘guilty conscience’ [*das erlebte Fehlen und der erlebte Mangel des schlechten Gewissens*]” are found in Scheler. *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*. p. 322 (We have modified the English translation.) / Scheler. *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik: neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethnischen Personalismus*. p. 335. (Stoker cites p. 374 in the second edition published in 1921.)

³⁵⁹ SZ §59, 291 / 338.

³⁶⁰ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 183.

³⁶¹ SZ §59, 292 / 338.

rejecting the inauthentic “reckoning” of the so-called “ordinary conscience” and in revealing the “existential” priority of one’s “call-of-duty.”

If we assume that these four proposed objections raised by Heidegger encompass the full scope of what he labels as the “ordinary conscience,” then our analysis has demonstrated that Stoker’s interpretation—which is incompatible with the “ordinary conscience” on all four counts—cannot simply be conflated with the others and included under this heading. Heidegger’s criticism of the “ordinary conscience” in §59 actually reinforces the fact that Stoker’s concept of conscience must be distinguished from Schelerian personalism and value ethics. In reviewing Heidegger’s dismissal of the existential merits of Stoker’s approach, the first two basic criticisms that the German philosopher makes of *Das Gewissen* have proven to be illegitimate. Let us now consider the third and final criticism of Stoker’s approach that Heidegger proposes explicitly in the remarks on *Das Gewissen* contained in his footnote to §55.

c) Heidegger’s Criticism that Stoker Blends Phenomenology with Theology

The most devastating critique of Stoker’s work in *Being and Time* is delivered in two short lines of the footnote to §55 where Heidegger asserts that Stoker’s approach negligently blends together phenomenology and theology. There is no denying that Stoker is guilty of this “offense”: Stoker builds his entire phenomenological interpretation on the basis of religious concepts and thereby falls well short of the radicality demanded by Heidegger. For the German thinker, the concoction of phenomenology and theology found in *Das Gewissen* can be traced back to Stoker’s naïve belief that conscience can be grasped “as something which subsists objectively and actually.”³⁶² Heidegger sees Stoker presuming—much like the neo-Kantians with their “critical-teleological method”—that the “objective” and “true” conscience can be accessed directly in experience simply by adopting the proper mindset, a sort of pure phenomenological “seeing” that somehow avoids distortions and distractions caused by the accumulation of traditional theories. To

³⁶² SZ §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496).

understand the grounds for Heidegger's criticism, consider these remarks taken from Stoker's introduction to *Das Gewissen*:

If one dares under such circumstances [regarding the ambiguity of various definitions of conscience] to look into this problem, one must look to what is presented in the phenomenon itself as a starting point, not to the theories, not to the history of the problem, but to the objective reality of the experienced "conscience," and to let only the objective reality of the truth have the last word. What works is not the presenting of abstract thoughts or theories, but the objectively subsisting real conscience, which will be described in depth as we try to understand its meaning.³⁶³

In the light of the basic principles laid out in *Being and Time*, Heidegger here identifies an evident incompatibility between his existential-ontological project and Stoker's proposed approach for "phenomenologically" investigating conscience. Another example of the apparent incompatibility of their approaches is found in Stoker's claim that one of the key causes of the "labyrinthine ambiguity" surrounding conscience is that psychology has not asserted itself against the speculative chaos of philosophical and theological theories.³⁶⁴ Stoker notably expresses hope that the crisis of European culture in the aftermath of the First World War will lead to "new interest for deeper underlying problems and...that soon psychology will give the 'conscience' the attention it deserves."³⁶⁵ When such a defense of psychological research is combined with Stoker's statement regarding "phenomenological" description and his reliance on religious concepts such as *synteresis*, it is difficult to counter Heidegger's claim that some "boundaries" have indeed been "blurred" by the author of *Das Gewissen*.

³⁶³ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 3. In German: "Wenn man sich unter solchen Umständen an das Gewissensproblem wagt, ist es von selbst geboten, nicht die Theorien, nicht die Geschichte des Problems, sondern die objektive Wirklichkeit, das wirklich erlebte "Gewissen" als Ausgangspunkt zu nehmen und nur die objektive Wirklichkeit über die Wahrheit der Theorien das letzte Wort sprechen zu lassen. Das will diese Arbeit; nicht das abstrakt gedachte oder theoretisch vorgestellte, sondern nur das objektiv wirklich bestehende Gewissen will sie in seiner Tiefe beschreibend zu erfassen versuchen und seinen Sinn zu verstehen trachten."

³⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 4.

³⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 2-3. In German: "In dieser heutigen Krisis erfährt die Psychologie eine neue Vertiefung, neue Interessen entstehen für tiefere Grundprobleme, und es kann erwartet werden, daß demnächst die Psychologie auch dem "Gewissen" die verdiente Aufmerksamkeit schenken wird."

While Heidegger appears to deliver a “decisive” blow against Stoker’s phenomenological method, our concern for Stoker’s influence on Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein in *Being and Time* remains legitimate—indeed, the question of this influence only becomes more problematic. If *Das Gewissen* suffers from “blurred boundaries” as it explains the source of conscience, how does Heidegger propose to investigate existence without presupposing an absolute source in his own work? Evidently recognizing the urgency of this problem, Heidegger promises in §54 to show how Dasein’s authentic mode of existence can be attested as an *existentiell* possibility without having recourse to a “power” external to Dasein. In remarking that Stoker does damage to both phenomenology and theology through his “blurring” of the two, Heidegger suggests a question that is vital to our study of *Das Gewissen*’s impact on *Being and Time*: how can this “blurring” be avoided?

As noted above, Stoker explicitly states that his adoption of the “phenomenological method” was accidental: he took up this phenomenological approach only *after* realizing that his initial “intellectualistic” and theoretically oriented approach was inappropriate for a study of conscience. The signs of this improvisation are seen in *Das Gewissen*’s exotic methodological blend of deconstructive historical analysis, “objective” description of psychological states, and earnest—yet highly debatable—interpretations of religious concepts. In this sense, Stoker’s work on conscience exemplifies the challenge of innovating a philosophical approach in defiance of theoretical conventions and thereby recalls Heidegger’s own concession at the end of §7 of *Being and Time*:

With regard to the awkwardness and ‘inelegance’ of expression in the analyses to come, we may remark that it is one thing to give a report in which we tell about entities, but another to grasp entities in their *Being*. For the latter task we lack not only most of the words but, above all, the ‘grammar.’ (*Für die letztgenannte Aufgabe fehlen nicht nur meist die Worte, sondern vor allem die „Grammatik“.*)³⁶⁶

³⁶⁶ SZ §7, 38-39 / 63.

Given that Stoker was less attuned to the question of “hermeneutical conditions” than was Heidegger,³⁶⁷ it can be argued that *Das Gewissen* suffers even more severely from this lack of “grammar”: Stoker’s accidental discovery that the study of conscience required a phenomenological approach leads to flagrant inconsistencies as he veers from one interpretive mode to the next. At certain points in *Das Gewissen*, Stoker appears to regard “phenomenology” as a special form of psychology that oversees the facts of emotional experience and documents the “objective reality” of God’s spirit revealed to each person; at others, Stoker proposes a patently existential interpretation of conscience in order to overcome the “metaphysical problems” revealed by his analysis. This existential aspect of Stoker’s work shows itself to be closely aligned with—but certainly not identical to—the Heideggerian notion of conscience; at the very least, it confirms that the Stokerian concept cannot be equated with the “ordinary conscience” that Heidegger submits to “destructive” analysis in *Being and Time*.

Despite the advances found in Stoker’s work, Heidegger justly criticizes the South African’s “blurred” notion of conscience as being fundamentally incompatible with his own concept of phenomenological investigation: it would be impossible to filter out the theological bias from the text of *Das Gewissen* in order to extract a “pure” existential concept of the sort proposed by Heidegger. While the South African focuses his study on the “so-called ‘moral conscience’” rather than the “religious” phenomenon, his “phenomenological” investigation proceeds on the basis of essentially religious—and specifically Christian—concepts. As Scheler notes with disapproval in his “Editor’s Foreword,” Stoker “overemphasizes the constancy” of conscience because he inappropriately favors “theistic metaphysical beliefs” and fails to adequately consider other ways of understanding the phenomenon, e.g. in terms of developmental psychology and sociology.³⁶⁸ If one attempted to remove the theological content from *Das Gewissen*, all that would remain of Stoker’s study would be his review of previous conscience theories and his aborted attempt to phenomenologically “describe” one’s experience of the “guilty

³⁶⁷ SZ §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496).

³⁶⁸ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. From the “Editor’s Foreword” by Max Scheler. p. xi.

conscience.” Purged of all discussion of *synteresis*, Stoker’s *Das Gewissen* would be reduced to less than half its original length: the entire concluding chapter and the work’s most original insights (proposed in the section entitled “The Evolution of Conscience”) would be lost. Ironically, Heidegger’s decision not to acknowledge the most central concept in Stoker’s interpretation of conscience—the Christian notion of *synteresis*—contributes to concealing the greatest difficulty facing his own concept of conscience: the fact that his existential interpretation also struggles with the problem of showing how it is ontically possible for Dasein to experience itself as a whole. Rather than attempting to “purify” Stoker’s phenomenology of *synteresis* to make it more “compatible” with Heidegger’s project, let us instead focus on how Stoker actually goes about his “phenomenological” investigation in *Das Gewissen* and produces the “blurring” so disparaged by Heidegger. For our study, what is most significant is the striking parallel between Stoker’s phenomenological approach to essentially theological notions and Heidegger’s proposed methodology for accessing the question of Being through the analysis of Dasein.

Immediately after Stoker demands in his book’s introduction that we “look only to [the objective reality] offered in the phenomenon itself,”³⁶⁹ he calls a halt to the entire enterprise because a vital preliminary task must be accomplished before “the problem can even be advanced.”³⁷⁰ It is here that Stoker insists on the necessity of the “quasi-surgical work” to extract the “word and concept” of conscience from the “great ambiguity and confusion.”³⁷¹ In other words, Stoker’s phenomenological investigation of conscience begins with a preliminary “destructive” step that consists of dispersing the “cosmopolitan assembly” of the history-burdened concept of conscience in order to determine how its original meaning can be accessed.³⁷²

³⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 3.

³⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 4.

³⁷¹ Ibid. p. 3.

³⁷² Ibid. p. 4.

Stoker's opening move in *Das Gewissen* parallels the one made by Heidegger in his analysis of Dasein and its "everyday" world: the phenomenon being investigated must first be freed from the obscuring strata of inauthentic assertions that have covered it up. Stoker does not launch headfirst into a description of the experience of conscience based on perception or intuition; instead, he demands that the "ordinary" theories of conscience proposed by tradition be peeled away so that its legitimate "bloodline" can be established ("...wer nach seinem Blut zum Gewissensreich gehört").³⁷³ Rather than accepting the authority of any given theory of conscience, Stoker—much like Heidegger—seeks to clear the way to *access* the phenomenon in order to then pose the question: "What is the conscience in its essence? (*Was ist das Gewissen seinem Wesen nach?*)"³⁷⁴ While Stoker's question lacks the "radicality" of the Heideggerian project's attempt to access the meaning of Being, it is remarkable that Stoker determines that conscience necessitates his improvising of a "phenomenological" investigation. As Stoker explains, the phenomenon of conscience *itself* discloses the genuine way for its own investigation and interpretation.

2.4. "Disease Symptoms" (*Krankheitserscheinungen*) in *Das Gewissen* and *Being and Time*

A shared analogy that is featured prominently in both Stoker's *Das Gewissen* and Heidegger's *Being and Time* allows us to directly compare their respective approaches to phenomenological investigation and to confirm Stoker's influence on the Heideggerian concept of conscience: the analogy of disease symptoms (*Krankheitserscheinungen*). Heidegger uses this analogy in both his *Prolegomena* course³⁷⁵ and in *Being and Time* to illustrate the meaning of the term "phenomenology."³⁷⁶ For his part, Stoker relies even

³⁷³ Ibid. p. 4.

³⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 4.

³⁷⁵ GA 20, 112-113 / 82.

³⁷⁶ SZ §7a, 30-31 / 54.

more heavily on the metaphor of “symptoms of life-threatening substances in the body” in the section of *Das Gewissen* that appears under the heading “Metaphysical Problems.”³⁷⁷

Discussing the “primordial” meaning of the term “phenomenology,” Heidegger presents his students in Marburg during the summer semester of 1925 with the example of “symptoms” of disease (*Krankheitserscheinungen*) to explain how “appearances (*Erscheinungen*)” can be understood as “occurrences (*Vorkommnisse*) which refer back to other occurrences from which we can infer something else which does not make an appearance.”³⁷⁸ In using the word “*Krankheitserscheinungen*,” Heidegger metaphorically associated his concept of phenomenology with a medical term that emerged in the late 19th century and was most commonly used in the field of psychiatric pathology. “*Krankheitserscheinungen*” served, for example, as a central concept of the pioneering psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin at the turn of the century as he described the physical afflictions of patients suffering from schizophrenia, paranoia and dementia. As Kraepelin wrote in his reference work on psychiatry published in 1899: “Besides the psychic disorder there are also in the physical domain a series of disease symptoms (*Krankheitserscheinungen*) to record, whose exact relations to the fundamental malady are not yet proved in all points.”³⁷⁹ For his part, Sigmund Freud, whose work is included in Stoker’s review of conscience theories but not mentioned in *Being and Time*, celebrates his “analytical method of psychotherapy” as the only means of discovering “the origins and context of disease symptoms (*Krankheitserscheinungen*)” suffered by hysterics.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁷ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. pp. 181-192.

³⁷⁸ GA 20, 112-113 / 82.

³⁷⁹ Emil Kraepelin. *Psychiatrie; Ein lehrbuch für studierende und aerzte*. (Leipzig: Barth, 1899). In German: “Ausser den psychischen Störungen sind auch auf körperlichem Gebiete eine Reihe von Krankheitserscheinungen zu verzeichnen, deren genauere Beziehungen zu dem Grundleiden allerdings noch nicht in allen Punkten feststehen.”

³⁸⁰ Sigmund Freud. “Über Psychotherapie.” *Gesammelte Werke*. ed. Anna Freud *et al.* vol. 5. (1905, 1968). p. 16. In German: “Ich darf behaupten, die analytische Methode der Psychotherapie ist diejenige, welche am eindringlichsten wirkt, am weitesten trägt, durch welche man die ausgiebigste Veränderung des Kranken erzielt [...] daß sie die interessanteste ist, uns allein etwas über die Entstehung und den Zusammenhang der Krankheitserscheinungen lehrt.”

After the outbreak of the First World War, the term took on a new and broader significance due to the advent of “shell-shock” or “War-Shock,” as the condition was called by British medical officer Montague D. Eder in his 1917 book on the diagnosis and treatment of war-related “psycho-neuroses.”³⁸¹ The Swiss psychiatrist Ludwig Binswanger, for example, published a text in 1915 entitled “*Hysterosomatische Krankheitserscheinungen bei der Kriegshysterie*” on the motor disorders observed in German soldiers being treated for acute anxiety following combat.³⁸² Reflecting the rising collective awareness of the Great War’s terrible social and cultural consequences, the term was appropriated by social scientists and philosophers documenting the wider range of “disease symptoms” suffered by the German nation and European culture as a whole. Replicating the clinical evaluation of shell-shocked soldiers, these thinkers sought to locate the source of the “evil” disease in the hope of proposing a remedy for Western civilization. One of the first German philosophers to publicly make this metaphorical link between the horrors of war and the symptoms of disease was the director of Stoker’s dissertation, Max Scheler. Speaking to an assembly in Vienna in the fall of 1917, Scheler shockingly pointed out the ongoing war’s “positive” impact:

That the War has uncovered and exposed this inner mendacity, this lying sham of European cultural community, long corroded with the poisons of nationalism, subjectivism, relativism, capitalism—that the hidden wounds of Europe’s soul have broken out in nauseating, eye-offending, evil-smelling but *healing* suppuration—for that thanks be even to this war! Here the War is not the cause of the disease but the diagnostic physician and analyst of the European soul.³⁸³

³⁸¹ Cf. Montague David Eder. *War-Shock, the Psycho-Neuroses in War: Psychology and Treatment*. (London: Heinemann, 1917).

³⁸² Cf. Otto Binswanger. "Hystero-somatische Krankheitserscheinungen bei der Kriegshysterie." *Monatsschrift für Psychiatrie und Neurologie* 38. (1915).

³⁸³ Max Scheler. "The Reconstruction of European Culture." trans. Bernard Noble. *On the Eternal in Man*. (London: SCM Press, 1917, 1960). pp. 418-419. This text is a talk that Scheler gave in the Urania at Vienna in the fall of 1917. In German: "Daß der Krieg diese innere Verlogenheit und Unwahrheit einer längst nicht mehr bestehenden, durch das Gift des Nationalismus und Subjektivismus, durch Relativismus und Kapitalismus längst zerfressenen europäischen Kulturgemeinschaft aufgedeckt und an den hellen Tag gebracht hat; daß die verborgenen seelischen Wunden der europäischen Seele zu weithin sichtbaren eklen, übelriechenden, aber *heilenden* Eiterströmen aufbrachen, des sei sogar dem Kriege Dank! Nicht die Ursache der Erkrankung, sondern der diagnostizierende Arzt und der Analysator der europäischen Seele ist hier der

Perhaps desiring to connect his ontological project with the growing concern for Germany's "spiritual health" during a time of cultural "crisis," Heidegger uses the metaphor of *Krankheitserscheinungen* in the summer of 1925 specifically to emphasize that any "appearance" is always accompanied by a phenomenon that does not show itself.³⁸⁴ When he reprises this analogy in *Being and Time*, Heidegger uses it to convey the derivative nature of such an "appearance." For Heidegger, the secondary nature of the "appearance (*Erscheinung*)" is exemplified by medical symptoms that can be clinically observed and that "indicate (*indizieren*)" an underlying disease: the phenomenon of the disease remains unseen but "announces itself (*Sich-melden*)" through the appearing of symptoms.³⁸⁵ Heidegger ties this analogy of disease symptoms to his account of the "reference-relationship" between what "appears" and what is indicated by this "appearance."³⁸⁶ In an appearance, the phenomenon "announces itself" but "does *not* show itself."³⁸⁷

While Heidegger's take on "disease symptoms" is primarily intended to explain the distinction between phenomenon and "appearance," it also helps to convey the difference between these notions and the concept of "semblance (*Schein*)" as well. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger insists that the concept of the phenomenon must be "understood from the beginning as that which shows itself in itself," echoing his presentation during the summer semester of 1925.³⁸⁸ Thus the phenomenon can either show itself or not show itself. When it shows itself, however, it can do so in two ways: 1) by *manifestly* "[showing] *itself in itself*,"³⁸⁹ which Heidegger calls the "primordial signification" of phenomenon,³⁹⁰ or 2) by "[showing] itself as something which in itself it is *not*...[which] is what we call 'seeming'

Krieg." Max Scheler. "Vom kulturellen Wiederaufbau Europas." *Gesammelte Werke*. ed. Maria Scheler. vol. 5. (Bern: A. Francke, 1917, 1968). p. 418.

³⁸⁴ GA 20, §9a, 112-113 / 82.

³⁸⁵ SZ §7a, 29-30 / 52-53.

³⁸⁶ SZ §7a, 31 / 54.

³⁸⁷ SZ §7a, 29 / 52.

³⁸⁸ SZ §7a, 31 / 54.

³⁸⁹ SZ §7a, 28 / 51.

³⁹⁰ SZ §7a, 29 / 51.

(*Scheinen*).”³⁹¹ For Heidegger, “semblance” is a “privative modification” of the phenomenon that necessitates “a pretension of showing itself—that is, of being a phenomenon.”³⁹² The fundamental difference between “semblance” and “appearance” lies in the dissimilar nature of the “not” related to each concept. Heidegger states the “*not-showing-itself*” of appearing—of indicating representatively or mediating—is “by no means to be confused with the privative ‘not’ which we used in defining the structure of semblance.”³⁹³ Heidegger continues by stating that “[what] appears does *not* show itself” and thus does not pretend to be a phenomenon; appearing is instead an indicating and therefore “can never seem.”³⁹⁴ In his *Prolegomena* course, Heidegger’s cursory explanation of how “appearance” is to be distinguished from “semblance” does not go any further than this absolute separation that he also initially proposes in *Being and Time*. As he tells his students in 1925, his simple review of the concepts described above “should suffice” in order to clarify the meaning of the “first component part of the term ‘phenomenology.’”³⁹⁵

Heidegger’s Revised Analogy of “Disease Symptoms” in *Being and Time*

In *Being and Time*, however, Heidegger goes on to make a small but significant modification to his earlier interpretation of semblance which he had presented *before* the publication of Stoker’s study in September 1925. When we compare the transcript of his *Prolegomena* course and the finalized text of *Being and Time*, we can see how this change implies a response to Stoker’s use of the metaphor of “disease symptoms” to explain his phenomenological approach to conscience. Rather than maintaining an absolute distinction between “appearance” and “semblance,” Heidegger subtly adds a new possibility for understanding this relationship which he again expresses metaphorically in terms of disease symptoms:

³⁹¹ SZ §7a, 28-29 / 51.

³⁹² SZ §7a, 29 / 52.

³⁹³ SZ §7a, 29 / 52.

³⁹⁴ SZ §7a, 29 / 52.

³⁹⁵ GA 20, §9a, 115 / 84.

In so far as a phenomenon is constitutive for ‘appearance’ in the signification of announcing itself through something which shows itself, though such a phenomenon can privatively take the variant form of semblance, appearance too can become mere semblance. In a certain kind of light someone can look as if his cheeks were flushed with red; and the redness which shows itself can be taken as an announcement of the Being-present-at-hand of a fever, which in turn indicates some disturbance in the organism.³⁹⁶

With this new take on the disease symptoms metaphor, Heidegger supplements his initial description of “appearance” with a specific physiological symptom that is originally used by Stoker to “explain” the phenomenon of conscience: changes in skin color.³⁹⁷

In Stoker’s text, the metaphor of disease symptoms serves to show how the “true” experience of conscience proves to be both “supernatural” and “supernormal” when compared to observable “symptoms” in the fields of biology and sociology, respectively.³⁹⁸ In a way that reveals what Heidegger protests as the “blurring” of phenomenology with theology in *Das Gewissen*, Stoker deploys the metaphor of disease symptoms not in order to explain his phenomenological method but to convey the necessity of the relationship between the conscience-plagued person and God, the relationship that enables each person to truly “see themselves” by recognizing the evil that exists within. For Stoker, conscience represents a metaphysical problem because it must be shown how the pain of the “conscience-stricken” indicates the “presence” of evil; in other words, Stoker aims to demonstrate how conscience is able to reliably detect “true evil.” For Stoker, the recognition that conscience depends on the authority of God means that the “guilty conscience” itself is not the genuine phenomenon: “true” conscience is rather the

³⁹⁶ SZ §7a, 30-31 / 54. In German: “Sofern für „Erscheinung“ in der Bedeutung von Sichmelden durch ein Sichzeigendes ein Phänomen konstitutiv ist, dieses aber privativ sich abwandeln kann zu Schein, so kann auch Erscheinung zu bloßem Schein werden. In bestimmter Beleuchtung kann jemand so aussehen, als hätte er gerötete Wangen, welche sich zeigende Röte als Meldung vom Vorhandensein von Fieber genommen werden kann, was seinerseits noch wieder eine Störung im Organismus indiziert.”

³⁹⁷ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. pp. 131-133.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 182. Stoker here observes that biologists, for example, view the experience of conscience as a sign of mental illness. From the “superior point of view (*noch höheren Standpunkt*)” of the phenomenological approach, however, one sees not only that a person who “experiences” the pain of conscience can be healthy but that he or she can actually “experience a much deeper reality than those considered normal (*als ein eine viel tiefere Realität Erlebender wie der gewöhnlich „normale“ Mensch*)” according to the standards of traditional science.

experience of hearing the “call-of-duty” and remembering one’s personal responsibility to obey *synteresis*. In Stoker’s metaphor, the pain of conscience is the “disease symptom” revealed to us by the caring spirit that guards the human soul from evil.

Analyzing this “symptom” of “guilty conscience,” Stoker finds in the experience of conscience a unity of three moments that make up its phenomenal whole:

Firstly, as noted above, the experience of conscience “reveals the presence of...the real personal evil in us.”³⁹⁹ This evil is indicated to the individual when it comes into contact with the absolute good of God: even though we are unable to grasp this “absolute knowledge,” the painful experience of evil coming into contact with the divine initiates an inner state of crisis (*Krise*). Stoker describes this “warning” function of conscience by comparing three pieces of equipment: a compass, a pressure valve and a seismograph.⁴⁰⁰ A compass is unlike conscience because it provides its user with specific information concerning direction. Since a pressure valve only reacts to a defined “quantity” of pressure that is considered unsafe, it is also unlike conscience because this would imply there is a certain level of evil that can be “tolerated.” For Stoker, the most suitable metaphor is that of the seismograph: this instrument constantly monitors the level of seismic activity but does not provide precise information regarding its source or its effects. As with a seismograph, the warning of conscience is delivered in absolute form and cannot be considered a command: it is rather a simple indication that implies an inner threat. As Stoker notes, we “know” as little about the origin of the evil within us from our experience of conscience as we know about the ultimate source of a disease from the symptoms observed in our body.

The second moment of Stoker’s conscience experience is one of crisis because the warning has revealed an inner conflict within the person. The pain of conscience indicates that the “indigenous forces” of the soul—the “healing life forces” of “spiritual love” placed in the soul by God—have refused to allow the foreign “enemy” to conquer this “sovereign”

³⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 183.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 184.

territory.⁴⁰¹ While the intensity of conscience pain fluctuates depending on the level of evil threatening the soul, Stoker insists that “guilt” is felt constantly because the soul is essentially impure and must “regretfully” heal itself. For Stoker, it is only the granting of ultimate forgiveness by God that can complete this “healing” process.

The third and final moment of conscience is the indicating of a “way” to recovery: for Stoker, this is the “way” of religious experience that brings the soul into unity with God. This “way” can be characterized in both negative and positive terms: negatively, it shows that the person is necessarily separated from God’s absolute goodness; positively, it reveals that the believer can combat the evil within his or her soul through faith and repentance. As Stoker notes, this “way” to recovery is the ultimate meaning of conscience: the “disease symptom” of one’s “guilty conscience” is a “call-of-duty (*Pflichtruf*),” a call to “healing” that seeks “to preserve the person” through faith.⁴⁰²

However different in its basic motivations, Stoker’s approach to the phenomenological investigation of conscience evidently resembles in many ways the Heideggerian interpretation of this phenomenon found in *Being and Time*. Notwithstanding his insistence that God is the necessary source of all existence, Stoker is just as concerned as Heidegger is with the need for exhibiting the “how” of experiencing conscience and for identifying the conditions of this experience. Similar to what Heidegger claims in *Being and Time*, Stoker insists that this phenomenon must be brought to “show itself in itself” because it cannot be properly understood in terms of “observable content.” Although the text of *Das Gewissen* was certainly influenced by its editor, Stoker confirms his independence from Scheler by resisting any attempt to establish a value-based ethical system on the basis of conscience: the South African is much less concerned with Scheler’s notion of value than with his own goal of exhibiting the basic conditions necessary for morality, which he reveals to also be the conditions of existence itself.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid. p. 183.

⁴⁰² Ibid. p. 184.

For Stoker, the first condition of existence is the “love” of God that necessarily animates experience: existence “begins” with the reception of this love by a “person” whose world is lit up by this divine force. The only possible “way” of existing authentically for Stoker’s person is the humble response of repentance. This act requires that one break free of all “evil” worldly interests that interfere with one’s responsibility to God. The “phenomenological” understanding of existence advocated by Stoker is essentially determined by one’s guilt for having eclipsed God’s light: while no person can replicate the “absolute” purity of the divine spark in one’s soul, one can seek to cherish it, to preserve it and to seek repentance for having fallen into evil. For Stoker, one’s seeing the “way” disclosed by conscience requires that one recognize that God’s light is what discloses the world. The only “certainty” that is revealed to Stoker’s person by conscience is the “fact” of one’s essential impurity: it is the experience of an indefinite and content-free “warning.” Due to the relative nature of all human knowledge, any notion that this contact with God would provide guidance about worldly affairs is necessarily a fallacious “seeming.” Stoker, however, does not share Heidegger’s reticence with regard to identifying the ultimate authority of the “source” phenomenon itself: for him, the metaphysical source is the “absolute” and “eternal” authority of God’s spirit in man. The human response to this absolute, in turn, is not the “knowledge” of *conscientia* but rather the choice to obey or disobey one’s “call-of-duty,” the personal call to faith. The distinction between the Stokerian “absolute” and the Heideggerian “call of conscience” can be seen clearly by contrasting Stoker’s example of skin color as a metaphoric “disease symptom” with Heidegger’s revised take on this same metaphor that we find in §7 of *Being and Time*.

Stoker’s “Absolute” Symptom: The “Skin Color” of Death

At the conclusion of his analysis of the “guilty conscience,” Stoker provides the example of changes in skin color to illustrate how the “supernatural” phenomenon of conscience differs from other types of experience. To explain how conscience is incomparable with any condition that can be “doubted,” Stoker expands on the analogy of disease symptoms by noting that the color of one’s complexion is often used as a clue of

one's emotional state or as a sign of one's relative level of health or illness. To visualize this, he compares two examples of face color—the “healthy red” of a fresh-faced teenager versus the “anemic pallor” of a sick patient—and notes that there are “innumerable intermediate colors” between these extremes.⁴⁰³ According to Stoker, this first “superficial” level of comparison between face colors tells us *nothing* about the “true” phenomenon of conscience: unlike such “relative” phenomena, conscience can only be understood in terms of absolute contrast.

This metaphor of “complexion” can only be applied to conscience by introducing the phenomenon of death, Stoker claims. Just as the conscience experience emerges out of the absolute conflict between good and evil, the meaning of bodily symptoms as a metaphor for conscience is ultimately dependent on the possible threat to one's life. Disease symptoms only have meaning, Stoker argues, if these symptoms are anchored by an “absolute” phenomenon which lies beyond the limits of the intermediate range and orients this meaning. With the phenomenon of death, Stoker observes, we have “in this last color a completely new tone and new meaning (*in dieser letzten Farbe einen gänzlich neuen Ton und neuen Sinn*)”: something that is essential to the meaning of all life but fundamentally alien and opposed to any state of “living.”⁴⁰⁴ As Stoker explains, his analogy cannot be interpreted literally in terms of the actual “colors” of the faces of a living person and a corpse; instead, what this metaphor expresses is that the “color” of a lifeless face must be recognized as being absolutely “stained” by death.⁴⁰⁵ The “color” of death is the “ultimate color” that contrasts absolutely with all other “colors” of human life.

Stoker applies this analogy to the confrontation of absolute good and evil indicated by the suffering of the “conscience-plagued.” The “disease symptoms” of conscience indicate both the presence of pure evil and pure love inside the person; the individual is at once punished for his faults and called to assume responsibility for preserving the light of

⁴⁰³ Ibid. p. 131. In German: “z.B. dem fröhlichen, dem schamhaften, dem jugendlichen oder dem gesunden Rot auf der einen Seite, und der krankhaften, ausgezehrten, blutarmen Blässe auf der anderen Seite—mit allem den unzählbaren Zwischerfarben zwischen diesen beiden Extremen.”

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 131.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 131.

absolutely good that has been placed within his soul by God. For Stoker, the “true” phenomenon of conscience is the concerned warning powered by God’s pure love—the “call-of-duty”—that seeks to preserve the person’s unity through the act of repentance. Observing that the “ontological bond between mother and child” is the cause of “the mother’s love for her child,” Stoker claims that the “true” conscience finds its source in the “ontological relationship between the living and the Creator.”⁴⁰⁶ Hearing the “call-of-duty” and experiencing “true” conscience allows one to become aware of this ontological relationship, i.e. one must come to recognize one’s essential “guilt” in order to then seek God’s forgiveness.

The Certainty of Stoker’s Conscience

The consequences of Stoker’s “blending together” of phenomenology and theology are most evident at the conclusion of *Das Gewissen*, where the author again takes up his analogy of face color and disease symptoms in order to speculate on the possibility of a “fundamental unity” between death and evil. Stoker writes:

We found a powerful analogy between face color (in relationship to other face colors) and the conscience experience of real evil (in relationship to other moral phenomena), which is also founded in ontic phenomena, namely in “death” and in “evil” (in “sin”). Does this analogy have an even deeper inner meaning and value? Both phenomena, “death” and “evil,” are catastrophic in nature and have an undesirable metaphysical nature; they break down and destroy the norms and ideals of self-obligation. Both are absolutely negative. I think it would be possible to work out an identity between the two that is very deep. Do these ontic phenomena in their deepest origins exist only side-by-side? Or do they ultimately make up a real fundamental unity?⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 132.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 269. In German: “Wir fanden zwischen der Leichenfarbe (in ihrer Beziehung zu den übrigen Gesichtsfarben) und dem echten bösen Gewissens-erlebnis (in seiner Beziehung zu den übrigen moralischen Phänomenen) eine sprechende Analogie, welche in den ontischen Erscheinungen, nämlich in „dem Tode“ und in „dem Bösen“ (in der „Sünde“) fundiert ist. Hat diese Analogie auch einen tieferen inneren Sinn und Wert? Beide Phänomene: der „Tod“ und das „Böse“ (die „Bosheit“, die „Sünde“) sind katastrophaler Natur und haben eine metaphysisch ungewünschte Art; sie brechen vernichtend in den gewöhnlichen und ideal-sein-sollenden Strom hinein; beide sind absolut negativ und negativwertig. Es wäre meines Erachtens möglich,

Here in *Das Gewissen's* closing pages, we see Stoker abandoning the principles of his improvised “phenomenological” method that had earlier so closely paralleled Heidegger’s existential investigation with its emphasis on the disclosing role of conscience. While his initial investigation of the experience of conscience had shown how the “person” is projected into a “super-biological” conflict,⁴⁰⁸ Stoker ends his study with a return to the traditional approach of metaphysical speculation, going so far as to claim that conscience offers “proof” that “eternal life” is possible.⁴⁰⁹ As he describes the implications of this possible link between death and evil, Stoker declares that he is willing to accept responsibility for what is revealed by “such a dogmatic thesis”:

If one establishes (with these dogmas) that a real association and unity between death and wickedness (sin) somehow exists...then we can say that the conscience, by its nature, crosses over the vital mortality of man and demands its “super-vital” immortality. An analogous “mortality”-phenomenon that shows us the nature of conscience in that it expresses the complete overcoming of the evil impulse within us can be very well grasped symbolically in the expression of the Christian religion: “The death of the old self in us.”⁴¹⁰

While Stoker’s phenomenological approach initially aims to expose the “true” phenomenon of conscience, the clearing away of all the previous theories presents Stoker with “fresh ground” upon which he can construct anew. If Heidegger and Stoker at times seem to proceed along parallel paths in the course of their respective investigations, this ends

eine sehr tiefgehende Wesensübereinstimmung beider herauszuarbeiten. Stehen diese ontischen Phänomene in ihrem tiefsten Grund nur nebeneinander? — oder haben sie letzten Endes eine reale Grundeinheit?”

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 182.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 269.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. p. 269. Here Stoker makes reference to Paul’s notion, most strongly conveyed in the Letter to the Romans 6:6, that the believer’s “old body” dies through one’s faith in crucified Christ who was sacrificed to “take away” this “body of sin.” Through this transformation, or rebirth, the “new self” is made free and no longer a “slave to evil.” In German: “Nimmt man (mit diesen Dogmen) an, daß zwischen Tod und Bösheit (Sünde), ein Wesensverband und eine reale Verkettung beider irgendwie besteht, dann kann man sagen, daß das Gewissen, seinem Wesen nach, die vitale Sterblichkeit des Menschen setzt und die übervitale Unsterblichkeit des Menschen fordert. Ein analoges „Sterblichkeits“-phänomen zeigt uns das Wesen des Gewissens schon insoweit auf, als es die vollständige Überwindung des bösen Dranges in uns bekundet, was symbolisch sehr wohl begriffen werden kann mit dem Ausdruck in der christlichen Religion: „das Absterben des alten Menschen in uns“, - ein Phänomen, welches uns hier sofort die Tiefe des Wiedergeburtproblems eröffnet.”

definitively with Stoker's "regression" back into speculative metaphysics at the close of *Das Gewissen*.

Stoker's allusion to Paul's "death of the old self" in defense of his "dogmatic" interpretation is particularly telling of the distinction that must be made between the approaches of Stoker and Heidegger, as the latter had interpreted the Pauline message very differently in one of his earliest courses on phenomenological method during the 1920-21 winter semester at Freiburg. Even in these early lectures, which are not characterized by the more brazen radicality of his "existential" period, the young Heidegger advocated a phenomenological approach to interpretation that aims to counter the speculative tendency exemplified by Stoker's remarks on conscience and immortality. Beginning his lecture on Paul's letter to the Galatians, Heidegger warns his students that the objectives of phenomenological research must remain strictly limited ones:

[We] do not intend to give a dogmatic or theological-exegetical interpretation, nor a historical study...[of Paul's letter to the Galatians], but only guidance for phenomenological understanding. Characteristic of the phenomenological-religious understanding is gaining an advance understanding for an original way of access (*für einen ursprünglichen Weg des Zugangs*). ... The theological method falls out of the framework of our study. Only with phenomenological understanding, a new way for theology is opened up. The formal indication (*formale Anzeige*) renounces the last understanding that can only be given in genuine religious experience; it intends only to open an access to the New Testament.⁴¹¹

In his analysis of Paul's letters, Heidegger reads the apostle's proclamations with an eye to the "way" of the Christian life experience—understood in an evidently existential sense—and not for the content regarding moral commands, specific forms of conduct and speculation about God's nature. While Paul plainly discussed questions of "law," the phenomenological reading proposed by Heidegger is more concerned with the basic comportment of the believer: the "how" of experiencing "Christian hope (*der christlichen Hoffnung*)."⁴¹² The Heideggerian interpretation of Paul's message is irreconcilable with

⁴¹¹ GA 60, 67 / 47.

⁴¹² GA 60, 102 / 71.

Stoker's hypothesis that the possibility of eternal life can be "proven" by the experience of conscience. For Heidegger, the situation of Paul's believer is anything but certain: faith is never assured. The torment of doubt is constant and the "remembering" of God's word must be constantly renewed. If they understand God's "call" authentically, those "who are called (*die Berufenen*)"⁴¹³ regard immortality to be a very secondary matter: "true" faith is tested not in the afterlife but in the actualized experience of awaiting *parousia*, coping with existence marked by uncertainty and violent oppression.⁴¹⁴ The factual "truth" of enacted living—teeming with turmoil and doubt—is what Heidegger seeks to exhibit through his phenomenological method:

The phenomenological explication does not aim at isolated contents, and only and primarily at them; rather, it aims at the relations (*Bezüge*) and enactments (*Vollzüge*), which are readable off the content (in each temporally conditioned form). However, these relations and enactments are, in turn, not to be elevated in an a priori perpetual armamentarium; rather, they are to grasp the sense from the appropriation of one's own factual existence! (*von der Aneignung der eigenen faktischen Existenz!*)⁴¹⁵

Heidegger further emphasizes this existential aspect as he attempts to access the question of Being in *Being and Time*. Dismissing all proofs of God as the cause of existence, Heidegger seeks to recover the "wholeness" of Dasein which provides the basis of all possible religious experience, including the "death of the old man" described by Paul. For Heidegger, what is so damaging about the "blurring" in *Das Gewissen* is that it reveals that Stoker had forgotten the believer's essential state of uncertainty. In Heidegger's eyes, Stoker ultimately betrayed the phenomenological method by taking his study of conscience to the threshold of an authentic understanding of the "call of conscience" only to retreat in search of metaphysical "certainty." Determined to "prove" the immortality of the soul, Stoker concludes by instrumentalizing conscience in the name of theoretical "certainty"

⁴¹³ GA 60, 136 / 97.

⁴¹⁴ GA 60, 150-151 / 107.

⁴¹⁵ GA 60, 136 / 96.

and thus neglects the penitent sinner's experience of utter "strife (*Kampf*)" and "insecurity."⁴¹⁶

In light of his critical remarks on *Das Gewissen*, Heidegger's reference to the metaphor of face color in §7 of *Being and Time* highlights how his phenomenological approach rejects the theological speculation proposed by Stoker. By modifying his earlier take on disease symptoms, Heidegger acknowledges yet another level of complexity that his own method of phenomenological interpretation must overcome. Previously, Heidegger had only observed that a phenomenon tends to not show itself (in the case of "appearance") or to show itself as something it is not (in the case of "semblance"). Now, Heidegger adds the specific possibility that phenomenological interpretation can also be misled by appearances with the character of "mere semblance," leading to a search for the phenomenon where it is not to be found.

Using the example of bad lighting that alters "face color" and can lead to a mistaken diagnosis, Heidegger takes his distance from Stoker's confidence in the certainty of conscience as a gauge of evil. For Heidegger, no observed "symptom" can provide certainty to the existential interpretation—not even the "color of death" or the "taint of evil" proposed by Stoker.⁴¹⁷ As implied in Heidegger's footnote to §55, Stoker falls prey to the traditional tendency to produce artificial foundations for existence that cover up the phenomenon, falsely giving to "everyday" experience the appearance of present-at-hand substantiality. Since he had not recognized the radicality of the existential problem, Stoker slipped back—according to Heidegger—into the illusion of metaphysics and failed to access the authentic phenomenon of conscience.

Scheler's Critique of the Heideggerian Call as Solipsistic

When we take into account the theological concepts that Stoker's phenomenological approach is built upon, Heidegger certainly appears justified in observing that his project

⁴¹⁶ GA 60, 150-151 / 107.

⁴¹⁷ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 131.

differs from *Das Gewissen* “in its approach and accordingly in its results as well.”⁴¹⁸ Despite the clear parallels between the two investigations and Stoker’s evident influence on *Being and Time*, the dogmatic positions taken by Stoker at the conclusion of his study confirm Heidegger’s assessment that their projects are irreconcilable. While he may misidentify Stoker’s approach in *Das Gewissen* with Scheler’s personalism, Heidegger accurately distinguishes the aims of his own existential-ontological investigation of Dasein from the theological motivations which underlie the study of conscience proposed by Stoker. All methodological similarities and common themes aside, the essence of conscience is understood in vastly different ways by the two men.

As we have shown, this is seen most clearly in the fact that Heidegger’s account does not contain a single mention of *synteresis*—the primary concept proposed by Stoker for interpreting the experience of conscience. Utterly ignoring the notion of God’s spark placed in the soul, Heidegger instead proposes a “call of conscience” that brings Dasein back to its ownmost possibility in resoluteness. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger firmly asserts that his conscience is neither the moral conscience nor the religious conscience, both of which he claims are derivatives of the existential phenomenon he seeks to elucidate. While this prioritizing of the existential does not negate the possibility of moral or religious ways of experiencing the phenomenon, the “call of conscience” as interpreted by Heidegger is resolutely *a*-theistic.

While Heidegger may rightfully argue that his project is *radically* different from Stoker’s investigation of conscience, this radicality forces him to take up an urgent problem for his own project: absent an “external” authority such as God, Heidegger’s investigation must reveal how Dasein can find the source of its authenticity within itself. If the positing of a metaphysical solution is disallowed from the start, how can the authentic disclosedness of Dasein be attested as an *existentiell* possibility? This fundamental problem is raised repeatedly by Heidegger as he nears the conclusion of his existential analysis and remains unsolved when he criticizes Stoker’s study in §55.

⁴¹⁸ SZ §55, 272 (Footnote 1) / 317 (Footnote vi to Chapter 2, 495-496).

In Scheler's posthumously published notes on *Being and Time*, we see that the editor of *Das Gewissen* was skeptical with regard to the "success" of Heidegger's attempt at producing this attestation. If the "call of conscience" cannot fulfill its fundamental role of showing how Dasein can exist authentically, then Scheler concludes that the Heideggerian project must be regarded as essentially "solipsistic":

[What] I reject in Heidegger is the solipsism of existence, which he takes as his *point of departure*. It represents a pure *reversal* of the Cartesian "cogito ergo sum" into a "sum *ergo cogito*." But even in Heidegger there *persists* the fundamental error of Descartes, namely, that that which, in the order to the being of entities, is in fact the *farthest off of all* (one's own ego; and basically this also holds in Heidegger's own doctrine of Dasein's "loss of the world") is held to be given as primary. What is Dasein and "Being-in-the-world" supposed to mean? Here he introduces the word "world" which is not only very ambiguous (and world is actually not primarily given; according to Kant it is in fact only an "idea" of the progress of the understanding) but also pregnant with the whole theistic theology of the past, because world possesses a definite meaning only in opposition to "God." Furthermore what does it mean for the *solus ipse* that its kind of being is Dasein and that Dasein is "Being-in-the-world"? Here the "in" is not supposed to mean anything like "enclosed." According to Heidegger "world" itself *precedes* in Being all spatiality and temporality. Here "Being-in" is supposed to mean something like "Being caught up in something" or "Being involved in something." Can this idea have any meaning at all unless the "*solus ipse*" also experiences itself as independent from the world—something Heidegger cannot admit? Aren't these the gloomy old theologoumena of Calvinist origin (cf. also "thrownness"), which are here translated into an apparently pure ontological language?⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁹ Max Scheler. "Reality and Resistance: On *Being and Time*, § 43." trans. Thomas Sheehan. *Heidegger, the Man and the Thinker*. ed. Thomas Sheehan. (Chicago: Precedent, 1976, 1981). p. 135. In German: "Was ich dagegen ablehne, das ist Heideggers Daseinssolipsismus, von dem er *ausgeht*. Er ist eine pure *Umkehr* des cartesianischen cogito ergo sum in ein sum *ergo cogito*. Aber der Grundfehler des Descartes, in der Ordnung des Seins des Seienden das primär gegeben zu halten, was tatsächlich das *Allerfernste* ist (eigene Ich; im Grunde ja auch nach Heideggers eigener Lehre von der «Weltverlorenheit» des Daseins) - er bleibt auch bei Heidegger *bestehen*. Was soll Dasein, «In-der-Welt-sein» bedeuten? Nicht nur wird hier ein Wort eingeführt, das Wort «Welt», das ungemein vieldeutig ist und wirklich nichts primär Gegebenes (nach Kant sogar nur eine «Idee» des Fortgangs des Verstandes), sondern auch ein Wort, das schwanger ist von der ganzen theistischen Theologie der Vergangenheit, da ja Welt nur im Gegensatz zu «Gott» einen bestimmten Sinn besitzt. Was besagt ferner für den *solus ipse*, seine Art des Seins sei Dasein und Dasein sei «In-der-Welt-sein»? Das «In» soll hier nicht etwa heißen «umschlossen»; «Welt» selbst geht nach Heidegger aller Räumlichkeit, Zeitlichkeit an Sein *vorher*. «Insein» – das soll doch hier etwas Ähnliches bedeuten wie «Hineingeschlossensein», «Hineinverstricktsein». Kann dieser Gedanke überhaupt sinnvoll sein, wenn nicht der «solus ipse» sich auch unabhängig von der Welt seiend erlebt, – was doch Heidegger nicht zugeben darf?

Denying Heidegger's claim to radicality, Scheler finds *Being and Time* to be dependent on the same kinds of presuppositions that his young German contemporary wishes to expose as inauthentic.

Beyond the question of whether Heidegger's destructive approach succeeds in revealing "reality" as illusory or not, what Scheler emphasizes here echoes Heidegger's own concerns regarding the role of conscience: how can Dasein's conscience attest to the possibility of authentic disclosedness if it is *impossible* to conceive of "Being-in-the-world" participating authentically in the "world"? While Scheler does not specifically criticize Heidegger's notion of conscience, his charge of "solipsism" undermines Heidegger's claim in *Being and Time* "that Dasein is *at the same time* both the caller and the one to whom the appeal is made."⁴²⁰ While Heidegger may deny "God" as the source of existence, Scheler considers *Being and Time* just as dependent on theological tradition because it represents a "negative image" of the same dogmatic structures. Interestingly, Scheler links Heidegger's existential concept of "thrownness" with the "gloomy" Calvinist worldview, recalling his earlier criticism of Stoker's investigation for its excessive reliance upon a single "historical appearance" of conscience as exemplified by the person of Calvin.⁴²¹ Regarding the "experience" of conscience, Heidegger and Stoker thus propose mirror images of each other's concepts of conscience when considered in the light of Scheler's comments: where Stoker's "call-of-duty" echoes inside God's creatures due to the presence of *synteresis*, Heidegger's "call of conscience" from Dasein to itself means nothing without "God" because existence is essentially defined as being "God"-less. Scheler refuses to accept the Heideggerian notion of a "Being-in-the-world" that can find in itself the conditions for the possibility of its own existence. Where Heidegger "hears" a summons that comes "*from me and yet from beyond me and over me,*" Scheler insists that thinking about existence must also be shown to be possible as the experience of Dasein *in the world*: the "*beyond me and*

Sind das nicht alte, schwermütige Theologoumena calvinistischer Herkunft (s. auch «Geworfenheit»), die hier in eine scheinbar rein ontologische Sprache übersetzt sind?" Max Scheler. "Zu «Idealismus–Realismus» aus Teil V." *Gesammelte Werke*. ed. Maria Scheler. vol. 9. (Bern: A. Francke, 1927, 1968). p. 260.

⁴²⁰ SZ §57, 275 / 320.

⁴²¹ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. From the "Editor's Foreword" by Max Scheler. pp. x-xi.

over me” must also be “*from the world and through the world.*”⁴²² What Scheler’s comments imply is that absent such a demonstration, the primordial “source” of Heidegger’s authentic existence is reduced to a solipsistic call: Dasein can only call itself if it is a phantasmic Being-*without-a-world*.

Stoker’s Divine Authority of Conscience

Whatever its defects, Stoker’s approach to conscience proposed a clear—if dogmatic—way to conceive the phenomenological beginning. According to Stoker’s account of conscience, intentionality is understood in the movements of caring and faith: authentic existence arises out of one’s obedient response to God’s “call-of-duty.” All experiencing of the world is possible only through one’s seeing the reflected light of *synteresis*, the divine spark placed in the soul. The intentional movement of Stoker’s person “out” to the world cannot occur without this illuminating *synteresis*: worldly “reality” is disclosed exclusively by its light.

Stoker regards faith as the personal response that is necessary for all genuine actualizing of experience: while faith can become deteriorated, existence is possible only through the “receiving” of the light of *synteresis*. Even in its most primitive and degenerate forms, experience is an act of “sensing” and “seeing” God’s light because for Stoker the world is disclosed exclusively in the shadowy contrasts of good and evil. The relative quality or “depth” of one’s experience of existence depends upon the purity of one’s “faith.” For example, those who regard conscience as a pathology or who cling to inferior beliefs regarding God (Stoker provides “pantheism, deism and atheism” as examples of such beliefs⁴²³) experience reality superficially, while those who acknowledge God’s love as the “ultimate meaning” of conscience are able to experience reality in “its full depth.”⁴²⁴ The field of “absolute consciousness” that provides the metaphysical basis for Husserlian intentionality is replaced in Stoker’s account by an initial movement of “pure giving” that

⁴²² SZ §57, 275 / 320.

⁴²³ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 182.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 184.

is explicitly attributed to God. When the “true” source of “moral conscience” is revealed through faith, the believer recognizes that the world is shaped by his or her personal relationship with God: the “way” to return to unity with God requires hearing the “call-of-duty,” cherishing the divine gift of *synteresis*, and repenting for our sins as they are revealed by the pain of conscience.

In “discovering” this absolute source of existence, Stoker recognizes that his project has exposed a number of “metaphysical problems,” ranging from the problem of theodicy to the question of eternal life.⁴²⁵ Reflecting this fact, significant portions of *Das Gewissen* are devoted to such theological questions and their investigation is what leads to Stoker’s sudden abandonment of his “phenomenological” approach to conscience as a “personal experience.” In the book’s concluding pages, Stoker adopts an increasingly “metaphysical” approach to moral questions related to conscience and explicitly concedes that his study has entered into “dogmatic” territory.⁴²⁶ But while Stoker’s study may ultimately veer away from phenomenological principles, his interpretation of *synteresis* “solves” the problem that Heidegger must confront in *Being and Time* regarding the possibility of conscience as an experience of Dasein. By claiming *synteresis* as the source of his conscience phenomenon, Stoker effectively enlists God as the ultimate authority for his “call-of-duty” and thereby avoids the necessity of undertaking the Heideggerian search for Dasein’s “self-attestation.”

Pentecost Monday 1926: The First Glimpse of Heidegger’s “Call of Conscience”

In Heidegger’s published texts, we find only one indication prior to *Being and Time*’s publication in April 1927 of the solution which he will adopt to overcome the problematic question of the “source” of conscience. In his talk of Pentecost Monday 1926 before the Academic Association of Marburg⁴²⁷—slightly less than a year before *Being and*

⁴²⁵ Ibid. pp. 180-192.

⁴²⁶ Ibid. p. 269.

⁴²⁷ Martin Heidegger and Ernst Fuchs. "Vortrag gehalten von Prof. Martin Heidegger am Pfingstmontag 1926 in Marburg vor der Akademischen Vereinigung." *Hannah Arendt Collection*. Eleven-page typescript of Heidegger's address prepared by Ernst Fuchs, located in the folder of Hannah Arendt's personal collection

Time was printed—Heidegger proposes that “Dasein has the intrinsic possibility of being called by itself through conscience.”⁴²⁸ Unlike the earlier Heideggerian texts which we reviewed in Part One of our study, this document cannot be classified within what we identified as the “pre-*Being and Time*” period of 1919-1925 because Heidegger’s talk to this intimate group of Marburg intellectuals and students took place *after* Heidegger had completed the working manuscript of *Being and Time* through the end of §76.⁴²⁹ When he gives this talk, Heidegger has already finished drafting his much more detailed interpretations of Dasein’s key authentic phenomena of Being-towards-death and conscience that are proposed for the first time in *Being and Time*. By this point, he has thus both read Stoker’s *Das Gewissen* and integrated its content into his own work on conscience. Given that the manuscript of *Being and Time* is now virtually complete, Heidegger’s unprecedented remarks on conscience at this Marburg gathering of May 24, 1926 provide what we can consider to be the first glimpse of the “call of conscience” which appears in *Being and Time*.

(holdings of the Stevenson Library of Bard College) containing the transcript of Heidegger's course "Interpretationen Aus Der Antiken Philosophie: Aristoteles. Metaphysik. Buch Theta. Zweistündige Vorlesung im Sommer-Semester 1931." Annandale-on-Hudson: Stevenson Library, Bard College. 1926. Accessed: September 26, 2011. <<http://www.bard.edu/library/arendt/pdfs/Heidegger-Interpretations2.pdf>>. With the express authorization of the Stevenson Library, we have reproduced the high-quality scans of this unpublished typescript as Appendix A of our thesis. For additional details on this talk, cf. Kisiel and Sheehan, eds. *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*. pp. 275-277.

⁴²⁸ Martin Heidegger. "On the Essence of Truth (Pentecost Monday, 1926)." trans. Theodore J. Kisiel. *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*. eds. Theodore J. Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, [1926] 2007). p. 286. In German: "Es liegt in der Grundverfassung des Daseins die Möglichkeit, von ihm selbst angerufen zu werden, durch das Gewissen und aufgerufen zu werden zu seinem eigentlichen Sein." Heidegger and Fuchs. "Vortrag gehalten von Prof. Martin Heidegger am Pfingstmontag 1926 in Marburg vor der Akademischen Vereinigung." p. 9. Note that our citations of Kisiel’s English translation of this talk have been modified in two ways: 1) emphasis added by Kisiel which is not found in the transcript has been removed, and 2) we have used the term “Being” to translate Heidegger’s “Sein,” rather than the term “be-ing” adopted by Kisiel in his translation of this text.

⁴²⁹ Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time*. p. 482. According to Kisiel’s timeline, Heidegger and several colleagues (including Löwith, Helene Weiss and “even Husserl”) were already working in April 1926 on final corrections to the printer’s galleys of *Being and Time*’s Division One. On Husserl’s birthday of April 8, 1926, Heidegger gave him as a present the “dedication” of *Being and Time*, which Husserl’s wife Malvine described in a letter as “his just completed work (seines eben vollendeten Werkes).” Kisiel notes that “apparently §§77-83 (the last 40 pages of BT)” are the only elements of *Being and Time* that have not yet been written at this point.

Although this short talk on “truth” contains only a few lines on conscience, these indicate that Heidegger has found a new way of expressing the “how” of Dasein’s experience of coming into “resoluteness”: Dasein is “summoned to its proper Being” by the “inner voice of conscience (*innere Stimme des Gewissens*).”⁴³⁰ This “silent” and “inner voice” is the way Dasein calls itself to the “resolute openness...[of] willingness to have a conscience (*Entschlossenheit zu Gewissen-haben-wollen*).”⁴³¹ Although Heidegger does not emphasize the methodological importance of this “source” of authentic existence as he does in *Being and Time*, we see for the first time that the “voice of conscience”—explicitly described in terms of “calling” and “summoning”—is what provides the “unique” means whereby Dasein can experience itself authentically and access “its proper Being.”⁴³² With this phenomenon of the “inner voice,” Heidegger indicates a way for accessing the “how” of Dasein’s experience without relying on an external authority: “conscience” allows Dasein to come into “resolute openness” through “action.”⁴³³ In this sense, Heidegger indicates how the “voice” provides access to the “basic constitution of Dasein,” understood explicitly as its “existential” constitution rather than the “psychic” one that is prioritized by the tradition with its notion of *conscientia*. Although Heidegger does not specifically point out the methodological implications of this “voice” to his Marburg audience, it is only through Dasein’s hearing of this “voice” that the ontological question of “the proper Being of Dasein” can be raised.⁴³⁴ As Heidegger states:

The way of Dasein is to discover. Likewise, one’s own Dasein is not discovered through psychoanalysis and psychic sleuthing, but through the way of Being in which it itself resides, through action. Dasein is situated in action. Acting involves resolute openness toward something. Such an openness is the basic mode in which I find myself. Resolute openness toward what? Such an openness does not say what I am, in which it recounts something about my psychic constitution. It is rather related to a willingness to have a conscience, the resoluteness to not allow the conscience to be distorted, which would make it impossible for conscience to disclose Dasein

⁴³⁰ Heidegger. "On the Essence of Truth (Pentecost Monday, 1926)." p. 286.

⁴³¹ Ibid. p. 286.

⁴³² Ibid. p. 286.

⁴³³ Ibid. p. 286.

⁴³⁴ Ibid. p. 286.

itself. This inner voice of conscience is what properly discloses Dasein to me, to the extent that I am intimately with myself. This unique way of uncovering and disclosing that lies in conscience and prescribes for me the temporally particular possibility of my Being, this mode of resolute openness has the character of keeping silent. The voice of conscience speaks in silence. Every other mode of uncovering expresses itself, becomes *logos*, comes to words and language. The basic constitution of Dasein has the intrinsic possibility of being called by itself through conscience and summoned to its proper Being. The resolve of willing to have a conscience, the conscience itself, is therefore the proper Being of Dasein. Truth proper is the conscience because Dasein itself is in the truth.⁴³⁵

Radically distinguishing his conscience from the tradition's *conscientia*, Heidegger indicates that the "silence" of this "voice" eliminates the distortion caused by "words and language"; for Heidegger, the "silence" of conscience represents the only "mode of uncovering" that allows Dasein to experience itself authentically without falling into the illusion that it possesses "certain knowledge" regarding the "objective" and "external" world.⁴³⁶ As a sort of antidote to the "distorting" effect of *logos*, the "silent summoning" of conscience discloses the "proper truth" of Dasein by calling it to the possibility of resoluteness in the face of existence's uncertainty.⁴³⁷ In Heidegger's talk of Pentecost Monday 1926, the theologically-inspired "call of duty" of divine authority to the individual

⁴³⁵ Ibid. p. 286. In German: "Die Art des Daseins ist entdeckend. So wird auch das eigene Dasein nicht entdeckt durch Psychoanalyse und Seelenschnüffelei, sondern durch die Seinsart, in der es selbst liegt, durch das Handeln. Das Dasein liegt im Handeln. Das Handeln schließt in sich die Entschlossenheit zu etwas. Sie ist die Grundart, in der ich mich selbst finde. Die Entschlossenheit wozu denn? Die Entschlossenheit sagt nicht, was ich bin, indem sie über meine seelische Verfassung etwas erzählt, sondern sie bezieht sich darauf, Gewissen haben zu wollen. Die Entschlossenheit dazu, sich selbst das Gewissen nicht zu verstellen, und ihm unmöglich zu machen, das Dasein selbst zu erschließen. Diese innere Stimme des Gewissens ist es, die mir das Dasein, sofern ich bei mir selbst bin, eigentlich erschließt. Diese eigentümliche Art des Entdeckens und Erschließens, die im Gewissen liegt und mir in meinem Sein die jeweilige Möglichkeit vorzeichnet, diese Art des Entschließens hat den Charakter des Schweigens. Die Stimme des Gewissens spricht in der Verschwiegenheit. Alle andere Art des Entdeckens spricht sich aus, wird zum Logos, kommt zum Wort. Es liegt in der Grundverfassung des Daseins die Möglichkeit, von ihm selbst angerufen zu werden, durch das Gewissen und aufgerufen zu werden zu seinem eigentlichen Sein. Die Entschlossenheit zu Gewissen-haben-Wollen, das Gewissen selbst ist also das eigentliche Sein des Daseins. Die eigentliche Wahrheit ist das Gewissen deshalb, weil das Dasein selbst in der Wahrheit ist." Heidegger and Fuchs. "Vortrag gehalten von Prof. Martin Heidegger am Pfingstmontag 1926 in Marburg vor der Akademischen Vereinigung," pp. 8-9.

⁴³⁶ Heidegger. "On the Essence of Truth (Pentecost Monday, 1926)." p. 286.

⁴³⁷ Ibid. p. 286.

that Stoker describes in *Das Gewissen*⁴³⁸ is transformed into the “intrinsic possibility” of Dasein’s “being called by itself” through its own silence.⁴³⁹

With this identification of a “source” of existence that avoids the need to posit an external “absolute,” Heidegger reveals the “voice of conscience” to be the “unique way of [authentic] uncovering and disclosing” that makes possible his proposed investigation of Being.⁴⁴⁰ Although he does not explicitly mention the methodological significance of this discovery, this phenomenon of the “silent call” that eliminates all distortion caused by *logos* will prove to be the pivotal concept of *Being and Time*: this “summons” is the exclusive means for coming into “resolute openness” and exhibiting Dasein’s “authentic structures.” Conscience not only “reveals” the constitutive phenomena of Dasein and provides access to the question of authentic temporality, it also fulfils the essential methodological role of attesting to Dasein’s authentic existence as mode of existence which can be experienced by Being-in-the-world. What Heidegger describes on Pentecost Monday 1926 as the “intrinsic possibility of being called by itself”⁴⁴¹ will prove in *Being and Time* to be the essential “attestation” of Dasein’s “authentic potentiality-for-Being,” which he will reveal to have “its roots in Dasein’s Being” without requiring recourse to an absolute or external power.⁴⁴²

Observing publicly for the first time that conscience should be regarded as a “call” or “summons,” Heidegger in his May 24, 1926 address takes an initial step toward proposing a solution to the question he raised during the 1919 “war emergency semester”: how existence can be experienced as “self-certifying”?⁴⁴³ Where Heidegger had earlier emphasized the need to identify the “basis” of this “self-certifying,”⁴⁴⁴ he now places the focus on the phenomenological interpretation of “resolute openness” which is constituted

⁴³⁸ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 276.

⁴³⁹ Heidegger. "On the Essence of Truth (Pentecost Monday, 1926)." p. 286.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 286.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid. p. 286.

⁴⁴² SZ §54, 267 / 312.

⁴⁴³ GA 56/57, 45 / 36-37.

⁴⁴⁴ GA 56/57, 45 / 36-37.

by Dasein's both *calling* "itself through conscience" and *wanting* "to have a conscience."⁴⁴⁵ With his notion of conscience understood as a "summoning call," Heidegger indicates a source within Dasein itself that makes possible the "self-certifying" at the heart of his evolving phenomenological approach.

As the excerpt from his Marburg lecture above shows, Heidegger does not highlight the vital methodological function of conscience in this presentation to the Marburg Academic Association in the spring of 1926. This text on "truth" is focused more on the themes of *Being and Time*'s §44 where he deconstructs the traditional "concept of truth as agreement" between "objective" statements and "real" facts.⁴⁴⁶ Nonetheless, these few lines included just prior to the conclusion of his talk make it clear that Heidegger has recognized and found a new way to express the essential role of conscience as Dasein's means of coming into resoluteness. To access its "mode of resolute openness," Dasein must be "summoned" to itself by conscience.⁴⁴⁷ What remains to be shown—as Heidegger will state explicitly in *Being and Time*—is how conscience can provide the "attestation" that this possibility of resoluteness can actually be *experienced* by Being-in-the-world?⁴⁴⁸ Rather than attempting to construct a "basis" for the "self-certification" that had concerned him previously,⁴⁴⁹ Heidegger is now searching for the "attestation" that Dasein can exist authentically and as a "whole"⁴⁵⁰: how can Dasein as Being-in-the-world "situated in action (*liegt im Handeln*)" at once silently call itself and be reached by this silent call?⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁵ Heidegger. "On the Essence of Truth (Pentecost Monday, 1926)." p. 286.

⁴⁴⁶ SZ §44, 214-220 / 257-263.

⁴⁴⁷ Heidegger. "On the Essence of Truth (Pentecost Monday, 1926)." p. 286.

⁴⁴⁸ SZ 54, 267 / 312.

⁴⁴⁹ GA 56/57, 45 / 36-37.

⁴⁵⁰ SZ 54, 267 / 312.

⁴⁵¹ Heidegger. "On the Essence of Truth (Pentecost Monday, 1926)." p. 286.

3. The Pivotal Role of the “Call of Conscience” in *Being and Time*

3.1. Analyzing Heidegger’s Interpretation of Conscience (§§ 54-60)

When Heidegger introduces the phenomenon of conscience in §54 of *Being and Time*, his investigation of Dasein’s existential structures is facing a critical problem: his project has still not shown how the phenomenon of Dasein can be accessed in its possibility of *authenticity* or as a *whole*. In the preceding existential analysis of Division One, Heidegger revealed the basic phenomena constitutive of Dasein and described its “everyday” mode of existence. Heidegger has also shown how Dasein’s “wholeness” can be understood in existential terms through his interpretation of Being-towards-death. Yet despite these “successes,” Heidegger recognizes that his investigation has not yet lived up to the standard that he himself established at the very start:

The fact that an authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole is ontologically possible for Dasein, signifies nothing, so long as a corresponding ontical potentiality-for-Being has not been demonstrated in Dasein itself. ... [We] must investigate whether to *any* extent and in any way Dasein *gives testimony*, from its ownmost potentiality-for-Being, as to a possible *authenticity* of its existence, so that it not only makes known that in an existentiell manner such authenticity is possible, but *demand*s this of itself.⁴⁵²

As Jean-François Courtine observes in his article “Voice of Conscience and Call of Being”:

⁴⁵² SZ §53, 266-267 / 311. In German: “Die ontologische Möglichkeit eines eigentlichen Ganzseinkönnens des Daseins bedeutet solange nichts, als nicht das entsprechende ontische Seinkönnen aus dem Dasein selbst erwiesen ist. ... Vor der Beantwortung dieser Fragen gilt es nachzuforschen, inwieweit *überhaupt* und in welcher Weise das Dasein aus seinem eigensten Seinkönnen her *Zeugnis gibt* von einer möglichen *Eigentlichkeit* seiner Existenz, so zwar, daß es diese nicht nur als *existenziell* mögliche bekundet, sondern von ihm selbst *fordert*.”

[Heidegger] must still show how this own Being-able-to-be belongs to Dasein as ontic possibility, phenomenally avowed. The question of Being-whole proper to Dasein must be brought back to the *phenomenal ground* which alone may serve as touchstone, if one wants to limit oneself to the “possible property of its Being, *as it is attested by Dasein itself*.”⁴⁵³

In this section of our investigation, we will examine how Heidegger interprets conscience in *Being and Time* as the phenomenon that provides an attestation of Dasein’s possibility of authenticity. Building on our foregoing review of the evolution of Heidegger’s understanding of conscience prior to 1927 and of his encounter with Stoker’s groundbreaking study, our analysis will focus on the new way in which Heidegger interprets conscience as a call *to* Dasein that comes *from* itself. Heidegger’s interpretation of this “call of conscience” as the attesting source of Dasein’s “authentic existence” is intended both to complete his interpretation of Dasein’s existential structures and to explain how his investigation obtains “access” to Being-in-the-world as a phenomenal whole. As the attestation of Dasein’s possibility of authentic understanding, the “call of conscience” is revealed as the primordial phenomenon upon which the methodology of *Being and Time* is based: conscience orients Dasein so it can “see through” the ambiguity of “everyday” existence and “come back” to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being.

Our examination of conscience in *Being and Time* will proceed as follows: 1) We will review the context related to Heidegger’s introduction of this new concept of the “call of conscience” and the need for it as an “attestation” of Dasein’s possibility of authentic existence. 2) We will conduct a section-by-section analysis of the second chapter of Division Two (§§54-60) in order to exhibit the key concepts related to Heidegger’s interpretation of conscience. 3) Recognizing Heidegger’s concern that the problem of “attestation” threatens to derail the entire project of *Being and Time*, we will focus our attention on the methodological implications of the apparently “insufficient” attestation of conscience.⁴⁵⁴ In so doing, we will establish that conscience plays a vital methodological role as the initiating call that brings Dasein into authentic disclosedness and is closely

⁴⁵³ Jean-François Courtine. “Voice of Conscience and Call of Being.” *Topoi* 7. 2 (1988). p. 106. Courtine cites from SZ §54, 267 / 312.

⁴⁵⁴ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

related to Heidegger's "method" of formal indication, which he elsewhere describes as "indispensable for an ultimate understanding" of *Being and Time*.⁴⁵⁵ 4) We will attempt to identify "clues" in Heidegger's interpretation of conscience that "indicatively" reveal a way to overcome the problem of attestation in *Being and Time*. By reconsidering the relationship of Heidegger's conscience with the phenomena of discourse, truth, solicitude and anticipation, we will seek to uncover an "existentiell possibility" of the "call of conscience" that provides the attestation of Dasein's "authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole."⁴⁵⁶

The Context of Heidegger's Introduction of Conscience in *Being and Time*

The problem of Dasein's wholeness is one that preoccupies Heidegger throughout *Being and Time* and explains why his degree of satisfaction with the progress of his investigation is so volatile. At the very beginning of his work, Heidegger sets a requirement for his existential study of Dasein: the *wholeness* of the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world must be preserved. As he declares in his introduction to *Being and Time*, this represents an inviolable principle of his existential-ontological approach:

In the interpretation of Dasein, [its fundamental structure] is something 'a priori'; it is not pieced together, but is primordially and constantly a whole (*sondern eine ursprünglich und ständig ganze Struktur*). It affords us, however, various ways of looking at the items which are constitutive for it. The whole of this structure always comes first; but if we keep this constantly in view, these items, as phenomena, will be made to stand out.⁴⁵⁷

With this principle established, Heidegger makes clear that his existential analysis will seek to expose the constitutive elements of Being-in-the-world in order to question the meaning of its very Being as a whole phenomenon. In the "preparatory" phase of Division One,

⁴⁵⁵ Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. p. 543. Excerpt from Heidegger's letter to Löwith on November 6, 1924. Cf. Theodore J. Kisiel. "Why the First Draft of *Being and Time* Was Never Published." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 20. (1989). p. 9.

⁴⁵⁶ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁴⁵⁷ SZ Introduction to Division 1, 40 / 65.

Heidegger thus pursues a series of investigations of Dasein's basic state in "everydayness" and how it encounters entities and other Daseins within the world.

These initial investigations lead up to Heidegger's first attempt to interpret the structural totality of "everyday" Being-in-the-world through the phenomenon that he calls "falling (*Verfallen*)." Heidegger describes "falling" as the "basic kind of Being" which belongs to Dasein in its most common ways of experiencing the world: in this mode of existence, Dasein's authentic care for its own individual possibilities is transformed into concern for the "events" and "things" of the public world of the "they."⁴⁵⁸ As a result, Dasein hides from itself—indeed, it utterly *loses* itself—by anonymously following the crowd and existing according to ways in which the world is publicly interpreted. Through his analysis, Heidegger shows how the interconnected phenomena of idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity characterize Dasein's state of "falling" wherein it is "completely fascinated by the 'world' ... and the 'they.'"⁴⁵⁹ With his interpretation of "falling," Heidegger affirms that a certain "phenomenal totality" of the "*essential* ontological structure of Dasein itself" has been satisfactorily obtained.⁴⁶⁰ Notwithstanding that the exhibition of Dasein remains incomplete and that Heidegger recognizes the need for an analysis of authentic existence, his conclusion at the end of §38 is unequivocal:

The leading question of this chapter has been about the Being of the "there." Our theme has been the ontological constitution of the disclosedness which essentially belongs to Dasein. ... [With] this analysis, the whole existential constitution of Dasein has been laid bare in its principal features, and we have obtained the phenomenal ground for a 'comprehensive' interpretation of Dasein's Being as care.⁴⁶¹

Yet after this "success" at the end of §38, Heidegger's level of satisfaction with the progress of his project appears to slip dramatically. By the end of his interpretation of truth in §44, Heidegger concedes that his grasp of Dasein's wholeness seems to have fallen well below the standard that he initially set for his phenomenological approach, i.e. in terms of

⁴⁵⁸ SZ §38, 175 / 219.

⁴⁵⁹ SZ §38, 176 / 220.

⁴⁶⁰ SZ §38, 175 / 219.

⁴⁶¹ SZ §38, 180 / 224.

what Heidegger described in §7 as the “species of exhibiting and explicating...demanded by this research.”⁴⁶² The last three sentences of Division One reveal that his analysis, at least to this point of the investigation, has not satisfied the basic criterion of preserving Dasein’s wholeness:

But *is* the phenomenon of care one in which the most primordial existential-ontological state of Dasein is disclosed? And has the structural manifoldness which lies in this phenomenon, presented us with the most primordial totality of factual Dasein’s Being? Has our investigation up to this point ever brought Dasein into view *as a whole*?⁴⁶³

While his efforts in Division One have allowed Heidegger to interpret the phenomenon of care as the Being of Dasein, this “breakthrough” appears to have been achieved at an excessively high cost: the interpretative work has advanced without preserving Dasein as a “whole” phenomenon. This implies that none of the “insights” obtained thus far have been attested as possible in “existentiell” terms. In other words, Heidegger has not shown how these constitutive phenomena of Dasein can possibly be experienced by Being-in-the-world as an actual and “whole” phenomenon.

In Division Two’s opening chapter on death (§§45-53), Heidegger indicates the urgency of finding a way to bring Dasein’s wholeness back into view. As he explains, the discovery of care as the Being of Dasein makes the wholeness of this phenomenon problematic because the “‘ahead-of-itself (*Sichvorweg*),’ as an item in the structure of care, tells us unambiguously that in Dasein there is always something *still outstanding*.”⁴⁶⁴ The legitimacy of Heidegger’s project can therefore only be preserved by showing how care, with its problematic nature of “Being-ahead-of-itself,” can be understood as the phenomenal basis of Dasein’s “wholeness.” As Heidegger states at the opening of Division Two: “The inadequacy of the hermeneutical situation from which the preceding analysis of

⁴⁶² SZ §7, 37 / 61.

⁴⁶³ SZ §44, 230 / 273. In German: “Aber ist mit dem Phänomen der Sorge die ursprünglichste existenzial-ontologische Verfassung des Daseins erschlossen? Gibt die im Phänomen der Sorge liegende Strukturmannigfaltigkeit die ursprünglichste Ganzheit des Seins des faktischen Daseins? Hat die bisherige Untersuchung überhaupt das Dasein *als Ganzes* in den Blick bekommen?”

⁴⁶⁴ SZ §46, 236 / 279.

Dasein has arisen, must be surmounted.”⁴⁶⁵ Heidegger thus opens his study of death on a cautionary note: the investigation must proceed in constant awareness that the most common interpretations of death are inauthentic. Having already identified the inauthentic structures of Dasein, Heidegger now seeks to conceive an “end” of Being-in-the-world that reflects the existential nature of his project.

Keeping constantly in view the existential constitution of Dasein already set forth, we must try to decide how inappropriate to Dasein ontologically are those conceptions of end and totality which first thrust themselves to the fore...⁴⁶⁶

The existential understanding of death must guard against the typical worldly sense of “end” in terms of spatio-temporality or some other such present-at-hand conception. The end of Dasein cannot be observed or calculated in the same way as worldly objects can be measured or evaluated. For Heidegger, totality is not a quantitative notion that can be understood in terms of stopping or finishing. The existential “end” means complete annihilation, something that is “impossible” in one’s “everyday” experience of the world. The essence of “*Being-a-whole*” is the unavoidable fact of one’s own impossibility: the certainty of each individual Dasein’s own death.⁴⁶⁷

To authentically understand Dasein’s death involves breaking away from the domination of “everyday,” worldly understandings of space and time. The end of Dasein is not the completed assembly of a collection of parts, or a minute-by-minute, second-by-second countdown towards a moment of extinction that can be prepared for. Rather, Dasein’s Being is characterized by “a constant ‘lack of totality’ which finds an end with death.”⁴⁶⁸ Dasein’s existence is determined by the “not-yet” of its eventual annihilation, the final impossibility of its existence that stands before it in the future. Dasein is the “not-yet”

⁴⁶⁵ SZ §46, 235-6 / 279.

⁴⁶⁶ SZ §48, 241 / 285.

⁴⁶⁷ SZ §48, 242 / 286.

⁴⁶⁸ SZ §48, 242 / 286.

of its impending end. As Heidegger specifies, death cannot be defined ontologically as “lack-of-togetherness...[or] being-missing as still-outstanding” founded upon a *sum*.⁴⁶⁹

That which makes up the ‘lack of totality’ in Dasein, the constant “ahead-of-itself,” is neither something still outstanding in a summative togetherness, nor something which has not yet become accessible. It is a “not-yet” which any Dasein, as the entity which is, has to be.⁴⁷⁰

In its life, Dasein is “running its course” and its totality is reached when this “course” comes to an end at death. This ending, however, is not based on “a ‘continuing’ piecing-on of entities” or reaching a specified “finish line” that can be measured and marked off.⁴⁷¹ Dasein’s experience of death is rather that of Being-towards-death, the anticipation of that which lies ahead and exposes Dasein to its coming annihilation in the here and now. In “its course,” Dasein moves towards this death but cannot “see it coming” because there is *nothing* to see coming. Death is the abyss that lies beyond the fog of Dasein’s existence.

Just as the whole of Dasein is not obtained by collecting its parts, death cannot be understood as its fulfillment or its perfect state. The common remark that so-and-so “lived life to the fullest” is an example of such a misunderstanding: Dasein is not provided with a list of authentic possibilities that it checks off and hands in on judgment day, according to Heidegger.

With its death, has [Dasein] necessarily exhausted its specific possibilities? Rather, are not these precisely what gets taken away from Dasein? ... The “ending” which we have in view when we speak of death, does not signify Dasein’s Being-at-an-end (*Zu-Ende-sein*), but a *Being-towards-the-end* (*Sein zum Ende*) of this entity.⁴⁷²

The experience of death for Dasein is not the end itself but rather the coming-towards-the-end. With its end, Dasein is extinguished; deprived of life, it has no possibility of Being and is no longer called to itself by conscience. It is in Being-towards-death—Being-

⁴⁶⁹ SZ §48, 243 / 287.

⁴⁷⁰ SZ §48, 244 / 288.

⁴⁷¹ SZ §48, 243 / 287.

⁴⁷² SZ §48, 244-5 / 288-9.

towards this annihilation of its Being and the end of all its possibilities—that Dasein experiences the “wholeness” that is its constant truth.

Nonetheless, Dasein can blind itself and ignore the authentic truth of its finite existence. In such dereliction, Dasein refuses to acknowledge its Being-towards-death and seeks shelter among the “they” rather than accepting to face of its ownmost certainty. In dissimulating itself in the public world, Dasein dodges the true anticipatory sense of death by attending only to what concerns it in the *present*.

In the publicness with which we are with one another in our everyday manner, death is ‘known’ as a mishap which is constantly occurring... The “they” has already stowed away an interpretation for this event. It talks of it in a ‘fugitive’ manner...as if to say, “One of these days one will die too, in the end; but right now it has nothing to do with us.” ... In such talking, death is understood as an indefinite something which, above all, ...is proximally *not yet present-at-hand* for oneself, and is therefore no threat.⁴⁷³

In “everydayness,” Dasein numbs itself in the comforting discourse of the “they” that offers “*constant tranquillization about death*.”⁴⁷⁴ Death becomes an anonymous “actuality” that occurs in the world. The talk of the “they” about death is “ambiguous,” so by joining in this conversation Dasein is able to conceal from itself the fact that death is “the distinctive potentiality-for-Being which belongs to Dasein’s ownmost self.”⁴⁷⁵ Dasein even covers up the authentic possibilities of others who are approaching death, e.g. in seeking to reassure the terminally ill that they are getting better and will “soon return to the tranquillized everydayness of the world of his concern.”⁴⁷⁶ For the “they,” the “dying of others” represents a “social inconvenience, if not even a downright tactlessness” on the part of the dying.⁴⁷⁷

In Heidegger’s analysis, the phenomenon of Being-towards-death provides the basis for Dasein’s freedom when it authentically assumes its responsibility to care for its Being.

⁴⁷³ SZ §51, 252-3 / 296-7.

⁴⁷⁴ SZ §51, 253-4 / 298.

⁴⁷⁵ SZ §51, 253 / 297.

⁴⁷⁶ SZ §51, 253 / 297.

⁴⁷⁷ SZ §51, 254 / 298.

In freeing itself for anxiety (*Angst*), Dasein recognizes itself as Being-towards-death and emerges from the anonymity of the “they” where it has avoided its ownmost possibility.

[In authenticity, Dasein is brought] *face to face with the possibility of being itself...in an impassioned freedom towards death—a freedom which has been released from the illusions of the “they,” and which is factual, certain of itself, and anxious.*⁴⁷⁸

One of the essential characteristics of Dasein’s disclosedness is the *anticipation* (*Vorlaufen*) of its totality in death. Exhibiting the priority of the existential interpretation for his ontological project, Heidegger argues that any “actualizing” of death implies the possibility of one’s demise, which he has shown to be impossible. Such “actualizing” would “deprive [Dasein] of the very ground for an existing Being-towards-death (*den Boden für ein existierendes Sein zum Tode*).”⁴⁷⁹ In the existential interpretation, what Dasein “actualizes” is not death itself but Being-towards-death as one’s ownmost possibility that is anticipated in terms of authentic care.

Being-towards-death is the anticipation of a potentiality-for-Being of that entity whose kind of Being is anticipation itself. ... Anticipation turns out to be the possibility of understanding one’s *ownmost* and uttermost potentiality-for-Being—that is to say, the possibility of *authentic existence*.⁴⁸⁰

In becoming “free *for* one’s own death” through anticipation, Dasein resists being buffeted about by the “they” and understands that its ownmost possibility is essentially related to its impending end.⁴⁸¹

Since anticipation of the possibility which is not to be outstripped discloses also all the possibilities which lie ahead of that possibility, this anticipation includes the possibility of taking the *whole* of Dasein in advance in an

⁴⁷⁸ SZ §53, 266 / 311. In German: “Das Vorlaufen enthüllt dem Dasein die Verlorenheit in das Man-selbst und bringt es vor die Möglichkeit, auf die besorgende Fürsorge primär ungestützt, es selbst zu sein, selbst aber in der leidenschaftlichen, von den Illusionen des Man gelösten, faktischen, ihrer selbst gewissen und sich ängstenden Freiheit zum Tode.” Emphasis is Heidegger’s.

⁴⁷⁹ SZ §53, 261 / 305.

⁴⁸⁰ SZ §53, 262-3 / 307.

⁴⁸¹ SZ §53, 264 / 308.

existentiell manner; that is to say, it includes the possibility of existing as a *whole potentiality-for-Being*.⁴⁸²

Concluding the chapter on death, Heidegger explicitly states that his existential interpretation of Being-towards-death remains an unattested concept at this point of his project. To live up to his own phenomenological standards, Heidegger must show how this phenomenon of Being-towards-death is both existentially necessarily *and* ontically possible. As Heidegger writes:

Does Dasein ever factually throw itself into such a Being-towards-death? Does Dasein *demand*, even by reason of its ownmost Being, an authentic potentiality-for-Being determined by anticipation?...The question of Dasein's authentic Being-a-whole and of its existential constitution still hangs in mid-air. It can be put on a phenomenal basis which will stand the test only if it can cling to a possible authenticity of its Being which is attested by Dasein itself (*wenn sie sich an eine vom Dasein selbst bezeugte mögliche Eigentlichkeit seines Seins halten kann*).⁴⁸³

Conscience and the Problem of Attestation (§54)

It is precisely in this context and to answer this decisive question that Heidegger introduces his existential concept of conscience in §54 of *Being and Time*. Its very specific objective is to show how Dasein's authenticity can "be attested in its existentiell possibility by Dasein itself."⁴⁸⁴ To allow his investigation to access Dasein as a "whole" phenomenon, Heidegger devotes himself to this task of providing an "attestation (*Bezeugung*)" of "an authentic potentiality-for-Being of Dasein (*eigentliches Seinkönnen des Daseins*)."⁴⁸⁵ As evidenced by the title of §54, "The Problem of How an Authentic Existentiell Possibility is Attested," Heidegger explicitly recognizes that the producing of this "attestation" is indeed *problematic*. Thus far in *Being and Time*, the existential interpretation of Being-in-the-world has not shown how it is possible for Dasein in "falling" to escape the clutches of the public "they" that rules "everyday" existence. What his foregoing analysis has emphasized

⁴⁸² SZ §53, 264 / 308-9.

⁴⁸³ SZ §53, 266-7 / 311.

⁴⁸⁴ SZ §54, 267 / 312.

⁴⁸⁵ SZ §54, 267 / 312.

is Dasein's essential tendency to blend into the anonymous "they" in order to avoid having to decide for itself. In §54, Heidegger states that he must show how Dasein can counter this tendency so that it can authentically come into "disclosedness" and achieve a "transparent" understanding of itself and its involvement in the world. Ironically, it is the presupposition of such "authentic" understanding that has allowed for Dasein's existential structures to be revealed in Heidegger's preceding analysis of "everyday" existence: all along, his analysis has advanced on the basis of an "authentic" understanding of the phenomena that have been uncovered. Thus the legitimacy of Heidegger's entire project depends upon the success of this "attestation": the mandatory "wholeness" of Dasein demands that the authentic mode of existence—the equiprimordial "flipside" of "everydayness"—be shown to be possible for Being-in-the-world.

Furthermore, Heidegger insists that this "attestation" must respect another fundamental principle of his approach to phenomenology: in exhibiting the constitutive phenomena that are essential to Being-in-the-world, there must be no speculative recourse to an external source in order to explain how existence is possible. As seen in his rejection of Stokerian conscience "powered" by divine "*synteresis*," Heidegger closes the door to any notion of an absolute authority in his ontological investigation. Dasein's Being must be explained exclusively in terms of the phenomena revealed as constitutive for it. In Heidegger's words, this "attestation" of the authentic mode of existence must "have its roots (*ihre Wurzel*) in Dasein's Being."⁴⁸⁶ The "attestation" must be produced "by Dasein itself (*von diesem selbst*)" and must "be such that we can find it (*selbst sich finden*)" because we—as the investigators following Heidegger's phenomenological indications—exist in the basic state of Being that we are analyzing.⁴⁸⁷ For Heidegger, this "attestation" is neither a simple validation of the existential interpretation of Dasein nor a theoretical confirmation of the "wholeness" of Dasein as a phenomenon. It is rather the revealing of "an authentic *potentiality-for-Being-one's-self*" that Dasein can only come to understand by recognizing the possibility of authentic "selfhood (*Selbstheit*)...as a *way of existing (Weise*

⁴⁸⁶ SZ §54, 267 / 312.

⁴⁸⁷ SZ §54, 267 / 312.

zu existieren), and therefore not as an entity present-at-hand.”⁴⁸⁸ The success of *Being and Time*’s interpretation of Dasein requires that Heidegger be able to show how Dasein can shed its identity as “they-self (*Man-selbst*)” and experience the “existentiell modification of the ‘they’” that allows for the possibility of “authentic Being-one’s-self.”⁴⁸⁹ Emphasizing the fact that *Being and Time* itself represents a performance of this modification, Heidegger promises that his investigation will “include a demonstration that in Dasein’s state of Being [this attestation] has its source.”⁴⁹⁰

In describing this “attestation,” Heidegger insists that his investigation does not seek to reveal a “new” Dasein that eliminates inauthentic “everydayness” from existence. Instead, this modification is described as a reversal of Dasein’s tendency to lose itself in the “they” where all “possibilities of Being” are stripped from Dasein and “already...decided upon.”⁴⁹¹ As a result of this reversal, Dasein comes into the possibility of “*making up for not choosing*” by “deciding for a potentiality-for-Being...from one’s own self.”⁴⁹² In order to actualize this “making up,” Dasein must open itself up to the possibility of authenticity by “bringing itself back (*Sichzurückholen*)” from the “they”;⁴⁹³ according to Heidegger, this return is possible because Dasein is constantly called back to itself. As he states:

[Because] Dasein is *lost* in the “they” (*in das Man verloren ist*), it must first *find* itself (*sich zuvor finden*). In order to find *itself* at all, it must be ‘shown’ to itself in its possible authenticity (*in seiner möglichen Eigentlichkeit* „gezeigt“ werden). In terms of its *possibility*, Dasein is already a potentiality-for-Being-its-self, but it needs to have this potentiality attested. (*Das Dasein bedarf der Bezeugung eines Selbstseinkönnens, das es der Möglichkeit nach je schon ist.*)⁴⁹⁴

In response to this need, Heidegger introduces his existential concept of conscience and assigns it the pivotal role of attesting the possibility of Dasein’s authentic existence. For

⁴⁸⁸ SZ §54, 267 / 312.

⁴⁸⁹ SZ §54, 267 / 312.

⁴⁹⁰ SZ §54, 267 / 312.

⁴⁹¹ SZ §54, 268 / 312.

⁴⁹² SZ §54, 268 / 313.

⁴⁹³ SZ §54, 268 / 313.

⁴⁹⁴ SZ §54, 268 / 313.

Heidegger, the phenomenon of conscience not only serves to demonstrate Dasein's authentic potentiality-for-Being as a possibility but also represents the basic source of authentic disclosedness upon which *Being and Time* is structured.

In the following interpretation we shall claim that this potentiality is attested by that which, in Dasein's everyday interpretation of itself, is familiar to us as the "voice of conscience (*Stimme des Gewissens*)".⁴⁹⁵

Displaying his awareness of the controversial history of conscience as a philosophical and theological concept, Heidegger immediately acknowledges the fact that "conscience has been disputed, that its function as a higher court for Dasein's existence has been variously assessed, and that 'what conscience says' has been interpreted in manifold ways."⁴⁹⁶ Highlighting this ambiguity, he claims the "doubtfulness" surrounding conscience serves to "*prove (bewiese)* that here a *primordial* phenomenon of Dasein lies before us."⁴⁹⁷ We will later consider some problems concerning Heidegger's interpretation of conscience, but we can immediately observe that the ambiguous nature of the "everyday interpretation" of conscience appears insufficient as "proof" of the primordially of this phenomenon. The mere fact that conscience is controversial does not mean that it is existentially essential to Dasein's Being. For now, however, let us simply take note of this potential problem and continue with our review of how Heidegger interprets conscience.

The first step of Heidegger's investigation requires that conscience be "[traced] back to its existential foundations and structures and [be made] visible as a phenomenon of Dasein" based on what has been revealed by the foregoing analyses of Dasein's constitutive phenomena.⁴⁹⁸ In other words, his interpretation of conscience must faithfully reflect the principle that all "everyday," "present-at-hand" and theoretical conceptions be rejected from the start. All forms of recourse to "any description and classification of experiences of conscience" or "any biological 'explanation'" are denied, as is "any employment of this phenomenon for proofs of God or for establishing an 'immediate'

⁴⁹⁵ SZ §54, 268 / 313.

⁴⁹⁶ SZ §54, 268 / 313.

⁴⁹⁷ SZ §54, 268 / 313.

⁴⁹⁸ SZ §54, 268-269 / 313.

consciousness of God.”⁴⁹⁹ Heidegger’s restrictions are intended to protect the phenomenon of conscience from the prejudice of tradition with its ceaseless demands for “inductive empirical proof” of the “voice” of conscience. This insistence “rests upon an ontological perversion of phenomenon” and a failure to recognize that conscience is different “from what is environmentally present-at-hand,” according to Heidegger.⁵⁰⁰

While the existential phenomenon of conscience reveals no “content,” Heidegger nonetheless insists that it “gives us ‘something’ to understand; it *discloses*.”⁵⁰¹ Conscience is an essentially positive form of discourse even if it provides no “worldly” information.

By characterizing [conscience] formally in this way, we find ourselves enjoined to take it back into the disclosedness of Dasein. This disclosedness, as a basic state of that entity which we ourselves are, is constituted by state-of-mind, understanding, falling and discourse (*Befindlichkeit, Verstehen, Verfallen und Rede*).⁵⁰²

Heidegger thus identifies conscience with the constitutive phenomenon of discourse but accords it a very special function. As the “attesting” phenomenon that both “gives us ‘something’ to understand” and allows Dasein to “first *find* itself,” conscience makes possible Dasein’s return to itself: authentic disclosedness is based upon one’s hearing of the “call of conscience.” As Heidegger states: “If we analyze conscience more penetratingly, it is revealed as a *call (Ruf)*”: this “mode of *discourse*”⁵⁰³ is an “*appeal (Anrufs)*” that calls Dasein to “its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-self.”⁵⁰⁴ It is more specifically a “*summoning [of Dasein] (Aufrufs)* to its ownmost Being-guilty”⁵⁰⁵ because conscience calls Dasein out from the anonymous crowd and back to the possibility of “making up for not choosing.”⁵⁰⁶

⁴⁹⁹ SZ §54, 269 / 313.

⁵⁰⁰ SZ §54, 269 / 313-314.

⁵⁰¹ SZ §54, 269 / 314.

⁵⁰² SZ §54, 269 / 314.

⁵⁰³ SZ §54, 269 / 314.

⁵⁰⁴ SZ §54, 269 / 314.

⁵⁰⁵ SZ §54, 269 / 314.

⁵⁰⁶ SZ §54, 268 / 313.

Freely conceding that his existential conscience “is necessarily a far cry from everyday ontical common sense,” Heidegger holds that this disclosing “call of conscience” is what provides the “ontological foundations” of all “everyday” notions concerning the “voice” of conscience.⁵⁰⁷ He claims that conscience reveals to Dasein that it must “bring itself back” from the “they” in order to understand authentically. The “calling” of conscience that allows Dasein to “*find* itself” implies a corresponding “hearing” that allows Dasein to “understand” this primordial appeal. The traditional concern for “proofs and counterproofs” of this “voice” illustrate for Heidegger how the ordinary theories of conscience fail to recognize what the conscience gives us to understand.⁵⁰⁸

To the call of conscience there corresponds a possible hearing. Our understanding of the appeal unveils itself as our *wanting to have a conscience (Gewissenhabenwollen)*. 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 (Entschlossenheit)*.⁵⁰⁹

In Heidegger’s proposed schema, conscience serves as an attestation of the possible experience of authenticity by showing how Dasein can “bring itself back” and decide “for an authentic potentiality-for-Being.”⁵¹⁰ The “call of conscience” does not “contain” the content of authentic experience. Rather, it provides the attestation of the possibility of Dasein’s authenticity: the call is the means whereby Dasein can come into “resoluteness” and thus assume responsibility for its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. Conscience attests Dasein’s authenticity because it makes possible the moment of “resoluteness” in which Dasein comes back to “authentic Being-one’s-self.” Dasein’s authenticity cannot be “found” in the call alone because this phenomenon also demands Dasein’s “hearing” of this call. Authenticity is attested in the “whole” phenomenon of “wanting to have a

⁵⁰⁷ SZ §54, 269 / 314.

⁵⁰⁸ SZ §54, 269 / 314.

⁵⁰⁹ SZ §54, 269-270 / 314.

⁵¹⁰ SZ §54, 268 / 313.

conscience,” which means choosing to be brought back to the “kind of Being-one’s-self which...we call ‘resoluteness.’”⁵¹¹

Conscience as a Mode of Discourse (§55)

The first task that Heidegger tackles in his attempt to show how conscience serves to attest Dasein’s authentic potentiality-for-Being is to explain how this phenomenon “belongs within the range (*Umkreis*) of those existential phenomena which constitute the *Being of the ‘there’* as disclosedness (*das Sein des Da als Erschlossenheit konstituieren*),” namely the “universal structures of state-of-mind, understanding, discourse and falling.”⁵¹² In other words, Heidegger aims to show why conscience must necessarily be “added” as one of Dasein’s basic phenomena and how it “fits” with the structures that have already been exhibited by his investigation. Immediately, however, he makes it clear that conscience is not simply an “example” or “a special ‘case’ of Dasein’s disclosure (*einen besonderen „Fall“ von Erschließung des Daseins*).”⁵¹³ Conscience must be interpreted as *the* disclosing source that makes possible Dasein’s authentic understanding of its Being. As Heidegger states:

[Our] interpretation of conscience not only will carry further our earlier analysis of the disclosedness of the “there,” but it will also grasp it more primordially with regard to Dasein’s authentic Being (*sondern ursprünglicher fassen im Hinblick auf das eigentliche Sein des Daseins*).⁵¹⁴

Heidegger here recognizes that his not-yet-completed interpretation of Dasein remains inadequate for explaining the phenomenon of disclosedness. As it stands, Heidegger has only shown how Dasein “*fails to hear (überhört)* its own self” because it has become lost “in the publicness and idle talk of the ‘they.’”⁵¹⁵ To correct this situation, he holds that the interpretation of conscience must now provide the means for explaining how

⁵¹¹ SZ §54, 270 / 314.

⁵¹² SZ §55, 270 / 315.

⁵¹³ SZ §55, 270 / 315.

⁵¹⁴ SZ §55, 270 / 315.

⁵¹⁵ SZ §55, 271 / 315.

Dasein can emerge from the hypnotic state wherein one's attention is devoted solely to the "they."

This listening-away must get broken off; in other words, the possibility of another kind of hearing which will interrupt it, must be given by Dasein itself. The possibility of its thus getting broken off lies in its being appealed to without mediation.⁵¹⁶

The solution that Heidegger proposes in order to explain this possibility is the "calling" of conscience. By his account, this call "arouses another kind of hearing...in every way opposite" to Dasein's usual fascination with the "ambiguity," "hubbub," and "newness" of the "they-world."⁵¹⁷

Heidegger insists that this existential call delivers no explicit or fixed message: it neither delivers a " 'picture,' like the Kantian representation of the conscience as a court of justice," nor does it involve a "[vocal] utterance...[of] a 'voice' of conscience (*eine „Stimme“ des Gewissens*)."⁵¹⁸ All such examples of the "everyday interpretation" of conscience illustrate how the phenomenon is commonly misunderstood in an assertive sense.

When 'delusions' arise in the conscience, they do so not because the call has committed some oversight (has mis-called), but only because the call gets *heard* in such a way that instead of becoming authentically understood, it gets drawn by the they-self into a soliloquy in which causes get pleaded, and it becomes perverted in its tendency to disclose.⁵¹⁹

Echoing his remarks from earlier in *Being and Time* regarding the inadequate vocabulary and grammar of his phenomenological project,⁵²⁰ Heidegger concedes that his phenomenon

⁵¹⁶ SZ §55, 271 / 316. In German: "Dieses Hinhören muß gebrochen, das heißt es muß ihm vom Dasein selbst die Möglichkeit eines Hörens gegeben werden, das jenes unterbricht. Die Möglichkeit eines solchen Bruchs liegt im unvermittelten Angerufenwerden."

⁵¹⁷ SZ §55, 271 / 316.

⁵¹⁸ SZ §55, 271 / 316.

⁵¹⁹ SZ §56, 274 / 318-319. In German: "Die „Täuschungen“ entstehen im Gewissen nicht durch ein Sichversehen (Sichver-rufen) des Rufes, sondern erst aus der Art, wie der Ruf *gehört* wird—dadurch, daß er, statt eigentlich verstanden zu werden, vom Man-selbst in ein verhandelndes Selbstgespräch gezogen und in seiner Erschließungstendenz verkehrt wird."

⁵²⁰ SZ §7, 38-39 / 63.

of conscience must not be confused with the literal notion of a vocal call: the “call of conscience” cannot be “[traced] back to some psychical faculty such as understanding, will, or feeling, or...some sort of mixture of these.”⁵²¹ To drive home this point, he includes at the close of §55 the footnote we have previously analyzed regarding the various theories of conscience that have been advanced by Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, as well as Kähler, Ritschl, Stoker and Scheler. Heidegger faults all these thinkers for the “ontologico-anthropological inadequacy of [their respective] free-floating framework[s] of psychical faculties or personal actions all duly classified.”⁵²²

For Heidegger, conscience is a more primordial “mode of discourse”: it is the existential phenomenon that makes authentic disclosedness possible. Conscience delivers to Dasein the only kind of unambiguous “giving-to-understand” that can enable it to “hear” authentically and thereby find itself.⁵²³

In the tendency to disclosure which belongs to the call, lies the momentum of a push—of an abrupt arousal. The call is from afar unto afar. It reaches him who wants to be brought back.⁵²⁴

Conscience as the Summoning Call to “Lost” Dasein (§56)

To explain the existential phenomenon of the “call of conscience,” Heidegger states that his first priority is to interpret how conscience functions as the unique mode of authentic discourse that allows for Dasein’s “listening-away” to be interrupted.

[We] shall not obtain an ontologically adequate interpretation of the conscience until it can be made plain not only *who* is called by the call but also *who does the calling*, how the one to whom the appeal is made is related

⁵²¹ SZ §55, 271 / 317.

⁵²² SZ §55, 271-272 / 317.

⁵²³ SZ §55, 271 / 316.

⁵²⁴ SZ §55, 271 / 316. In German: “In der Erschließungstendenz des Rufes liegt das Moment des Stoßes, des abgesetzten Aufrüttelns. Gerufen wird aus der Ferne in die Ferne. Vom Ruf getroffen wird, wer zurückgeholt sein will.”

to the one who calls, and how this ‘relationship’ must be taken ontologically as a way in which these are interconnected in their Being.⁵²⁵

Noting that discourse is most commonly understood as a kind of “utterance” that is communicated through language, Heidegger aims to show how his notion of the “call of conscience” conveys “information” in a very different way. He claims that unlike the public phenomenon of assertive communication, the existential call is an unmediated form of discourse that arises in Dasein itself. Heidegger holds that the “giving to understand” of conscience is not to be understood as “content,” as if the call communicated a direct and explicit “message.” As Ricoeur explains, Heidegger’s “conscience says nothing: no racket, not even a message, just a silent call.”⁵²⁶ Indeed, the power of the call is found precisely in the fact that “[conscience] discloses solely and constantly in the mode of keeping silent (*im Modus des Schweigens*).”⁵²⁷ This silence supercedes the communicative chatter of the “they” and makes possible a different mode of hearing. The “what is talked about” that is conveyed by the call relates strictly to the call itself: it “informs” Dasein that it is being appealed to by itself.

Let us consider how Heidegger responds to three basic questions he raises regarding what is disclosed by the call: 1) who is called by the call, 2) what the call says, and 3) who is the one who calls.

Firstly, what the call “gives us to understand” is the basic fact that an appeal is being made to “Dasein itself.” While Heidegger admits that this “target” seems “indefinite” and “vague,” he insists that this call is the basis of any possible experience of Dasein.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁵ SZ §56, 274 / 319. In German: “Eine ontologisch zureichende Interpretation des Gewissens gewinnen wir aber erst dann, wenn sich verdeutlichen läßt: nicht nur *wer* der vom Ruf Gerufene ist, sondern *wer* selbst *ruft*, wie der Angerufene zum Rufer sich verhält, wie dieses „Verhältnis“ als Seinszusammenhang ontologisch gefaßt werden muß.”

⁵²⁶ Paul Ricoeur. *Soi-même comme un autre*. (Paris: Seuil, 1990). p. 401. In French: « En effet, que l’on considère le contenu ou l’origine de l’appel, rien ne s’annonce qui n’ait été déjà nommé sous le titre de pouvoir-être ; la conscience ne dit rien : pas de vacarme, ni de message, mais un appel silencieux. »

⁵²⁷ SZ §56, 273 / 318.

⁵²⁸ SZ §56, 272 / 317.

[It] is essential to Dasein that along with the disclosedness of its world it has been disclosed to itself, so that it always *understands itself*. The call reaches Dasein in this understanding of itself which it always has, and which is concerned in an everyday, average manner. The call reaches the they-self of concerned Being with others.⁵²⁹

Quite simply, the call finds Dasein where it has become lost: in the ambiguity of what has been publicly interpreted.

Secondly, the call informs Dasein about itself in the sense that the appeal indicates “to what one is called.”⁵³⁰ When it reaches Dasein lost in the “they,” conscience actually “*passes over*” the “they” and appeals to “only the *self* of the they-self.”⁵³¹ In so doing, the call brings Dasein to its “*own self*” and “pushes [the ‘they’] into insignificance (*Bedeutungslosigkeit*).”⁵³² Heidegger observes that conscience “asserts nothing, gives no information about world-events, has nothing to tell” when considered from the standpoint of “*everydayness*.”⁵³³ But to Dasein itself, this call is experienced as a startling summons.

[What] the call discloses is unequivocal (*trotzdem eindeutig*), even though it may undergo a different interpretation in the individual Dasein in accordance with its own possibilities of understanding. While the content of the call is seemingly indefinite, the *direction it takes* (*Einschlagsrichtung*) is a sure one... The call does not require us to search gropingly for him to whom it appeals, nor does it require any sign by which we can recognize that he is or is not the one who is meant.⁵³⁴

In summoning Dasein’s “*own self*,” the “call of conscience” does not “put up for ‘trial’ the self to which the appeal is made.”⁵³⁵ Rather, conscience reveals to Dasein the fact that it has “lost” itself and that it must return to an authentic understanding of its Being; conscience blocks out the chatter about public things and “calls Dasein forth (and

⁵²⁹ SZ §56, 272 / 317. In German: “Zum Dasein gehört aber wesenhaft, daß es mit der Erschlossenheit seiner Welt ihm selbst erschlossen ist, so daß es *sich* immer schon *versteht*. Der Ruf trifft das Dasein in diesem alltäglich-durchschnittlich besorgenden Sich-immer-schon-verstehen. Das Man-selbst des besorgenden Mitseins mit Anderen wird vom Ruf getroffen.”

⁵³⁰ SZ §56, 273 / 317.

⁵³¹ SZ §56, 273 / 317.

⁵³² SZ §56, 273 / 317.

⁵³³ SZ §56, 273 / 318.

⁵³⁴ SZ §56, 274 / 318.

⁵³⁵ SZ §56, 273 / 318.

‘forward’) into its ownmost possibilities, as a summons to its ownmost *potentiality-for-Being-its-self*.⁵³⁶

Dasein’s Call of Care to Itself (§57)

Heidegger devotes §57 to the third question concerning the identity of the caller, a question that is particularly difficult because the “caller maintains itself in conspicuous indefiniteness (*auffallenden Unbestimmtheit*)” and resists interrogation.⁵³⁷ When considered according to “the manner of the world,” Heidegger notes that this “peculiar indefiniteness” leads to the mistaken conclusion that the caller is “nobody” or “nothing.”⁵³⁸ But seen existentially, the “aloofness” of the caller and the “impossibility of making [its identity] more definite...are distinctive for it in a *positive* way (*eine positive Auszeichnung*)” because they reveal that “the caller is solely absorbed in summoning us to something...[and] is *heard only as such* (*nur as solcher gehört*).”⁵³⁹ When the caller “refuses to answer” any “worldly” question about its identity,⁵⁴⁰ this actually confirms its identity: “*In conscience Dasein calls itself (Das Dasein ruft im Gewissen sich selbst)*.”⁵⁴¹ Recognizing that this answer alone is inadequate, Heidegger clarifies that when Dasein is summoned by the call from the “they-world,” it is “its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-self [that] functions as the caller.”⁵⁴² In other words, the caller is the Dasein’s “authentic self.” Heidegger continues:

[The] call is precisely something which *we ourselves* have neither planned nor prepared for nor voluntarily performed, nor have we ever done so. ‘It’ calls („*Es*“ *ruft*), against our expectations and even against our will. On the other hand, the call undoubtedly does not come from someone else who is

⁵³⁶ SZ §56, 273 / 318. In German: “Festzuhalten gilt es: der Ruf, als welchen wir das Gewissen kennzeichnen, ist Anruf des Man-selbst in seinem Selbst; als dieser Anruf der Aufruf des Selbst zu seinem Selbstsein können und damit ein Vorrufen des Daseins in seine Möglichkeiten.”

⁵³⁷ SZ §57, 274 / 319.

⁵³⁸ SZ §57, 274-275 / 319.

⁵³⁹ SZ §57, 274-275 / 319.

⁵⁴⁰ SZ §57, 274 / 319.

⁵⁴¹ SZ §57, 275 / 320.

⁵⁴² SZ §57, 275 / 320.

with me in the world. The call comes *from* me and yet *from beyond me and over me* (*Der Ruf kommt aus mir und doch über mich*).⁵⁴³

The indefiniteness of the caller, an indefiniteness that Heidegger emphasizes by “describing” the caller as “it,” reflects Dasein’s nature as a “thrown” entity for whom the “*why*” of its existence is utterly unknowable.⁵⁴⁴ In this sense, the caller of conscience must not be understood either as “something present-at-hand within-the-world” or as a “free-floating self-projection (*freischwebendes Sichentwerfen*)” whose existence can be attributed to its own “power.”⁵⁴⁵ When Dasein understands itself authentically, it understands what conscience discloses to it: “the fact ‘that it is, and that it has to be something with a potentiality-for-Being as the entity which it is.’”⁵⁴⁶ The indefinite caller of conscience is authentic Dasein that seeks to find itself by calling out to the Being-in-the-world who is always “listening away.” The caller is “anxious with anxiety (*Angst*) about its ownmost potentiality-for-Being” and summons Being-in-the-world to find itself “*in the very depths of its uncanniness (im Grunde seiner Unheimlichkeit)*.”⁵⁴⁷

In its “who,” the caller is definable in a ‘worldly’ way by *nothing* at all. 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 (*das nackte „Daß“ im Nichts der Welt*). The caller is unfamiliar to the everyday they-self; it is something like an *alien* voice (*eine fremde Stimme*). 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”?⁵⁴⁸

This experience of coming “face to face” with its thrownness is precisely what Dasein in “everydayness” seeks to avoid when it forfeits the possibility of making its own decisions and blends in with the “they.” When Dasein “flees to the relief which comes with the supposed freedom of the they-self,” it closes itself off to this authentic understanding of its

⁵⁴³ SZ §57, 275 / 320.

⁵⁴⁴ SZ §57, 276 / 321.

⁵⁴⁵ SZ §57, 275-276 / 320-321.

⁵⁴⁶ SZ §57, 276 / 321.

⁵⁴⁷ SZ §57, 276 / 321.

⁵⁴⁸ SZ §57, 276 / 321.

thrownness.⁵⁴⁹ Indeed, Heidegger claims many common examples of the “ordinary interpretation” of conscience confirm this tendency to avoid having to “face” one’s own conscience, e.g. identifying an authority behind the experience of conscience, such as God, or determining a “biological” cause for it.⁵⁵⁰ For Heidegger, such explanations exemplify the tradition’s

...unexpressed but ontologically dogmatic guiding thesis that what *is* (in other words, anything so factual as the call) must be *present-at-hand*, and that what does not let itself be objectively demonstrated as *present-at-hand*, just *is not* at all.⁵⁵¹

Countering “everyday” Dasein’s desperate flight into publicness, conscience ceaselessly appeals in its “uncanny mode of *keeping silent*” and makes possible a return to authentic self-understanding.⁵⁵²

Uncanniness is the basic kind of Being-in-the-world, even though in an everyday way it has been covered up. Out of the depths of this kind of Being, Dasein itself, as conscience, calls. The ‘it calls me’ is a distinctive kind of discourse for Dasein. The call whose mood has been attuned by anxiety is what makes it possible first and foremost for Dasein to project itself upon its ownmost *potentiality-for-Being*. The call of conscience, existentially understood, makes known for the first time what we have hitherto merely contended: that uncanniness pursues Dasein and is a threat to the lostness in which it has forgotten itself (*die Unheimlichkeit setzt dem Dasein nach und bedroht seine selbstvergessene Verlorenheit*).⁵⁵³

It is on these grounds that Heidegger claims that conscience “*manifests itself as the call of care (Das Gewissen offenbart sich als Ruf der Sorge)*.”⁵⁵⁴ The phenomenon of care accounts for how Dasein can act both as the caller and the called: the appeal is made out of care for the authentic potentiality-for-Being of Dasein lost in the “everyday” concerns of

⁵⁴⁹ SZ §57, 276 / 321.

⁵⁵⁰ SZ §57, 275 / 320.

⁵⁵¹ SZ §57, 275 / 320.

⁵⁵² SZ §57, 277 / 322.

⁵⁵³ SZ §57, 277 / 322.

⁵⁵⁴ SZ §57, 277 / 322.

the “they.” Through the phenomenon of conscience, Dasein is “summoned out of [its] falling by the appeal.”⁵⁵⁵ As Heidegger concludes:

The call of conscience—that is, conscience itself—has its ontological possibility in the fact that Dasein, in the very basis of its Being, is care.⁵⁵⁶

In the closing moments of §57, Heidegger reminds his readers that the principal task of his interpretation of conscience remains outstanding: what still must be produced is a way “of making the conscience intelligible as *an attestation of Dasein’s ownmost potentiality-for-Being (Bezeugung seines eigensten Seinkönnens)*.”⁵⁵⁷ The identification of conscience as the “call of care” has “merely...[traced] back conscience *as a phenomenon of Dasein* to the ontological constitution of that entity.”⁵⁵⁸ While this may represent only a preparatory phase of his interpretation of conscience, Heidegger contends that it has nonetheless significantly advanced his project by revealing conscience to be a “mode of discourse” and by identifying the existential structures constitutive of “the *full* experience of conscience (*das volle Gewissenserlebnis*).”⁵⁵⁹ Most importantly, Heidegger has shown that conscience as calling implies an authentic form of “*hearing*” that is essential in order for Dasein to be able to understand the phenomenon. This discovery, however, means that the interpretation of how conscience provides an attestation of Dasein’s authentic way of Being cannot be undertaken without first investigating “the character of [this authentic] *hearing*.”⁵⁶⁰ In other words, the authentic way of hearing the “call of conscience” must be exhibited and explained before the search for an attestation of conscience can proceed. As Heidegger states:

[Only] by analyzing the way the appeal is understood can one be led to discuss explicitly *what the call gives one to understand (was der Ruf zu verstehen gibt)*.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁵ SZ §57, 277-278 / 322.

⁵⁵⁶ SZ §57, 278 / 322-323.

⁵⁵⁷ SZ §57, 279 / 324.

⁵⁵⁸ SZ §57, 279 / 324.

⁵⁵⁹ SZ §57, 279 / 324.

⁵⁶⁰ SZ §57, 279 / 324.

⁵⁶¹ SZ §57, 279 / 324.

Being-Guilty and the Reticent Hearing of Conscience (§58)

Having illustrated how Dasein is called by conscience, Heidegger now seeks to show how Dasein can come to authentically understand this appeal. Thus, Heidegger must explain the essence of and the necessary conditions for this alternative “kind of hearing” that allows Dasein to understand the summons of conscience and to break off its “listening-away” to the “they.” To orient his investigation, Heidegger poses two basic questions:

[What] is it that is essentially implied when the appeal is understood authentically? What is it that has been essentially *given* us to understand in the call at any particular time, even if factually it has not always been understood?⁵⁶²

In response to these questions, Heidegger recalls that no “worldly” content or “information about events” is conveyed by the call.⁵⁶³ Rather, “the call gives us a potentiality-for-Being to understand”; opposed to anything “ideal and universal,” it discloses a potentiality-for-Being that is radically “individualized and which belongs to that particular Dasein.”⁵⁶⁴ The discursive call discloses to Dasein by “[calling] us back” to the uncanniness of our thrownness “in calling us forth” to our ownmost potentiality-for-Being.⁵⁶⁵

While he insists that “what the call says” is not “universal,” Heidegger claims that there is something common to the full range of “ordinary” ways of understanding conscience: they all refer to Dasein’s status as “guilty” or “not guilty.”⁵⁶⁶ For Heidegger, this provides an important clue for his existential investigation.

[What] we generally hear or fail to hear in any experience of conscience...[is] that the call either addresses Dasein as “guilty (*schuldig*),” or, as in the case when the conscience gives warning, refers to a possible “guilty,” or affirms, as a “good” conscience, that one is “conscious of no guilt”? Whatever the ways in which conscience is experienced or

⁵⁶² SZ §58, 280 / 325.

⁵⁶³ SZ §58, 280 / 325.

⁵⁶⁴ SZ §58, 280 / 326.

⁵⁶⁵ SZ §58, 280 / 326.

⁵⁶⁶ SZ §58, 280-281 / 326.

interpreted, all our experiences “agree” on this “guilty.” If only it were not defined in such wholly different ways!⁵⁶⁷

While he will deem all of these “ordinary” ways of interpreting conscience to be inauthentic in §59, Heidegger here recognizes that what they share in common indicates that Dasein’s “idea of guilt (*Schuld*) [must be drawn] from the Interpretation of its own Being.”⁵⁶⁸ As Heidegger states:

[The] question of the existential meaning of what has been called in the call...must first be conceptualized if we are to understand what the call of “guilty” means, and why and how it becomes perverted in its signification by the everyday way of interpreting it.⁵⁶⁹

Heidegger finds the basis of this conceptualization in “the character of the ‘not’” that is essential to the idea of guilt; understood authentically, this “not” is grasped exclusively in terms of “the way Dasein is—namely, *existing*.”⁵⁷⁰

Hence we define the formally existential idea of “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*.”⁵⁷¹

In contrast with this existential idea of guilt, the “everyday” notions that Heidegger examines, e.g. “owing,” “having debts,” “being responsible for,” “making oneself punishable,” being “laden with moral guilt,”⁵⁷² etc., share the basic error that this “not” can be understood in a “present-at-hand or generally accepted” way.⁵⁷³ According to Heidegger, the notion of “moral guilt” distorts the original phenomenon by attracting Dasein’s attention to its concern for worldly affairs. For Heidegger, Dasein’s existential Being-guilty is unrelated to any debt, obligation or “ought” that can be calculated and

⁵⁶⁷ SZ §58, 280-281 / 326. Note that we have modified the translation to remove the exclamation point and capitalization added by Macquarrie and Robinson to “guilty,” as these are not found in the original German text which reads “*schuldig*.”

⁵⁶⁸ SZ §58, 281 / 326.

⁵⁶⁹ SZ §58, 281 / 326-327.

⁵⁷⁰ SZ §58, 283 / 329.

⁵⁷¹ SZ §58, 283 / 329. In German: “Die formal existenziale Idee des „schuldig“ bestimmen wir daher also: Grundsein für ein durch ein Nicht bestimmtes Sein—das heißt *Grundsein einer Nichtigkeit*.”

⁵⁷² SZ §58, 282 / 328.

⁵⁷³ SZ §58, 283 / 329.

balanced off. As Jean Greisch observes, Heidegger even rejects any connection between Being-guilty and the “theological concept of ‘original sin,’” except for the fact that the former is the “condition of the ontological possibility” of the latter.⁵⁷⁴ Dasein is not guilty because it “lacks” something or must make retribution for something, as if this guilt could be corrected. Heidegger contends such misunderstandings regarding the essence of Dasein’s guilt reflect the error of applying the accounting standards of the “presence-at-hand” to the understanding of existence, thereby distorting the *existential* phenomenon revealed by Heidegger’s investigation. In other words, these inauthentic interpretations understand the “not” of Dasein’s guilt in terms of a “lack, as the not-Being-present-at-hand of something which ought to be.”⁵⁷⁵ With his existential interpretation of guilt, Heidegger eliminates from consideration any notion that Dasein could possibly be “lacking in some manner.”⁵⁷⁶

The “not” of existential guilt is not something that can be corrected or accounted for, Heidegger insists. Guilt is rather an essential characteristic of Dasein because it “has been thrown (*geworfen*)” into existence and “brought into its ‘there,’ but *not* of its own accord”; Dasein exists as a “thrown” entity that “can *never* get [its] basis into its power.”⁵⁷⁷ At the same time, Dasein is essentially responsible for its thrownness: “as existing, Dasein must take over Being-a-basis...[and] be its own thrown basis.”⁵⁷⁸

[As] this entity to which it has been...delivered over, it is, in its existing, the basis of its potentiality-for-Being. Although it has *not* laid that basis *itself*, it reposes in the weight of it... In being a basis—that is, in existing as thrown—Dasein constantly lags behind its possibilities. It is never existent *before* its basis, but only *from it* and *as this basis*. Thus “Being-a-basis” means *never* to have power over one’s ownmost Being from the ground up. This “*not*” belongs to the existential meaning of “thrownness.” It itself,

⁵⁷⁴ Jean Greisch. *Ontologie et temporalité : esquisse d'une interprétation intégrale de Sein und Zeit*. (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1994). p. 294. In French: « Aurions-nous ici l'équivalent fonctionnel du concept théologique de « faute originelle » ? Non, c'est même de son contraire, ou plutôt de sa condition de possibilité ontologique, qu'il s'agit. »

⁵⁷⁵ SZ §58, 283 / 329.

⁵⁷⁶ SZ §58, 283 / 329.

⁵⁷⁷ SZ §58, 284 / 329.

⁵⁷⁸ SZ §58, 284 / 330.

being a basis, *is* a nullity of itself. (*Dieses Nicht gehört zum existenzialen Sinn der Geworfenheit. Grundseiend ist es selbst eine Nichtigkeit seiner selbst.*)⁵⁷⁹

Recognizing the existential significance of this “not” is essential to grasping the nature of Dasein’s Being as care. When Dasein exists, it exists as an entity that cares for its possibilities of Being as something thrown into the world and projected “in one possibility or another.”⁵⁸⁰ While Dasein can experience existence authentically or inauthentically, it cannot be anything other than what it is: a thrown entity. In other words, Dasein must exist as the “Being-a-basis” of a basis which it cannot choose and has no power to create or alter. As Heidegger states, Dasein can only project “itself upon possibilities into which it has been thrown.”⁵⁸¹ When it comes to the Being-a-basis of its existence, Dasein has *no* choice. Dasein’s ability to choose is “limited” to “choosing” the way in which it understands its existence, either out of concern for the worldly interests of the “they” or in authentically caring for its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. Furthermore, because Dasein is essentially lost in the “they,” even the choice of returning to the authentic disclosedness of one’s potentiality-for-Being is only possible because we are constantly called by conscience—“against our expectations and even against our will.”⁵⁸²

When Dasein understands authentically, it “[*becomes*] free for the call” because it is able to “[hear] the appeal correctly” and to recognize “*its ownmost possibility of existence*”; hearing the call means that Dasein understands its essential nature as Being-guilty and “has chosen itself.”⁵⁸³

Understanding the call is choosing; but it is not a choosing of conscience, which as such cannot be chosen. What is chosen is *having-a-conscience* as

⁵⁷⁹ SZ §58, 284 / 330.

⁵⁸⁰ SZ §58, 285 / 331.

⁵⁸¹ SZ §58, 284 / 330.

⁵⁸² SZ §57, 275 / 320.

⁵⁸³ SZ §58, 287 / 333-334. In German: “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.”

Being-free for one's ownmost Being-guilty. "*Understanding the appeal*" means "*wanting to have a conscience.*"⁵⁸⁴

It is this disclosing of Dasein's "most primordial potentiality-for-Being as Being-guilty" that reveals conscience to be "an *attestation* which belongs to Dasein's Being."⁵⁸⁵ For while the call communicates no definite content, Heidegger claims that it does disclose something positive to Dasein about its own Being. Indeed, what conscience discloses makes possible Dasein's authentic mode of existing whereby it is brought "face to face with its ownmost potentiality-for-Being."⁵⁸⁶

At the conclusion of §58, Heidegger appears to be close to delivering on his promise to provide a way of attesting Dasein's authentic mode of existence. However, he concedes that his exhibition of how Dasein is able to authentically understand the "call of conscience" might have neglected one of the basic principles of his phenomenological method of investigation: that all existential phenomena must be shown to be possible in ontical experience. Reflecting on this, Heidegger acknowledges the apparent impossibility of reconciling his interpretations of conscience and guilt with the common ways in which these concepts are understood in "everyday" experience.

But now that we have exhibited a potentiality-for-Being which is attested in Dasein itself, a preliminary question arises: can we claim sufficient evidential weight for the way we have exhibited this, as long as the embarrassment of our interpreting the conscience in a one-sided manner by tracing it back to Dasein's constitution while hastily passing over all the familiar findings of the ordinary interpretation of conscience, is one that is still undiminished? Is, then, the phenomenon of conscience, as it 'actually' is, still recognizable at all in the interpretation we have given?⁵⁸⁷

Heidegger here seems to soften his earlier stance in §57 when he had argued "that the ordinary ontical way of understanding conscience [must not] be recognized as the first

⁵⁸⁴ SZ §58, 288 / 334. In German: "Das Rufverstehen ist das Wählen—nicht des Gewissens, das als solches nicht gewählt werden kann. Gewählt wird das Gewissen-*haben* als Freisein für das eigenste Schuldigsein. *Anrufverstehen* besagt: *Gewissen-haben-wollen.*"

⁵⁸⁵ SZ §58, 288 / 334.

⁵⁸⁶ SZ §58, 288 / 334.

⁵⁸⁷ SZ §58, 288-289 / 335.

court of appeal for an ontological interpretation.”⁵⁸⁸ While he does not retract this previous statement, Heidegger now appears to recognize that the investigation has been advanced to a point where this apparent incoherence with worldly experience must be addressed. The legitimacy of the project of *Being and Time* demands that the attestation Heidegger is seeking be shown to conform to the phenomenological standards that he has set for himself. Recognizing the urgency of this problem, Heidegger announces that “[we] must explicitly demonstrate the connection between the results of our ontological analysis and the everyday ways in which the conscience is experienced.”⁵⁸⁹

Heidegger’s Existential Conscience vs. “Ordinary Interpretations” (§59)

Heidegger begins §59 on a pessimistic note as he takes up the question of this apparent incoherence. He concedes that his interpretations of conscience as the “call of care” and of “wanting-to-have-a-conscience” as “the way in which the appeal is understood” are radically unlike anything one would associate with the “ordinary” ways of describing the conscience.⁵⁹⁰ As Heidegger reports:

These two definitions cannot be brought into harmony at once with the ordinary interpretation of conscience. Indeed they seem to be in direct conflict with it.⁵⁹¹

Rather than abandoning his interpretation of conscience, however, Heidegger reacts to this apparent conflict by adopting a more strident tone. He asks:

But *must* the ontological interpretation agree with the ordinary interpretation at all? Should not the latter be, in principle, ontologically suspect?⁵⁹²

At this point, Heidegger completely alters the strategy of his approach to the ontical evidence related to the phenomenon of conscience. Instead of regarding this incoherence as necessarily problematic, he claims that the “ordinary interpretation” of conscience actually

⁵⁸⁸ SZ §57, 279 / 324.

⁵⁸⁹ SZ §58, 289 / 335.

⁵⁹⁰ SZ §59, 289 / 335.

⁵⁹¹ SZ §59, 289 / 335.

⁵⁹² SZ §59, 289 / 335.

provides proof that the “falling and concealment” characteristic of “everydayness” are what lead to the common “misunderstanding” of the call.⁵⁹³ Jean Greisch argues that this strategic shift at the beginning of §59 reveals Heidegger’s reluctance to examine how the “positive” content of the “ordinary experience of conscience” might be related to his existential interpretation:

Heidegger, once again taking cover behind the alibi of the purely ontological orientation of his existential analysis, seems to me to be trying to avoid this possible confrontation [between his existential conscience and the “ordinary experience”], even if he enumerates a certain number of “essential problems” that it is impossible to avoid.⁵⁹⁴

Given Heidegger’s stated objective of revealing how conscience provides the attestation of Dasein’s authentic mode of existence, one would have expected that Heidegger would produce positive evidence of how Being-in-the-world can actualize the experience of the existential phenomenon. This is certainly what seems to be promised at the close of §58 when Heidegger demands a “way of access” that “explicitly [demonstrates] the connection between the results of our ontological analysis and the everyday ways in which the conscience is experienced,” as we have seen.⁵⁹⁵ Instead, Heidegger reverses course in §59 and implies that Dasein’s “ordinary kind of Being” represents an inappropriate “ontological horizon” for interpreting the authentic phenomenon of conscience.⁵⁹⁶

Notwithstanding the “reorientation” of his analysis, Heidegger insists that his investigation must proceed with the analysis of the “everyday understanding of conscience and...the anthropological, psychological, and theological theories of conscience which have been based upon it.”⁵⁹⁷ He reassures his readers that “even the ordinary experience of

⁵⁹³ SZ §59, 289 / 335.

⁵⁹⁴ Greisch. *Ontologie et temporalité : esquisse d'une interprétation intégrale de Sein und Zeit*. p. 296. In French: « Heidegger, se retranchant une nouvelle fois derrière l'alibi de l'orientation purement ontologique de l'analytique existentielle, me semble plutôt se dérober à cette confrontation possible, même s'il énumère un certain nombre de « problèmes essentiel » qu'il est impossible de contourner. »

⁵⁹⁵ SZ §59, 289 / 335.

⁵⁹⁶ SZ §59, 289 / 336.

⁵⁹⁷ SZ §59, 290 / 336.

conscience must somehow—pre-ontologically—reach this phenomenon.”⁵⁹⁸ His subsequent analysis will show, however, that the existential conscience is *radically* different from all these theories: indeed, these “ordinary” notions show how Dasein’s way of hearing the “call of conscience” is “perverted” by the “they-self.”⁵⁹⁹ All the traditional ways of describing the experience of conscience obscure Dasein’s “authentic truth” and distort the authentic care for one’s ownmost potentiality-for-Being; they reveal how the public “they” reorients Dasein’s care for its own possibilities to other worldly entities and interests “*with which one can concern oneself.*”⁶⁰⁰ So while Heidegger insists that his investigation “has no right to disregard the everyday understanding of conscience,” his approach to all “ordinary” ways of understanding conscience is thoroughly destructive.⁶⁰¹ While this destruction is certainly positive for Heidegger’s disclosing of the existential phenomena characteristic of Dasein, it proves problematic here at the pivotal point in *Being and Time* where Heidegger must produce an “existentiell attestation” of how conscience is ontically possible as an experience of Being-in-the-world. Given Heidegger’s strategic shift at the beginning of §59, it is clear that his review of the “ordinary interpretations” of conscience will not lead to such an attestation because they “become intelligible” only when they are examined *against* the “existential analysis...[of] the phenomenon of conscience in its ontological roots.”⁶⁰² Before proceeding with his analysis of how his existential phenomenon of the “call” can be compared to “ordinary” notions of conscience, Heidegger notes that only one benefit can result from completing this task: his analysis will reveal “the ways in which they miss the phenomenon and in the reasons why they conceal it.”⁶⁰³

To facilitate this comparison, Heidegger derives four objections to his existential conscience that reflect the “essential” differences between his notion and the “everyday” way of understanding conscience.

⁵⁹⁸ SZ §59, 289 / 336.

⁵⁹⁹ SZ §58, 282 / 327.

⁶⁰⁰ SZ §58, 282 / 327.

⁶⁰¹ SZ §59, 290 / 336.

⁶⁰² SZ §59, 290 / 336.

⁶⁰³ SZ §59, 290 / 336.

In this ordinary interpretation there are four objections which might be brought up against our interpretation of conscience as the summons of care to Being-guilty: 1) that the function of conscience is essentially critical; 2) that conscience always speaks in a way that is relative to some definite deed which has been performed or willed; 3) that when the ‘voice’ is experienced, it is never so radically related to Dasein’s Being; 4) that our interpretation takes no account of the basic forms of the phenomenon—‘evil’ conscience and ‘good,’ that which ‘reproves’ and that which ‘warns.’⁶⁰⁴

We have already considered in detail each of these four objections and the way that Heidegger responds to them in our preceding analysis of his criticism of Stoker’s interpretation of conscience. Given this fact, we will not repeat that task again here. Let it suffice to say that Heidegger flatly dismisses all four objections, arguing that they all reflect an understanding of Dasein’s guilt as something “present-at-hand” and related to “‘practical’ injunctions.”⁶⁰⁵ This is evident when Heidegger alludes to Schopenhauer’s “ledger book” notion of conscience as he describes the way the existential phenomenon is debased in “everydayness.”

But *must* the ontological interpretation [of conscience] agree with the ordinary interpretation at all? Should not the latter be, in principle, ontologically suspect? ... Everydayness takes Dasein as...something that gets managed and reckoned up. ‘Life’ is a ‘business,’ whether or not it covers its costs. And so with regard to the ordinary kind of Being of Dasein itself, there is no guarantee that the way of interpreting conscience which springs from it or the theories of conscience which are thus oriented, have arrived at the right ontological horizon for its interpretation.⁶⁰⁶

At the same time, Heidegger recognizes that his rejection of these “ontologically inadequate [ways] of understanding the conscience” means that he has still not shown how his existential interpretation of conscience can serve as an “attestation” of Dasein’s authentic mode of existence.⁶⁰⁷ While his existential approach seems to point to “*possibilities* for a more primordial existentiell understanding,” Heidegger warns that his

⁶⁰⁴ SZ §59, 290 / 336.

⁶⁰⁵ SZ §59, 294 / 340.

⁶⁰⁶ SZ §59, 289 / 335-6.

⁶⁰⁷ SZ §59, 295 / 341.

investigation must guard against “[letting] itself get cut off from ontical experience (*sich nicht von der ontischen Erfahrung abschnüren läßt*).”⁶⁰⁸

Resoluteness and the Problematic Attestation of Conscience (§60)

Having completed his review of how the conscience is “ordinarily interpreted,” Heidegger returns in §60 to the primary objective of his existential interpretation of the phenomenon: “to exhibit an attestation of Dasein’s ownmost potentiality-for-Being—an attestation which *is* in Dasein itself.”⁶⁰⁹ As Frank Schalow notes in his essay “The Topography of Heidegger’s Concept of Conscience,” Heidegger must show how conscience can perform its special methodological role of “[serving] as a marker within the destructive landscape.”⁶¹⁰ Yet at the opening of this last section of the chapter on conscience, Heidegger has not yet taken up this task. Concretely, Heidegger must still disclose how Dasein “[summons] us to Being-guilty”:⁶¹¹ it remains to be demonstrated how Dasein can call itself out from the “they” and back to one’s authentic understanding of existential guilt. The attestation of this possibility is the required thread that Heidegger needs in order to connect his existential analysis with existentiell experience.

To exhibit the existential structure of this “experience” of attestation, Heidegger proceeds by describing the “way in which Dasein has been *disclosed*” when it understands itself as “wanting to have a conscience.”⁶¹² In other words, he considers the kind of disclosedness that is implied when Dasein “understands the call undisguisedly in the sense it has itself intended.”⁶¹³ To accomplish this, Heidegger takes up his previous analysis of the three basic structures of Dasein’s disclosedness—understanding, state-of-mind and discourse—and then determines the “manner” in which each of them could correspond to

⁶⁰⁸ SZ §59, 295 / 341.

⁶⁰⁹ SZ §60, 295 / 341. In German: “Die existenziale Interpretation des Gewissens soll eine im Dasein selbst *seiende* Bezeugung seines eigensten Seinkönnens herausstellen.”

⁶¹⁰ Frank Schalow. “The Topography of Heidegger’s Concept of Conscience.” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* LXIX. 2 (1995). p. 255.

⁶¹¹ SZ §60, 295 / 341.

⁶¹² SZ §60, 295 / 342.

⁶¹³ SZ §60, 295 / 342.

“wanting-to-have-a-conscience.” In understanding the “call of conscience,” Heidegger sees Dasein coming into a transparent understanding of itself as a thrown entity that must exist as the Being-the-basis of a basis it has neither created nor has any power over. Such an understanding implies that one “[projects] oneself in each case upon one’s ownmost factual possibility” as the Being-guilty that is thrown into the world.⁶¹⁴ Since this understanding discloses “one’s own Dasein in the uncanniness of its individualization,” Heidegger identifies the state-of-mind of conscience as anxiety: “Wanting-to-have-a-conscience becomes a readiness for anxiety (*Gewissenhabenwollen wird Bereitschaft zur Angst*)” because this basic “kind of mood” brings Dasein “face to face with its own uncanniness.”⁶¹⁵

As the “third essential item in disclosedness,” discourse plays a double role in Heidegger’s existential interpretation of the attesting “experience” of conscience.⁶¹⁶ We have seen that the call itself is described as a “mode of discourse” that “summons” Dasein. But this call must also be properly “received” by Dasein: the call must be authentically *heard* so that Dasein can be “called back into the stillness of itself...as something that is to become still.”⁶¹⁷ This “articulative” mode of discourse characteristic of Dasein’s authentic understanding of the silent “call of conscience” is what Heidegger calls “reticence (*Verschwiegenheit*).” As Heidegger explains: “In hearing the call understandingly, one denies oneself any counter-discourse... Only in reticence...is this silent discourse understood appropriately in wanting to have a conscience.”⁶¹⁸ Through the symbiosis of silent calling and reticent hearing, conscience “takes the words away from...the ‘they.’”⁶¹⁹ Dasein responds authentically to Heidegger’s silent “call of conscience” by replicating this keeping silent in the mode of reticence. There is no counter-proposal to the “call of conscience” because when Dasein understands this call, it is overcome by it: Dasein can neither argue with conscience nor refuse its command precisely because there is no

⁶¹⁴ SZ §60, 295 / 342.

⁶¹⁵ SZ §60, 295-296 / 342.

⁶¹⁶ SZ §60, 296 / 342.

⁶¹⁷ SZ §60, 296 / 343.

⁶¹⁸ SZ §60, 295-296 / 342.

⁶¹⁹ SZ §60, 296 / 343.

command. The return to one's self, marked by the sudden muting of the noisy "they," brings Dasein into the opening of its own authentic disclosedness. In this experience of the immediate quieting that interrupts Dasein's public way of existing, Being-in-the-world recognizes its nature as Being-guilty and can resolutely assume responsibility for its ownmost potentiality-for-Being.

The existential interpretation of Dasein's authentic mode of disclosedness in hearing the "call of conscience" is completed by grasping these elements together as a "whole" phenomenon: they are the constitutive elements of Dasein's possibility of existing authentically.

The disclosedness of Dasein in wanting to have a conscience, is thus constituted by anxiety as state-of-mind, by understanding as a projection of oneself upon one's ownmost Being-guilty, and by discourse as reticence. 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 (*Entschlossenheit*)."⁶²⁰

Heidegger explicitly links this "distinctive mode of Dasein's disclosedness" with his earlier interpretation of disclosedness as "primordial truth" in §44.⁶²¹ Whereas his earlier "proposition that 'Dasein is in the truth'...called attention to the primordial disclosedness of this entity as the *truth of existence*," Heidegger insists that resoluteness represents an even *more basic* mode of Dasein's truth.⁶²²

In resoluteness we have now arrived at that truth of Dasein which is most primordial because it is *authentic*. Whenever a "there" is disclosed, its whole Being-in-the-world—that is to say, the world, Being-in, and the self which, as an 'I am,' this entity is—is disclosed with equal primordially.⁶²³

⁶²⁰ SZ §60, 296-297 / 343.

⁶²¹ SZ §60, 297 / 343.

⁶²² SZ §60, 297 / 343.

⁶²³ SZ §60, 297 / 343.

In this “experience” of attestation through conscience, Dasein is made fully transparent to itself. “Thrown into its ‘there’...[and] factually submitted to a definite ‘world,’”⁶²⁴ Dasein doesn’t lift itself out of its world when it hears conscience and understands authentically; rather Dasein sees its world differently in understanding the significance of what is disclosed to it according to the “for-the-sake-of-which” of the ownmost and authentic possibility that it has chosen for itself. Dasein sees through the obscurity of what is said by the “they”; when Dasein understands itself and its world clearly, its mode of Being-with (*Mitsein*) is modified so that it becomes possible for people to “authentically be with one another.”⁶²⁵

Resoluteness brings the self right into its current concerned Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being with others (*fürsorgende Mitsein mit den Anderen*). In the light of the “for-the-sake-of-which” of one’s self-chosen potentiality-for-Being (*Worumwillen des selbstgewählten Seinkönnens*), resolute Dasein frees itself for its world. Dasein’s resoluteness towards itself is what first makes it possible to let the others who are with it ‘be’ in their ownmost potentiality-for-Being, and to co-disclose this potentiality in the solicitude which leaps forth and liberates (*vorspringend-befreienden Fürsorge*). When Dasein is resolute, it can become the “conscience” of others.⁶²⁶

As with the “call of conscience,” the phenomenon of resoluteness is described by Heidegger as an indefinite concept in existential terms: it must be understood as the unique experience of each individual Dasein at a specific moment, i.e. the authentic appropriation of one’s existence. The existentiell “content” of resoluteness is utterly dependent on what is possible for Dasein as the entity thrown into its particular “there.”

Resoluteness, by its ontological essence, is always the resoluteness of some factual Dasein at a particular time. Resoluteness ‘exists’ only as a resolution (*Entschluss*) which understandingly projects itself. ... *The resolution is precisely the disclosive projection and determination of what is factually possible at the time.*⁶²⁷

⁶²⁴ SZ §60, 297 / 344.

⁶²⁵ SZ §60, 298 / 344.

⁶²⁶ SZ §60, 298 / 344.

⁶²⁷ SZ §60, 298 / 345.

This authentic disclosedness doesn't eliminate the "they," but it does imply that Dasein sees through the "they" and understands itself and its world in terms of its own "decision" rather than accepting the public way the world is understood. In the mode of authentic disclosedness, Dasein also recognizes that it is always threatened by the "untruth" of publicness: when it hears the "call of conscience," Dasein knows that it "is already in irresoluteness (*Unentschlossenheit*), and soon, perhaps, will be in it again."⁶²⁸

To further clarify the distinct character of resoluteness, Heidegger describes a specific mode of the "there" of Dasein when it exists in the "authentic transparency" of resoluteness: this authentic "there" is the "existential phenomenon which we call a 'situation.'"⁶²⁹ For Heidegger, the concept of the "situation" conveys the special "spatiality" of Dasein, a "spatiality" that is quite unlike the present-at-hand notions of space and time in the "natural world." In the "situation," Dasein understands itself and the "current factual involvement-character of the circumstances" disclosed to it in terms of its resoluteness.⁶³⁰ This authentic "there" is the "place" where Dasein finds itself when it hears the "call of conscience" and exists in a possibility it has chosen, even if it has not "created" this possibility and certainly does not have an unrestricted set of options. What is unique about the "situation" of resoluteness compared to Dasein's other possibilities is that the voice of the "they" is silenced in this authentic possibility: while the "they" still shape the world, Dasein's understanding of its possibilities is authentically based on its ownmost potentiality-for-Being rather than what the "they" has to say. As Heidegger notes: "*For the 'they'...the situation is essentially something that has been closed off (verschlossen).*"⁶³¹

In this special "spatiality" shaped by the authentic understanding of Dasein's possibilities, Heidegger observes that the notion of resoluteness as "taking action" must be taken in a very broad sense: resoluteness implies the "action" of resolving upon a specific

⁶²⁸ SZ §60, 299 / 345.

⁶²⁹ SZ §60, 299 / 346.

⁶³⁰ SZ §60, 299 / 346.

⁶³¹ SZ §60, 300 / 346.

possibility for one's existence.⁶³² Dasein does not come into the "situation" and then decide upon an action; rather, "Dasein is already *taking action*" in resoluteness because "action" is essential to "wanting-to-have-a-conscience."⁶³³ In other words, the existential "action" of resoluteness is the authentic experience of one's Being in care.

*Resoluteness, however, is only that authenticity which, in care, is the object of care (in der Sorge gesorgte), and which is possible as care—the authenticity of care itself.*⁶³⁴

By interpreting resoluteness as the "experience" of Dasein's authentic "there," Heidegger establishes the connection between the "call of conscience" and "the existential structure of that authentic potentiality-for-Being which the conscience attests—wanting to have a conscience."⁶³⁵ As the "event" of Dasein's freeing itself from the "they," the moment of resoluteness is what Greisch describes as the "fruit" produced by the "call of conscience"⁶³⁶:

From a methodological point of view, we must remark that the notion of resoluteness links together two planes that Heidegger had clearly distinguished up to this point: that of existential structures and that of existentiell possibilities.⁶³⁷

Heidegger's interpretation of the "appeal" of conscience reveals that Dasein is not called to "some empty ideal of existence"; rather, Dasein calls itself to a specific and possible "situation" where it authentically comes into the concrete "current factual...circumstances" of its existence.⁶³⁸ As Heidegger will state explicitly in §61, this "situation" of resoluteness exhibits "Dasein's authentic potentiality-for-Being...in its

⁶³² SZ §60, 300 / 347.

⁶³³ SZ §60, 300 / 347.

⁶³⁴ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁶³⁵ SZ §60, 300 / 347.

⁶³⁶ Greisch. *Ontologie et temporalité : esquisse d'une interprétation intégrale de Sein und Zeit*. p. 301. In French: « Du point de vue méthodologique, on remarquera que la notion de résolution opère la jonction de deux plans que jusqu'alors Heidegger avait clairement distingués : celui des structures *existentiales* et celui des options *existentielles*. »

⁶³⁷ Ibid. p. 301.

⁶³⁸ SZ §60, 300 / 347.

existentiell attestation” and thus represents Heidegger’s solution to the problem of attestation announced at the opening of §54.

Heidegger admits, however, that this interpretation of the existential structures of resoluteness is insufficient for his investigation: it remains to be shown how Dasein’s “authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole” can be attested. While Heidegger claims this will be accomplished on the basis of his exhibition of resoluteness, the status of resoluteness as an “existentiell attestation” will remain highly questionable right through the end of *Being and Time*. Despite Heidegger’s apparent satisfaction at having attested Dasein’s possible authenticity at the end of §60, this “attestation” appears to fall well short of the objective set at the beginning of §54. As Greisch remarks:

Just when we once again could have thought that the long quest for Dasein’s wholeness was coming to an end, it turns out that this is not the case: we must still search for an *existentiell* attestation of what for the moment is nothing more than a purely existential project.⁶³⁹

Rather than demonstrating the possible connection between his existential concept of authenticity and Dasein’s factual experience, Heidegger now contends that “it is enough if that authentic potentiality-for-Being which conscience attests for Dasein itself in terms of Dasein itself is defined existentially.”⁶⁴⁰ This claim is problematic because without disclosing a *possibility* of how Dasein can experience its conscience, Heidegger’s existential analysis remains “[hanging] in mid-air.”⁶⁴¹ As we have seen, Heidegger introduced conscience—with its unique methodological role—*precisely* in order to show how Dasein’s attestation of this “authentic potentiality-for-Being” can be found “in its existentiell possibility by Dasein itself.”⁶⁴²

⁶³⁹ Greisch. *Ontologie et temporalité : esquisse d’une interprétation intégrale de Sein und Zeit*. p. 304. In French: « [Alors] que de nouveau on pourrait penser que la longue quête de l’intégralité du *Dasein* touche à sa fin, cela n’est pas le cas : il faudra encore rechercher l’attestation *existentielle* de ce qui pour l’instant n’est encore qu’un projet purement existentiel ! »

⁶⁴⁰ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁶⁴¹ SZ §53, 267 / 311.

⁶⁴² SZ §54, 267 / 312.

The identification of the allegedly “concrete situation” of resoluteness as the “attestation” of conscience proves dubious because the exhibition of resoluteness is accomplished strictly on the basis of existential concepts and is never revealed—not even indicatively—to be a possible experience of Being-in-the-world. In keeping with his “destructive” phenomenological approach, Heidegger in §59 has eliminated any connection between his existential phenomenon of conscience and how it is ordinarily interpreted. While Heidegger may be correct in dismissing such deficient notions, *he never indicates an alternative way of experiencing conscience authentically*. The essential structures of authentic disclosedness as they are described by Heidegger only compound this problem because they are shown to be exclusively existential concepts. According to Heidegger, the resoluteness of Dasein “in wanting to have a conscience, is thus constituted by anxiety as state-of-mind, by understanding as a projection of oneself upon one’s ownmost Being-guilty, and by discourse as reticence.”⁶⁴³ None of these three key phenomena of Dasein’s possible authenticity are demonstrated in *Being and Time* to be ontically possible; indeed, the case appears to be quite the opposite. For example, Heidegger goes to great lengths in Division One to distinguish the phenomenon of anxiety from that of the “ontical” experience of fear.⁶⁴⁴ As Heidegger makes clear in his existential analysis, anxiety “makes manifest in Dasein its *Being towards* its ownmost potentiality-for-Being.”⁶⁴⁵ While the existential role assigned to anxiety is clear, it remains “unattested” from an existentiell standpoint: this is precisely why Heidegger needs the attestation of conscience to confirm the “existentiell possibility” of Dasein’s authenticity. Similarly, the purely “transparent” understanding of one’s authentic Being-guilty as an entity thrown into the world and the absolutely “silent” discourse of reticent Dasein remain “purely existential” notions at the close of §60. With minimal elaboration, Heidegger merely implies that the “existentiell attestation” of Dasein’s authentic potentiality-for-Being is satisfactorily achieved because resoluteness “brings the Being of the ‘there’ into the existence of its situation,” where the “current factual involvement-character” of one’s existence is disclosed.

⁶⁴³ SZ §60, 243 / 296.

⁶⁴⁴ SZ §§39-40, 182-191 / 226-235.

⁶⁴⁵ SZ §40, 188 / 232.

[When] the call of conscience summons us to our potentiality-for-Being, it does not hold before us some empty ideal of existence, but *calls us forth into the situation (in die Situation vorruft)*. ... When our understanding of the appeal is interpreted existentially as resoluteness, the conscience is revealed as that kind of Being—included in the very basis of Dasein—in which Dasein makes possible for itself its factual existence, thus attesting its ownmost potentiality-for-Being (*das eigenste Seinkönnen bezeugend*).⁶⁴⁶

Heidegger thus confirms that his “existentiell attestation” of conscience in §60 is obtained strictly on the grounds of the existential interpretation of resoluteness. Rather than being revealed in terms of “factual existence,” conscience is presupposed as a “kind of Being” that “makes possible...its factual existence.” This modified approach to attestation contradicts the reason why Heidegger introduced conscience in the first place: the “attestation...[that] authentic existence is possible”⁶⁴⁷ was required to reveal the connection between ontical experience and Heidegger’s ontological project. In this regard, it is significant that Heidegger explicitly acknowledges that his interpretation of resoluteness has not revealed any way of understanding authenticity as a “factual existentiell possibility” of Dasein.⁶⁴⁸ Reprising his strategy concerning the problematic “everyday” notions of conscience in §59, Heidegger seems here to dismiss the relevance of this apparent difficulty:

To present the factual existentiell possibilities in their chief features and interconnections, and to interpret them according to their existential structure, falls among the tasks of a thematic existential anthropology (*fällt in den Aufgabenkreis der thematischen existenzialen Anthropologie*). For the purposes of the present investigation as a study of fundamental ontology, it is enough if that authentic potentiality-for-Being which conscience attests for Dasein itself in terms of Dasein itself, is defined existentially.⁶⁴⁹

Such a dismissal might be justified if resoluteness were sufficient for demonstrating how it is possible for Dasein to experience its authenticity in factual existentiell terms. But we have seen that the “situation” of resoluteness is highly suspect as a basis for providing the

⁶⁴⁶ SZ §60, 300 / 347.

⁶⁴⁷ SZ §54, 267 / 312.

⁶⁴⁸ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁶⁴⁹ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

required “existentiell” attestation of conscience. Is it possible that this attestation remains “missing” at the end of §60?

This appears to be the case when we consider the final lines of this section concerning “Dasein’s *authentic* potentiality-for-Being-a-whole”⁶⁵⁰ and the next two sections (§§61-62) describing the phenomenon of Dasein’s “anticipatory resoluteness.” For as soon as Heidegger completes the exhibition of resoluteness, he returns to the phenomenon of Being-towards-death and recognizes that the attestation of Dasein’s wholeness remains outstanding and must be produced. On the basis of the existential phenomenon of resoluteness, Heidegger must show how the specific attestation of Dasein’s Being-towards-death is possible:

[As] an authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole, the authentic Being-towards-death which we have deduced existentially still remains a purely existential project for which Dasein’s attestation is missing (*dem dies daseinsmäßige Bezeugung fehlt*). Only when such attestation has been found will our investigation suffice to exhibit (as its problematic requires) an authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole, existentially confirmed and clarified—a potentiality which belongs to Dasein.⁶⁵¹

To accomplish this task, Heidegger demands that we investigate whether the phenomenon of anticipatory Being-towards-death is somehow contained in resoluteness as a specific possibility of Dasein’s authentic existence. He asks: “What if resoluteness, in accordance with its meaning, should bring itself into authenticity only when it projects itself...upon [the] uttermost possibility [of its own death?]” When Heidegger later affirmatively declares that this is indeed the case, his conclusion carries significant implications for the “attestation” of conscience produced in §60.

Resoluteness does not just ‘have’ a connection with anticipation, as with something other than itself. *It harbours in itself authentic Being-towards-death, as the possible existentiell modality of its own authenticity.*⁶⁵²

⁶⁵⁰ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁶⁵¹ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁶⁵² SZ §62, 305 / 353.

This “clarification” confirms the problem regarding the initial interpretation of resoluteness as the “existentiell attestation” of Dasein’s possible authenticity: while resoluteness may encompass such a possibility, the “existential” definition provided in §60 does not describe the specifically authentic “situation” where Dasein is summoned by the “call of conscience.” As Heidegger affirms: “Resoluteness is authentically and wholly what it can be, only as *anticipatory resoluteness (nur als vorlaufende Entschlossenheit)*.”⁶⁵³ Absent the essential “anticipation” of Dasein’s wholeness as Being-towards-death, the exhibition of resoluteness merely reveals the “purely existential” structures of Dasein’s potentiality-for-Being—which could just as well be authentic or inauthentic. This preliminary and “unspecific” description of resoluteness *sans* anticipation is, however, essentially inadequate for attesting Dasein’s possible authenticity as required by Heidegger’s project.

When the call of conscience is understood, lostness in the “they” is revealed (*Das Verstehen des Gewissensrufes enthüllt die Verlorenheit in das Man*). Resoluteness brings Dasein back to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-itself. When one has an understanding Being-towards-death—towards death as one’s *ownmost* possibility—one’s potentiality-for-Being becomes authentic and wholly transparent (*eigentlich und ganz durchsichtig*).⁶⁵⁴

By correcting the “insufficient” attestation of §60 with his concept of “anticipatory resoluteness,” Heidegger seems to invite a renewal of his search for a way to connect the existential-ontological project with ontical experience. Describing how Dasein “holds itself free *constantly*” by anticipating its “constantly certain...death,” Heidegger appears intent on revealing an ontical possibility of how Dasein can exist authentically. On the basis of the authentic “certainty” of “anticipatory resoluteness,” he seems ready to show how Dasein can experience the “call of conscience” that produces this attestation. As Heidegger states: “Authentic ‘thinking about death’ is a wanting-to-have-a-conscience, which has become transparent to itself in an existentiell manner.”⁶⁵⁵ At the close of §62, Heidegger

⁶⁵³ SZ §62, 307-309 / 355-356.

⁶⁵⁴ SZ §62, 307 / 354.

⁶⁵⁵ SZ §62, 309 / 357.

explicitly addresses the importance of confirming the connection between this “attestation” of the phenomenon of conscience and the possible ontical experience of Dasein.

Is there not...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 as a *positive necessity (positiven Notwendigkeit)*, in terms of the object which we have taken as the theme of our investigation.⁶⁵⁶

Given Heidegger’s evident concern for demonstrating how Dasein experiences this possibility of authentic existence through “wanting-to-have-a-conscience,” it is remarkable for our study that he will never again elaborate on the phenomenon of conscience in the remainder of *Being and Time*, nor will he again raise the matter of this “positive necessity.” The word “*Gewissen*” will only be mentioned in passing on five occasions in the remaining 127 pages following the conclusion of §62 and the question of how conscience is experienced will never again be raised. Moreover, after the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger virtually banishes the concept of existential conscience from his work altogether. Other than a few reprises of his critique of the “moral conscience,” Heidegger ceases using the term “conscience” as a philosophical concept. By never showing how Dasein’s authenticity is made “phenomenally accessible” through the possible experience of conscience, Heidegger never produces the “missing” attestation clearly promised at the opening of the conscience chapter in §54. Ultimately, Heidegger never shows how his existential interpretation of conscience passes his own phenomenological “test.”⁶⁵⁷

3.2. The Methodological Problem of Heidegger’s “Missing” Attestation

Two major points have been made clear in our preceding analysis of Heidegger’s interpretation of conscience:

⁶⁵⁶ SZ §62, 310 / 358.

⁶⁵⁷ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

Firstly, conscience is assigned a pivotal role in the methodology of *Being and Time* as the proposed “attestation” that Dasein’s authenticity is ontically possible. Heidegger presents conscience as the *de facto* final constitutive “phenomenon” of Dasein’s existential structures and as the means through which he has been able to access these phenomena from the very start. Moreover, Heidegger intends to use the phenomenon of conscience to demonstrate that Dasein can authentically understand its existence without recourse to an “alien power” or other metaphysical absolute that would supply the basis for its existence.⁶⁵⁸ In this sense, Heidegger’s conscience is required both to “complete” the existential investigation of Dasein’s structures and to provide the necessary attesting “evidence” that Dasein is “phenomenally accessible” in its authentic mode.⁶⁵⁹ As Courtine states:

[Clearly] defined at the outset [of §54], are the function and import of the analysis of *Gewissen*: to show phenomenologically how, through the call of conscience, is constituted the ipseity of Dasein, in the attesting of its authentic Being-able-to-be. ... But the interpretation of conscience—Heidegger emphasizes this—does not simply extend the existential analytics, but aims to take hold again *more originally* of it, bringing it back to the possibility of a Being-there proper.⁶⁶⁰

In the methodological strategy of *Being and Time*, this “attestation” of conscience is required in order to make it possible to raise the question of the meaning of Being through an investigation of how anticipatory Being-towards-death is related to temporality.

Secondly, given the fact that conscience is so important to the methodology of *Being and Time*, Heidegger’s recognition that the required attestation is still “missing” at the conclusion of §60 holds potentially devastating implications for his entire project. With his interpretation of resoluteness as Dasein’s authentic mode of disclosedness, Heidegger reveals that the “call of conscience” has been effective throughout the existential analytic of Dasein. All the existential structures described from the beginning of his work to this point have been made transparent on the basis of the authentically disclosing conscience.

⁶⁵⁸ SZ §57, 275 / 320.

⁶⁵⁹ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁶⁶⁰ Courtine. "Voice of Conscience and Call of Being." p. 106.

The investigation itself *requires* that one “hears” the “call of conscience.” Indeed, Feldman even contends that the text of *Being and Time* implies the “performance” of the summoning call by Heidegger himself and represents “an attestation of Dasein’s ownmost ability to be itself”: the “profoundly figurative and specifically catachrestic” text represents a disturbing call that must be *heard* and *re-enacted* by each reader.⁶⁶¹ Yet as Heidegger himself clearly states, his project “will stand the test only if it can cling to a possible authenticity of its Being which is attested by Dasein itself.”⁶⁶² Without this attestation, Heidegger implicitly recognizes that his investigation would remain a “purely existential project” and thus could be considered to be as “free-floating” as any of the traditional theories of presence-at-hand that he condemns.⁶⁶³ Despite the major methodological setback at the end of §60, Heidegger continues his project and clearly intends to produce this attestation in the process of investigating the phenomenon of temporality: the investigation of the “anticipatory resoluteness” of “*authentic Being-towards-death*” in §62 seeks to “[elucidate] phenomenally” what Heidegger calls “*the possible existentiell modality of [Dasein’s] own authenticity*.”⁶⁶⁴ As we have noted above, however, Heidegger will never return to the problem of the “missing” attestation of conscience in the remaining pages of his interrupted and ultimately abandoned ontological project based on the existential analysis of Dasein.

Recognizing these facts—that conscience plays a vital methodological role in *Being and Time* and that the project as a whole appears jeopardized by the “insufficiency” of its attestation—we will now consider in greater depth the relationship between the problematic attestation of conscience and Heidegger’s phenomenological method of investigation. This requires that we first attempt to describe the methodology of *Being and Time* and make explicit the basic principles of Heidegger’s approach. Only then will we be in position to more precisely explain how conscience is related to his problem of “method.” To guide this analysis, we will emphasize the “how” of revealing the “missing” attestation of conscience. In other words, how might Heidegger’s methodology allow for the discovery of a possible

⁶⁶¹ Feldman. *Binding Words: Conscience and Rhetoric in Hobbes, Hegel, and Heidegger*. p. 80.

⁶⁶² SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁶⁶³ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁶⁶⁴ SZ §62, 305 / 353.

way of experiencing the phenomenon of conscience? Furthermore, what conditions are methodologically necessary for such an attestation to be produced? Based on what we discover, we will then consider why the attestation of conscience still proves problematic in *Being and Time* and seek to identify clues in the text itself that could indicate solutions to this methodological impasse.

It is no longer a secret that the methodology of *Being and Time* cannot be exhibited simply by reading the text closely. In Heidegger's personal correspondence with his former graduate student Karl Löwith shortly after the work was published, the young professor states explicitly that these principles are not explained in *Being and Time* itself.⁶⁶⁵ As Dahlstrom reports: "By his own account, Heidegger does not exactly have a methodology, but he certainly does have a method."⁶⁶⁶ This is not to say that the work lacks methodical rigor; on the contrary, the deliberate structure of the project reflects the painstaking development of Heidegger's phenomenological approach over more than a decade. On this point, we can only echo Walter Schulz's remark that *Being and Time*, with its ever tightening "spiral" of interpretive force, is a "methodologically sophisticated work"⁶⁶⁷ and concur with Courtine's observation that this assessment "could never be taken too seriously."⁶⁶⁸ Yet despite the evident deployment of an innovative "phenomenological method" in *Being and Time*, Heidegger for the most part kept his preparatory analytic of Dasein free of details regarding his methodology. While Heidegger addresses methodological questions directly in a few university courses and public talks during his so-called "phenomenological decade" leading up to *Being and Time*, his strategy for addressing matters of methodology within the book itself is one of minimalism if not mutism.

⁶⁶⁵ Martin Heidegger. "Letter Exchange with Karl Löwith on *Being and Time*." *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of His Early Occasional Writings*. eds. Theodore J. Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007). p. 302.

⁶⁶⁶ Daniel O. Dahlstrom. "Heidegger's Method: Philosophical Concepts as Formal Indications." *The Review of Metaphysics* 47. 4 (1994). p. 779.

⁶⁶⁷ Schulz. "Über den philosophiegeschichtlichen Ort Martin Heideggers." p. 101.

⁶⁶⁸ Courtine. "La cause de la phénoménologie." p. 165.

Notwithstanding the preliminary “definition” of “phenomenology” provided in §7 and some occasional “asides” about interpretation that mark the progression of his analysis, Heidegger resists the urge to provide the reader of *Being and Time* with an explicit description of his innovative “method” for investigating Dasein. In this work, Heidegger proceeds to “leap” into the “hermeneutic circle” and “positively” go about his interpretative task of identifying the essential ontological-existential phenomena, inviting his reader to follow along and analyze the “how” of existence based on his or her own experience. Heidegger neither explains the “how” of this “leap” nor the basic principles underlying his interpretative “techniques.” Reflecting his stated intention in *Being and Time* to analyze existence without separating Dasein from its world, Heidegger demands of his reader an immediate commitment: he or she must participatively re-enact this *self*-interpretation of existence structured upon the disclosed phenomena. It is thus that conscience can be said to have been effective from the very start of *Being and Time*: it is the primordial phenomenon at the source of authentic disclosedness that has effectively made the analysis of Dasein possible even if this role is left unmentioned by Heidegger right up to the threshold of the ontological investigation of temporality in Division Two.

Conscience and the “Method” of Formal Indication in *Being and Time*

Based on his correspondence with Löwith, we know that the concept of “formal indication” represents the key to the method that Heidegger uses to conduct his preparatory investigation of Dasein and its constitutive elements in *Being and Time*.⁶⁶⁹ While he hardly mentions the term “formal indication” in the text, this innovative concept had explicitly served as the basis of his phenomenological approach for most of the decade leading up to this breakthrough work. Indeed, his remarks to Löwith reveal that Heidegger had consciously chosen to downplay the methodological principles upon which his analysis of existence are based.⁶⁷⁰ Reacting to Löwith’s claims that the “ontological” project of analyzing Dasein’s structures had failed to uphold the “hermeneutics of facticity”

⁶⁶⁹ Heidegger. “Letter Exchange with Karl Löwith on *Being and Time*.” p. 302.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 302.

developed by Heidegger in Freiburg, the young professor testily points out his former student's failure to recognize the methodological continuity between his earlier work focused on the interpretation of factual life and his subsequent ontological-existential focus.

The problems of facticity persist for me with the same intensity as they did in my Freiburg beginnings, only much more radically now, and still *in the perspectives* that were guiding me even in Freiburg. That I was constantly occupied with Duns Scotus and the Middle Ages, then back to Aristotle, is by no means a matter of chance. ... Formal indications, critique of the customary doctrine of the a priori, formalization and the like: all of this is still there for me even if I do not speak of them now.⁶⁷¹

While *Being and Time* contains some expositions regarding the etymological origins and genealogies of specific concepts, such as phenomenology and truth, Heidegger shuns the complexities related to the “how” of his interpretive work. Heidegger evidently wants to emphasize the “experience” of Dasein’s authentic understanding rather than to describe the technical aspects of his approach. For Heidegger, treatises on method are of secondary interest compared to the experience of phenomenological revealing itself, i.e. the *actualizing* of what is formally indicated. Another letter addressed to Löwith three years prior to the completion of *Being and Time* provides further evidence regarding his evolving approach and his conscious decision to downplay methodological matters:

You’ll be getting an offprint when the essay [“The Concept of Time”⁶⁷²] comes out in January. Unfortunately, I had to leave out some important topics, in particular the ‘formal indication,’ which is indispensable for an ultimate understanding—I have worked essentially on this topic.⁶⁷³

In developing the concept of “formal indication,” Heidegger sought to provide phenomenological research with a means of overcoming the “problem of the *theoretical*” and philosophy’s traditional insistence on separating the observing subject from its world

⁶⁷¹ Ibid. p. 302.

⁶⁷² Cf. Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. p. 315. Kisiel justly describes this essay as one of the early “drafts” of *Being and Time*.

⁶⁷³ Ibid. p. 543. Excerpt from Heidegger’s letter to Löwith on November 6, 1924. Cf. Kisiel. “Why the First Draft of *Being and Time* Was Never Published.” p. 9.

or breaking the “real” world into distinct regions of study.⁶⁷⁴ We find Heidegger’s most sustained attempt to explain the concept of formal indication in his 1920-21 winter semester course at Freiburg entitled “Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion” where he attempts to build on Husserl’s “breakthrough” work on formalism in the final chapter of the *Prolegomena* to his *Logical Investigations*. In this course, formal indication is proposed by Heidegger as a methodological procedure for advancing the hermeneutic study of factual life while guarding against the dangerous presuppositions inherent to the theoretical attitude. Through his innovative approach to the interpretation of existence, Heidegger envisions a way of accessing phenomenological “truth” that aims to show how language emerges out of the discovery of the world by what he calls the “I am.” Heidegger contrasts this “discovering” form of truth with the traditional concept of truth, which values only the objective “facts” that are “possessed” by the knowledgeable “I am.”

While Heidegger recognizes that the traditional notion of truth has shaped the history of philosophy since the pre-Socratic period, he contends that this prioritizing of *logos*-based evidence fundamentally distorts the “how” of the encounter of the “I am” with its world. Seeking to recover the question of this “how” of existence, Heidegger proposes his new phenomenological concept of “formal indication” as a way of investigating existence on the basis of Dasein’s genuine discovery of factual life. This “method” demands a way of overcoming the “prejudice” of “everyday” life and the “preconceived opinions” of science so that the factual basis of existence can be retrieved. For this reversal of the natural attitude to succeed, authentic interpretation must be able to cut through the accumulated sedimentation of objective certainty that has blocked off access to the original truth of existence. As Heidegger states at the opening of his lecture on “Formalization and Formal Indication”:

We will name the methodical use of a sense that becomes a guiding one for phenomenological explication, a “formal indication.” The phenomena will be examined according to what the formally indicative sense carries within itself. Through the methodological consideration, it must become clear how

⁶⁷⁴ GA 60, 55 / 38.

it can be that the formal indication, although guiding the consideration, nevertheless brings no preconceived opinion into the problems.⁶⁷⁵

Parallels Between Formal Indication and the “Call of Conscience”

By examining the transcripts of Heidegger’s lectures on formal indication during his “phenomenological decade,” we discover important parallels between his innovative “method” of philosophical investigation and the role assigned to the “call of conscience” in *Being and Time*’s existential analysis of Dasein.⁶⁷⁶ As in the case of the “attestation” of conscience, Heidegger states that formal indication must deliver a means of access to the “truth” of existence that makes it possible for any individual investigator to adopt and enact the proposed approach. Hent de Vries describes Heidegger’s formally indicative concepts as “stepping stones” towards authentic understanding:

[They] target or touch upon the phenomenon—lived experience—yet do not lead us to the very heart of it. In a sense, they lead up to a way that still remains to be followed *all the way* and first of all *in a genuine way*. ... It is, it seems, only when they disclose the access to the fundamental meaning of the phenomenon that they allow certain methodological principles and procedures to be deduced in the first place.⁶⁷⁷

Reflecting the academic context of his philosophical work, Heidegger develops formal indication explicitly as a methodological concept and describes in detail how this approach to phenomenology arises out of his critical assessment of Husserl’s formalism. If the merit of phenomenological research is that it promises to uncover the “things themselves” upon which factual experience is structured, then Heidegger insists that phenomenology’s first task must be to determine “how” this search can proceed without losing touch with the world. While the methodology for accomplishing this task is not explicitly described in *Being and Time*, the fundamental question of “how” it is possible to conduct this search is precisely what the “attestation” of conscience is supposed to answer.

⁶⁷⁵ GA 60, 55-56 / 38.

⁶⁷⁶ Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. p. 59.

⁶⁷⁷ Hent de Vries. "Formal Indications." *MLN* 113. 3 (1998). p. 646.

The similarities between what Heidegger demands of formal indication in his phenomenological investigation of facticity and what Heidegger seeks to achieve with his interpretation of Dasein's conscience in *Being and Time* are striking. Consider the following three examples of similarities between the "roles" assigned to both formal indication and conscience. Firstly, Heidegger states that formal indication is essentially undetermined by "what-content" (*Wasgehalt*).⁶⁷⁸ The formal character of Heidegger's indicating implies that this "method" does not communicate any form of material "certainty" that can be shared as "objective" knowledge. Formal indication—like the silent call—carries with it an essential "indefiniteness" because the "truth" of what is indicated can only be experienced by being "enacted." As Streeter notes in his essay on formal indication in *Being and Time*: "Formal indication can *only* point and exhort others to carry out the direction in which it points."⁶⁷⁹ Secondly, Heidegger stresses in his course "Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion" that formal indication functions as a "defense (*Abwehr*)" against "the falling tendency of factual life experience (*der abfallenden Tendenz der faktischen Lebenserfahrung*)."⁶⁸⁰ Just as the "call of conscience" breaks off Dasein's listening to the "they," the "negative" warning of formal indication frees the understanding from the "fatal...prejudice"⁶⁸¹ of "sound common sense (*gesunden Menschenverstandes*)."⁶⁸² Thirdly, Heidegger emphasizes that formal indication requires an appropriate mode of reception in order to produce any form of authentic understanding. Just as conscience requires a proper kind of *hearing*, formal indication necessitates the enacting of what is indicated. Because the "discourse" of formal indication is itself immaterial and empty of content, it discloses nothing if it is not understandingly appropriated. To function as the basic means of phenomenological investigation, formal indication must be enacted in much the same way as the "call of conscience" must be willingly *heard* in order for Dasein to come into resoluteness. This parallel is further

⁶⁷⁸ GA 60, 58-59 / 40.

⁶⁷⁹ Ryan Streeter. "Heidegger's Formal Indication: A Question of Method in *Being and Time*." *Man and World* 30. (1997). p. 427.

⁶⁸⁰ GA 60, 64 / 44.

⁶⁸¹ GA 60, 62-63 / 43.

⁶⁸² GA 60, 36 / 25.

reinforced by the heavy emphasis on the “situation” in both Heidegger’s lectures on formal indication and his interpretation of conscience in *Being and Time*. Where conscience brings Dasein into the “situation [of] the ‘there’ which is disclosed in resoluteness,”⁶⁸³ formal indication is linked in Heidegger’s course on “Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle” to the “situation of the original access to the proper ‘what’ and ‘how’ of philosophy, ...[to] the situation of the primal decision on the actualizations of philosophizing (existence).”⁶⁸⁴ This parallel is seen even more clearly in Heidegger’s reading of Paul’s First letter to the Thessalonians:

The turning-around (*Umwendung*) from the object-historical to the enactment-historical (*Vollzugsgeschichtlichen*) lies in factual life experience itself. It is a turning-around to the situation...[which is] for us something that belongs to understanding in the manner of enactment... For the question of the unity or the diversity of the situation, it is important that we can gain them only in the *formal indication*. (*Für der Frage der Einheit bzw. Mannigfaltigkeit der Situation ist es wichtig, daß wir sie nur in der formalen Anzeige gewinnen können.*)⁶⁸⁵

In his lectures on phenomenological method, Heidegger identifies formal indication as the only means of conducting philosophical research because it alone provides access to the situation of enactment that he equates with authentic existence. Emphasizing the “importance” and “methodological, and more than simply methodological, primacy of the concept of formal indication” in Heidegger’s early work, de Vries observes that the author of *Being and Time* demands that phenomenology itself must be taken “in a formally indicative sense.”⁶⁸⁶

The procedure of formal indication gives access to—or reveals the very meaning of—phenomenology and of the phenomenon, rather than the other way around.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸³ SZ §60, 299 / 346.

⁶⁸⁴ GA 61, 35 / 28. In German: “Sie ist als Situation des ursprünglichen Zugangs zum eigentlichen Was-Wie-Sein der Philosophie die Situation der Unentscheidung der Vollzüge des Philosophierens (Existenz).”

⁶⁸⁵ GA 60, 90 / 63.

⁶⁸⁶ de Vries. “Formal Indications.” p. 670.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 670.

As we have seen, Heidegger in *Being and Time* assigns this primordial task of formally indicating the phenomenal situation to the experience of conscience: the existential call allows Dasein to access its “authentic truth” and to attest the possibility of its authenticity, thus providing a methodological basis for the investigation conducted in *Being and Time*.

If we are justified in making this connection between conscience and formal indication, then we also might have opened up a new way of investigating the “missing” attestation of conscience through the exhibition of its relation to Heidegger’s “method” of phenomenological research. To advance our study, we will first consider how formal indication emerged as Heidegger’s “method” of investigation as a result of his critical reading of Husserl’s theoretical work on formalism. Based on this analysis, we will then examine how the development of Heidegger’s method of formal indication is reflected in his interpretation of the “call of conscience” in *Being and Time*. In so doing, we will also make it possible to evaluate the potential parallels between the problems related to the “beginning” or phenomenal “source” of formal indication and the “missing” attestation of conscience. Using what we gain from this analysis regarding the link between conscience and formal indication, we will then turn back to the question of Heidegger’s interpretation of conscience as the “attesting” call and search for clues within *Being and Time* that might explain the “insufficiency” of this attestation.

Heidegger’s Critique of Husserlian Formalism and “Objective Validity”

In November 1920, more than six years prior to the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger warned his students that Husserl’s approach to phenomenology was trapped in the “prejudice” of “formal-ontological determinedness” and required a radical correction.⁶⁸⁸ He presented a detailed breakdown of Husserl’s work on formalization in the *Logical Investigations* showing how it is “fatal for the relational- and enactment-aspect of the phenomenon...because it prescribes...a theoretical relational meaning...[and] hides the

⁶⁸⁸ GA 60, 62 / 43.

enactment-character.”⁶⁸⁹ To fulfill the promise of phenomenology, Heidegger claimed that the prejudiced “formal determination” found in Husserl’s work must be pushed aside in order to reconsider the actual “how” of worldly experience. In this sense, Heidegger rejected the Husserlian project of “securing” objects on the basis of what is experienced in the flow of consciousness and can be possessed as knowledge. Heidegger sought to uproot the “objective certainty” championed by Husserl, as seen in the *Prolegomena* to his *Logical Investigations*:

The state of affairs comes before us, not merely putatively, but as actually before our eyes, and in the object itself, *as the object that it is (Der Sachverhalt steht uns jetzt nicht bloß vermeintlich, sondern wirklich vor Augen und in ihm der Gegenstand selbst, als das, was er ist)*... [As] actually thus it is given to our knowledge...[and] known to be such. Otherwise put, its being thus is a truth actually realized, individualized in the experience of the inwardly evident judgment (*daß er so ist, ist aktuell gewordene Wahrheit, vereinzelt im Erlebnis des evidenten Urteils*).⁶⁹⁰

For Husserl, formalism was a means of correcting the error of all previous work in the field of logic by providing a phenomenological solution for collecting valid data from experience. For Heidegger, this approach to formalism—despite its great potential—remains ensnared in the theoretical way of understanding experience and fails to recognize the priority of factual enactment over objective perception and intuitive judgment.

In the concluding chapter of Husserl’s *Prolegomena* to his *Logical Investigations*, we see how closely related yet at the same time so far apart were the phenomenological projects of Husserl and Heidegger. Seemingly anticipating Heidegger’s “destructive” approach to phenomenology, Husserl calls for a rigorous investigation of “the conditions of the possibility of *theoretical knowledge (den Bedingungen der Möglichkeit theoretischer Erkenntnis)* in general, or, more generally, of inference in general or knowledge in general, and in the case of any *possible* human being (*für ein beliebiges menschliches Wesen*).”⁶⁹¹ In

⁶⁸⁹ GA 60, 63 / 43.

⁶⁹⁰ Edmund Husserl. *Logical Investigations*. trans. J. N. Findlay. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970). Prolegomena §62, vol. 1, p. 226.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid. Prolegomena §65, vol. 1, p. 232.

the mission that he lays out in his *Prolegomena*, Husserl demands that “*the ideal essence of theory*” be analyzed to determine its “*primitive essential concepts (primitiven wesenhaften Begriffe)*,”⁶⁹² the *a priori* conditions that account for the constitution of any possible “interconnected web of knowledge (*Zusammenhang der Erkenntnis*).”⁶⁹³ Indeed, Husserl appears to encourage initiatives like Heidegger’s existential analysis of Being-in-the-world when he urges his followers to faithfully pursue “seemingly trivial, preparatory tasks” such as “looking methodologically to the fixation of unambiguous, sharply distinct verbal meanings (*eindeutiger, scharf unterschiedener Wortbedeutungen*).”⁶⁹⁴ Husserl claims such work is vital in order to attain “*insight into the essence* of the concepts involved” and to salvage “the field of pure logic” by eliminating “fatal” equivocation and “confused concepts [that have] so hindered the progress of knowledge.”⁶⁹⁵

While this implied call for destruction, rigor and concern for “*a phenomenological origin (phenomenologischen Ursprung)*” would seem to confirm the alignment of Husserl and Heidegger, the latter openly breaks with his master specifically with regard to the question of formalization.⁶⁹⁶ Despite his criticism of the philosophical tradition, Husserl plainly intends to solidify the logical foundations that support theoretical knowledge and to secure the “*objective validity* of the formal structures (*objective Geltung der erwachsenden Bildungsformen*)” required by science.⁶⁹⁷ Husserl’s attention is focused on the “*a priori* conditions of knowledge, which can be discussed and investigated apart from all relation to the thinking subject and to the idea of subjectivity in science.”⁶⁹⁸ While Heidegger also believes that phenomenology must disclose the *a priori* conditions of experience, he argues that Husserl overlooked the problematic status of the subject in his quest to find a “‘pure’ foundation” upon which the “validity” of scientific knowledge could rest.⁶⁹⁹ Heidegger

⁶⁹² Ibid. Prolegomena §66, vol. 1, p. 235.

⁶⁹³ Ibid. Prolegomena §67, vol. 1, p. 236.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid. Prolegomena §67, vol. 1, p. 238.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid. Prolegomena §67, vol. 1, p. 238.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid. Prolegomena §67, vol. 1, p. 238.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid. Prolegomena §68, vol. 1, p. 238.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid. Prolegomena §65, vol. 1, p. 233.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid. Prolegomena §65, vol. 1, p. 233.

argues that Husserl’s faith in the absolute “definiteness and clearness (*Bestimmtheit und Klarheit*)”⁷⁰⁰ of experience comes at a cost: factual life is stripped of its original “*enactment-character*” and considered only in terms of its classifiable “*content*.”⁷⁰¹

Heidegger sees formal indication as a method for correcting the error of Husserl’s formalization by recovering the neglected question of the “original ‘how’” of experience.⁷⁰² In this regard, Heidegger demands that we “become clear about the meaning of the formal indication”⁷⁰³ and recognize that—unlike formalization—“the *formal indication* has *nothing* to do with...[the ‘general’ and] the attitudinally theoretical.”⁷⁰⁴ Heidegger claims that unless one recognizes that the “meaning of ‘formal’ in the ‘formal indication’ is *more original (ursprünglicher)*,”⁷⁰⁵ one will inevitably “[fall] either into an attitudinal consideration or into regional demarcations which one views as absolute.”⁷⁰⁶ In the specific case of Husserl, Heidegger is even more damning: with his theoretical prejudice *and* his concept of absolute consciousness, Husserl is guilty of *both* errors. For Heidegger, phenomenology must be saved from Husserl’s tragic perpetuation of the tradition’s formal-ontological prejudice. In his notes for a course on “The Philosophical Foundations of Medieval Mysticism” that was planned for the 1919-20 winter semester but never given, Heidegger remarks:

[Only] phenomenology can offer rescue in philosophical need (*Rettung aus der philosophischen Not*), but only if it remains pure in its radical moments of origin (*in ihren radikalen Ursprungsmomenten rein erhalten*), if intuition is not theorized and the concept of essence is not rationalized according to the general idea of universal validity...⁷⁰⁷

For Heidegger, Husserl’s abstracting of the “subject”—seen most dramatically in the method of phenomenological reduction—continues the philosophical tradition of

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid. Prolegomena §62, vol. 1, p. 225.

⁷⁰¹ GA 60, 63 / 43.

⁷⁰² GA 60, 63 / 43.

⁷⁰³ GA 60, 55 / 38.

⁷⁰⁴ GA 60, 59 / 41.

⁷⁰⁵ GA 60, 59 / 41.

⁷⁰⁶ GA 60, 55 / 38.

⁷⁰⁷ GA 60, 323-324 / 245.

neglecting the question of how Dasein discovers its world. Despite having criticized the modern notion of subjectivity, Husserl did not follow up this criticism with a radical questioning of the nature of and conditions for any experience of “consciousness” or of supposedly “certain” knowledge. Heidegger contends that the phenomenological project will remain a failure unless the investigation of the *a priori* conditions of experience is broadened to include the “how” of the discovering subject’s interpretation of its factual experience in the world. Given that Husserl remains faithful to the scientific ideal of absolute “definiteness and clearness,”⁷⁰⁸ Heidegger considers his predecessor’s phenomenological insights to be literally *problematic* in that Husserl exposes vital problems but fails to propose sufficiently radical solutions.

With his concept of formal indication, Heidegger appropriates Husserl’s insights regarding formalization and radically transforms the scientifically-oriented theory of forms into a methodological tool for interpreting the entity that his master had overlooked: the experiencing “subject” or Dasein. As Heidegger notes:

The point of departure of the path to philosophy is *factual life experience* (*Der Ausgangspunkt des Weges zur Philosophie ist die faktische Lebenserfahrung*). It seems, however, as if philosophy is leading us out of factual life experience.⁷⁰⁹

Nonetheless, Husserl’s insights regarding the illegitimate domination of logic by the principle of generalization inspire Heidegger’s attempt to develop an investigative strategy for explicating the conditions of facticity and the Being of the “I am” that discloses the world. The key for Heidegger is that phenomenology must guard against the degradation of “factual life experience as a matter of secondary importance” and explain how “philosophy arises” out of original experience and “springs back into it in a reversal that is entirely essential.”⁷¹⁰ In the twilight of his career, Husserl will unwittingly see his early work on formalization transformed by Heidegger into a radically new approach to phenomenology: Originally intended to provide the foundation for universal science, Husserl’s all-

⁷⁰⁸ Husserl. *Logical Investigations*. Prolegomena §62, vol. 1, p. 225.

⁷⁰⁹ GA 60, 10 / 8.

⁷¹⁰ GA 60, 15 / 11.

encompassing theory of pure forms will ironically serve to advance Heidegger's renegade ontological-existential project—a project which explicitly denies the ideal of “certain knowledge” necessary in order to even conceive of such a foundation. In his “Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion” course, Heidegger makes it clear that formal indication offers a means for recovering the authentic understanding of factual life experience that he believes has been deformed by the common notion of history that regards the past as a theoretical object. According to Heidegger, the traditional sense of history is a “generalization” of factual experience according “to what extent something temporal...something becoming and something conscious as past...appears in it.”⁷¹¹ Heidegger argues that this objectifying approach to history, which can conveniently be divided into various domains of knowledge and used as a foundation for theoretical activity, has escaped radical questioning.

For Heidegger, the primary task of formal indication is thus to defend factual experience from the corrupting prejudice of the formal-ontological attitude. If phenomenology is to succeed in its mission to reestablish an understanding that authentically reflects the phenomena of experience rather than falling into the illusions of naturalism or idealism, then Heidegger insists that its method must effectively guard against the erroneous belief that experience and the relations upon which it is structured can be determined with absolute certainty.

A glance at the history of philosophy shows that formal determination of the objective entirely dominates philosophy. How can this prejudice, this pre-judgment, be prevented? This is just what the *formal indication* achieves. It belongs to the phenomenological explication itself as a methodical moment. Why is it called “formal”? The formal is something relational. The indication should indicate beforehand the relation of the phenomenon—in the negative sense, however, the same as if to warn! ... [The] formal indication is a defense (*Abwehr*), a preliminary *securing*, so that the enactment-character still remains free.⁷¹²

⁷¹¹ GA 60, 55 / 38.

⁷¹² GA 60, 63-64 / 43-44. In German: “Ein Blick auf die Geschichte der Philosophie ergibt, daß die formale Bestimmtheit des Gegenständlichen die Philosophie völlig beherrscht. Wie kann diesem Präjudiz, diesem Vorurteil vorgebeugt werden? Das leistet gerade die *formale Anzeige*. Sie gehört als methodisches Moment

By stressing the question of the “how” of enactment, Heidegger aims to recall the utter flux of the enactment-character of one’s involvement in factual life. For Heidegger, the ideal of certain knowledge is not just a question of improving one’s “seeing” or of adopting an artificial attitude towards the world, as he believes is seen in Husserl’s experiments with reduction; this ideal is an impossibility that has lured philosophy away from authentically “listening” to experience and recognizing the thrown character of existence. With his appropriation of the concept of the formal, Heidegger intends to fulfill the promise of what he contends is revealed but left unrealized in Husserl’s logical interpretation of formalization. This task requires the development of an interpretive means of philosophical investigation that overcomes “the falling tendency of factual life experience (*der abfallenden Tendenz der faktischen Lebenserfahrung*), which constantly threatens to slip into the objective.”⁷¹³ To liberate philosophy from its entanglements in the “general determination of the objective,” Heidegger calls for a method for ensuring that the “relational meaning” of what is indicated is not “[taken] granted” as being “originally theoretical.”⁷¹⁴ With the concept of formal indication, Heidegger seeks to establish an approach for his philosophical project that allows for positive discoveries regarding the essence of existence while vigilantly guarding against the prejudice of the theoretical attitude.

Reversing Tradition: From Object-Historical to Enactment-Historical

Formal indication thus represents a means for correcting the error that has allowed thought to become divorced from the lived “truth” of one’s experience: it counters the tradition’s faith in “material” knowledge. In this reversal or correction, Heidegger’s “call of conscience” complements the “method” of formal indication and serves in *Being and Time* as the means for showing how authentic indicating is possible. As interpreted by

der phänomenologischen Explikation selbst zu. Warum heißt sie „formal“? Das Formale ist etwas Bezugsmäßiges. Die Anzeige soll vorweg den Bezug des Phänomens anzeigen—in einem negativen Sinn allerdings, gleichsam zur Warnung! ... [Die] formale Anzeige ist eine *Abwehr*, eine vorhergehende *Sicherung*, so daß der Vollzugscharakter noch frei bleibt.”

⁷¹³ GA 60, 64 / 44.

⁷¹⁴ GA 60, 64 / 44.

Heidegger, conscience is the initiating indication that can bring Dasein into the authentic moment of resoluteness: it serves its indicative function by urging Dasein to ignore “everyday” worldly concerns and come back to itself. At the beginning of his explication of Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians during the 1920-21 winter semester, Heidegger connects this reversal with the decisive situation of “enactment,” a notion which he will later tie to the “call of conscience”: “The turning-around from the object-historical to the enactment-historical lies in factual life experience itself. It is the turning-around to the situation.”⁷¹⁵

For Heidegger, this “reversal” is an act of destruction and resistance: it corrects the error of traditional philosophy with its theoretical perspective of the world and makes possible a more original understanding of experience. While this might seem like a simple correction, Heidegger claims it is not easily achieved. Such a reversal requires that Dasein overcome the overwhelming tendency to seek some kind of authority or posit a material basis for its knowledge. As Heidegger states:

[Factic] life experience, which is to be the starting point of philosophizing, is also the starting point of that which hinders philosophizing. ... By making, for the very first time, factic life experience itself into a problem, we have the possibility of reversing this decadent tendency, finding in experience itself the motives for this about-face and the transformation it can promote.⁷¹⁶

In this sense, formal indication must resist Dasein’s flight towards the illusory security of knowledge and ensure that all interpretation of experience remains authentically exposed to potential error: the possibility of deception must be recognized as essential to one’s factual experience. The phenomenological project must find within factual life the powerful means and motives for recognizing the need to struggle and “*stand firm*” against the

⁷¹⁵ GA 60, 90 / 63.

⁷¹⁶ Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. p. 156.

essential tendency of “*letting oneself fall*”⁷¹⁷ into the security of “objective,” worldly things.⁷¹⁸

Formal indication involves the commitment to what Heidegger calls the interpretive forestructure: one must approach phenomena “purely *formally*” and allow the meaning of factual life experience to reveal the “truth” of one’s involvement with these phenomena.⁷¹⁹ This formal “experiment” of the phenomenological foreconception structures all possibility of authentic experience, yet it is no foolproof technique for obtaining the “facts” of existence. Even the most earnest endeavor at revealing this “truth” is conditioned by the volatility of Dasein’s existence. “It has...*never* the tendency of determining such a realm [of objects in a material complex] with finality, but rather is subordinated to the historical situation,” Heidegger claims.⁷²⁰ Through one’s commitment to the interpretive foreconception, what is to be gained is the “enactment of the historical situation of the phenomenon.”⁷²¹ The result is not a securing of factual knowledge upon which an unshakable “theory of regions” can be constructed.⁷²² Instead, this factual experience is the basic phenomenon of history: the enactment of the volatile “original-historical situation”⁷²³ that is the living experience of “temporality as such.”⁷²⁴

According to Kisiel’s account, Heidegger affirms the ontological significance of formal indication by making the “I am” the “prime phenomenon” to be explored through his methodology.⁷²⁵ Heidegger emphasizes the individual nature of enactment by focusing “on the full *facticity* of the ‘I am,’ and...[subsequently] on the *project* of ‘existence’ understood as a forward-tending ‘(having)-to-be’ (*Zu-sein*).”⁷²⁶ In one of his first remarks

⁷¹⁷ GA 60, 156 / 110.

⁷¹⁸ GA 60, 53 / 36.

⁷¹⁹ GA 60, 82 / 57.

⁷²⁰ GA 60, 82 / 57.

⁷²¹ GA 60, 84 / 58.

⁷²² GA 60, 84 / 58.

⁷²³ GA 60, 84 / 58.

⁷²⁴ GA 60, 80 / 55.

⁷²⁵ Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. p. 147.

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 147-148.

revealing the importance of formal indication for the question of the “I am,” Heidegger states:

The formal indication is in the “neither-nor”; it is neither something in the manner of an order, nor explication of a phenomenological determination. We cannot project a situation into a particular field of being, nor onto “consciousness (*Bewußtsein*).” We cannot speak of a “situation of a point A between B and C.” Language protests against this. And indeed we cannot do this because a point is nothing “like an I (*Ichliche*).”⁷²⁷

Formal indication does not indicate a “point” but rather a possibility of the “like an I” that can be understood through enactment. Through what is formally indicated, phenomenological investigation is able to cautiously access the phenomenon of the “like an I” without falling into the fantastic certainty of the pure “I am,” something Heidegger sees as characteristic of modern science. The preliminary foreconception that is indicated provides an access point for phenomenological interpretation through the non-predicative, purely formal “is” that “merely *is* and does not *have*.”⁷²⁸ Through the preventive method of formal indication, theoretical-objective science is denied its very foundation and the derivative nature of traditional ontology is exposed. Ontological regions, verifiable knowledge and the “consciousness-point” of the subject are all recognized as secondary because formal indication allows factual life to regain its priority as the genuine basis of all human experience. As Heidegger proclaims, the “how” of formal indication is only a “starting point of a phenomenological study.”⁷²⁹

One of the basic principles of Heidegger’s formal indication is that this “method” must preserve the essential questionability of experience. Only through the enactment of what is indicated is any understanding made possible—and this understanding itself never yields an “eternal certainty” but rather a fleeting yet personal experience of “truth.” While formal indication implies a foreconception of what is indicated, the indication itself is “empty” and can only receive its fulfillment through enactment. Thus the direction of what

⁷²⁷ GA 60, 91 / 63.

⁷²⁸ GA 60, 92 / 64.

⁷²⁹ GA 60, 92 / 64.

is formally indicated is never random or haphazard but is aimed toward its enactment. In his 1929-30 course at Marburg entitled “The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics,” Heidegger confirmed in his brief comments on “*formally indicative*” concepts that they essentially “point into a concretion of the individual Dasein in man in each case” even though they “never already bring this concretion along with them in their content.”⁷³⁰ For Heidegger, “anyone who seeks to understand is called upon by [the] conceptual context” of what is formally indicated “to undertake a transformation of themselves into their Dasein.”⁷³¹ Factual experience is the enacted “goal” of formal indication: it is the concrete “situation” that the indication is oriented toward. The concreteness of philosophy is not an “object” but rather a movement towards the “concrete situation” of enactment. As the “method” of indicating this movement, formal indication offers phenomenological investigation a means of actualizing the “situation of the original access to the proper ‘what’ and ‘how’ of philosophy.”⁷³² As Heidegger writes:

There resides in the formal indication a very definite bond; this bond says that I stand in a quite definite direction of approach, and it points out the only way of arriving at what is proper...by following the indication.⁷³³

Since the formal is always indicated in the approach to factual experience, rather than imposed upon it, the concept of formal indication can serve as the methodology of proper philosophical investigation because it serves strictly as a “way” of proceeding. The direction can always be adjusted and the object is never determined once and for all, not even after the formal indication has been enacted by the investigator. Due to the irremediably uncertain character of existence, the “method” of formal indication must constantly return to the beginning and initiate the process of enactment over and over again.

“Formal-indicative” is a unified, inseparable concept in philosophy. The formal is not the “form,” and the indication its content; on the contrary,

⁷³⁰ GA 29/30, 429 / 296.

⁷³¹ GA 29/30, 430 / 297.

⁷³² GA 61, 35 / 28.

⁷³³ GA 61, 33 / 26.

“formal” means “approach toward the determination,” approach-character.⁷³⁴

Through formal indication, “the more radical and formal is the understanding of what is empty, the richer it becomes, because it leads to the concrete.”⁷³⁵

Like the “call of conscience,” formal indication serves to counter the basic tendency of human beings to interpret experience in objective and material terms. As Heidegger tells his students: “How can this prejudice, this pre-judgment, be prevented? This is just what the *formal indication* achieves.”⁷³⁶ Heidegger’s proposed “method” defies the falling tendency of human existence and aims to rescue the authentic historicity of factual life.

One must return ever again to the point of departure (*Ansatzpunkt*). The departure is to be taken from the having-relation of that which is “like an I” (*von der Habensbeziehung des Ichlichen*).⁷³⁷

In the formal indication, one is directed towards the possibility of authentic understanding and, as we have seen, this directing function in *Being and Time* is performed by the phenomenon of conscience.

The Problematic “How” of Formal Indication and the “Missing” Attestation of Conscience

Beyond the common characteristics we have found in both Heidegger’s concepts of formal indication and conscience, our analysis also reveals that the two concepts share the same fundamental problem: Heidegger does not show *how* these authentically disclosive phenomena are possible in worldly experience. In the case of the “call of conscience,” the required “attestation” remains “missing,” at least in terms of being described as a “factual existentiell possibility” of Dasein.⁷³⁸ As for formal indication, Heidegger never shows how the “reversal” of the “formal determination of the objective [that] entirely dominates

⁷³⁴ GA 61, 34 / 27.

⁷³⁵ GA 61, 33 / 26.

⁷³⁶ GA 60, 63 / 43.

⁷³⁷ GA 60, 92-93 / 64.

⁷³⁸ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

philosophy” is actually possible.⁷³⁹ How can we “return ever again to the point of departure”?⁷⁴⁰ Despite the confidence expressed by Heidegger before his students, his presentation of formal indication as a means of philosophical investigation remains strictly hypothetical. As in the case of the “call of conscience,” Heidegger will take up the question of the “historical” in order to find an “attestation” of how formal indication can be “experienced.” But given that this task of “attestation” is never completed by Heidegger—neither in his numerous courses on phenomenology nor in *Being and Time*—the problem remains unsolved. How is it *possible* to initiate formal indication and deploy this method of phenomenological interpretation? Given the “falling tendency” of experience, how could anyone recognize the need for formal indication and actually go about enacting it? Is there some kind of initial “call” that makes the method of formal indication possible?

During his lecture on formalization and formal indication in November 1920, Heidegger raised and quickly dismissed this question:

The turn from the object-historical complex to the enactment-historical *situation* itself derives from connections which can be shown in factual life experience. Does one, with this turning-around, at all emerge from history? Where does the phenomenological begin? This objection is legitimate, but it maintains as its background the conviction that the philosophical has a special dimension. This difficulty, therefore, does not burden our study.⁷⁴¹

In this early lecture, Heidegger argues that any concern for the question of “beginning” shows itself to be already tainted by the prejudice of the “formal-ontological” way of thinking.⁷⁴² What this implies is that worldly experience is essentially structured on the “reversal” of the enactment of formal indication prior to any philosophizing or

⁷³⁹ GA 60, 63 / 43.

⁷⁴⁰ GA 60, 92-93 / 64.

⁷⁴¹ GA 60, 90 / 63. In German: “Die Wendung von dem objektgeschichtlichen *Zusammenhang* zur vollzugsgeschichtlichen *Situation* stammt selbst ab von Zusammenhängen, die in der faktischen Lebenserfahrung aufgewiesen werden können. Kommt man überhaupt mit dieser Umwendung aus der Geschichte heraus? Wo beginnt das Phänomenologische? Dieser Einwand ist berechtigt, hat aber zum Hintergrund die Überzeugung, das Philosophie hätte eine besondere Dimension. Das ist das Mißverständnis. Rückgang ins Ursprünglich-Historische ist Philosophie. Diese Schwierigkeit belastet deshalb unsere Betrachtung nicht.”

⁷⁴² GA 60, 90 / 63.

phenomenological investigating, e.g. prior to any phenomenological reduction. This question only comes up, Heidegger tells his Freiburg students, because the “dominating” mode of “theoretical” understanding covers up the original “reversal” process.⁷⁴³ While Heidegger’s rhetoric is forceful, he never shows how one can actually emerge from the obscurity of traditional conventions concerning our experience of the world and initiate this illuminating “reversal.” In one of his lectures on formal indication during the 1921-22 winter semester, Heidegger’s attempt to “define” his phenomenological approach through the use of a metaphor appears to confirm the impossibility of authentic understanding.⁷⁴⁴

The situation in question does not correspond to a safe harbor but to a leap into a drifting boat (*nicht die rettende Küste sondern der Sprung ins treibende Boot*), and it all depends on getting the mainsheet in hand and looking to the wind. ... To grasp philosophy authentically means to encounter absolute questionability (*absolute Fragwürdigkeit*) and to possess this questionability in full awareness.⁷⁴⁵

Resoluteness appears to be an *a priori* condition for the “performance” of formal indication that itself is supposed to make resoluteness possible. Heidegger’s “heroic” leap seems fantastical given his assessment of the world’s essential ambiguity that is demonstrated by our “everyday” state of “blindness to one’s own spiritual situation.”⁷⁴⁶ In his lectures, Heidegger nonetheless insists that “absolute questionability” does arise in factual life: through the movement of the reversal, one exposes factual life’s ambiguity and then inevitably falls back into it. But despite Heidegger’s assurances, the “how” of this “process” remains nebulous; given the assessment of the “falling tendency” of Dasein and the “necessarily already declined” nature of factual life,⁷⁴⁷ this experience of “full awareness” seems impossible unless someone or something is calling us to “leap.”⁷⁴⁸ In analyzing the possible connection between Heidegger’s notion of “factual” experience and Christian faith, de Vries asks: “[What], exactly, justifies this analogy, extrapolation, or

⁷⁴³ GA 60, 90 / 63.

⁷⁴⁴ GA 61, 37 / 29.

⁷⁴⁵ GA 61, 37 / 29.

⁷⁴⁶ GA 61, 38 / 30.

⁷⁴⁷ GA 61, 32-33 / 26.

⁷⁴⁸ GA 61, 37 / 29.

implication [of enactment], if not, in turn, an act, indeed a leap, of faith?"⁷⁴⁹ While Heidegger claims that the reversal does not imply a movement outside of history, there remains the need to explain how this "beginning" can be experienced within history. As Schalow points out, Heidegger's insistence on the "ontic dimension of the call" and the need for an "existentiell attestation" is directly related to showing how understanding is possible without the Christian "faith-commitment" and its "mythological religious elements," prominently "employed in Kierkegaard's analysis."⁷⁵⁰ But how can this authentic reversal be possible given Heidegger's own conclusion that the factual world is already steeped in "prejudice" and defined by the "tendency toward fleeing away"?⁷⁵¹

Heidegger's concern for the "attestation" of conscience in *Being and Time* confirms that he *de facto* disavows the earlier stance he had taken in Freiburg when he dismissed the question of phenomenological beginning. To fulfill its potential as a means of accessing the "things themselves," phenomenology must explain the "how" of experience and provide the attestation of how "authentic" understanding is possible. To simply dismiss the question of "beginning" would leave phenomenological investigation completely disconnected from the world: it would then be no more than a "free-floating" and "purely existential" theoretical approach.⁷⁵² The necessity of the "attestation" of conscience in *Being and Time* confirms that Heidegger came to realize that he must take on this difficult "burden" of demonstrating how Dasein's "turning-around" is experienced.⁷⁵³ But then how *can* the "movement" of reversal be initiated? Despite the "professed atheism" of *Being and Time*, are formal indication and the "call of conscience" ultimately as dependent as Stoker's *synteresis* on some sort of metaphysical power, as implied in de Vries' charge that the "destructive" Heideggerian project involves the "re-citation of the *verbum internum* of Christian faith"?⁷⁵⁴

⁷⁴⁹ de Vries. "Formal Indications." p. 646.

⁷⁵⁰ Schalow. "The Topography of Heidegger's Concept of Conscience." p. 262.

⁷⁵¹ GA 61, 39 / 31.

⁷⁵² SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁷⁵³ GA 60, 90 / 63.

⁷⁵⁴ de Vries. *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*. p. 197.

3.3. Investigating the Formally Indicative “Clues” of Conscience

Our investigation has now confirmed the following three points regarding conscience and formal indication: firstly, that conscience must play a key methodological role in *Being and Time* as the attesting “thread” that connects the existential analysis with worldly experience; secondly, that conscience is closely related to Heidegger’s “method” of formal indication developed in his series of courses on phenomenological investigation; and thirdly, that Heidegger in *Being and Time* recognizes the urgency of addressing the attestation “problem” that he had dismissed in his earlier work on formal indication. We have also seen that—despite his attempt to solve this problem—Heidegger never produces the “missing” attestation in *Being and Time*. Is it possible that the connection between formal indication and conscience might shed light on this problem that threatens to derail Heidegger’s entire project? What is certain is that our analysis has opened up a new way of examining Heidegger’s interpretation of conscience in *Being and Time* from a methodological perspective. We are in a position to consider how the attestation “problem” arises and to evaluate whether an alternative reading of conscience is possible. We are now in a position to ask: does Heidegger provide any “clues” that might help us find the “missing” attestation required by his project? In other words, do any of the existential phenomena explicitly mentioned by Heidegger in his investigation of conscience *formally indicate* the possibility of a solution to be found in Dasein itself? In order for the phenomenon of conscience to successfully function as attestation, Heidegger’s phenomenological “method” must show how conscience is able to *find* Dasein who is lost in the world. We are therefore looking for evidence of how Heidegger’s authentic “call of conscience” can be connected with the existential phenomena that have been previously analyzed in *Being and Time*. When we conduct this search, we find four such “clues” that require closer examination: discourse, truth, solicitude and death.

Discourse: Silent Calling and the “Voice of the Friend”

When he introduces the phenomenon of conscience in §54, Heidegger describes it as being constituted by two basic modes of discourse: calling and hearing. First, he identifies conscience “as a *call (Ruf)*” that he specifically describes as “a mode of *discourse (Rede)*.”⁷⁵⁵ Then he notes the involvement of a second kind of discourse: “To the call of conscience there corresponds a possible hearing (*ein mögliches Hören*).”⁷⁵⁶ Through this phenomenon of calling-hearing, Dasein experiences the uncanniness of absolute silence that enables it to “break off” its listening to the “they” and come into resoluteness.⁷⁵⁷

The call dispenses with any kind of utterance. It does not put itself into words at all... Conscience discourses solely and constantly in the mode of keeping silent...[and forces Dasein] into the reticence of itself. ... [What] is ‘called’ is not to be tied up with an expectation of anything like a communication (*daß das Verstehen des „Gerufenen“ sich nicht an die Erwartung einer Mitteilung und dergleichen klammern darf*).⁷⁵⁸

To clarify his description of this authentic mode of discourse, Heidegger repeatedly points his reader back to the existential analysis of discourse and language provided in §34. Indeed, Heidegger’s interpretation of conscience even includes two footnotes specifically referencing this earlier section where he had analyzed the basic structures of discourse and determined its place among the constitutive elements of Dasein’s disclosedness. When we reconsider the analysis of §34 from a methodological perspective, however, Heidegger’s earlier analysis of discourse proves problematic for his interpretation of conscience: as we will see, the “authentic” discourse of conscience proves to be incompatible with his description of discourse in §34. As Courtine points out, “it becomes immediately apparent” that it is “impossible to translate simply, in terms of call, utterances applicable to *Rede* [discourse] in general” because the logic of common discourse is “basically inadequate” for any authentic understanding of conscience.⁷⁵⁹ Furthermore, the methodology of

⁷⁵⁵ SZ §54, 269 / 314.

⁷⁵⁶ SZ §54, 269-270 / 314.

⁷⁵⁷ SZ §55, 271 / 316.

⁷⁵⁸ SZ §56, 273-274 / 318.

⁷⁵⁹ Courtine. “Voice of Conscience and Call of Being.” p. 107.

Heidegger's analysis of discourse shows itself to be strangely inconsistent with his way of investigating the other two "equiprimordial" phenomena that constitute Dasein's disclosedness: state-of-mind and understanding.

In the opening lines of §34, Heidegger introduces the phenomenon of discourse almost apologetically. He has already established that disclosedness consists of the "equiprimordial" phenomena of state-of-mind, understanding and discourse, yet his analysis of the third phenomenon comes much later than that of the other two. Rather than analyzing all three "equiprimordial" phenomena together, Heidegger has delayed the analysis of discourse and given priority to the analyses of two other phenomena: interpretation and assertion. Why has the discussion of discourse been postponed? Heidegger claims that discourse only reveals itself as a constitutive element of disclosedness when "language...becomes our theme *for the first time (jetzt erst)*."⁷⁶⁰ As Heidegger states:

*The existential-ontological foundation of language is discourse. This phenomenon is one of which we have been making constant use already in our foregoing interpretation of state-of-mind, understanding, interpretation, and assertion; but we have, as it were, kept it suppressed in our thematic analysis (aber gleichsam unterschlagen).*⁷⁶¹

This peculiar "suppression" carries with it significant and problematic implications for Heidegger's methodology. For one, Heidegger seems to imply that the basic phenomenon of discourse—unlike the "equiprimordial" concepts of state-of-mind and understanding—becomes accessible only *after* the phenomenon of "assertion as communication" has been examined.⁷⁶² Evidently, this methodological sequence is incoherent with Heidegger's interpretation of the silent "call of conscience." At the opening of §34, Heidegger claims that the "concepts of 'saying' and 'speaking'" have led to the recognition of discourse as an "equiprimordial" element of disclosedness.⁷⁶³ Yet if the

⁷⁶⁰ SZ §34, 160 / 203.

⁷⁶¹ SZ §34, 160-161 / 203.

⁷⁶² SZ §34, 160 / 203.

⁷⁶³ SZ §34, 160 / 203.

“intelligibility” described in §34 can only arise through communication, then the “authentic” phenomenon of conscience cannot be a mode of such discourse. Secondly, the delay poses a threat to the entire methodological structure of *Being and Time* because the phenomenon of interpretation is shown to be itself interpreted on the basis of a partial view of disclosedness. While Heidegger downplays this apparent neglect of discourse’s primordial role on the grounds that “we have been making constant use [of it] already,”⁷⁶⁴ his remark does not eliminate the methodological problem. If discourse has been in “constant use” but improperly recognized, then the authentic phenomenon has necessarily remained in obscurity and the investigation has been advanced illegitimately on the basis of a deficient mode of discourse. Thirdly, this “suppression” appears to camouflage a remarkable difference between the phenomenon of discourse described in §34 and the “double role” assigned to discourse in the “calling-hearing” of conscience. In both §34 and §57, Heidegger emphasizes the “hearing” function of discourse that is required for disclosedness: in order to understand authentically, Dasein must reticently “hold its tongue” so that it can “hear” what is disclosed to it. When we examine how Heidegger speaks of the call, “everything becomes a question of listening,” as Courtine observes.⁷⁶⁵ What is unique to Heidegger’s concept of conscience, however, is that no authentic understanding is possible without the “summons” that silently calls Dasein back to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. This calling function—which is not mentioned explicitly as a possibility in §34—represents a “mode of discourse” quite unlike anything that could be discovered strictly on the basis of a study of assertive “language.”

The silent “discourse” of conscience begins with the “calling” that proves to be the *source* of authentic disclosedness, not with the reciprocal “hearing” or “articulating” that together with understanding and state-of-mind constitutes the whole of the existential structures of disclosedness. As Heidegger subsequently informs us, the “call of conscience” is the attesting source of “[the] most primordial, and indeed the most authentic,

⁷⁶⁴ SZ §34, 161 / 203.

⁷⁶⁵ Courtine. “Voice of Conscience and Call of Being.” p. 106.

disclosedness in which Dasein, as a potentiality-for-Being, can be.”⁷⁶⁶ What is formally indicated by conscience appears to fall outside the limits of what can be signified by discourse, at least by discourse as it is described in §34. Due to his delaying of the analysis of discourse, Heidegger obscures the problem of categorizing the “call of conscience” as an “equiprimordial” phenomenon alongside understanding and state-of-mind. As we have seen, it is conscience with its unique and unmediated way of “giving-to-understand” that makes these two constitutive phenomena possible.⁷⁶⁷ Is the “call of conscience” that discloses the “most primordial phenomenon of truth”⁷⁶⁸ properly understood as a mere “mode of discourse” through the description found in §34? Must calling rather be understood as a radically *pre-discursive* phenomenon that interrupts the communicative chatter of “everydayness” so that Dasein can authentically return to the “there” of disclosedness? In analyzing Heidegger’s lectures on Paul and Augustine, Schalow notes the difficulty of Heidegger’s attempt to describe the “call of conscience” as a form of discourse:

What life-phenomenon can exhibit the movement of formal indication; what basic genre of lived-utterance can mark the transition from ineffability, that is, provide the worldly locus for the primeval constellation of meaning? In asking this question, we reach the vestige of a prediscursive, practically initiated saying, even a non-speaking, where the phenomenon of the “call” first announces itself.⁷⁶⁹

By exposing the apparent incompatibility of discourse and conscience, Heidegger’s “clue” of discourse also leads us to reconsider the methodological importance of his very first allusion to the “call of conscience” in *Being and Time*. For it is in §34 that Heidegger first identifies a potential source of the call: “the voice of the friend.”⁷⁷⁰

Listening to . . . is Dasein’s existential way of Being-open as Being-with for others. Indeed, hearing constitutes the primary and authentic way in which Dasein is open for its ownmost potentiality-for-Being—as in hearing the

⁷⁶⁶ SZ §44, 221 / 264.

⁷⁶⁷ SZ §55, 271 / 316.

⁷⁶⁸ SZ §44, 221 / 264.

⁷⁶⁹ Schalow. "The Topography of Heidegger's Concept of Conscience." p. 258.

⁷⁷⁰ SZ §34, 163 / 206.

voice of the friend whom every Dasein carries with it (*als Hören der Stimme des Freundes, den jedes Dasein bei sich trägt*). Dasein hears, because it understands.⁷⁷¹

Admittedly, Heidegger never explains, at least in his extant work, what is meant by this “voice of the friend” so we must avoid the temptation to exaggerate its significance, especially given our concern for the “precautionary” method of formal indication. At the same time, Heidegger’s acknowledgement that Dasein can be reached by the “voice of the friend” is potentially relevant to our methodological question in several ways. Firstly, this “voice of the friend” implies that some sort of “call” is presupposed in Heidegger’s analysis of discourse even if the phenomenon of “calling” goes unmentioned. Indeed, Heidegger’s remark concerning the “voice” confirms that the analysis of the phenomenon of “disclosedness” in §34 is incomplete and must be corrected because the “most primordial” role of conscience as calling was initially neglected.⁷⁷² Secondly, the “voice of the friend” is directly associated with an authentic possibility of “Being-with for others”: to resolutely come into one’s “ownmost potentiality-for-Being,” Dasein must adopt the “primary and authentic way” of Being-with that involves “hearing the voice.”⁷⁷³ As Heidegger subsequently informs us, this “hearing” requires the reciprocal “calling” of conscience: the calling of “the voice of the friend whom every Dasein carries with it”⁷⁷⁴ implies that an authentic way of Being-with is essential to Dasein’s “*truth of existence (Wahrheit der Existenz)*.”⁷⁷⁵ In his essay “The Self and Its Witness,” Christopher Fynsk emphasizes how this “voice of the friend” confirms Dasein’s essence as Being-with:

Who is this friend whose voice Dasein always carries with it? Clearly it is not the voice of just any other with whom Dasein might come into contact and with whom Dasein *can* come into contact by virtue of the structure of hearing. The voice of the friend is *always* there, just as Dasein itself is always there as thrown. Perhaps all we can say...is that when Dasein finds and assumes itself in its constancy, it finds that there is always another with

⁷⁷¹ SZ §34, 163 / 206.

⁷⁷² SZ §58, 288 / 334.

⁷⁷³ SZ §34, 163 / 206.

⁷⁷⁴ SZ §34, 163 / 206.

⁷⁷⁵ SZ §44, 221 / 264.

it, speaking to it. ... Heidegger says that what it hears, from itself and from the other, is silence.⁷⁷⁶

Heidegger's description of "*keeping silent*" as "another essential possibility of discourse" in §34 confirms the implication of authentic Being-with in the phenomenon of "calling."⁷⁷⁷ At the close of §56, Heidegger asserts that the call neither puts "itself into words at all" nor represents "anything like a communication"; he emphasizes that conscience "*discourses solely and constantly in the mode of keeping silent.*"⁷⁷⁸ If the "call of care" is a "mode of discourse," then conscience can only be described as a *pure* or *absolute* form of discourse: uncorrupted by worldly communication with material others, "the call comes *from me* and yet *from beyond me and over me.*"⁷⁷⁹ Reinforcing the fact that the call "has its roots in Dasein's Being,"⁷⁸⁰ Heidegger insists that "the call undoubtedly does not come from someone else who is with me in the world."⁷⁸¹ When we consider his analysis of discourse, however, the phenomenon of "*keeping silent*" is exhibited in terms of communication whereby in "talking with one another, the person who keeps silent can 'make one understand.'"⁷⁸² With this remark, Heidegger opens the door to a way of sharing authentic understanding through Dasein's "keeping silent" and reaffirms that Being-with is essentially related to this "primordial" mode of discourse.

As a mode of discoursing, reticence articulates the intelligibility of Dasein in so primordial a manner that it gives rise to a potentiality-for-hearing which is genuine, and to a Being-with-one-another which is transparent.⁷⁸³

As opposed to the essentially silent call, the phenomenon of "*keeping silent*" is described in §34 as a mode of withdrawal from communicative talking: the "person who keeps silent" is

⁷⁷⁶ Christopher Fynsk. "The Self and Its Witness: On Heidegger's *Being and Time*." *Boundary 2: A Journal of Postmodern Literature and Culture* 10. 3 (1982). p. 196.

⁷⁷⁷ SZ §34, 164 / 208.

⁷⁷⁸ SZ §56, 273-274 / 318.

⁷⁷⁹ SZ §57, 274-275 / 319-320.

⁷⁸⁰ SZ §54, 267 / 312.

⁷⁸¹ SZ §57, 275 / 320.

⁷⁸² SZ §34, 164 / 208.

⁷⁸³ SZ §34, 165 / 208.

contrasted with the “the person who is never short of words.”⁷⁸⁴ This “keeping silent” appears more closely related to the alternative “kind of hearing” that blocks out the “they” than to the phenomenon of “calling” itself. In his essay entitled “Heidegger’s Ear,” Jacques Derrida describes the “enigma” of Dasein’s hearing of the voice of the “silent” friend who “says nothing”:

[What] matters here is not what the friend’s voice says. Not its said. Not even the saying of its said. Hardly even its voice. Rather what matters is the hearing (*das Hören*) of its voice. Hearing is the principal theme of this chapter.⁷⁸⁵

Given our focus on the methodological role of conscience, we see that the “*keeping silent*” of discourse in §34 reflects the “reticence” of one “who already understands”.⁷⁸⁶ the discursive possibility of “*keeping silent*” thus requires that one has already been called by conscience. When Heidegger states that “[keeping] silent authentically is possible only in genuine discoursing (*im echten Reden*),” it is implied that conscience has summoned Dasein to this possibility.⁷⁸⁷ “*Constant*” and *absolute*, the silence of the “call of conscience” must therefore be distinguished from the “*keeping silent*” of a reticent person resisting the urge to communicate.⁷⁸⁸ The possibility of “[keeping] silent authentically” necessarily implies the presupposition that Dasein is “constantly” being called by conscience.⁷⁸⁹

Truth: Presupposing the “Call of Conscience”

That the calling of conscience is “presupposed” in *Being and Time* is confirmed by a second methodological “clue” found in §60: the phenomenon of “truth.” In explaining

⁷⁸⁴ SZ §34, 165 / 208.

⁷⁸⁵ Jacques Derrida. “Heidegger’s Ear: Philopolemology (*Geschlecht IV*).” trans. John P. Leavey Jr. ed. John Sallis. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993). p. 164. Translated modified. In French: « En tout cas, ce qui importe ici, selon toute apparence, ce n’est pas ce que dit la voix de l’ami. Ce n’est pas son dit. Pas même le dire de son dit. À peine sa voix. Plutôt l’écoute (*das Hören*) de sa voix. *Das Hören* est le thème principal de ce chapitre. »

⁷⁸⁶ SZ §34, 164 / 208.

⁷⁸⁷ SZ §34, 165 / 208.

⁷⁸⁸ SZ §60, 296 / 342.

⁷⁸⁹ SZ §34, 165 / 208.

how conscience “summons” Dasein, Heidegger describes resoluteness as the “distinctive and authentic...mode of Dasein’s disclosedness” where it has come “back into the stillness of itself.”⁷⁹⁰ In exhibiting the relationship between the disclosedness of Being-in-the-world and its authentic mode of resoluteness, Heidegger repeatedly refers to the phenomenon of “truth”: two footnotes in §60 specifically direct the reader back to §44 entitled “Dasein, Disclosedness, and Truth.” In this final section of Division One, Heidegger observes that Dasein’s essence as a disclosing entity implies that “truth” exists whenever Dasein exists: all “experience” of Being-in-the-world involves the disclosing of the “truth” of its existence.

We *must* presuppose truth. Dasein itself, as in each case my Dasein and this Dasein, *must* be; and in the same way the truth, as Dasein’s disclosedness, *must be*. (*Wir müssen die Wahrheit voraussetzen, sie muß als Erschlossenheit des Daseins sein, so wie dieses selbst als je meines und dieses sein muß.*) This belongs to Dasein’s essential thrownness into the world. ... [Truth] already gets presupposed in so far as Dasein is at all.⁷⁹¹

If we keep in mind this description of Dasein as a “truth”-disclosing entity, Heidegger’s interpretation of resoluteness in §60 takes on new significance for our methodologically-focused analysis of the “call of conscience.” When Heidegger characterizes resoluteness as “authentic disclosedness,” he recalls that disclosedness is Dasein’s “*primordial truth*...not [as] a quality of ‘judgment’ nor of any definite way of behaving, but [as] something essentially constitutive for Being-in-the-world as such.”⁷⁹² If the “primordial disclosedness” of Dasein is “the *truth of existence*,” then the authentic mode of resoluteness represents the authentic mode of Dasein’s existential truth.⁷⁹³

In resoluteness we have now arrived at that truth of Dasein which is most primordial because it is *authentic*. Whenever a “there” is disclosed, its whole Being-in-the-world—that is to say, the world, Being-in, and the self which,

⁷⁹⁰ SZ §60, 296 / 343.

⁷⁹¹ SZ §44c, 228-229 / 271.

⁷⁹² SZ §60, 297 / 343.

⁷⁹³ SZ §60, 297 / 343.

as an ‘I am,’ this entity is—is disclosed with equal primordially (*gleichursprünglich*).⁷⁹⁴

Resoluteness represents the “most primordial” truth because it discloses Dasein transparently in its “wholeness” constituted by both falling and authentic disclosedness. In resoluteness, Dasein enacts its ownmost potentiality-for-Being and sees itself “truthfully” for what it is.

By linking Dasein’s authentic truth and wholeness in his description of the phenomenon of resoluteness, Heidegger brings the vital methodological role of the “call of conscience” to the fore once again. Dasein can only be secured as a “whole” phenomenon if it is *called* back to itself in resoluteness. At the same time, any disclosing of a “there” implies that Dasein has been disclosed as a “whole Being-in-the-world” constituted by its full range of existential structures, both authentic and inauthentic.⁷⁹⁵

As care...Dasein has been determined by facticity and falling. Disclosed in its ‘there,’ it maintains itself both in truth and untruth with equal primordially. This ‘really’ holds in particular for resoluteness as authentic truth. Resoluteness appropriates untruth authentically. Dasein is already in irresoluteness (*Unentschlossenheit*), and soon, perhaps, will be in it again.⁷⁹⁶

For Heidegger, the “most primordial truth” of resoluteness does not allow Dasein to somehow “correct” its essential tendency to flee when faced with its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. Rather, resoluteness allows Dasein to see itself transparently as existing both in “truth” and in “untruth.” Being-in-the-world lost in the “they” can only be called back to resoluteness because authentic disclosedness is constitutive for existence; similarly, Dasein can only fall from resoluteness because inauthenticity is also constitutive for existence. Even when falling Dasein *avoids* seeing itself for what it truly is, the “authentic truth” of its ownmost potentiality-for-Being remains essential to its existence. When we presuppose the “truth” of disclosedness, both the “authentic truth” of resoluteness and the inauthentic “untruth” of the “they” are contained in this presupposition.

⁷⁹⁴ SZ §60, 297 / 343.

⁷⁹⁵ SZ §60, 297 / 343.

⁷⁹⁶ SZ §60, 298-299 / 345.

What does it mean to ‘presuppose’? It is to understand something as the ground for the Being of some other entity.⁷⁹⁷

However, if we are to understand Dasein in its “essential thrownness” as an entity that “*must* be,” then another vital phenomenon must also be “presupposed”:⁷⁹⁸ the “call of conscience” that Heidegger identifies as the attesting “source” of resoluteness. As Courtine observes:

What, originally, comes before the subject and will always already have been ahead of it? ... At the origin of the subject is the voice.⁷⁹⁹

For Heidegger, this call is the only phenomenon that can bring Dasein back to its “authentic truth” and reveal its “wholeness.”

Thus, the “clue” of “truth” brings us full circle back to the problem of how conscience provides the attestation of Dasein’s possibility of authenticity so that the phenomenal “wholeness” of Being-in-the-world can be accessed. While a “purely existential” investigation might be satisfied with the “presupposing” of conscience, Heidegger has set a higher phenomenological standard for his project: conscience must “be attested in its existentiell possibility by Dasein itself.”⁸⁰⁰ While we argue that the required attestation remains “missing” in *Being and Time*, does the formally indicated “clue” that resoluteness is Dasein’s “authentic truth” point our search in the right direction? To answer this question, we must look more closely at the relation between Heidegger’s existential conscience and the phenomenon of resoluteness.

Heidegger describes the experience of Dasein’s coming into its “most primordial truth” as “wanting to have a conscience”: the “resoluteness” of one who *hears* conscience is “constituted by anxiety as state-of-mind, by understanding as a projection of oneself upon one’s ownmost Being-guilty, and by discourse as reticence.”⁸⁰¹ Once again, we see

⁷⁹⁷ SZ §44c, 228 / 270.

⁷⁹⁸ SZ §44c, 228 / 270.

⁷⁹⁹ Courtine. "Voice of Conscience and Call of Being." p. 101.

⁸⁰⁰ SZ §54, 267 / 312.

⁸⁰¹ SZ §60, 296-297 / 343.

that the “whole” phenomenon of conscience as both calling and hearing is not preserved: the only discourse to be found in “resoluteness” is reticent hearing. While reticence can in turn be interpreted existentially as “keeping silent” and thus as “calling,” we have already seen that this is methodologically insufficient for Heidegger: if the call is to provide the attestation of Dasein’s possible existence in authenticity, this must be shown to be possible as an “existentiell” experience of Being-in-the-world. What Heidegger confirms here is that the role of the *calling* is a special one: it is not constitutive of resoluteness like the other “authentic” phenomena but rather is its attesting source. The “structural” phenomena of anxiety, Being-guilty and reticence all find their source in the calling of conscience and provide “evidence” that conscience must be “presupposed”—but the “call of conscience” itself remains unattested. When considered from a “purely existential” perspective, Heidegger’s interpretation of the “authentic truth” of resoluteness only confirms the problem of producing an “attestation” of the “presupposed” call.

Solicitude: The Priority of Authentic Being-With

Fortunately for our investigation, Heidegger opens the door to an alternative way of considering the “authentic truth” disclosed by conscience by introducing in §60 what we have identified as the third “clue”: “concernful solicitude.”⁸⁰² Heidegger uses this “phenomenon” to convey the experience of encountering the world that arises out of authentic disclosedness when Dasein resolutely projects itself upon its chosen possibility for Being:

Resoluteness, by its ontological essence, is always the resoluteness of some factual Dasein at a particular time. ... *The resolution is precisely the disclosive projection and determination of what is factually possible at the time.* ... Only in a resolution is resoluteness sure of itself.⁸⁰³

For Heidegger, “concernful solicitude” represents the schema of how Dasein encounters its world and others based on what is determined to be “*factually possible*.”⁸⁰⁴ Given that

⁸⁰² SZ §60, 300 / 348.

⁸⁰³ SZ §60, 298 / 345.

⁸⁰⁴ SZ §60, 298 / 345.

conscience is introduced specifically to provide an “attestation” of Dasein’s possible authenticity, it is significant that Heidegger does not consider any “factual existential possibilities” of resoluteness, describing such an exercise as one of “the tasks of a thematic existential anthropology” and claiming it lies outside the scope of his “study of fundamental ontology.”⁸⁰⁵ Nonetheless, Heidegger is concerned with the “*existential definiteness*” of Dasein’s resoluteness and “concernful solicitude” represents the “form” of what is determined in a resolution:⁸⁰⁶

What one resolves upon in resoluteness has been prescribed ontologically in the existentiality of Dasein in general as a potentiality-for-Being in the manner of concernful solicitude.⁸⁰⁷

As the authentic “manner” of Being-in-the-world, “concernful solicitude” is presented as the existential “form” of the factual possibility upon which Dasein projects itself in disclosing its shared world. For Heidegger, “concernful solicitude” is the factual result of Dasein’s hearing the “call of conscience” and experiencing the “authentic truth” of one’s existence. If an “existentiell possibility” of calling is to be attested, it must be found in this experience of the “*disclosive projection and determination of what is factically possible at the time.*”⁸⁰⁸

Considering the methodological role of conscience in *Being and Time*, however, the movement of “concernful solicitude” appears opposed to the existential phenomenon of calling that resists Dasein’s inevitable slide into concern for worldly affairs. Rather than “attesting” Dasein’s possibility of existing authentically, “concernful solicitude” is a composite concept that presupposes the equivalence of Dasein’s concern for other co-Daseins and its involvement with worldly entities lacking the disclosing character of Dasein: this presupposition can be regarded as the way in which Dasein initiates the “blocking off” of its “authentic truth” as anticipatory Being-towards-death concerned with its authentic possibilities of existence. Two distinct and incompatible modes of disclosing

⁸⁰⁵ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁸⁰⁶ SZ §60, 298 / 345.

⁸⁰⁷ SZ §60, 298 / 345.

⁸⁰⁸ SZ §60, 298 / 345.

appear to be aggregated in the phenomenon of “concernful solicitude”: the discovering of ready-to-hand “entities” and the disclosing of others who share Dasein’s kind of Being. This is seen when we examine Heidegger’s description of resoluteness more closely:

[*Authentic*] disclosedness modifies with equal primordially both the way in which the ‘world’ is discovered (and this is founded upon that disclosedness) and the way in which the Dasein-with of others is disclosed. ... [Both] one’s Being towards the ready-to-hand understandingly and concernfully, and one’s solicitous Being with others, are now given a definite character in terms of their ownmost potentiality-for-Being-their-selves. ... Resoluteness brings the self right into its current concernful Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being with others.⁸⁰⁹

As a supposedly authentic possibility for Dasein, “concernful solicitude” is problematic because the “wholeness” of Dasein’s “most primordial truth”⁸¹⁰ is cleaved into two distinct parts in order to accommodate the various kinds of entities that one encounters in the world. This “cleavage” is *essentially* inauthentic because Dasein’s existence is thereby interpreted in terms of the objective status of “worldly things” rather than the possibilities of Dasein itself as the disclosing entity. In “concernful solicitude,” the “entities” and “others” encountered in the world are seen to determine the “form” of Dasein’s “ownmost potentiality-for-Being.” In this schema, the “wholeness” of Being-in-the-world is inauthentically interpreted as the sum of its parts—a notion that runs counter to the basic phenomenological principles established by Heidegger himself. While this fracturing of the world powerfully illustrates the essential nature of Dasein’s fallenness, it also confirms the seriousness of the problem concerning the “attestation” of conscience. Despite Heidegger’s rejection of “present-at-hand” thinking, the schema of “concernful solicitude” replicates the “theoretical” way of understanding existence and is fundamentally incoherent with what conscience “gives Dasein to understand” when it calls.⁸¹¹

As we examine Heidegger’s search for the “attestation” of conscience, we find a vital lesson concerning this fracture of “concernful solicitude” in §39 entitled “The

⁸⁰⁹ SZ §60, 297-298 / 344.

⁸¹⁰ SZ §44, 221 / 264.

⁸¹¹ SZ §58, 287 / 333.

Question of the Primordial Totality of Dasein's Structural Whole." In this section where Heidegger identifies "Dasein's Being...as *care*,"⁸¹² he indicates that the "wholeness" of Dasein cannot be grasped on the basis of "*average everydayness*" alone.⁸¹³ There exists no "architect's plan" for constructing the "totality of the structural whole" out of the constitutive elements of "everyday" experience,⁸¹⁴ such as Dasein's concern in "*Being alongside [things in] the 'world'*" and its solicitude in "*Being-with others.*"⁸¹⁵ Rather than piecing together Dasein's wholeness, Heidegger claims that his investigation must reveal how Dasein provides us with "the only appropriate ontico-ontological way of access to itself" as a whole.⁸¹⁶ Foreshadowing his introduction to conscience, Heidegger calls us to "seek for one of the *most far-reaching* and *most primordial* possibilities of disclosure—one that lies in Dasein itself."⁸¹⁷ Initially, Heidegger focuses this search for a legitimate methodological basis on the state-of-mind of anxiety; as the investigation advances, however, we learn that it is conscience that calls Dasein into this "*most far-reaching*" experience of anxiety. Heidegger emphasizes that the "methodological" aspects concerning Dasein's "way of access to itself" are vital precisely because they protect against the "disunity" and "obstructiveness" of Being-in-the-world's "for the most part inauthentic" mode of existence.⁸¹⁸

By pointing to "the voice of the friend," our first "clue" of discourse revealed an essential connection between the calling of conscience and Dasein's essence as Being-with. Does this evidence of "the voice of the friend" allow us—in the spirit of the basic principles of Heidegger's project—to disclose the "*most primordial*" phenomenon underlying the possibility of "concernful solicitude"? In other words, can our third "clue"

⁸¹² SZ §39, 182 / 227.

⁸¹³ SZ §39, 181 / 225.

⁸¹⁴ SZ §39, 181 / 226.

⁸¹⁵ SZ §39, 181 / 225.

⁸¹⁶ SZ §39, 182 / 226.

⁸¹⁷ SZ §39, 182 / 226.

⁸¹⁸ SZ §39, 181-182 / 225-227.

of “concernful solicitude” be “*simplified* in a certain manner” and brought “to light in an elemental way”?⁸¹⁹

To answer this question, we must turn back to §26 where Heidegger analyzes the phenomena of “solicitude” and “everyday Being-with.” In the early stages of this analysis, it appears that Heidegger’s interpretation of Being-with will be determined strictly in terms of how the world is discovered by “concernfully circumspective Dasein.”⁸²⁰ This reflects the fact that the analysis of Being-in precedes the introduction of Being-with in *Being and Time*: Heidegger explicitly notes at the opening of §26 that the “foregoing explication of the world” is what allows “the remaining structural items of Being-in-the-world [such as Being-with to] become visible.”⁸²¹ Given Heidegger’s strategy of beginning *Being and Time* by exploring the concept of “world,” it seems appropriate that the answer to “the question of the ‘who’” of Dasein⁸²² could only arise out of “an explicit idea of...the ‘world’ itself as something constitutive for Dasein.”⁸²³ Thus, Heidegger begins by describing the encounter with the other as something that is disclosed from “out of the *world*” and is “encountered *environmentally*” in terms of that “with which [Dasein] is proximally concerned.”⁸²⁴ Nonetheless, Heidegger recognizes that these “entities” he calls “others” are distinct from other “things.” Others “are neither present-at-hand nor ready-to-hand” because they share Dasein’s characteristic of disclosing the world: “they are *like* the very Dasein which frees them, in that *they are there too, and there with it.*”⁸²⁵ But even if the other is encountered as “Dasein-with in the world (*Mitdasein in der Welt*)” and never “as a human-thing present-at-hand (*als vorhandenes Menschending*),”⁸²⁶ Heidegger indicates that “everyday” Being-with only emerges out of Dasein’s circumspective concern for its worldly environment.

⁸¹⁹ SZ §39, 182 / 226.

⁸²⁰ SZ §26, 119 / 155.

⁸²¹ SZ §26, 117 / 153.

⁸²² SZ §26, 117 / 153.

⁸²³ SZ §11, 52 / 77.

⁸²⁴ SZ §26, 119 / 155.

⁸²⁵ SZ §26, 118 / 154.

⁸²⁶ SZ §26, 120 / 156.

The tone of Heidegger's analysis of Being-with changes dramatically, however, when he observes that this "concern" for worldly entities actually conceals the true essence of Dasein as Being-with. While it may "*ontically*" appear "obvious"⁸²⁷ that Dasein comes into a world of "things" before it can relate to any "others" who may share this world,⁸²⁸ Heidegger states that this priority is existentially false. For Heidegger, "Dasein in itself is essentially Being-with."⁸²⁹ In other words, Dasein does not become Being-with *after* discovering its world or *after* realizing that it exists in the presence of another entity that shares its disclosing nature. Heidegger's acknowledgement of Dasein's existential trait of Being-with is significant for our investigation of conscience because it reveals that concern for worldly entities actually arises out of Being-with, even though the opposite seems to be "obvious" in "everyday" experience. This is seen in Heidegger's repeated descriptions of how Dasein discloses the "significance" of the entities that are "closest to us" as ready-to-hand equipment: these disclosed entities are understood in terms of their "for-the-sake-of-which" as oriented by Dasein's care for its Being.⁸³⁰ Since Dasein is essentially Being-with, the significance of all entities necessarily refers to the possibility of encountering others even if no actual encounter ever occurs.

Being-with [is] an existential attribute which Dasein, of its own accord, has coming to it from its own kind of Being (*die dem Dasein von ihm selbst heraus seiner Seinsart zukäme*). ... Being-with is an existential characteristic of Dasein even when factually no other is present-at-hand or perceived. Even Dasein's Being-alone is Being-with in the world. (*Das Mitsein bestimmt existenzial das Dasein auch dann, wenn ein Anderer faktisch nicht vorhanden und wahrgenommen ist. Auch das Alleinsein des Daseins ist Mitsein in der Welt.*)⁸³¹

To illustrate how Being-with essentially determines Dasein's discovery of worldly entities, Heidegger provides some examples, such as clothing that involves "an essential assignment or reference to possible wearers," a "decently kept up field" that belongs "to such-and-such

⁸²⁷ SZ §25, 116 / 152.

⁸²⁸ SZ §26, 120 / 156.

⁸²⁹ SZ §26, 120 / 156.

⁸³⁰ SZ §26, 117-118 / 153-154.

⁸³¹ SZ §26, 120 / 156-157.

a person,” or a “book...bought at So-and-so’s shop and given by such-and-such a person.”⁸³²

The others who are thus ‘encountered’ in a ready-to-hand, environmental context of equipment, are not somehow added on in thought to some thing which is proximally just present-at-hand; such ‘things’ are encountered from out of the world in which they are ready-to-hand for others—a world which is always mine too in advance.⁸³³

Since Dasein is essentially Being-with, the “world which is always mine too in advance” is necessarily a world which is possibly shared with others *in advance* as well.⁸³⁴ If the calling of conscience is to attest Dasein’s authenticity as an existentiell possibility, then this possibility that Heidegger seeks must reflect Dasein’s transparent understanding of itself as Being-with.

For our study, it is thus a decisive moment when Heidegger determines that the existential phenomenon of Being-with must be distinguished from Dasein’s concern for worldly entities discovered alongside it.

Concern is a character-of-Being which Being-with cannot have as its own, even though Being-with, like concern, is a *Being towards* entities encountered within-the-world. But those entities 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 entities are not objects of concern, but rather of *solicitude*.⁸³⁵

To describe this phenomenon, Heidegger presents what he calls the “two extreme possibilities (*zwei extreme Möglichkeiten*)” for solicitude in its positive modes, which can be seen to represent its inauthentic and authentic poles.⁸³⁶ The adjective “extreme” used by Heidegger is very significant here: these opposing possibilities of solicitude are

⁸³² SZ §26, 117-118 / 153-154.

⁸³³ SZ §26, 118 / 154.

⁸³⁴ SZ §26, 118 / 154.

⁸³⁵ SZ §26, 121 / 157. In German: “Der Seinscharakter des Besorgens kann dem Mitsein nicht eignen, obzwar diese Seinsart ein *Sein zu* innerweltlich begegnenden Seienden ist wie das Besorgen. Das Seiende, zu dem sich das Dasein als Mitsein verhält, hat aber nicht die Seinsart des zuhandenen Zeugs, es ist selbst Dasein. Dieses Seiende wird nicht besorgt, sondern steht in der *Fürsorge*.”

⁸³⁶ SZ §26, 122 / 158.

distinguished precisely in terms of Dasein's "concern" for worldly entities as opposed to its "authentic Being towards itself."⁸³⁷

The inauthentic solicitude that "leaps in (*für ihn einspringen*)" for the other is the "extreme" case wherein Dasein usurps his or her "position in concern": in this "dominating" mode of solicitude, Dasein inhibitably "takes over (*übernimmt*) for the other that with which he is to concern himself."⁸³⁸ For Heidegger, this mode of inauthentic solicitude "pertains for the most part to our concern with the ready-to-hand" and exemplifies how authentic Being-with can be perverted by Dasein's "concern" for worldly affairs.⁸³⁹ While he regards this "domination" of the other to be an "extreme" mode of Being-with, Heidegger indicates that it is "to a large extent determinative for Being with one another" and closely related to the various modes of deficient "everyday" Being-with-one-another, ranging from utter disinterestedness to deceitful manipulation.⁸⁴⁰

In contrast to this "dominating" kind of solicitude, the authentic "positive mode" of solicitude "helps the other to become transparent to himself *in* his care and to become *free for it*."⁸⁴¹ This "extreme" of authentic solicitude is possible because Dasein through resoluteness "experiences" the full transparency of its ownmost potentiality-for-Being and understands itself essentially as Being-with. Since authentic solicitude is only possible when Dasein is resolute, it is Dasein's silence in the authentic resoluteness described in §60 that makes possible the "sharing" of its transparency by solicitously "[leaping] *ahead* of [the other] in his existentiell potentiality-for-Being, not in order to take away his 'care' but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time (*sondern erst eigentliche als solche zurückzugeben*)."⁸⁴² Very significantly, Heidegger does not once refer to "concern" when he describes this authentic "extreme" of solicitude: "This kind of solicitude pertains essentially to authentic care—that it, to the existence of the other, not to

⁸³⁷ SZ §26, 122 / 159.

⁸³⁸ SZ §26, 122 / 158.

⁸³⁹ SZ §26, 122 / 158.

⁸⁴⁰ SZ §26, 122 / 158-9.

⁸⁴¹ SZ §26, 122 / 159.

⁸⁴² SZ §26, 122 / 158-159.

a ‘*what*’ with which he is concerned...”⁸⁴³ On the basis of Dasein’s authentic understanding of its own Being, the liberating form of solicitude reveals to others the possibility of a “world” defined neither in terms of “things” nor of personal interests. In place of this, authentic solicitude helps to “*free*” the other so he or she can come “back...authentically” to understanding existence on the basis of his or her ownmost “for-the-sake-of-which.”⁸⁴⁴ For Heidegger, this sharing of “transparency” and “freedom” is what makes it possible for Dasein to “become *authentically* bound together (*eigentliche Verbundenheit*)” with others: in authentic solicitude, Dasein “frees the other in his freedom for himself (*die den Anderen in seiner Freiheit für ihn selbst freigibt*).”⁸⁴⁵

Especially when considered in light of our investigation of conscience, we can see that this form of liberating solicitude represents the “extreme” authentic mode of Dasein fully disclosed to itself as Being-with. However, Heidegger provides no guidance as to how this mode of existence can actually be experienced. While he will go on to describe the inauthentic “who” of the “they-self” in detail, Heidegger restricts his analysis of authentic solicitude in this chapter to a four-sentence sketch that primarily serves to contrast it with inauthentic forms of Being-with.

Much like the “call of conscience,” authentic solicitude is a methodological prerequisite for any investigation of the constitutive structures of Dasein as a “whole” yet this phenomenon of “transparent” Being-with proves difficult—if not impossible—to describe as an existentiell possibility. While Heidegger never provides a thoroughgoing interpretation of authentic solicitude, his most explicit remarks tellingly come in §60 when he describes the connection between solicitude, conscience and resoluteness. Here, Heidegger recalls that in resoluteness, Dasein both becomes free for its own authentic ownmost possibility of Being and serves—through its silent decisiveness—to bring the other to recognize his or her own possibility of “hearing” the “call of conscience” as well:

⁸⁴³ SZ §26, 122 / 159.

⁸⁴⁴ SZ §26, 122 / 159.

⁸⁴⁵ SZ §26, 122 / 159.

In the light of the “for-the-sake-of-which” of one’s self-chosen potentiality-for-Being, resolute Dasein frees itself for its world. Dasein’s resoluteness towards itself is what first makes it possible to let the others who are with it ‘be’ in their ownmost potentiality-for-Being, and to co-disclose this potentiality in the solicitude which leaps forth and liberates. When Dasein is resolute, it can become the ‘conscience’ of others. (*Das erschlossene Dasein kann zum „Gewissen“ der Anderen werden.*) Only by authentically Being-their-selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another (*eigentliche Miteinander*)—not by ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraternizing in the “they” and in what “they” want to undertake.⁸⁴⁶

With this remark, Heidegger provides an explicit and direct answer to the question we raised earlier regarding “concernful solicitude (*besorgenden Fürsorge*)”: his interpretation of resolute Being-with implies “authentic solicitude” and reveals the derivative nature of Dasein’s “everyday” experience grasped mainly in terms of “concern” for worldly entities.⁸⁴⁷ “Concernful solicitude” is a necessarily deficient mode of authentic Being-with: it artificially aggregates Dasein’s concern for the “world” and its “solicitous” relations with others. Any “concernful” experience indicates that Dasein’s transparent understanding of itself as Being-with has been distorted: when Dasein is “concerned,” it is not able to understand itself authentically in care and transparently as care. Preoccupied with the “things” discovered in its “world” rather than its own authentic possibilities, Dasein cannot experience its existence in terms of the “common devotion” that “*authentically* [binds] together” Being-with-one-another and frees both Dasein and “the other in his freedom for himself.”⁸⁴⁸ When we reconsider the methodological significance of the connection between calling and solicitude, what we discover is that “concernful solicitude” for “worldly things” and for one’s “worldly relations” with others is precisely what must be “broken off” by the “call of conscience” when Dasein is summoned to “return” to caring for its ownmost potentiality-for-Being.

⁸⁴⁶ SZ §60, 298 / 344-5.

⁸⁴⁷ SZ §26, 124 / 161.

⁸⁴⁸ SZ §26, 122 / 159.

Anticipation: Attesting the Wholeness of Being-Towards-Death

Our final “clue” related to the methodological role of conscience is the “anticipation (*Vorlaufen*)” of Dasein as Being-towards-death, which is the primary topic that opens Division Two of *Being and Time* as Heidegger considers the meaning of Dasein’s “totality.” As we have seen, the attestation that Heidegger seeks to obtain from conscience is directly related to the preceding existential interpretation of death. Heidegger’s strategy for investigating the concept of temporality on the basis of Dasein’s anticipation of its end demands that he demonstrate how “Dasein ever factually [throws] itself into such a Being-towards-death.”⁸⁴⁹ At the end of §53, Heidegger reveals that the “ultimate” objective of the existential analysis of Dasein is to raise the question of

*...whether the anticipation of death, which we have hitherto projected only in its ontological possibility, has an essential connection with that authentic potentiality-for-Being which [remains to be] attested.*⁸⁵⁰

The next step is thus to show how “Dasein gives testimony (*Zeugnis gibt*), from its ownmost potentiality-for-Being, as to a possible *authenticity* of its experience.”⁸⁵¹ If conscience can produce this “attestation,” then it will be possible to examine how “anticipation” is related to Dasein’s authenticity. At the conclusion of §60, Heidegger reaffirms this focus on the relation between death and conscience as he recognizes the seriousness of the situation regarding the “missing” attestation of Dasein’s wholeness.

[As] an authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole, the authentic Being-towards-death which we have deduced existentially still remains a purely existential project for which Dasein’s attestation is missing (*dem die daseinsmäßige Bezeugung fehlt*).⁸⁵²

As we have seen, Heidegger never produces the required attestation of the “call of conscience” in *Being and Time* so the problem regarding the disclosing of an “ontical

⁸⁴⁹ SZ §53, 266 / 311.

⁸⁵⁰ SZ §53, 267 / 311.

⁸⁵¹ SZ §53, 267 / 311.

⁸⁵² SZ §60, 301 / 348.

potentiality-for-Being...determined by anticipation” also remains unsolved.⁸⁵³ Nonetheless, Heidegger has certainly “worked out...[his] idea” of how conscience might be related to the question of “Dasein’s *authentic* potentiality-for-Being-a-whole”—even if both the concepts of conscience and death remain confined within what “remains a purely existential project.”⁸⁵⁴ In this sense, our final “clue” of anticipation also represents Heidegger’s “last word” regarding conscience: when he focuses on “anticipatory resoluteness (*vorlaufen Entschlossenheit*)” in §61, Heidegger points his search for the “attesting call” back to the phenomenon of Being-towards-death. Is there an “existentiell possibility” that can attest an “authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole” in anticipatory resoluteness?⁸⁵⁵ In other words, is there a way that we can understand the “call of conscience” as a call to anticipation that can be ontically experienced?⁸⁵⁶

When we look back attentively at Heidegger’s interpretation of Being-towards-death, we find a remarkable confirmation that the clue of authentic “solicitude” is essential to what is supposedly disclosed to Dasein by the “call of conscience.” In revealing the essential connection between death and “Dasein’s ownmost individualized Being,” Heidegger indicates a kind of understanding of existence that can only be founded in a “pure” and “transparent” experience of one’s essence as Being-with:

We may now summarize our characterization of authentic Being-towards-death as we have projected it existentially: anticipation reveals to Dasein its lostness in the they-self, and brings it face to face with the possibility of being itself, primarily unsupported by concerned solicitude (*auf die besorgende Fürsorge primär ungestützt*), but of being itself, rather, in an impassioned freedom towards death (*Freiheit zum Tode*)—a freedom which has been released from the illusions of the “they,” and which is factual, certain of itself, and anxious.⁸⁵⁷

When Dasein recognizes its essence as Being-towards-death, it is “primarily unsupported by concerned solicitude” because this deficient mode of Being-in-the-world reveals that

⁸⁵³ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁸⁵⁴ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁸⁵⁵ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁸⁵⁶ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁸⁵⁷ SZ §53, 266 / 311. We have added the emphasis to the text that is underlined.

Dasein has understood its existence—and the existence of others—principally in terms of “substantial things.”⁸⁵⁸ In contrast to “concernful solicitude,” the authentic “freedom towards death” that is described by Heidegger matches up perfectly with the phenomenon of resoluteness that arises in one’s hearing the “call of conscience.”⁸⁵⁹ As we have seen, this resoluteness implies that Dasein transparently understands itself as Being-with, which explains how when “Dasein is resolute, it can become the ‘conscience’ of others.”⁸⁶⁰ The dynamic nature of the existential call that summons Dasein to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being is reflected in both the “leaping forth” of authentic solicitude that liberates and the anticipation of one’s own fate as Being-towards-death. In his subsequent interpretation of historicity in *Being and Time*, Heidegger specifies in §74 how being summoned to resoluteness represents a “repetition”—a coming back to one’s “authentic truth” as Being-with who resolutely exists for the sake of a common “destiny” (*Geschick*):⁸⁶¹

The resoluteness which comes back to itself and hands itself down, then becomes the *repetition* (*Wiederholung*) of a possibility of existence that has come down to us. *Repeating is handing down explicitly*—that is to say, going back into the possibilities of the Dasein that has-been-there. The authentic repetition of a possibility of existence that has been—the possibility that Dasein may choose its hero—is grounded existentially in anticipatory resoluteness; for it is in resoluteness that one first chooses the choice which makes one free for the struggle of loyally following in the footsteps of that which can be repeated.⁸⁶²

When Dasein authentically understands its essence in resoluteness, it recognizes that its “authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole” as Being-towards-death⁸⁶³ is an existential characteristic that it shares with all possible others in its essential Being-with. This is why

⁸⁵⁸ SZ §53, 266 / 311.

⁸⁵⁹ SZ §53, 266 / 311.

⁸⁶⁰ SZ §60, 298 / 344.

⁸⁶¹ SZ §74, 384 / 436.

⁸⁶² SZ §74, 385 / 437. In German: “Die auf sich zurrückkommende, such überliefernde Entschlossenheit wird dann zur *Wiederholung* einer überkommenen Existenzmöglichkeit. Die *Wiederholung ist die ausdrückliche Überlieferung*, das heißt der Rückgang in Möglichkeiten des dagewesenen Daseins. Die eigentliche Wiederholung einer gewesenen Existenzmöglichkeit—daß das Dasein sich seinen Helden wählt—gründet existenzial in der vorlaufenden Entschlossenheit; denn in ihr wird allererst die Wahl gewählt, die für die kämpfende Nachfolge und Treue zum Wiederholbaren frei macht.”

⁸⁶³ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

Dasein, in the reticence of its transparent understanding of itself as *Being-with-towards-death*, “can become the ‘conscience’ of others” and “co-disclose this potentiality in the solicitude which leaps forth and liberates.”⁸⁶⁴

As Heidegger explains, this possibility of anticipatory “Being-with-towards-death” is not an obvious one from an “everyday” perspective;⁸⁶⁵ indeed, it even seems incongruous with some of the previous analyses of Dasein’s existential structures in *Being and Time*. Authentic Being-with is usually obscured by Dasein’s jealous monitoring and deceitful manipulation of others; similarly, authentic Being-towards-death is distorted by the constant efforts of the “they” to transform the “dying of others” into something that can be made “‘objectively’ accessible.”⁸⁶⁶ By establishing anticipatory resoluteness as the basis of Dasein’s wholeness, Heidegger reveals the essential link between the “authentic solicitude” of Being-with and the genuine anticipation of Being-towards-death. When Being-with and Being-towards-death are understood authentically, they show themselves to be essentially compatible with Heidegger’s description of anticipation in §53:

The ownmost possibility, which is non-relational, not to be outstripped, and certain, is *indefinite* as regards its certainty. (*Die eigenste, unbezügliche, unüberholbare und gewisse Möglichkeit ist hinsichtlich der Gewißheit unbestimmt.*) ... Anticipation utterly individualizes Dasein, and allows it, in this individualization of itself, to become certain of the totality of its potentiality-for-Being.⁸⁶⁷

The primordial wholeness of Dasein revealed in the transparency of anticipatory resoluteness “contains” both the possibility of authentic Being-with and the radical individualization of Being-towards-death. Given that the “attestation (*Bezeugung*)” of the “call of conscience” is intended to reveal Dasein’s “authentic truth,” it is remarkable to note that the “clue” of Being-towards-death also points us to the possibility of “authentic” witnessing through “*conviction (Überzeugung)*.”⁸⁶⁸ As Ricoeur poignantly asks: “Must we

⁸⁶⁴ SZ §60, 298 / 344.

⁸⁶⁵ SZ §63, 311 / 359.

⁸⁶⁶ SZ §47, 237-238 / 281-282.

⁸⁶⁷ SZ §53, 265-266 / 310.

⁸⁶⁸ SZ §52, 256 / 300.

recall that in German ‘conviction’ is called *Überzeugung*, a term from the same family as witness (*Zeuge*) and as attestation (*Bezeugung*)?”⁸⁶⁹ Whereas Heidegger roundly criticizes the traditional notion of “objective” certainty, he finds in the authentic understanding of one’s Being-towards-death a genuine form of certainty that is founded etymologically on the same root as attestation:

One mode of certainty is *conviction* (*Überzeugung*). In conviction, Dasein lets the testimony of the thing itself which has been uncovered (the true thing itself) be the sole determinant for its Being towards that thing understandingly (*durch das Zeugnis der entdeckten (wahren) Sache selbst sein verstehendes Sein zu dieser bestimmen*). Holding something for true (*für-wahr-halten*) is adequate as a way of maintaining oneself in the truth (*Sich-in-der-Wahrheit-halten*), if it is grounded in the uncovered entity itself, and if, as Being toward the entity so uncovered, it has become transparent to itself as regards its appropriateness to that entity. In any arbitrary fiction or in merely having some ‘view (*Ansicht*)’ about an entity, this sort of thing is lacking.⁸⁷⁰

As we have seen, the “existential definition” of resoluteness provided in §60 is inadequate as the attestation of this authentic mode of certainty because it lacks the transparency required for Dasein to be able to recognize itself as Being-towards-death. Any notion of resoluteness that ignores Dasein’s “ownmost certainty” as Being-towards-death remains, “from an existentiell point of view, a fantastical exaction,” to use Heidegger’s own words.⁸⁷¹ When conscience calls Dasein back to where it becomes “transparent to itself,” the “situation” of resoluteness is conditioned by the only authentic “certainty” that Dasein can experience: the anticipation of its end.⁸⁷² As Heidegger notes, resoluteness is authentic “only as *anticipatory resoluteness*” because only in anticipation is Dasein “constantly certain of death...thus attaining a certainty which is authentic and whole.”⁸⁷³

⁸⁶⁹ Ricœur. *Soi-même comme un autre*. p. 405. Footnote 1. In French: « Faut-il rappeler qu’en allemand « conviction » se dit *Ueberzeugung*, terme de la même famille que le témoin (*Zeuge*) et que l’attestation (*Bezeugung*) ? »

⁸⁷⁰ SZ §52, 256 / 300.

⁸⁷¹ SZ §53, 266 / 311.

⁸⁷² SZ §52, 256 / 300.

⁸⁷³ SZ §62, 307-309 / 355-356.

The “call of conscience” reaches out to Dasein with what Heidegger calls “unwavering precision (*ungebrochene Schärfe*)”:

[It] essentially [individualizes Dasein] down [to] its ownmost potentiality-for-Being [and] discloses the anticipation of death as the possibility which is *non-relational* (*Vorlaufen zum Tode als der unbezüglichen Möglichkeit*). Anticipatory resoluteness lets the potentiality-for-Being-guilty, as one’s ownmost non-relational possibility, be struck wholly into the conscience (*ganz ins Gewissen schlagen*).⁸⁷⁴

As Heidegger reveals in his interpretation of “anticipatory resoluteness,” the “call of conscience” brings Dasein back to its specifically authentic potentiality-for-Being by making it acknowledge the constant certainty of its impending death. Only through the “[authentic] ‘thinking about death’” of Dasein when it hears the call of conscience can this disclosing entity “become transparent to itself in an existentiell manner.”⁸⁷⁵ If we are looking for “a definite ontical way” of understanding the “call of conscience” as Heidegger demands, then it is not the “purely existential” concept of resoluteness presented in §60 that can point us to a possible solution. Rather, the “existentiell attestation” of conscience must specifically indicate the unique and ownmost potentiality-for-Being of Dasein that is disclosed in anticipatory resoluteness and demonstrate how this authentic form of anticipation is possible. If the “call of conscience” can be experienced, then it must be experienceable as the call to the certainty of Dasein’s own death.

The “Positive Necessity” of Experiencing the Call

As Heidegger stresses repeatedly in *Being and Time*, his phenomenological investigation of Dasein must demonstrate “a possible *authenticity* of its existence...in an existentiell manner.”⁸⁷⁶ Without this thread of a possibility that can connect ontical experience with the existential analysis, Heidegger’s entire existential-ontological project cannot “stand the test” that he himself insists upon.⁸⁷⁷ As we have seen, it is the “call of

⁸⁷⁴ SZ §62, 307 / 354.

⁸⁷⁵ SZ §62, 309 / 357.

⁸⁷⁶ SZ §53, 267 / 311.

⁸⁷⁷ SZ §53, 267 / 311.

conscience” that Heidegger tasks with producing the required “attestation” of Dasein’s possible authenticity as something that it can find in its own Being. Our analysis has shown, however, that this attestation of Dasein’s transparency as an authentic and whole phenomenon is never produced “in an existentiell manner” as required. The initial attempt to provide this “attestation” of conscience through the interpretation of resoluteness produces an “insufficient” attestation: it cannot be demonstrated to be possible as experience. In §60, resoluteness is only “defined existentially” and this initial interpretation does not specify that resoluteness is only authentic if Dasein *anticipates* its “ownmost potentiality-for-Being” as Being-towards-death.⁸⁷⁸ Even after Heidegger specifies “anticipatory resoluteness” as the unique “authentic” mode of Dasein’s existence in the subsequent sections,⁸⁷⁹ this concept is never “worked out” as a “factual existentiell possibility.”⁸⁸⁰ Ultimately, we are never shown in *Being and Time* how it is possible for Dasein to actually experience conscience: neither Dasein’s understanding of the “call of conscience” nor the special mode of “discourse” of calling are shown to be factually possible in ontical experience. At the end of §62, Heidegger states that a “definite ontical way” of understanding how Dasein can experience “authentic existence” is a “*positive necessity (positiven Notwendigkeit)*” for his investigation.⁸⁸¹ This “way” is needed in order for Heidegger to maintain his independence from traditional ontology and its reliance on metaphysical absolutes. When it comes to the existential concept of conscience, Heidegger must demonstrate that his phenomenon of calling is not dependent on an external power, such as the divine “light” of Stoker’s *synteresis*. Yet as we have seen, Heidegger never explicitly describes an experience that conveys how Dasein can be called by conscience in *Being and Time*. Given Heidegger’s abandonment of the concept of conscience following the publication of *Being and Time*, we are left without an “answer” from Heidegger regarding the possibility of experiencing this call. In order to continue the search for this

⁸⁷⁸ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁸⁷⁹ SZ §62, 307-309 / 355-356.

⁸⁸⁰ SZ §60, 301 / 348.

⁸⁸¹ SZ §62, 310 / 358.

“missing” attestation, we are forced to look beyond what is explicitly provided by Heidegger in his published texts and extant manuscripts.

In this regard, our analysis has opened up a new way of pressing on with this search: by considering the problem of attestation in light of Heidegger’s “method” of formal indication, we have attempted to follow the *formally indicated* “clues” which the thinker provides in the course of interpreting the phenomenon of conscience. Having identified the vital methodological role of conscience in *Being and Time*, we established that there is a close relation between the “call of conscience” and Heidegger’s “method” of formal indication developed during his “phenomenological decade” in Freiburg and Marburg. Our examination of Heidegger’s four formally indicated “clues” regarding authentic existence—discourse, truth, solicitude and anticipation—allowed us to identify some of the essential characteristics of any possible “experience” of the “call of conscience.” However, we have not yet been able to point to way of “demonstrating” how Dasein can ontically experience its self-attestation. Through our analysis of the connection between discourse and conscience, we learned that any “existentiell attestation” of the call must account for how one experiences both the *hearing* and the *calling* required for Heidegger’s interpretation of the phenomenon. In examining the phenomenon of “authentic truth,” we discovered that Heidegger’s existential analysis presupposes the calling of conscience because all existence depends upon the possible transparency of Dasein to itself. Our investigation of solicitude showed that “concernful solicitude” is incompatible with Dasein’s authentic truth: conscience calls Dasein away from its “concern” for worldly things to the transparent understanding of its essential Being-with, which is what allows it to serve as the “liberating” conscience of others. Finally, the phenomenon of anticipation revealed that any experience of the “call of conscience” necessarily implies bringing Dasein back to its authentic “certainty” as Being-towards-death. What we continue to seek is the way that conscience can be seen to “bridge” the gap between the existential interpretation of the silent call and the revealing of an “existentiell possibility” whereby Dasein can actually come into its “authentic truth.” As we have seen, existence presupposes the “call of conscience”: on a purely existential level, the call *must* be. What remains

problematic is the *how* of this call. How can we experience this *calling* and this *hearing*? Where are we to find the tether that connects the existential project to the “there” of Being-in-the-world?

Having reviewed these formally indicated “clues,” our investigation is now in a position to examine how the required “attestation” in *Being and Time* might be conceived as a “factual possibility” that Dasein can experience. However, there is one last formal indication provided by Heidegger in his interpretation of conscience that we must first consider: the word “conscience” itself, more specifically the German term “*Gewissen*” employed by Heidegger. Based on Heidegger’s criticism of the “ordinary interpretation” of conscience, it is evident that he regards the notion of “moral conscience” to be a deficient way of understanding an original phenomenon signified by the word “*Gewissen*.” Is it possible that Heidegger’s understanding of this term might point back to a source of the German word that is quite different from the patently moral sense of the Latin *conscientia*?

4. Heidegger's Conscience as the Testimony of Being-Towards-Death

On the basis of the formally indicated phenomena that Heidegger links to *Gewissen* in *Being and Time*, we have assigned ourselves the task of showing how Dasein might *experience* the “call of conscience” and thereby produce the attestation of its own authentic potentiality-for-Being—an attestation upon which rests the success of Heidegger’s entire existential-ontological project. In the previous chapter, we closely examined Heidegger’s interpretation of conscience and attempted to understand how Dasein can experience this “attesting call” by considering four formally indicated phenomena identified by Heidegger as being essential to Dasein’s authenticity: discourse, truth, solicitude and anticipation. While these phenomena are shown by Heidegger to constitute Dasein’s authentic mode of existence, they do not allow us to point to a possible way of understanding how Being-in-the-world can *experience* the “call of conscience.” As Heidegger himself notes, *Being and Time* requires this “demonstration” of how authentic existence can be an “*existentiell* possibility” of Dasein in order to prove that his existential project is not merely “a fantastical exaction (*eine phantastische Zumutung*).”⁸⁸² In this final chapter of our investigation, we will continue our search for this “attesting” experience by considering the most “direct” of the formally indicated clues related to the “call of conscience” that Heidegger proffers in *Being and Time*: the German word *Gewissen* itself.

Our analysis of what is formally indicated by Heidegger’s existential concept of *Gewissen* will follow the basic steps of the “method” of phenomenological investigation that he elaborated in Marburg and Freiburg prior to writing *Being and Time*. Firstly, we will approach the problem of Heidegger’s conscience by “means of the phenomenological-critical destruction,” which involves the “cleaning-up...of ambiguity (*Reinemachen...der Vieldeutigkeit*)” and the elimination of “conventional” and “ordinary” biases that block off

⁸⁸² SZ §53, 266 / 311.

the primordial “enactment” sense of any phenomenon.⁸⁸³ As we will see, this initial step will emphasize the historical error that led to *Gewissen* becoming equated with the Latin notion of *conscientia* and moral conscience, an error that obscures the German word’s distinct history and original meaning. Secondly, on the basis of what is disclosed by our preliminary “destructive” review, we will determine what can be positively exhibited with regard to the meaning of the formally indicated concept of conscience—a step that Heidegger described as the “first bringing-out (*erste Hebung*)” of the phenomenon.⁸⁸⁴ As we search for a way of experiencing Heidegger’s “call of conscience,” we will discover that the earliest recorded meaning of the German word *Gewissen* was “testimony”—a meaning that is echoed with remarkable fidelity by Heidegger’s interpretation of conscience as the means of providing an “attestation” of Dasein’s possible authenticity. Thirdly, we will constructively attempt to “preconceive” the sense of Heidegger’s *Gewissen* as a phenomenon whose meaning can only be “fulfilled” through its “enactment” as a possible experience of Being-in-the-world.⁸⁸⁵ Recognizing the special methodological role of conscience in *Being and Time* as the attestation of Dasein’s possible authenticity, we will attempt to describe a way that Dasein can *experience* its being “summoned” to care for its authentic potentiality-for-Being and to reveal the conditions essential to such an experience. As we will show, this possibility—which reflects Dasein’s genuine essence as Being-towards-death and Being-*amidst* in a world shared with others—can be conceived as the experience of Being-in-the-world’s hearing the silent resoluteness of the martyr.

⁸⁸³ GA 59, §5-5a, 29-30 / 21-22.

⁸⁸⁴ GA 59, §5d, 41 / 29.

⁸⁸⁵ GA 59, §5b, 35 / 25.

4.1. *Gewissen* Not *Conscientia*: Exposing the Historical Ambiguity of Conscience

With his interpretation of the experience of one's being called to authenticity, Heidegger proposes conscience as the "means" whereby Dasein can interrupt its falling into "everydayness" characterized by the ambiguity of assertive language. The "call of conscience" invites Dasein to counter this ambiguity and resolutely seize its ownmost possibility: it offers to Being-in-the-world the unique possibility of making an unambiguous choice, indeed this choice is precisely what allows Dasein to overcome the ambiguity (*Zweideutigkeit*) of its "everyday," inauthentic way of existing among the "they." Coming at the pivotal moment in *Being and Time* where Heidegger transitions from the analysis of Dasein's constitutive elements to his interpretation of time, Heidegger's interpretation of conscience reveals how the "illuminating" experience of authentic disclosedness is *possible* and therefore can provide the "attestation" required in order to legitimize the foregoing analysis of Dasein's constitutive phenomena. In exhibiting how Dasein can be "called back" from its dispersal in worldly affairs, Heidegger confirms the methodological role of conscience as the unique phenomenon that allows Dasein to recognize the "equiprimordial" structures of its existence and to produce the "attestation" that it can actually experience its authentic mode of Being.

Heidegger's "choice" of conscience as the antidote to ambiguity is a significant—yet highly ironic—one: this "phenomenon" that he identifies as essential to Dasein's authenticity is itself one of the most ambiguous and controversial terms of the Western philosophical and theological traditions. From its earliest recordings in ancient Greek and Christian texts, conscience has been associated with the problem of moral authority and the possible relation between humankind and a metaphysical "source" of all existence. The notion of conscience has fueled endless disputes—in both philosophy and theology—regarding the limits of human reason, the nature of existence, the power of the divine, the

possibility of certain knowledge, the freedom of the will and the validity of morals, among countless other topics.⁸⁸⁶ In the Scholastic period, *conscientia* was increasingly characterized as a “function” of human reason; this semantic evolution contributed to the emergence of the modern notion of consciousness, one of the primary targets of Heidegger’s “destructive” phenomenology.

Answers regarding “why” and “how” Heidegger came to see conscience as the initiating phenomenon of Dasein’s authentic disclosedness are not explicitly provided in *Being and Time*—and this problem cannot be remedied simply by reviewing Heidegger’s earlier texts, as we have seen above. Furthermore, the term “*Gewissen*” virtually disappears from Heidegger’s vocabulary following its dramatic appearance in his 1927 work. Given the importance of conscience for the investigation of *Being and Time*, it is remarkable how little Heidegger develops this existential concept. The mystery of Heidegger’s virtual silence regarding his “discovery” of conscience only deepens when we consider that he was well aware both of the monumental controversy regarding the term’s use as a philosophical concept and of its significant role in the emergence of the modern notion of consciousness.

What then might the word *Gewissen* itself tell us about Heidegger’s existential phenomenon that is described as the means for attesting to Dasein’s possibility of authentic existence? Is it possible that the origins of the German concept of “conscience” might indicate how Dasein can experience its authentic “self-attestation”?

***Conscientia* and the Confused Notion of Moral Conscience**

Although our investigation of Heidegger’s concept of conscience in *Being and Time* has proven to be challenging due to the rarity of relevant primary and even secondary sources, the opposite is the case when we consider the topic of conscience in philosophical and, especially, theological literature. Conscience and related moral phenomena have

⁸⁸⁶ Cf. James H. Hyslop, “Conscience,” *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, eds. James Hastings and John A. Selbie (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1911), vol. 4. Also, James Gaffney. “Conscience: The Evolution of Ambiguity.” *Matters of Faith and Morals*. (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1987). Also, Henry Chadwick. *Some Reflections on Conscience: Greek, Jewish and Christian*. (London: Council of Christians and Jews, 1969).

ranked among the most common subjects of religious and philosophical study since the earliest moments of recorded history: countless and varied accounts found in the Egyptian, Jewish, Greek and Roman traditions speak of “taboos,” divine reprimands, and advising “voices” that are attributed to spirits, gods or God.⁸⁸⁷ Such authoritative “voices” of conscience were commonly considered as “evidence” for the establishment of behavioral norms or explicit laws and penalties.⁸⁸⁸

Considered a “popular” rather than philosophical concept in ancient Greek society,⁸⁸⁹ the notion of *suneidesis*—with its explicit connections to public shame and dishonor—is seen to emerge as a central feature of Christian morality and its notions of sin and one’s personal relationship with God. The emphasis of the New Testament on the painful experience of sinners in recognizing their guilt and acknowledging their dependence on God’s grace for salvation (which is vividly conveyed in the Pauline letters) has been the topic of sustained theological study from the times of the Church Fathers (e.g. Augustine) through the Scholastic era (e.g. Bonaventura, Aquinas) and up to the present day (e.g. Scheler, Stoker, Stelzenberger). In the course of its evolution, the concept of conscience has been constantly dogged by skepticism regarding its status as a legitimate source of moral guidance and concerns about its ambiguity as a term. With the accumulation of rival theories describing its origin and its nature, the meaning of “conscience” became increasingly fractured over time, especially after the Protestant Reformation and the appropriation of the notion of “individual conscience” by modern philosophy. As Michael Despland observed, the “Protestant Reformation fostered a new Western assurance of conscience. Conscience became safe, certain,” which was reflected in

⁸⁸⁷ Two such examples: 1) Moral sanctions in the Book of the Dead and other Egyptian treatises are attributed to “the gods, the chiefs, the dead, the family.” George Foucart, “Conscience (Egyptian),” *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, eds. James Hastings and John A. Selbie (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1911), vol. 4. p. 35. 2) In Greek mythology, the “Furies (*Erinyes*)” are seen to “[punish] the individual for violations of the moral law.” Hyslop, “Conscience,” vol. p. 31.

⁸⁸⁸ Hyslop, “Conscience,” vol. p. 31.

⁸⁸⁹ In his text on the Greek notion of conscience, Jones notes that while the “clearer realization of the shamefulness of sin” may have been influenced by the early philosophers, it “should be noticed...that *sunoida* and *to suneidos* are popular, not philosophic, expressions.” W. H. S. Jones, “Conscience (Greek and Roman),” *Ibid.*, vol. 4. p. 39.

the “many moves toward certainty” seen in the 16th century in fields ranging from astronomy to religion.⁸⁹⁰

For Heidegger, this scientific quest for “certainty” is closely tied to the dominant tradition of *conscientia* and the moral “ought” that has concealed the fundamentally uncertain character of existence. Itself influenced by the growing tensions within Christianity, the scientific movement of the Enlightenment found in conscience a means for emancipating subjective experience and validating “knowledge” as certain. By valorizing the idea of an “inner” conscience possessed by each person, the burgeoning rationalist movement made possible the subsequent “discovery” that this phenomenon could itself be accessed by science as a psychological entity. Already splintered as a theological concept by the Scholastics, the notion of conscience fell deeper into ambiguity with the emergence of the concept of consciousness in modern philosophy, notably as a result of what Lewis describes as a historical failure to clarify the distinction between consciousness and the phenomenon of conscience.⁸⁹¹ From the Heideggerian perspective, this lack of clarity is an essential characteristic of *conscientia*; arguably, a “clear” distinction between consciousness and *conscientia* would be essentially *impossible* to establish due to the ambiguity of Dasein’s inauthentic “everyday” mode of existence, as Heidegger contends in *Being and Time*’s Division One.

⁸⁹⁰ Michael Despland. “Conscience.” *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. ed. Mircea Eliade. vol. 4. (New York: Macmillan, 1987). p. 48. In Despland’s words, “the Protestant Reformation gave subjective assurance and the scientific revolution began to give objective certainty: Galileo did not weigh the relative merits of authorities; he knew for sure.”

⁸⁹¹ C. S. Lewis. *Studies in Words*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960). pp. 181-191. As Lewis observes in his discussion of the English terms conscience and consciousness, the former remains today closely associated with, and indeed sometimes even synonymous with, the latter. In French, a second term for consciousness (or *Bewußtsein* in German) was never even adopted; instead, the term of *la conscience* that emerged from the Latin *conscientia* was appropriated to provide a title for the rationalist notion of “conscious” awareness. The “ethical” sense of conscience was itself then required to adopt a “new” name: “*la conscience morale*.” While this “splitting” of conscience occurs in all the major Western European languages, the French example is most striking due to the outright “redefinition” of *la conscience* as “consciousness.” Not only was *la conscience morale* relegated to the status of a qualified term, the essential relation of *conscience* to pain, guilt or emotional distress was completely lost. In *la conscience morale*, the neutral awareness of *conscience* is presupposed as the basis of any “consciousness” of the specifically moral phenomenon. Interestingly, the French language does retain a word that is closely “related” to the painful experience of moral conscience: *remords*, the “biting” of remorse. Exemplifying the “intellectualization” of the Latin *conscientia*, the modern French notion of *conscience* stifles the “biting” reminder of one’s guilt and emphasizes instead the neutral consciousness of the subject.

In the German intellectual community of the 19th and 20th centuries, discussion regarding the terms *conscientia* and *Gewissen* was particularly effervescent and the boundary separating the philosophical from the theological was porous: commentaries on conscience arrived in great quantity from all quarters, especially as scientists from emerging fields such as psychology and sociology began to contribute with increasing regularity to the debate over the “source” of moral authority.⁸⁹² This general preoccupation with the question of conscience in Germany only increased following the First World War, as the nation was forced not only to concede a humiliating military defeat but also to formally accept its “guilt” for having been the “sole instigator” of the hostilities.⁸⁹³ From a historical standpoint, the timing of Heidegger’s deployment of his “existential” concept of conscience in *Being and Time* is thus quite peculiar: almost a decade after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, German anger continued to simmer at having been forced to assume complete responsibility for the devastation and horrors of the First World War and to pay staggering reparations to the Allies. Since December 1918, for example, the German Foreign Ministry had funded a “War Guilt Office (*Kriegsschuldreferat*)” to conduct research, prepare studies and produce propaganda countering the Allies’ claims that Germany was solely to blame for the outbreak of war in 1914.⁸⁹⁴ From 1919 through the mid-1920’s, the Berlin based *Juni-Klub*—a radical anti-democratic organization named in bitter remembrance of the June 28, 1919 signing of the Treaty of Versailles—published a widely read journal entitled *Das Gewissen* devoted to correcting what it described as:

⁸⁹² Robert Jewett. *Paul's Anthropological Terms; A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971). p. 402. As the American theologian notes in his study of the Pauline concept of *suneidesis*: “The discussion regarding the word *suneidesis* cannot be dealt with...exhaustively...[due to] the sheer mass of literature which appeared on this subject in the mid-nineteenth century, a flood of such dimensions that Martin Kähler at the end of the century said it had already become “*unübersehbar* [overwhelming].” In note 6 of Division Two, Chapter Two of *Being and Time*, Heidegger makes specific reference to the entry by Kähler on *Gewissen* in the *Realenzyklopädie* that Jewett mentions here.

⁸⁹³ The text of Article 231 of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles reads: “The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.”

⁸⁹⁴ C. Stewart Doty and Charles D. Hamilton. *Western Civilization: Recent Interpretations*. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973). pp. 410-411.

Lack of conscience *is the most conspicuous feature of our age*; this lack of conscience dominates us; it dominates Europe; it dominates the world. Everywhere conscience has fallen silent.⁸⁹⁵

In 1925 and 1926, following his release from prison for his participation in the failed Beer Hall Putsch in Munich, Adolf Hitler published the two volumes of *Mein Kampf*, proclaiming the urgent need to “clear up” the question of “war guilt.”⁸⁹⁶ Under the circumstances, what Heidegger proposed in *Being and Time* represented a radical yet resonant philosophical concept: a content-free, God-less, amoral and “silent call” that summons the individual to accept his or her “existential” guilt and to reject “common” human values in favor of one’s authentic and ownmost possibility.

It should be noted that scholarly interest in the concept of *Gewissen* persists in the middle and late 20th century in Germany, however the volume of contributions is greatly reduced and the tone noticeably changes from one of “effervescent enthusiasm” to solemnity following the Second World War. This difficult historical context may explain in large part why relatively few philosophical texts written by German commentators since 1945 have focused on Heidegger’s concept of conscience.

Given the sheer volume of texts that have been produced on moral conscience, our study is forced to forego a comprehensive review of the evolving historical theories regarding conscience and how they relate to Heidegger’s concept and its methodological role in *Being and Time*. Here we heed the counsel of notable theologians including Kähler, Jewett and Stelzenberger, among others, who conclude that a satisfactory definition of conscience—or even a comprehensive survey of the various proposed notions of conscience restricted to the domains of philosophy or theology—would be impossible to produce. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger’s criticism of Stoker conveys the hopelessness of such an attempt: whatever its qualities, the “wide-ranging investigation” of *Das Gewissen*

⁸⁹⁵ "Das Gewissen." *Das Gewissen: Unabhängige Zeitung für Volksbildung* I. 11 (1919). p. 2. English translation from Fritz Richard Stern. *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961). p. 228. In German: “Die Gewissenlosigkeit ist das hervorstehendste Merkmal unserer Zeit, sie beherrscht uns; sie beherrscht Europa; sie beherrscht die Welt. Ueberall schweigt das Gewissen.”

⁸⁹⁶ Adolf Hitler. *Mein Kampf*. trans. James Vincent Murphy. (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1939). p. 360.

is nonetheless judged by Heidegger to be incomplete.⁸⁹⁷ Given Stelzenberger's conclusion a few decades later that the concept of conscience has become so confused that any thought of defining the term should be abandoned, one can only concede that Heidegger's ideal of a "complete" study of theories concerning conscience could never be satisfied. Fortunately, our examination of the existential concept of *Gewissen* in *Being and Time* does not necessitate an exhaustive review of the historical evolution of philosophical and theological theories of conscience.⁸⁹⁸ In keeping with Heidegger's phenomenological approach, our investigation of how the "attestation" of the existential "call of conscience" can be *experienced* will instead focus on revealing what the concept of *Gewissen* formally indicates about the "enactment-sense" of this phenomenon.

The Problematic Equation of *Suneidesis* and *Conscientia*

The first "destructive" task that must be undertaken as we consider what is formally indicated by Heidegger's notion of conscience is to examine the relation of the Latin *conscientia* to the ancient Greek term *suneidesis*, the word which is almost universally recognized as its etymological source. In light of its importance for the development of the modern concept of conscience, a clear understanding of this relation is vital for our study: only on the basis of such an understanding of the historical roots of moral conscience can we hope to identify a possible way of experiencing Heidegger's phenomenon of *Gewissen*.

⁸⁹⁷ SZ, Footnote to §55, 272 / 495 (note vi).

⁸⁹⁸ We also doubt whether such a "survey" would contribute significantly to our understanding of the concept because as dozens of philologists and theologians have already produced such studies, usually with a thematic focus, e.g. on the Pauline concept of conscience or the Scholastic theories of conscience. While no such "survey" could be considered complete, there is clearly an abundance of texts that attempt to document the historical development of the concept of conscience. Cf. Martin Kähler. *Das Gewissen: Ethische Untersuchung; Die Entwicklung seiner Namen und seines Begriffes; Erster, geschichtlicher Teil; Geschichtliche Untersuchung zur Lehre von der Begründung der sittlichen Erkenntnis; Erst Hälfte: Alterum und Neues Testament*. (Halle: Julius Fricke, 1878). Odon Lottin. *Psychologie et morale aux XIIIe et XIIIe siècles*. (Gembloux: Duculot, 1942). Claude Anthony Pierce. *Conscience in the New Testament: A Study of Syneidesis in the New Testament*. (London: SCM Press, 1958). H. Reiner. "Gewissen." *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*. ed. Joachim Ritter. vol. 1 (A-C). (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe & Co., 1971). Johannes Stelzenberger. *Syneidesis im Neuen Testament*. (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1961). Uta Störmer-Caysa. *Über das Gewissen: Texte zur Begründung der neuzeitlichen Subjektivität*. (Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum Verlag, 1995). Among many others.

For most philosophers, theologians and linguists who have studied the origins of *conscientia*, the equivalence of the ancient Greek and Latin terms is considered a given. Assurances abound that *suneidesis* and *conscientia* are synonymous terms and that the concept of conscience passed down by ancient Greek civilization to the early Christian church: the latter simply “refined” the “primitive” Greek understanding of the phenomenon.⁸⁹⁹ Based on our study of literature concerning the historical development of conscience, the scales are heavily weighted in favor of those claiming the equivalence of the Greek and Latin terms.

However, this hypothesis of a “smooth” transition from one language to the next is faced with a major problem as soon as one takes even a cursory look at the root terms that make up these words. Not only are the Greek *eidesis* and the Latin *scientia* not equivalent, they are not even related. The term *scientia* is believed to be derived from the Latin verb *scire* meaning “to know,” based on the metaphoric notion that one can know by

⁸⁹⁹ In the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Hyslop asserts: “The Greek equivalent of Latin *conscientia* was *suneidesis*.” Schinkel states: “The Latin ‘*conscientia*’ is a translation, even (more or less) a transliteration of the Greek ‘*syneidesis*.’” In the *Vocabulaire européen des philosophes*, Balibar notes (with a hint of skepticism) that the words *suneidesis* and *conscientia* are commonly considered to be equivalent: “We have taken the habit the of considering that the meaning of the modern notion of ‘conscience’ can be tied to various uses of the Latin *conscientia* and the Greek *suneidesis*.” With much less reserve, Potts claims: “The Latin ‘*conscientia*’ is...an exact transliteration of ‘*syneidesis*.’” C.S. Lewis holds that: “The Greek ‘*oida*’ and the Latin ‘*scio*’ mean ‘I know.’ With the prefixes ‘*sun*’ (or ‘*syn*’) and ‘*cum*’ (which becomes ‘*con*’), meaning ‘with,’ we have ‘*sunoida*’ and ‘*conscio*.’ The accompanying nouns are ‘*syneidesis*’ and ‘*conscientia*’; the Latin adjective is ‘*consci*us.’” Cf. Hyslop, “Conscience,” vol. p. 30. Anders Schinkel. *Conscience and Conscientious Objections*. (Amsterdam: Pallas, 2007). p. 155. Barbara Cassin. *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies : dictionnaire des intraduisibles*. (Paris: Seuil, 2004). p. 260. From Étienne Balibar’s entry on “Conscience.” In French: “On a pris l’habitude de considérer que les sens de la « conscience » moderne se rattachent à différents emplois du latin *conscientia* et du grec *suneidesis*.” Unlike the majority of scholars who have written on the relation between these words, Balibar rightly observes that there are serious difficulties related to any claim that the terms are synonymous and that the modern concept of conscience was simply passed down from the Greeks. Balibar regards this situation as a “*cas privilégié*” for studying the effects of what he calls “*le « colinguisme européen »*.” He observes that the Greek concept is quite different from *conscientia* and the European words derived from it. Balibar writes: “*Pour le grec, il s’agit clairement d’une rétroversion à partir de correspondances instituées par les Latins cherchant à créer leur propre terminologie morale.*” Unfortunately, however, he neither elaborates in any detail on these difficulties (related to the relationship between *suneidesis* and *conscientia*) nor discusses their consequences. Potts. *Conscience in Medieval Philosophy*. p. 2. The summary of C.S. Lewis’s explanation of the relation between *sunoida* and *conscio* is found in Schinkel. *Conscience and Conscientious Objections*. p. 79. It accurately summarizes Lewis’s claims found in *Studies in Words*, p. 181.

distinguishing between two objects or separating one thing from another⁹⁰⁰; this word would be directly related to the Latin *scindere* (“to cut, divide”).⁹⁰¹ The knowledge of *scientia* is thus knowledge acquired by division and separation: produced by the activity of the human mind, it can be collected, possessed, and split into various branches. These Latin terms share the Proto Indo-European base *skei-* and have an altogether different Greek “equivalent” than the verb *oida* at the heart of *suneidesis*: the parent of the Latin *scientia* is believed to be the Greek verb *schizo* meaning “to split” or “to cleave.”⁹⁰² The concept of knowledge that emerges from such “dividing” is fundamentally different from the experience of “having seen” conveyed by the verb *oida* and which is essential to the original meaning of *suneidesis*.

The exposure of this fault in the traditionally recognized lineage that directly connects *conscientia* to the Greek *suneidesis* is vital to our investigation of Heidegger’s *Gewissen* and his insistence on its independence from the Latin *conscientia*. The German word *Gewissen*—unlike *conscientia*—is not subject to any such doubts concerning its etymological “bloodline,” to paraphrase Stoker’s expression⁹⁰³: the relation between the German verb *wissen*—upon which *Gewissen* is founded—and the ancient Greek *oida* is a direct one. As we will see, the sense of “having seen” conveyed by the Greek verb *oida* is essential to the original meaning—and the unique history—of the German word *Gewissen* used by Heidegger.

Notwithstanding the fact that *Gewissen* and *suneidesis* share an etymological root, there is no question that the meaning of Heidegger’s existential conscience must be distinguished from that of *suneidesis*, as much as it must be from that of *conscientia*. Indeed, the inherently moral sense of the Greek *suneidesis* can arguably be even more strongly associated with Heidegger’s description of Dasein’s inauthentic way of “fearfully” following the public “they.” Prior to the emergence of the reflexive sense of the word as

⁹⁰⁰ Michiel de Vaan. *Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the Other Italic Languages*. (Leiden; Boston: E.J. Brill, 2008). p. 545.

⁹⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 544.

⁹⁰² Pokorny. *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*. pp. 919-921.

⁹⁰³ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 4.

“self-conscience,” the Greek verb *sunoida* reflected one’s concern for the knowledge shared *with* others—particularly the members of one’s community. Its moral role was understood in a very practical sense: one should avoid acting in ways that would allow others to have knowledge of one’s misdeeds or forbidden thoughts.⁹⁰⁴ Concern for conscience was a matter of protecting one’s honor, of keeping one’s name clean, and of preserving one’s status, well-being, property and freedom. The verb *sunoida* conveys no explicit concern for the “inner” motivations of specific acts but rather expresses one’s concern for the knowledge that others might have regarding such acts. The others implied in the prefix *sun-* are the witnesses of one’s behavior or statements: the “power” of *suneidesis* as a moral concept thus arises out of one’s fear of the potentially terrible consequences that could result from the disclosure of any shared knowledge. As the theologian Pierce notes in his study of *Conscience in the New Testament*:

The word, from which all the words and phrases in this group spring, is *sunoida*. ... This very common word means basically, as its composition shows, *I know in common with*. Its most frequent general use is to indicate knowledge about another person as a potential witness for or against him. Reasonably there develops from this the sense of, simply, *I bear witness*.⁹⁰⁵

In his essay on the words “conscience” and “conscious,” C.S. Lewis contends that the “moral clout” of conscience reflects the fact that the divulgations of one’s fellow witnesses might lead to negative consequences for oneself. “Since secrets often are, and are always suspected of being, guilty secrets, the normal implications of [conscience] are bad,” Lewis writes.⁹⁰⁶ Conscience serves as a reminder of the looming threat of condemnation (e.g. shame, dishonor, stigmatization, punishment) that cannot be disassociated from such secret “knowledge”: what is known through the shared “having seen” of *sunoida* can lead to one’s being cast out of the community, physically punished or even killed. In one’s anxious state

⁹⁰⁴ Gerhard Kittel. “Sunoida, Suneidesis.” trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. vol. 7. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964). p. 899. Kittel states: “The proper place to start (for understanding the meaning of *sunoida* and *suneidesis*) is the non-reflexive *sunoida tivi ti...*: ‘to have knowledge of something with’ another person on the basis of eye-witness.” As Kittel observes, what has been seen may imply the “guilt” of one or more of the “eye-witnesses.”

⁹⁰⁵ Pierce. *Conscience in the New Testament: A Study of Syneidesis in the New Testament*. p. 18.

⁹⁰⁶ Lewis. *Studies in Words*. p. 185.

of concern regarding what is known by others, all acts of intimacy and transparency are seen as essentially dangerous because the one “who shares my secret, who can give evidence about something I have done, is usually the fellow-conspirator; therefore the possible witness against me, the possible blackmailer...”⁹⁰⁷

For our study of the Heideggerian notion of conscience, there is a final significant characteristic of *sunoida* that must also be pointed out: the “knowledge” that is held jointly in “moral” conscience is related to the *past* but known in the *present*. This is conveyed in the aorist verb form of *oida*, which expresses the notion that one “has already seen.” As a moral concept, conscience involves *seeing* that can be *remembered*—and thus can be *known*—by those who share this knowledge through “having seen together.”

Yet very early in the preserved evidence of the Greek word, we see its original meaning of “joint knowledge” altered in a variety of ways as *sunoida* splinters into a homonymous collection of distinct, and increasingly incompatible, meanings. Most notably—in a way that presages the emergence of the notion of subjective “consciousness” almost two millennia later—*sunoida* is “dis-jointed” by eliminating the necessity of one’s relation to others with whom the inner knowledge is shared. Rather than what Pierce describes as “being privy with another” or having “a shared secret,”⁹⁰⁸ *sunoida* metaphorically takes on the sense of a “reflexive” relation of the self with its own knowledge. One of the Oxford English Dictionary’s definitions of conscience conveys how the original notion of conscience as “shared” was overtaken by its “subjective” derivative: “privity of knowledge (with another), knowledge within oneself.”⁹⁰⁹ The original sense of “shared ‘having-seen’” thus came to be eclipsed by the individual’s own “awareness” of inner “knowledge” that it possesses and can concern itself with. In this modified sense of one’s conscious “self-awareness,” the reflexive conscience assumes the principal role and one’s involvement of “others” is forgotten. Pierce notes that the new meaning of *sunoida* that arose in ancient Greece was “simply, *awareness*, or *consciousness* and thence... *I*

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 185.

⁹⁰⁸ Pierce. *Conscience in the New Testament: A Study of Syneidesis in the New Testament*. p. 18.

⁹⁰⁹ “Conscience.” *Oxford English Dictionary*. vol. 2. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933). p. 845.

know well.”⁹¹⁰ The word *sunoida* was increasingly used in the oxymoronic expression “*emauto sunoida*”: through the neutering of the prefix *sun-*, conscience becomes *self-conscience*.⁹¹¹ As Pierce notes:

The colloquial phrase, ...*hos an suneides*, meaning *please yourself* or *it's up to you* leads us directly, by way of the absolute usage, to a particular construction of this word which is far commoner than any other use of it—the construction *hauto suneidenai*. ... In itself this phrase suggests a variety of ideas—which might appear singly or in combination: *to share knowledge with one's self—to be privy...with one's self—to hug a (possibly guilty) secret to one's self—to be a witness for or against one's self* or *to bear witness to one's self*.⁹¹²

Gewissen's Obscured Origin and History

We must not forget that the word used by Heidegger is the German *Gewissen*, which has a different root and history than the Latin *conscientia* with which it is commonly identified. While the Latin word may be vital to the development of German philosophy and theology, Heidegger's use of *Gewissen* demands that we recognize this German term as being distinct from all foreign and ancient notions. Indeed, despite his familiarity with the Scholastic debate over *conscientia*, Heidegger himself *never once* refers to *conscientia* in his interpretation of *Gewissen* in §§54-60 of *Being and Time*,⁹¹³ nor does he mention the Greek words *sunoida* and *suneidesis*. Given Heidegger's tacit rejection of the prevalent equation of *conscientia* and *Gewissen*, our study faces several key questions: does the translation of the term *Gewissen* by words based upon the Latin *conscientia* (e.g., conscience in English or *conscience morale* in French) conceal an original meaning of the German word? Has the authentic phenomenon of *Gewissen* that Heidegger seeks to reveal

⁹¹⁰ Pierce. *Conscience in the New Testament: A Study of Syneidesis in the New Testament*. p. 18.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 18.

⁹¹² *Ibid.* p. 18.

⁹¹³ The only appearance of “*conscientia*” in *Being and Time* is found in Heidegger's discussion of the Hegelian interpretation of time in §82. Here, Heidegger criticizes Hegel's discovery of the “essence of *conscientia*” in his “logically formalized interpretation of Descartes' ‘*cogito me cogitare rem.*’” SZ §82b, 433 / 484.

been neglected due to the obscuring or corrupting influence of the foreign term *conscientia*?

The Anonymous Translation of *Conscientia* as “*Mînero Geuúzzen*”

Virtually all philological research into the etymological development and history of *Gewissen* has emphasized the determinative role of the first extant document that explicitly connected the German word to *conscientia*. This connection is found in the gloss of a Psalmic commentary by Notker Labeo of Saint Gall produced at the turn of the first millennium. While Heidegger does not raise the question of the origin of the German word *Gewissen* in *Being and Time*, Stoker summarizes the generally accepted theory concerning its emergence with a single line in *Das Gewissen*: “This imitation of the Latin ‘*conscientia*’ is first seen in the work of Notker of Saint Gall (circa 1000) through the term’s appropriation from the Christian-Latin vocabulary.”⁹¹⁴ Like virtually all the philosophical and theological commentators who have studied the term *Gewissen* since Notker’s time, neither Stoker nor any of the other sources mentioned in Heidegger’s footnote to §55 seriously consider the possibility of a distinct “original meaning” of the German word. Even the few texts (such as the lengthy entry on *Gewissen* in the Grimm brothers’ *Deutsches Wörterbuch*⁹¹⁵) that explicitly document the etymological development of *Gewissen* prior to Notker’s era have highlighted the determinative influence of the Latin *conscientia* and the earlier Greek *suneidesis* for the German word’s signification, paying much less heed to the possibility that *Gewissen* might have originally signified something else.⁹¹⁶

⁹¹⁴ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 9. Our translation. In German: “Diese Nachbildung des lateinischen „*conscientia*“ tritt zuerst bei Notker von St. Gallen (um 1000) auf, unter Aneignung des christlich-lateinischen Sprachschatzes.”

⁹¹⁵ Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm. “Gewissen.” *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. vol. 6. (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1971). pp. 6213-6287.

⁹¹⁶ All the published histories of the term *Gewissen* that we have studied are consistent with Stoker’s brief account. For example, in his entry on “*Gewissen*” in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Reiner reports that the word first appeared as a “translation” of *conscientia* in the gloss of Notker’s Psalmic commentary work and that the meaning of *conscientia* in term is “determined” by the Greek *suneidesis*. Reiner. “Gewissen.” p. 574.

Given that so little attention has been paid to the possibility that *Gewissen* may have had an earlier and distinct meaning, the “fact” that the German word can be equated with *conscientia* has gained nearly universal acceptance. The standard account of *Gewissen*’s development is exemplified in Edward Engelberg’s observations regarding the relation between consciousness and conscience:

In German, as Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Freud have noted, the cognates are obvious: conscience is *Gewissen*; knowledge is *Wissen*; to be certain (with conviction) is to be *gewiss*; and consciousness is *Bewusstsein*. ... Schopenhauer commented that [the origin of *Gewissen*] lay with both the Latin *conscientia*...and the Greek word *suneidesis* which means conscience-consciousness. Dictionaries since his time have made these and further connections. The Gothic *miþwissei*, literally “with knowledge,” was a direct translation of *conscientia*. This became *gewizzeni* (also *giwizzani* and *gawizani*), again from Latin but beginning to resemble the modern German. Around 1000 the Monk of St. Gallen, Notker “Teutonicus,” used *gewizzen* as a translation of the Latin *conscious*, “so that conscience originally also meant consciousness in the religious-moral sense.”⁹¹⁷

As we will see, the Gothic *miþwissein* has *completely different* etymological roots than the Latin *conscientia*. Moreover, the first recorded appearances of this word *miþwissein*, found in the 4th Century Gothic Bible of Wulfila, show that it was used to translate the word *suneidesis* from the original Greek manuscripts *directly*—without the supposed mediation of the Latin *conscientia*. Wilhelm Streitberg, a renowned 19th and 20th century Germanic language specialist and the editor of the 1910 edition of the Gothic Bible, reports that “almost every verse of the Gothic Bible teaches us that Wulfila translated the Bible directly from the Greek” and that the translation, produced prior to Saint Jerome’s initial work on the Vulgate, is not based on an “authorized” Latin version.⁹¹⁸ Once fully exposed, the error of the “obvious” account of *Gewissen*’s historical development shows that Heidegger’s attempt to pull *Gewissen* free from the grip of *conscientia* is actually justified by the fact these two words have distinct histories and very different original meanings.

⁹¹⁷ Edward Engelberg. *The Unknown Distance: From Consciousness to Conscience, Goethe to Camus*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972). pp. 12-13.

⁹¹⁸ Wilhelm Streitberg and Ulfilas. *Die gotische Bibel; Erster Teil: Der gotische Text und seine griechische Vorlage*. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1919). p. xxxi. Our translation.

Let us complete our review of the “standard” history of *Gewissen* as the German equivalent of *conscientia* before we examine in greater detail the “error” upon which it is based. While the Benedictine monk Notker Labeo is generally credited with the “birth” of the German concept of *Gewissen*, the first usage of this word as a translation of the Latin *conscientia* cannot actually be attributed to him.⁹¹⁹ The first trace of the linking of these terms is found not in the biblical commentary signed by Notker himself, but rather in the annotations that an anonymous glossator added to Notker’s commentaries on the Old Testament psalms. The earliest appearance of *Gewissen* as a translation of *conscientia* is found in the gloss of Notker’s commentary on Psalm 68 of the Old Testament, wherein David asks God to help him to resist the persecutors who “reproach” him for his religious faith and to allow him to overcome what he calls “my confusion and my shame.”⁹²⁰ Discussing line 20 of the Psalm, Notker’s commentary in Old High German describes the confusion and inner torment of David as “what bites the conscience,” which he describes not in German but in Latin with the expression: “*quae mordet conscientiam*,” an expression lifted directly from Augustine’s own commentary on this same passage.⁹²¹ To facilitate the reading of Notker’s commentary by German readers, the anonymous glossator furnished the following translation in Old High German of these three Latin words: “*diu mich pîzzet in mînero geuûzzeni*”—“which bites me in my conscience.”⁹²²

Notwithstanding this fateful choice of terminology by Notker’s anonymous glossator, the idea that the German term *Gewissen* can be simply equated with *conscientia* and traced back to *sunoida* is evidently problematic. A fracture very similar to the one that

⁹¹⁹ Widely recognized for the importance of his literary and scholarly work, Notker III (about 950-1022) was a monk of the Order of St. Benedict at the Abbey of Saint Gall who produced significant commentaries on Aristotle and Boethius, as well as Biblical texts. He contributed significantly to the development of German vernacular literature through his production of many translations and original works in Old High German. In recognition of these contributions to early German language and culture, the distinguishing monikers Teutonicus and Labeo are often added to his name in historical accounts, helping to distinguish him from other monks of St. Gall who bore the same name. N. E. Collinge. *The Laws of Indo-European*. (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 1985). p. 121.

⁹²⁰ *The Holy Bible, Douay-Rheims Version*. Ed. Richard Challoner. (Baltimore, MD: John Murphy Company, 1899.) Psalm 68: 20.

⁹²¹ Notker. *Notkers des Deutschen Werke: Der Psalter, Psalmus LI-C*. (Halle/Saale: M. Niemeyer, 1954). p. 466.

⁹²² *Ibid.* p. 466.

we observed between the Latin *scientia* and the Greek *oida* is seen when we compare the former term with the German *wissen*: the “knowledge” of *conscientia* is essentially different from the experience of the German *Gewissen*. Unlike the *skei-* of *scientia* with its emphasis on “dividing,” the German verb *wissen* that serves as the base of the word *Gewissen* descends from the family of words springing from the early Gothic *witan* and whose Proto-Indo European root is *ueid-*, meaning to “see.” This *ueid-* is directly linked to the Greek *sunoida*: it is the *oida*, i.e. the “to have seen” of the *eidōs*. Plainly put, as opposed to the Latin *conscientia*, the German *Gewissen* is legitimately related to the *oida*. Where *scientia* involves the production of knowledge through separating oneself from the world and then dissecting it, the German *wissen* conveys the Greek concept’s sense of one’s remembered “seeing.”

Given that the standard equating of *conscientia* and *Gewissen* is evidently misleading, our primary question regarding the original sense of *Gewissen* remains outstanding. If the notion of *conscientia* did not spawn the German term, then what is the original sense of *Gewissen* and how might it inform our study of Heidegger’s interpretation proposed in *Being and Time*?

Three Different Translations of *Suneidesis* in the Fourth Century Gothic Bible

The earliest and most significant evidence of a Germanic “translation” of *suneidesis* is found in the Gothic Bible, which was produced in the fourth century by Bishop Ulfilas (or Wulfila) of Moesia (now Bulgaria) and represents the oldest extant text written in a Germanic language. In the Gothic manuscripts of the Pauline Epistles,⁹²³ the Greek term *suneidesis*—which is uniformly translated as *conscientia* in the Latin Vulgate—is translated using not one but *three* different Gothic words: *mipwissein*, *gahugdai* and

⁹²³ The Gothic Bible manuscripts of the letters of Paul are found in the *Codexes Ambrosianus* and *Carolinus* (today conserved in Milan, Italy, and Wolfenbüttel, Germany, respectively). Cf. “The Gothic Bible.” Antwerp: Wulfila Project, University of Antwerp. Last Update: March 30, 2006. Accessed: February 16, 2011. <<http://www.wulfila.be/gothic/browse/>>.

puhtus.⁹²⁴ Similarly to what we have seen in the case of the German *Gewissen*, none of the meanings of these three Gothic terms can be reconciled with the Latin concept of *conscientia*: none expresses the sense of knowledge obtained through division or separation which is conveyed by the Latin word *scientia*.

Let us briefly consider the meanings and roots of each of these three terms to consider how they might inform our search for a possible experience of what is formally indicated by Heidegger's phenomenon of *Gewissen*.

a) **Puhtus:**

Although the least used of the three Gothic words that appear as translations of the Greek *suneidesis*, the term *puhtus* exerts the most influence on contemporary German and English language: this term is derived from the Proto Indo-European root *tong-* meaning “to think” or “to feel,” which is the root of both the German verb “*denken*” and the English words “think” and “thought.”⁹²⁵ While this may appear to confirm an authentic link between the Pauline *suneidesis* and the Latin *conscientia* as a way of describing shared “knowledge,” the etymology of *puhtus* actually points in a very different direction: the “sensing” conveyed by the Gothic *puhtus* is the active “reception” of thought rather than any kind of possessive “knowing.” This participative or enacted “thinking” is reflected in the fact that *tong-* is also the root of the German verb “*danken*” and its English equivalent “to thank”⁹²⁶: the activity of “thinking” or “feeling” in *puhtus* reflects the idea of preserving “grateful thought” in one’s memory. Thus understood, “thinking” is not “knowing” but rather the faithful reception and caring for what has been given to the mind to think upon, a meaning echoed by the German verb *gedenken*, meaning “to commemorate, to remember.” The remembrance conveyed by the Gothic *puhtus* is not related to “material facts” which must be retained as knowledge but rather to one’s “spiritual”—or “existential”—

⁹²⁴ The incomplete Gothic manuscripts of the Bible that have been preserved contain passages of the Pauline letters where the word *suneidesis* occurs 18 times in the Greek original. Of these 18 occurrences, the word is translated three times as *puhtus*, four times as *gahugdai*, and 11 times as *miþwissein*.

⁹²⁵ Pokorny. *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*. p. 1088.

⁹²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 1088.

responsibility to gratefully receive the gift of thought. Like the Heideggerian notion of “wanting-to-have-a-conscience,” the “thinking” of *puhtus* is possible only when one accepts this *responsibility* to remember: in this sense, it must be distinguished from modern philosophical notions such as Cartesian “certainty” and Husserlian “absolute consciousness” which Heidegger associates with *conscientia*.

b) Gahugdai:

Appearing four times in the fragments of the Gothic Bible as a translation of *suneidesis*, the composite word *gahugdai* is composed of the prefix *ga-*, which implies production or activity, and the base Gothic verb *hugjan*, which Lehmann defines as “to think” and relates to the Greek words *phronein*, meaning “to have an understanding, to feel, to think,” and *nomizein*, meaning “to hold by custom or usage, to deem, think, suppose.”⁹²⁷ Attempts to define *hugjan* and its cognates prove problematic, however, because there is no consensus regarding the etymology of these Gothic terms. Indeed, Lehmann reports matter-of-factly: “No etymology.”⁹²⁸ The composite form *gahugds* is defined by Lehmann as “*dianoia*, mind” or “*suneidesis*, conscience”—but he again concedes that this word remains etymologically undetermined.⁹²⁹ Fortunately, evidence of this term in other early Germanic texts allows us to paint a clearer picture of its meaning and its relation to both the Pauline notion of *suneidesis* and Heidegger’s *Gewissen*.

The first German text containing this word is the *Heliand*, the oldest extant work of Germanic literature, which was written in Old Low German (also known as *Plattdeutsch* or Old Saxon) by an unknown author in the early part of the 9th century.⁹³⁰ Importantly for

⁹²⁷ Winfred P. Lehmann, Sigmund Feist and Helen-Jo J. Hewitt. *A Gothic Etymological Dictionary: Based on the Third Edition of Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der Gotischen Sprache by Sigmund Feist*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986). p. 192. The English “definitions” of the Greek words which Lehmann mentions as being related to the meaning of *hugjan* are those of Thayer and Smith.

⁹²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 192.

⁹²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 139.

⁹³⁰ G. Ronald Murphy. *The Heliand; The Saxon Gospel; A Translation and Commentary*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). p. xiii. While the *Heliand* doesn’t allow for the direct comparison of the Old Low German, also widely known as Old Saxon, to an original Greek or Latin text, as is the case with the Gothic Bible, the text was intended to convey the anonymous author’s interpretation of the Christian message and

our study of the roots of Heidegger's *Gewissen*, the *Heliand* features 21 appearances of the composite word *gihugd* or one of its variants. In all of these appearances, the word is used to convey the meaning of "to remember" or "to keep in mind" one's faith in God. The significance of *gihugd* is perhaps most strongly indicated by its central role in the *Heliand*'s account of the Last Supper, where the Savior conveys to his followers the importance of remembering his sacrifice. In this retelling, the *Heliand* modifies the Gospel accounts (Mark 14:22-25, Matthew 26:26-29 and Luke 22:17-20) by emphasizing the personal *responsibility* of listeners to keep the message of God secure in their hearts and to preserve the purity of their faith:

... Always remember (*gihuggeat*) to continue to do what I am doing at this supper, tell the story of it to many men. This body and blood is a thing which possesses power: with it you will give honor to your Chieftain. It is a holy image: keep it in order to remember Me (*mîn te gihugdiun*), so that the sons of men will do it after you and preserve it in this world, and thus everyone all over this middle world will know what I am doing out of love to give honor to the Lord.⁹³¹

In a manner that recalls the Heideggerian interpretation of "authentic" solicitude, the *Heliand* indicates how each believer's care for his or her faith both preserves the memory of God's word and produces a loving "brotherhood" united in mutual devotion to God.

This responsibility to remember in the *Heliand* is also a source of tragedy: just as Heidegger's *Dasein* is essentially guilty as a "thrown" entity, the follower of God in the "middle world" is essentially tainted by impurity and cannot live up to this duty to faithfully "remember." The painful remorse resulting from this failure is vividly described

does employ much of the same vocabulary found in the Gospels; indeed, the text is often called "The Saxon Gospel." As Murphy writes: "The Low German language remained the exclusive vernacular of the peoples of Northern Germany and many neighboring regions of Northern Europe until the early 19th century when standard German (modeled upon the grammar of Middle High German, largely due to the influence of Martin Luther's translation of the Bible in this language) began take root throughout the Germanic territories. A remarkable example of popular religious literature, *Heliand* (the "Savior" in English) retells the story of the Christian Gospels in the form of a heroic poem of nearly 6,000 alliterative lines. The author imagines "the events and words of the gospel as if they have taken place and been spoken in his own country and time, in the chieftain society of a defeated people...forcibly Christianized by Charlemagne" and offers "a unique cultural synthesis between Christianity and Germanic warrior-society."

⁹³¹ Ibid. p. 153. (Fitt 56, 4643-4656.)

in the retelling of Peter's denial of Christ on the night of his arrest. Here, the *Heliand* conveys the physical suffering and emotional turmoil that floods Peter's heart and mind when he hears the rooster crow and sees his persecuted Lord looking at him. Peter feels himself overcome with such profound regret that he cries "tears of blood" that gush directly "from his heart."

Peter immediately felt pain within him, there was hurt in his heart [and] confusion in his mind (*harm an is hertan endi is hugi drôbi*). He was deeply concerned about what he had just said. He remembered the words (*gihugde thero uuordo*) which Christ the Ruler had Himself said to him before, that in the dark of the night, before cockcrow, he would deny his Lord three times. The memory swelled up within him, a bitter feeling in his breast, and he walked out of the place in a rage, ...went off from the crowd because of his deep concern and feelings of sorrow. He was crying over his own words, his own failure. He was so worried that hot and bloody tears came pouring up from his heart. He thought he could never again make up in the slightest for his deceitful deeds and return to his Lord and be in His favor.⁹³²

Remarkably, none of the details of Peter's tormented "conscience" that we find in the *Heliand* appears in the original Gospel texts; furthermore, the word *conscientia* is not present in any of the Vulgate's three accounts of Peter's denial of Christ.⁹³³ In the *Heliand*, the reports found in the Gospels are supplemented with an account of the physical and emotional pain of guilt suffered *internally* by Peter. The remembering of the *Heliand*'s *gihugd* brings Peter into what Heidegger might describe as a state of unmitigated anxiety: "awakened" to the fact that he has denied Christ, he recognizes that the wholeness of his relationship with God has been lost.⁹³⁴ In both the *Heliand*'s retelling of the Gospel and

⁹³² Ibid. pp. 164-165. (Fitt 59, 4993-5008.)

⁹³³ The Gospel of John 18:15-27 summarily describes Peter's three denials but mentions nothing of his reaction at the sound of the cock's crow. The Gospel of Mark 14:66-72 adds only that Peter broke down and wept. The most detailed accounts come in the Gospels of Luke 22:54-62 and Matthew 26:69-75 where it is simply added that Peter went out from the courtyard and wept bitterly.

⁹³⁴ Variants of the Old Saxon *gihugh* also appear in two of the earliest Old High German accounts of Peter's denial of Christ found in the *Codex Sangallensis* 56, which contains the translation of Tatian's *Diatessaron* produced in the first half of the 9th century, and in Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch*, a poetic rendition of the Gospel believed to have been completed between the years 863-871. In both of these texts, the word is used to describe Peter's failure to remember the word of God and is associated with his experience of pain when he is "reawakened" by the cock's crow. Tatian and Eduard Sievers. *Tatian; Lateinisch und altdeutsch mit ausführlichem Glossar*. (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1966). p. 257 (§188, 6). English translation by Hogg:

Heidegger's existential analysis of Dasein, we see this "awakening" of the individual to his or her responsibility of remembering—a responsibility that counters one's tendency to "fall" into the confusion, deceit, failure and regret that characterizes human existence in the "middle" world. In the *Heliand*, the remembering of *gihugd* at once provides the key for understanding one's authentic experience of the world by cherishing God's word and the means for recognizing one's sinfulness for having become dispersed in worldly concerns.

c) *Mip*wissein:

As the most common of the three Gothic words used to translate the Pauline word *suneidesis*, *mip*wissein seems easily translatable into English as "having seen in common with" if we follow the convention of translating the German prefix "mit-" as "with." However, this understanding of the prefix "mit-" covers up a significant difference between the German and English concepts. The *mip*- of *mip*wissein finds its roots in the Proto Indo-European base *medhi*-, meaning "in the middle of," "amidst," "between," "intermediate"; Pokorny relates it to the Greek word *mesos*.⁹³⁵ In contrast, the English "with" finds its roots in the Proto Indo-European *ueidh*- meaning "apart," "separate from," "in two"—the same root as the German word *Witwe* meaning "widow" and *wider* meaning "against."⁹³⁶

If we recuperate the original sense of the prefix *mip*-, then our preliminary translation of *mip*wissein becomes not "seeing-with" but rather "seeing-*amidst*."⁹³⁷ This distinction between the "in the middle of" of *mip*- and the separation of "with" is exemplified by the composite Gothic word for "meanwhile": *mipphan*. Sharing the sense of the Heideggerian interpretation of temporality, *mipphan* conveys the notion of time as an indefinite but concrete temporal "between": it represents the "amidst" of time that

Tatian. *The Diatessaron*. trans. Hope W. Hogg. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1896).
 Otfrid. *Evangelienbuch*. (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1965). p. 182 (IV. 13, 38) and p. 190 (IV. 18, 37-42).

⁹³⁵ Pokorny. *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*. pp. 706-707.

⁹³⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 1127-1128.

⁹³⁷ To reflect this important distinction between the English "with" and the German "mit," we will use from this point onward the more appropriate expression "Being-*amidst*" in place of the conventional English translation of "Being-with" when we refer to Heidegger's concept of *Mitsein*. For purposes of comparison, however, we will not modify the other "mit" words used by Heidegger, such as Dasein-with (*Mitdasein*) and Being-with-one-another (*Miteinandersein*).

Heidegger might have called the “authentic moment” of existence. In this sense, the *mip-* signifies the “intermediate” that unifies time and serves as the basis of Dasein’s experience.

When it is fused with the sense of “amidst” conveyed by the prefix *mip-*, the “having seen” of the verb *wissen* cannot be considered a distinct faculty or standpoint that one can possess: the Gothic *mipwissein* conveys neither the “certainty” of an impartial subject nor the “objectivity” validated by confirming the details of one’s experience with others. It is rather the experience of finding oneself “amidst” the world and infused in existence. Although the meaning of *mipwissein*—like that of Heidegger’s *Mitsein*—cannot simply be equated with Heidegger’s notion of *Gewissen*, this original Gothic word for conscience provides additional evidence that *Gewissen* developed independently of the Latin *conscientia* and emerged directly from the Greek *oida* with its original sense of “to have seen.” More importantly, it reveals that the meaning of conscience—at this early point in its historical development—was understood not only as a sharing of “knowledge” or moral rules but as a way of “seeing the world” and existing “amidst” others. While the *mip-* implies that plurality is a condition of existence, it does not convey that one is “separated” from the world and others who co-exist in it but rather that one “sees amidst” a world that is essentially shared. Thus the Heideggerian notion of *Mitsein* should not be understood merely as “Being-with” but also—and primarily—as “Being-amidst” in this shared world. Like the Heideggerian “call of conscience” that summons Dasein to recognize its essence as a thrown entity, *mipwissein* points to a way of understanding Paul’s concept of conscience as a reminder that the Christian believer must remain faithful despite the trials of existing “amidst” a hostile world.

Results of the “Phenomenological Destruction” of Conscience

Our destructive review of what is formally indicated by Heidegger’s *Gewissen* has allowed for two major discoveries confirming that the original meaning of the German term must be distinguished from the Latin *conscientia* and the “ordinary” interpretation of moral conscience. Firstly, we have shown that the German word is etymologically distinct from the Latin concept of *conscientia* and emerged from a different source. Indeed, the earliest

“equation” of the words *Gewissen* and *conscientia* by the anonymous glossator of Notker’s commentary of Psalm 68 comes approximately six centuries after the earliest preserved Germanic texts were produced. Secondly, we have seen that *Gewissen* is not to be found among the three words that served as the earliest Germanic “translations” of the Pauline term *suneidesis* that appear in the Gothic Bible. Furthermore, all three of these Gothic words—*mipwissein*, *gahugdai* and *þuhtus*—reveal that the initial conception of Germanic “conscience” emphasized the “existential” sense of experiencing the “remembering” of one’s spiritual purity rather than the notion of “possessing” knowledge. If the much more recent “translation” of *conscientia* as *Gewissen* represents an ulterior appropriation of the German term, then what might have been the “original” meaning of this word *Gewissen*? In seeking to understand how the “phenomenon” of *Gewissen* proposed by Heidegger can be experienced, can we identify an earlier meaning that this word was used to convey?

4.2. Conscience as the “Self-Attestation” of Being-*Amidst* (*Mitsein*)

***Testimonium*: Evidence of *Gewissen*’s “Original Meaning”**

As we seek to demonstrate how Heidegger’s phenomenon of conscience can be understood as a possible ontical *experience* of Being-in-the-world, our search for an “original” meaning of the German term *Gewissen* leads us to take up the oldest extant bound book produced in a Germanic language: the eighth century Latin-Old High German “word book” known as the *Codex Abrogans*, which contains the earliest known evidence of the German word *Gewissen*.⁹³⁸ In this manuscript glossary of religious terms, we find inscribed the first Germanic word based upon the same linguistic components that make up the later German term *Gewissen*: the Old High German *kiuizzitha*. This word is formed by

⁹³⁸ The *Codex Abrogans* is part of the collection of the Library of the Abbey of St. Gallen in Switzerland. The entire manuscript is available online on the website of the Virtual Manuscript Library of Switzerland. “*Codex Abrogans* (St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 911).” St. Gallen: Virtual Manuscript Library of Switzerland (St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek). Last Update: December 31, 2005. Accessed: December 30, 2010. <<http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/csg/0911>>.

the early Old High German prefix *ki-*, the precursor to the later German *ge-* meaning “to produce” or “to show,” and *uuizzitha*, one of the earliest variants of the verb *wissen* for “having seen” or “knowing.” The “meaning” of this composite word proposed in this ancient manuscript is remarkable given Heidegger’s interpretation of the “call of conscience” as the way Dasein produces an attestation of its authenticity: *kiuuizzatha* is identified as the translation of the Latin *testimonium*,⁹³⁹ meaning “witness, evidence, attestation, testimony.”⁹⁴⁰

The evidence of the *Codex Abrogans* reveals that the first documented meaning of the German word *Gewissen* is not the judging faculty of *conscientia* but rather the act of attestation, the enactment of *witnessing* and *producing testimony*. What we have discovered through our exhibiting of what is formally indicated by Heidegger’s *Gewissen*—the concept he introduces in the chapter of *Being and Time* bearing the title “Dasein’s Attestation of an Authentic Potentiality-for-Being”—is that the earliest recorded meaning of *Gewissen* was indeed “attestation.” Tellingly for our study of the Heideggerian concept, the Old High German *kiuuizzitha* does not convey testimony in terms of a capacity or a habit that can be possessed but rather as the “attestation” produced through an act of bearing witness that one *performs*: in the experience of *kiuuizzitha*—as in that of *testimonium*—one *gives* testimony and *bears* witness.⁹⁴¹

⁹³⁹ This definition of “*testimonium*” as “*kiuuizzitha*” appears twice in the *Codex Abrogans*. Ibid. pp. 120, 189. With the authorization of the Library of the Abbey of St. Gall, the images of these two pages have been reproduced as Appendices A and B of this thesis. Also, the expression “*testimonium dat*” is translated as “*cauuizzidha gipit*.” Ibid. p. 29. It should be noted that no other alternative translations of “*testimonium*” appear and that—interestingly—the Latin word “*conscientia*” is not found in the glossary.

⁹⁴⁰ Lewis. *An Elementary Latin Dictionary*. p. 856.

⁹⁴¹ While the *Codex Abrogans* clearly indicates the original sense of the German concept of *Gewissen* as *testimonium*, it also presents us with additional evidence of what Heidegger has described as Dasein’s tendency to fall into the illusion of “certainty” based on its possession of “objective knowledge.” For in this earliest extant German text, several early forms of the German verb *wissen* are related directly to the “knowing” of the Latin *scio*, the root of *scientia*. For example, the Latin adjectives *sciens* (meaning “known”) and *inscius* (meaning “unknowing” or “ignorant”) are translated respectively in Old High German using the words *uuizzendi* and *unuuzzo*. “*Codex Abrogans* (St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 911).” pp. 75, 165. Furthermore, we find explicit evidence of the association between *testimonium* and the act of passing judgment or condemning in the proposed “definitions” of the Old High German words *cauuizzinot* and *unkiuuizzinot*, which are identified respectively as equivalents of the Latin terms *damnabitur* (meaning “he will be condemned”) and *inuindicatum* (meaning “to no longer indicate or accuse,” that is to say “to acquit”).

As we have seen, the “attestation” required in *Being and Time* is the demonstration that Dasein can find—in its own experience—a possible way of authentically “disclosing itself in resoluteness.”⁹⁴² The unearthing of *Gewissen*’s original meaning as “testimony” represents the first “positive” result of our “destructive” investigation of what is formally indicated by Heidegger’s concept. Yet if the experience of Heidegger’s conscience is the experience of “attestation” as “testimony,” then we still must reveal a possible way of *experiencing* this testimony ontically. In other words, we must still show how Being-in-the-world is able to “break off” its listening to the “they” by experiencing the “call of conscience,” a task requiring that we reconsider Heidegger’s interpretation of Being-*amidst* and the inauthentic “who” of Dasein proposed in *Being and Time*’s Division One.

Recovering Dasein’s Authentic Sense of Being-*Amidst*

In §§25-27 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes “everyday” Being-*amidst* (*Mitsein*) in terms of Being-in-the-world’s concern for that “which lies closest to us” in terms of the environmentality of its world.⁹⁴³ Examining the most common ways in which Dasein concerns itself with its world, Heidegger determines that the “who” of “everyday” Dasein fails to recognize its own radically individualized possibilities and instead allows itself to become captivated by public affairs. The authentic “self-testimony” of the “call of conscience” is thus drowned out by the roar of the crowd: Dasein adopts the “disguise” of anonymity and shuns its own authentic possibilities.

One’s own Dasein, like the Dasein-with of others (*das Mitdasein Anderer*), is encountered proximally and for the most part in terms of the with-world with which we are environmentally concerned (*der unweltlich besorgten Mitwelt*). When Dasein is absorbed in the world of its concern—that is, at the same time, in its Being-*amidst among* others (*das heißt zugleich im*

Ibid. pp. 27, 156. Even more significantly for Heidegger’s approach to phenomenological investigation, the Latin adjective *legale*—whose meaning is rooted in the “choosing” of the Greek *logos*—is translated by the Old High German *uizzodlih*. Ibid. p. 179. Thus what Heidegger describes in *Being and Time* as the essential ambiguity of *logos*—the tendency of assertive language to cover up the original phenomenon—can be seen in the very first text expressing the original meaning of *Gewissen* as “testimony,” which represents the unique phenomenon that Dasein can “break off” its listening to the public “they.”

⁹⁴² SZ §60, 298 / 345.

⁹⁴³ SZ §27, 126 / 164.

Mitsein zu den Anderen)—it is not itself. *Who* is it, then, who has taken over Being as everyday Being-with-one-another (*alltägliches Miteinandersein*)?⁹⁴⁴

The answer of the “who” is to be found in the “publicness” of Dasein’s most common form of Being-with-one-another in which it ignores its own individual possibilities and devotes itself to keeping up with others. Rather than pursuing its own course of action, Dasein accepts the “disguise” of the general public, dons the cloak of anonymity and abdicates its responsibility for making its own decisions regarding its existence.

The self of everyday Dasein is the *they-self* (*Man-selbst*), which we distinguish from the *authentic self*—that is, from the self which has been taken hold of in its own way. As they-self, the particular Dasein has been *dispersed* (*zerstreut*) into the “they,” and must first find itself.⁹⁴⁵

Heidegger insists, however, that Dasein’s abandonment of its authentic self in favor of its subjection by the “they” of the public is not a diminishing of Dasein’s Being, but rather the factual “reality” of Dasein’s existence as Being-in-the-world.

When it falls into the “they,” Dasein doesn’t lose its existential characteristic of concern for its world but rather puts this concern under the cloak of the “they.” The “self-testimony” of conscience is forgotten as Dasein pursues the common objective of anonymous public Being-with-one-another. Dasein in the “they” is obsessed with maintaining this anonymity: in its relations with others, inauthentic Dasein jealously guards against any threat to its “averageness,” constantly monitoring others in order to avoid falling behind. By acting in this way, Dasein unwittingly participates in the common campaign to undermine any individual initiatives of others and contributes to enforcing the obligatory but ever-changing codes of the “they.” For Heidegger, the “they” is not a “genus” or “type” that Dasein can positively choose: it is rather a constitutive phenomenon of Dasein that describes its most common state as Being-in-the-world failing “to stand by one’s self” and conforming to “leveled down” public standards.

⁹⁴⁴ SZ §26, 125 / 163. In this citation, we have modified the English translation from “Being-with with others” to “Being-*amidst among* others.”

⁹⁴⁵ SZ §27, 129 / 167.

The “dictatorship” of publicness implies both the loss of any recognition of one’s individual possibilities and the exacting requirement to always participate and “know” what the “they” considers to be valid at any given moment. Though exhausting, this way of existing nonetheless serves to comfort Dasein: it can remain anonymously unaccountable rather than having to take responsibility for making choices concerning its ownmost possibilities. In its flight from “wanting-to-have-a-conscience,” Dasein avoids hearing the “self-testimony” of conscience and consequently spares itself the “trouble” of having to face itself and its “true” possibilities. Dasein’s existence becomes one of following along and participating in the approved form of public discourse rather than “reticently” standing apart in silence:

The “they”...can be answerable for everything most easily, because it is not someone who needs to vouch for anything. It ‘was’ always the “they” who did it, and yet it can be said that it has been ‘no one (*keiner*).’⁹⁴⁶

Numbed by its concern for the world of the “they,” Dasein loses touch both with itself and with others as individuals; the possibility of authentically encountering the other fades as Dasein slips into ambiguous anonymity. When Dasein falls into the “they,” it loses not only itself but also the other.

By publicness everything gets obscured, and what has thus been covered up gets passed off as something familiar and accessible to everyone.⁹⁴⁷

As it abandons itself to the “they,” Dasein “disburdens” itself of the responsibility to make its own choices and becomes alienated from itself: the “self-testimony” of conscience goes unheard. Yet as Heidegger makes clear in §54, it is this “call of conscience”—the experience of “self-testimony” that “comes *from* me and yet *from beyond me and over me*”⁹⁴⁸—that allows for the possibility of Dasein’s return to an authentic, transparent understanding of itself, its world and the others with whom Dasein shares this world.

⁹⁴⁶ SZ §27, 127 / 165.

⁹⁴⁷ SZ §27, 127 / 165.

⁹⁴⁸ SZ §57, 275 / 320.

As we search for how to understand this positive *experience* that can serve as the “attestation” of Dasein’s authenticity, we see that the “self-testimony” of the “call of conscience” requires the possibility of encountering others: if Dasein’s “attestation” of conscience is experienced through “testimony,” then it must be produced as an attestation that can be shared. Dasein’s silence can only be characterized as “reticence” if this silent discourse is the testimony of Being-*amidst* that can be communicated—without recourse to assertive language—with others in a shared world.

In Heidegger’s account of Being-*amidst*, the other is characterized as being unlike all “material” things or creatures disclosed in Dasein’s environment because the other shares Dasein’s disclosing kind of Being: for this reason, Heidegger claims, the other can never be encountered as present-at-hand. Thus when Dasein comes into its world, it necessarily comes into a world that is shared with others who contribute to its disclosure as a meaningful totality. Disclosed *amidst* the meaningful relations that unite itself, others and worldly things, Dasein is dependent upon this shared web of “involvement,” which can be understood both authentically and inauthentically. Notwithstanding *how* Dasein understands its world, this “totality” of “involvement” reflects the disclosive interaction of all co-Daseins who exist in and thus contribute to the significance of Dasein’s existence. “Dasein in itself is essentially Being-*amidst* (*Mitsein*),” notes Heidegger, and thus always understands its world as a landscape of meaning shaped by itself and others.⁹⁴⁹ In this sense, Dasein’s existential structures are thoroughly “permeated” by the possible encounter with the other. From an existential standpoint, the possibility of encountering the other is constitutive for Dasein as Being-in-the-world because anything disclosed in the world can necessarily be shared. From an *existentiell* standpoint, the encounter of the other is therefore a *condition* of authentic disclosedness: the attestation of one’s authenticity demands a way of *experiencing* reticent silence as “self-testimony” that “breaks off” one’s inauthentic dispersal among the “they” and makes possible the hearing of conscience.

⁹⁴⁹ SZ §26, 120 / 156.

Absent the possible encounter with the other, Dasein would have no world: existence would be meaningless, shapeless and unintelligible. Moreover, there would be no way of hearing the “call of conscience” if Dasein was unable to experience an authentic encounter of the other: its “self-testimony” could neither be produced nor heard without the possibility of a mutual experience of authenticity and a sharing of the world. In other words, it would be impossible to produce an attestation of Dasein’s authenticity in an unshared world. A universe emptied of any possibility of genuinely encountering the other as co-Dasein could not include a “call of conscience.”

[As] Being-with, Dasein ‘is’ essentially for the sake of others. ... In Being-with, as the existential “for-the-sake-of” of others, these have already been disclosed in their Dasein. With their Being-with, their disclosedness has been constituted beforehand; accordingly, this disclosedness also goes to make up significance—that is to say, worldhood.⁹⁵⁰

Our investigation of the “call of conscience” reveals that Heidegger’s existential phenomenon of Being-*amidst* implies that involvement with the other is necessary in order for Dasein to experience the “disclosedness” of such a shared world. In turn, this potential link between Dasein and the other holds implications for the relation between Dasein’s authentic “disclosedness” and Heidegger’s analysis of the “broader phenomenal domain of Dasein’s everydayness”: on the grounds of what is “formally indicated” by Being-*amidst*, the other may serve to bridge the seemingly problematic gap between conscience and the “public world,” thus preserving the “worldly” orientation of Heidegger’s ontological project and avoiding the threat of solipsism. If the “call of conscience” indeed discloses Dasein’s authentic possibility of existence, then Heidegger’s exhibition of Being-*amidst* points to a necessary role for the other in the revealing of the world. Although Heidegger never explicitly describes how the other performs its co-disclosing role, he clearly establishes that the existential possibility of encountering others is constitutive for the

⁹⁵⁰ SZ §26, 123 / 160. In German: “Als Mitsein „ist“ daher des Dasein wesenhaft unwillen Anderer. ... Im Mitsein als dem existenzialen Unwillen Anderer sind diese in ihrem Dasein schon erschlossen. Diese mit dem Mitsein vorgängig konstituierte Erschlossenheit der Anderen macht demnach auch die Bedeutsamkeit, d.h. die Weltlichkeit mit aus, als welche sie im existenzialen Worum-willen festgemacht ist.”

world's "totality of significance" revealed to Dasein in the moment of resoluteness—a moment that depends entirely on Dasein's experiencing the "self-testimony" of conscience.

Heidegger emphasizes that the contingent nature of any specific worldly encounter with a given other in no way diminishes the fact that the possibility of this encounter is essential to Dasein's existential character of Being-*amidst*. Any attempt to reduce Dasein's encounter with others to an "event" of mere presence misconstrues the meaning of Being-*amidst* as constitutive for Dasein, Heidegger insists.⁹⁵¹ Such a misunderstanding of Dasein's existential structures is considered by Heidegger to be evidence of the present-at-hand thinking of the philosophical tradition that seeks to impose the requirement of substantiality upon Dasein and the others who share its world.

Even Dasein's Being-alone is Being-*amidst* in the world. The other can *be missing only in and for* a Being-with. Being-alone is a deficient mode of Being-*amidst*; its very possibility is the proof of this.⁹⁵²

In liberating his existential concept of Being-*amidst* from any requirement of the presence, Heidegger confirms the irrelevance of any present-at-hand-like conception of Dasein's involvement with others who share its kind of Being. Even when surrounded by others, Dasein can remain in solitude if it allows the "they" to dictate its understanding and to refuse to acknowledge others as co-Daseins who contribute to the meaning to the shared world. As Heidegger observes, "failed encounters" of this sort are commonplace and don't diminish the Being of others or affect their status as co-Daseins. Rather, the existential structure of Being-*amidst* is what serves as the basis of both the encounter of the other as Dasein-with in the world and the "failure" of Dasein to experience this encounter authentically: whether or not this encounter is *experienced* in a genuine way depends on the mode of Being-*amidst* that characterizes Dasein at any given moment of its existence.

Being-*amidst* is in every case a characteristic of one's own Dasein (*Mitsein ist eine Bestimmtheit des je eigenen Daseins*); Dasein-with characterizes the Dasein of others to the extent that it is freed by the world for a Being-*amidst*.

⁹⁵¹ SZ §26, 120 / 156-7.

⁹⁵² SZ §26, 120 / 156-7.

Only so far as one's own Dasein has the essential structure of Being-*amidst*, is it Dasein-with as encounterable for others.⁹⁵³

When it falls into inauthenticity, Dasein fails to recognize the "other" authentically as Dasein-with in deference to the intolerant "they" and its ideal of anonymity. In indifferently "passing one another by,"⁹⁵⁴ Dasein condemns itself to an impoverished understanding of the shared world because it is blind to the possibility of any individual and unique contribution by the other to the world's significance. The less Dasein takes into consideration the Dasein-with of others, the less it understands its environment as one whose meaning is shaped by the authentic possibilities of both itself and others. In what Heidegger terms the "deficient" experience of "Being-alone," Dasein stifles its authentic understanding of the world as Being-*amidst*. When Dasein allows itself to be drawn into the concerns of the "they," it is exposed to a fascinating but superficial world with the appearance of great diversity: all depth of understanding is flattened out in a seemingly limitless landscape where Dasein as "they-self" roams freely. In this ambiguous mode of "everydayness," Dasein's understanding can become so limited that it even fails to acknowledge others of its own kind. For Heidegger, it is the ultimate "perversion" of philosophy that such superficiality is precisely what is granted the status of substantiality by the ontological tradition through its prioritizing of presence-at-hand.

If the "call of conscience" can renew Dasein's authentic understanding of its world as one that is shared, then any demonstration of *how* conscience can be experienced necessitates the possibility of authentically encountering the other. The transparency implied by Heidegger's concept of authenticity requires that the world's meaning be revealed in terms of the "for-the-sake-of-which" of Dasein itself *and* of others as co-Daseins who mutually free one another through the phenomenon of positive solicitude. Heidegger's attestation of Dasein's authenticity must show how the mirage of an infinite world of present-at-hand entities can be replaced by Being-*amidst*'s experience of the meaningful totality of a world it shares with others.

⁹⁵³ SZ §26, 121 / 157.

⁹⁵⁴ SZ §26, 124 / 161.

Calling Dasein to Disclosedness: The Implications of Positive Solitude

While our analysis of authentic Being-*amidst* has revealed that an encounter with the other is *existentially* essential to hearing the “call of conscience,” we still face a dilemma when it comes to understanding how this attesting phenomenon can be demonstrated as an ontical, *existentiell* and “non-theoretical” possibility of Being-in-the-world. Heidegger contends that Being-*amidst* as an existential phenomenon structures both the authentic and deficient ways of encountering others, including the experience of the *absence* of others. Understood existentially, Being-*amidst* thus represents a structural characteristic of Dasein that does not imply the necessary presence of others or Dasein’s factual encounter with them. But while the possibility of encountering the other may appear to be contingent when Heidegger interprets the existential concept of Being-*amidst* in Division One, can this still be the case in Division Two when an attestation of Dasein’s possibility of being “called” to authenticity is required? If the “self-testimony” of Dasein is defined as a “solitary” experience, have we lost the potential link between the ontical world that Dasein shares with others and Heidegger’s existential-ontological project? Can the “the voice of the friend” indeed be a phenomenon that Dasein “carries with it” in absolute solitude, requiring no *existentiell* experience in order to be heard?⁹⁵⁵ Is this silent call that comes “*from me and yet from beyond me and over me*”⁹⁵⁶ nothing but a case of “solipsism,” as Scheler has alleged?⁹⁵⁷

If it can be said that Heidegger points to a possible solution to this problem in *Being and Time*, this “answer” must arise in the “bridge” that he appears to propose between his description of Being-*amidst*’s mode of authentic solicitude and the experience of conscience when he acknowledges in §60 that resolute Dasein “can become the ‘conscience’ of others (*kann zum „Gewissen“ der Anderen werden*).”⁹⁵⁸ Through Heidegger’s interpretation of conscience as Dasein’s attesting “self-testimony,” we are

⁹⁵⁵ SZ §34, 163 / 206.

⁹⁵⁶ SZ §57, 275 / 320.

⁹⁵⁷ Scheler. “Reality and Resistance: On *Being and Time*, § 43.” p. 135.

⁹⁵⁸ SZ §60, 298 / 344.

informed that “everyday” Being-*amidst* can potentially recover from its dispersal in worldly concerns *and* that it can influence the destiny of co-Daseins encountered in its shared world, both authentically and inauthentically. This experience of authentic “self-testimony” proves to be the key to understanding how Dasein anticipatively “leaps ahead” of the other “not in order to take away his ‘care’ but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time.”⁹⁵⁹

In examining the way this disclosing solicitude is described in *Being and Time*, we see Heidegger exposing at least five parallels between the phenomenon of the attesting “call of conscience” and Dasein’s capacity to bring the other into its own disclosedness: 1) The solicitude of authentic Dasein is one that is content-free and silent, recalling his description of the summoning call as one that “discloses nothing which could be either positive or negative as something with which we *can concern ourselves*.”⁹⁶⁰ The influence of Dasein on the other’s coming into his or her own disclosedness is not achieved by “pressuring” the other, but rather by exposing a disturbing breach in the “they.” Dasein makes space for the other, pointing towards a clearing where he or she can come into his or her own “authentic truth.” 2) Authentic solicitude is oriented towards possibilities and can reveal to the other the “care” that all co-Daseins share as the essence of their Being. In “leaping ahead” of the other, solicitous Dasein reveals their similarity as projected co-Daseins who share a mutual responsibility for choosing their ownmost possibility of Being. The silent “self-testimony” of authentic Dasein interrupts the “static” of the “they” and can incite the other to take responsibility for his or her Being. 3) Heidegger’s linking of conscience with liberating solicitude confirms both that the call is essential to Dasein’s experience of authenticity and that all existence is based on the possibility of the authentic encounter with others as Dasein-with. To have the possibility of liberating others, Dasein itself must have factually achieved its own disclosedness whereby Dasein “frees the other in his freedom for himself.”⁹⁶¹ The call reveals that Dasein’s authentic potentiality-for-Being underlies all existence but has become covered up by the “they.” As the attestation of

⁹⁵⁹ SZ §26, 122 / 158-9.

⁹⁶⁰ SZ §59, 294 / 340-1.

⁹⁶¹ SZ §26, 122 / 159.

Dasein's authenticity, the "call of conscience" shatters the illusion of the dominant "they" and reveals the possibility of encountering others as individuals with their own potentialities-for-Being. 4) In his assessment of solicitude, Heidegger describes the liberating of the other as revealing its disclosedness "authentically as such for the first time."⁹⁶² Dasein's freeing the other doesn't pull him or her back to some "previous" situation and isn't dependent upon a past encounter of the other. Any encounter of the other is always a "new" one as Dasein comes back into its authentic mode of Being by projecting itself upon new possibilities: since no situation of "resolution" is ever the same, this is also the case of any possibility of encountering the other. The "call of conscience" does not recall Dasein to a former time of disclosedness, but rather "summons us" forth to Dasein's responsibility for its ownmost possibility of Being.⁹⁶³ 5) As the authentic mode of Being-*amidst*, liberating solicitude is necessarily founded upon a transparent understanding of the world as shared and made significant for Dasein through to its co-involvement in the world *amidst* others as Dasein-with. The implication of others is essential to the authentic disclosedness of the world because its meaning is shaped both by others *and* by Dasein as mutually disclosing co-Daseins.

When Dasein liberates others, its own authentic understanding of the world is enriched by its recognition of the relations of significance that others contribute to the meaning of one's existence. In other words, an authentic understanding of the world implies Dasein's openness to the other: mutual disclosedness represents the essence of authentic Being-*amidst* and provides the foundation of all ways of understanding existence, even the inauthentic way of understanding the world that results from Dasein's "falling" into the "they." Heidegger's presentation of the "call of conscience" implies a necessary connection between Dasein and others in the experience of collaboratively disclosing the totality of significance that constitutes the shared world. In describing the resoluteness of Dasein who has heard the "call," Heidegger relates "the solicitude which leaps forth and liberates" to the co-disclosing by Dasein and others of their respective "self-chosen...[and]

⁹⁶² SZ §26, 122 / 159.

⁹⁶³ SZ §60, 300 / 347.

ownmost potentiality-for-Being.”⁹⁶⁴ As it frees the other for its ownmost possibility of Being, Dasein opens itself up to the other and understands its existence to be inextricably intertwined with others in a shared world.

Based on this analysis of Dasein’s capacity to liberate others, can we now conceive of a “possible experience” of the attesting “call of conscience” by Being-in-the-world? Can this relation between authentic solicitude and conscience be linked to an experience that demonstrates how Dasein can “initiate” its authentic disclosedness? More specifically, can the phenomenon of authentic solicitude described in Heidegger’s existential interpretation of Being-*amidst* contribute to our understanding of the “voice of the friend” and its relation to the experience of conscience?⁹⁶⁵

For Dasein to follow the liberating other’s “example” and accept responsibility for its own authentic possibilities, it must recognize the reticent silence of the other as “self-testimony” that cuts off the “they.” Such an experience would imply that the other—as autonomous, individual Dasein-with—must confront Dasein and force it to come face-to-face with its own authentic possibilities. In his account, Heidegger doesn’t explicitly state that Dasein *will* seize the opportunity afforded by such a “liberation” and invariably choose to join the solicitous other in authentic resoluteness: there is no existential or ontical “obligation” that binds Dasein to such “wanting-to-have-a-conscience.” However, Heidegger’s description of the primordial experience of anxiety that cuts through the “they” and strips Dasein of its shelter shows that Dasein cannot ignore this silence. As “they-self,” Dasein has many ways that it can respond: it can refuse to acknowledge the silence of the authentic other, denigrate it, seek to instrumentalize it, prod it to rejoin the public chatter, just pass by it, etc. But whatever it does, Dasein *must respond* to this disturbing “self-testimony” of the other—either by sliding back into the non-choice of existing amongst the

⁹⁶⁴ SZ §60, 298 / 344. In German: “Aus dem Worumwillen des selbstgewählten Seinkönnens gibt sich das entschlossene Dasein frei für seine Welt. Die Entschlossenheit zu sich selbst bringt das Dasein erst in die Möglichkeit, die mitseienden Anderen „sein“ zu lassen in ihrem eigensten Seinkönnen und dieses in der vorspringend-befreienden Fürsorge mitzuerschließen. Das entschlossene Dasein kann zum „Gewissen“ der Anderen werden.”

⁹⁶⁵ SZ §34, 163 / 206.

“they” or by assuming responsibility for its authentic potentiality-for-Being. In the former case, the “they-self” recovers from its anxious moment of silence (“it was really nothing”) and returns busily to its eternal activity of “catching up” with the crowd,⁹⁶⁶ thereby never catching a glimpse of the depth of significance of its shared world. Its eyes immediately turn back to the superficial landscape of its public world. However, the latter possibility produces a different “outcome”: interrupted by the “call of conscience,” the “they-self” pains to catch its breath and Dasein—at least for a moment—authentically recognizes its “failure to stand by one’s self.” Exposed to its essential guilt, Dasein joins the other in the disturbing silence of “self-testimony,”⁹⁶⁷ an experience in which they can become “*authentically bound together (eigentliche Verbundenheit)*.”⁹⁶⁸

As Heidegger makes clear, there is no specific “what” that is communicated to Dasein by the other (or *vice versa*) when it enters this silent “space” of disclosedness as liberated Being-*amidst*.⁹⁶⁹ Instead, Dasein comes into authentic understanding of the “*disclosive projection and determination of what is factually possible at the time.*”⁹⁷⁰ The factual possibilities of action can only be determined by what Dasein discovers when it finds itself authentically oriented in its world. While the formal indication of Being-*amidst* does not allow us to specify the “content” of Dasein’s possibilities of action, Heidegger’s exhibition of the “*amidst*” of existence does confirm the constitutive role of the other for the possible experience of an authentically shared world. Revealed as the meaningful matrix structured by projective co-Daseins, this shared world is essentially a “togetherness” where Dasein’s ownmost possibilities are woven into its shared worldly environment. Yet Heidegger insists that there is a necessary condition for this mutual disclosedness to be possible: Dasein and the other must quiet the “they” by meeting in reticence. This mutual experience of authenticity requires a reducing of all public discourse to absolute silence.

⁹⁶⁶ SZ §40, 187 / 231.

⁹⁶⁷ SZ §27, 128 / 166.

⁹⁶⁸ SZ §26, 122 / 159.

⁹⁶⁹ SZ §26, 122 / 159.

⁹⁷⁰ SZ §60, 298 / 345.

With our exhibition of this experience of shared silence, our analysis of Being-*amidst* and the attesting “self-testimony” of Heidegger’s notion of *Gewissen* has allowed us to identify an important connection between Dasein’s experience of the “call of conscience” and the phenomenon of authentic solicitude. Since “everydayness” is characterized by the public’s denial of any individual potentiality-for-Being, authentic Being-*amidst* requires an experience that reveals to Dasein that its world is one that is shared with others and not possessed by the “they.” In addition to contributing to the relations of meaning that “shape” Dasein’s world, the other is essential to Being-in-the-world’s experience of “self-testimony” and thus plays a necessarily role in its experience of the attesting phenomenon of the “call of conscience.” Since any authentic conception of Dasein’s world requires that it be recognized as shared, the attesting call that makes authenticity possible can only be heard if existence is characterized by plurality. The “hearing” of conscience is necessarily a communicable phenomenon. As we continue our search for a way of understanding *how* Being-in-the-world can *experience* the “call of conscience,” we have identified the principal condition that is implied by Heidegger’s interpretation of *Gewissen* as “attestation”: the demonstration of Dasein’s possibility of authentic existence—understood as the unity of Dasein’s equiprimordial structures of Being-in-the-world, Being-*amidst* and Being-towards-death—necessarily involves the experience of encountering the other.

4.3. Experiencing Conscience as the Silence of Martyrdom

The Call Without Conscience: Heidegger’s Abandonment of *Gewissen*

Despite its pivotal role in *Being and Time* as the attestation of Dasein’s possibility of authentic existence, the notion of conscience is barely even mentioned by Heidegger in his subsequent philosophical writings and talks. What Heidegger retains from his interpretation of the “call of conscience” is not the concept of *Gewissen* itself but the experience of being “called”: the initiating “summons,” the “call of being (*Zuruf des*

Seyns)” that opens up the question of Being.⁹⁷¹ As Inwood reports, Heidegger’s subsequent ways of describing the “call” reveal that this phenomenon has been uncoupled from the existential concept of *Gewissen*:

Later, Heidegger still speaks of the call, especially the silent call (*Ruf, Zuruf*, etc.): the call of being, the call of men, gods, earth and world to each other, the call to us of poetry and the call involved in naming things. But conscience and guilt play little part in Heidegger’s work after *Being and Time*.⁹⁷²

Although Heidegger will insist on the continuity in the development of his thought, his decision to abandon the investigation of Dasein in order to pursue other approaches to the question of Being marks a point of rupture for our study: the concept of conscience is sentenced to oblivion. After what Kisiel describes as Heidegger’s recognition that “*Being and Time* was a failed project,”⁹⁷³ the morally-charged term of *Gewissen* will be virtually eliminated from his vocabulary. Heidegger offers, at least in the extant texts, neither a retraction nor an explanation: the question of *Gewissen* is simply left hanging, suspended in silence.

In recuperating his notion of the “call,” however, Heidegger continues to assert the connection established in *Being and Time* between the phenomenon of calling or summoning and the concept of death. In his University of Freiburg course during 1942-43 winter semester, for example, Heidegger bluntly asserts that the phenomenon of “calling” and the experience of one’s “mortality” cannot be divorced from one another. Reflecting on the various ways in which the ancient Greeks understood “truth (*aletheia*),” Heidegger replaces his former notion of Dasein’s “hearing” the “call of conscience” with a “purer” experience of being called to an experience of “sacrifice” in the name of truth. As Heidegger writes:

⁹⁷¹ GA 65, §242, 384-385 / 268-269.

⁹⁷² David B. Griffiths. *The Keywords of Martin Heidegger: A Philosophical-Lexical Analysis of Sein und Zeit*. (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006). p. 166. Footnote 286. With reference to Michael Inwood’s *A Heidegger Dictionary* (Blackwell, 1999). p. 39.

⁹⁷³ Kisiel. *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*. p. 458.

The highest form of suffering is the dying of death as a sacrifice for the preservation of the truth of Being. This sacrifice is the purest experience of the voice of Being.⁹⁷⁴

In a later reading of the poem by Parmenides, Heidegger confirms this essential connection between the “call of *aletheia* (*Ruf der aletheia*)” and the essence of the hearer as a “mortal (*Sterblichen*).”⁹⁷⁵ Without reprising his existential interpretation of Being-towards-death proposed in *Being and Time*, Heidegger nonetheless emphasizes the relation between calling and death as he queries the “*mystery*” of Being, reaffirming the essential uncertainty of thought and the impossibility of grasping Being as knowledge:

[Anyone] who only expects thinking to give assurances, and awaits the day when we can go beyond it as unnecessary, is demanding that thought annihilate itself. That demand appears in a strange light if we consider that the essence of mortals calls upon them to heed the call which beckons them toward death. As the outermost possibility of mortal Dasein, death is not the end of the possible but the highest shelter (the gathering sheltering) of the mystery of calling disclosure.⁹⁷⁶

With his post-*Being and Time* redeployment of the call *sans* conscience, Heidegger thus indicates that this problem of “attestation”—unlike the phenomenon of conscience initially proposed as the solution to this problem—remains essential to his approach to the investigation of Being.

Perhaps due in part to Heidegger’s immediate abandonment of the existential concept of conscience proposed in *Being and Time*, relatively few commentators have focused on Heidegger’s *Gewissen* with an eye either to further developing this specific concept, to identifying the origins of its meaning (which may be formally indicated by

⁹⁷⁴ GA 54, 249-250 / 166-167. In German: “Die höchste Gestalt des Schmerzes aber ist das Sterben des Todes, der das Menschsein opfert für die Wahrung der Wahrheit des Seins. Dieses Opfer ist die reinste Erfahrung der Stimme des Seins.”

⁹⁷⁵ GA 7, 260. English translation is from Martin Heidegger. “Moirai (Parmenides, Fragment VIII, 34-41).” trans. Frank A. Capuzzi. *Early Greek Thinking*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1975). p. 100.

⁹⁷⁶ GA 7, 261. English translation is from Ibid. p. 101. In German: “Wer jedoch vom Denken nur eine Versicherung erwartet und Tag errechnet, an dem es ungebraucht übergangen werden kann, der fordert dem Denken die Selbstvernichtung ab. Die Forderung erscheint in einem seltsamen Licht, wenn wir uns darauf besinnen, daß das Wesen der Sterblichen in die Achtsamkeit auf das Geheiß gerufen ist, das sie in den Tod kommen heißt. Er ist als äußerste Möglichkeit des sterblichen Daseins nicht Ende des Möglichen, sondern das höchste Ge-birg (das versammelnde Bergen) des Geheimnisses der rufenden Entbergung.”

Heidegger's "radical" interpretation of the term), or to considering the methodological importance of the concept for Heidegger's hermeneutical approach to phenomenology. Perhaps the most significant legacy of Heidegger's *Gewissen* to date has been its contribution to the philosophical problem of testimony.⁹⁷⁷ Indeed, several commentators have pointed critically to Heidegger's silent "call of conscience" as evidence of the impossibility of attestation in *Being and Time*—or of any experience of testimony whatsoever—in the absence of a validating "experience of the absolute"⁹⁷⁸ or some "metaphysical power" that can *produce* or *authorize* such testimony. For many critics of Heidegger's interpretation of conscience, the insufficiency of Dasein's "self-attestation" demonstrates that any attempt to "understand" existence requires the recognition of a metaphysical "source" that authorizes testimony and thus provides the basis for experience.

Ricœur's Call to Again "Take Up the Problem" of Heideggerian Conscience

In the writings of Paul Ricœur, we find one of the most provocative—and insightful—analyses of the problem of how Dasein can experience the attesting "call of conscience." Significantly for our study, Ricœur specifically considered how the "self-testimony" of Heidegger's *Gewissen* might inform the metaphysical problems of alterity and of the absolute. In his 1989 essay entitled "Emmanuel Lévinas, Thinker of Testimony (*Penseur du témoignage*)," Ricœur explored how the experience of testimony can be understood by positioning Heidegger and Lévinas in extreme opposition to one another with regard to their concepts related to this phenomenon of attestation. Ricœur proposes that their approaches can be compared on the basis of two criteria that he considers

⁹⁷⁷ The international symposium on "Testimony" organized by Enrico Castelli in Rome during the winter of 1972 provides a particularly interesting example of how Heidegger's "attesting" phenomenon of *Gewissen* has been examined in relation to the problem of testimony. Although Heidegger was not present at this symposium, his concept of *Gewissen* influenced many of the texts that were presented and subsequently published, notably the contributions made by Ricœur, Emmanuel Lévinas, Gianni Vattimo, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Castelli himself.

⁹⁷⁸ Paul Ricœur. "L'herméneutique du témoignage." *Lectures 3 : Aux Frontières De La Philosophie*. (Paris: Seuil, [1972] 1994). p. 107.

essential to any “philosophy that merits the title ‘philosophy of testimony’”: “superiority (*supériorité*)” and “exteriority (*extériorité*).”⁹⁷⁹ Based on his schema, Ricœur claims that:

[Superiority] and/or exteriority don’t just constitute the characteristic traits of philosophies of testimony through their intersection, but also furnish the criterion of their difference, in the sense that, as I will show, from Heidegger...to Lévinas, the gradient of superiority *increases* with that of exteriority.⁹⁸⁰

On the “superiority” axis, Ricœur sees Heidegger denying the attesting “call of conscience” even the slightest degree of transcendence with his description of the call as being content-free and originating in Dasein itself. On the “exteriority” scale, Ricœur believes that Heidegger’s call—which supposedly reveals the utter inauthenticity of the “they-world”—eliminates the possibility of Dasein’s being able to authentically engage with anything “external” to it. For Ricœur, the call reveals that Dasein cannot authentically interact with any “other” because externality is essentially “strangeness (*étrang(èr)eté*)”—indeed, authenticity is experienced as “strangeness without strangers (*étrang(èr)eté sans étranger*).”⁹⁸¹

It is with regards to the “strangeness” of exteriority that Ricœur sees the greatest distance between Heidegger and Lévinas when it comes to their concepts of testimony. As Ricœur writes:

It is in regard [to externality] that Heidegger and Lévinas seem the closest and are in fact the furthest apart. The closest in terms of their descriptions of the passivity, of the non-mastery, of the sensibility of the Being-summoned. The furthest apart when it comes to (Heidegger’s) reduction of the stranger that parallels that of transcendence... (In Heidegger’s case,) strangeness is

⁹⁷⁹ Ricœur. “Emmanuel Lévinas, penseur du témoignage.” p. 83. In French: “...deux thèmes dont la jonction me semble caractériser une philosophie qui mérite le titre de « philosophie du témoignage ».”

⁹⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 84. In French: “Hauteur et/ou Extériorité ne constitueraient pas seulement par leur jonction les traits marquants des philosophies du témoignage, mais fourniraient en outre le critère de leur différence, dans la mesure où, comme je vais le montrer, de Heidegger...à Lévinas, le gradient de la Supériorité *croît* avec celui de l’Extériorité.” Note that in these excerpts and our discussion of this essay, we have—for simplicity’s sake—taken out Ricœur’s references to what he considers to be an “intermediate” approach to testimony that lies between the Heideggerian and Lévinassian ones, which is the “*critériologie du divin*” proposed by Jean Nabert.

⁹⁸¹ Ibid. p. 86.

understood as a structure of the (worldly) Being-towards that is dissociated from Being-with (whose analysis is restricted due to Heidegger's quasi-exclusive focus on the "they"). Thus the recourse to the neutral expression: *es ruft*, "it calls."⁹⁸²

For Ricœur, Heidegger's stifling of both the "superiority" and the "exteriority" of his existential call is reflected in the fact that "Heidegger's conscience is as little...moral as possible! (*le Gewissen de Heidegger est aussi peu... moral que possible !*)"⁹⁸³ Rather than recognizing the other's identity—let alone acknowledging the "absolutely superior 'Other'" advocated by Lévinas—Heidegger is seen by Ricœur to be concerned solely with the question of impersonal Being and the "ontological conditions of nothingness (*conditions ontologiques de la néantité*)," thus effectively denying "the primacy of ethics."⁹⁸⁴

What conscience attests is the potentiality-for-Being itself, both as an existential and as an existentiell phenomenon, rather than some kind of difference between good and evil; we see in this approach one of the effects of Heidegger's struggle against the "value" systems of the neo-Kantians, and even more so that of Max Scheler, in the name of fundamental ontology: the more we emphasize the *sein* in *Dasein*, the less we are disposed to recognize any kind of ethical power in the call, in the *ad-vocation*...⁹⁸⁵

Emphasizing the problem of how one can experience Heideggerian conscience, de Vries echoes what is implied in Ricœur's analysis when he describes the attestation of *Dasein* in *Being and Time* as an impossibility. When *Dasein*'s essential thrownness is paired with the allegedly "solipsistic" phenomenon of the existential call, the requirement of attestation set by Heidegger at the opening of *Being and Time* is exposed as

⁹⁸² Ibid. p. 86. In French: "C'est en ce point que Heidegger et Lévinas semblent le plus proches et sont en fait le plus séparés. Le plus proches, par cet aveu de la passivité, de la non-maîtrise, de l'affection liées à l'être-convoqué. Le plus éloignés, en vertu de la réduction de l'étranger parallèle à celle de la transcendance... Voici l'étrang(èr)eté reportée sur une structure de l'être-à (au monde) et dissociée de l'être-avec (dont l'analyse est appauvrie par la focalisation quasi exclusive sur le On). D'où le recours au neutre : *es ruft*, « cela appelle »." Note that in this citation, we have retained the expression "Being-with" because this is the sense of *Mitsein* that Ricœur evidently wishes to convey in his use of the French term "*être-avec*."

⁹⁸³ Ibid. p. 84.

⁹⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 87.

⁹⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 85. In French: "[*Ce*] que la conscience atteste, c'est le pouvoir-être soi-même, à la fois comme existentiel et comme existentiell, non quelque différence que ce soit entre le bien et le mal ; on surprend par là un des effets de la lutte menée contre le penser-valeur des néo-kantiens, et plus encore de Max Scheler, au nom de l'ontologie fondamentale : plus on souligne *sein* dans *Dasein*, moins on est disposé à reconnaître quelque force éthique à l'appel, à l'*ad-vocation*..."

unachievable. De Vries follows Ricœur in pointing out an apparent similarity in the interpretations of testimony proposed by Heidegger and Lévinas that actually confirms a radical difference between their two approaches.

In an almost circular mode...—and this reveals the aporetic—[Heidegger's] *attestation is made possible by what it makes possible*. In other words, this prescriptivity manifests itself only in the mode of a *quasi-*, if not *un-* or *anti-*phenomenological gesture of testimony, which does not lend itself to any descriptive or constative rendering, and has for that reason to be *affirmed* and *assumed* by a singular performative. This performative, moreover, is absolute in the etymological sense of the Latin *absolvere*: it loosens itself from every context, from every horizon, from every dimension, even from the situation that Heidegger characterizes as “thrownness.” Otherwise than being possible, then, and otherwise than the “otherwise than being” to which it testifies, it resembles the very structure of [Lévinas's] *à dieu*.⁹⁸⁶

On these grounds, de Vries seconds Ricœur's claim that Heidegger seeks to “profit from the superior force of authentication of the *Gewissen*” without acknowledging its transcendent and absolute nature.⁹⁸⁷

Seen from the critical perspective adopted by both Ricœur and de Vries, the “attestation” described in *Being and Time* appears “impossible,” or at least “otherwise than being possible,” and thus can be considered as evidence that Heidegger's interpretation of conscience is flawed. Moreover, Ricœur claims this “problematic” situation faced by Heidegger highlights the urgency of positing an “absolute” that can provide the orientation required for any phenomenological or hermeneutical investigation of existence. Having concluded his analysis of the Heideggerian conscience, Ricœur asks:

[Is it] possible, on the basis [of a] hermeneutics of testimony, to return to the problematic of *Gewissen*, of the moral conscience, of the injunction, to again take up the problem at the point where Heidegger left off?⁹⁸⁸

⁹⁸⁶ de Vries. *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*. p. 287.

⁹⁸⁷ Ricœur. “Emmanuel Lévinas, penseur du témoignage.” p. 85. In French: “Mais toute la stratégie de Heidegger est de tirer bénéfice de la force supérieure d'authentification issue du *Gewissen*, sans lui accorder le moindre statut de transcendance.”

This question is one that Heidegger seems to invite with his sudden abandonment of the concept of *Gewissen* following the publication of *Being and Time*. As our study of Stoker's impact on the development of *Being and Time* has shown, Heidegger was fully aware of the problem of the "absolute" and the implications of this problem for his existential interpretation of *Gewissen*. Indeed, Heidegger's later recuperation of the enigmatic "call" to disclosedness—stripped of any reference to conscience—indicates that the German thinker continued to struggle with the problem of how philosophy can *produce* testimony without positing an "absolute." In responding to Ricœur's challenge regarding the possibility of picking up the problem of conscience where Heidegger left off, however, we must keep in mind what our study has already revealed: the existential interpretation of *Gewissen* in *Being and Time* reflects a deliberate attempt to avoid any speculation about the call's "absolute" source, which is a restriction rejected out of hand by Ricœur.

Of course, Ricœur's presentation of the Heideggerian *Gewissen* is primarily intended to serve as a foil for a concept of testimony that he considers to be its extreme—and more attractive—opposite: the "ultimate" philosophy of testimony proposed by Lévinas. When examined according Ricœur's schema, the testimony of the infinitely responsible self proposed by Lévinas is seen to be characterized both by the absolute superiority of God over the self and by the utter dependence of the self on the encountered other. In his 1981 essay "Bad Conscience and the Inexorable," Lévinas delivers his most direct response to the Heideggerian notion of the attesting "call of conscience," which he characterizes as a "pre-reflexive," "non-intentional" and "detestable" concept.⁹⁸⁹ For Lévinas, Heidegger's existential call both spurns God and forsakes the other:

The call of God does not establish between me and the One who has spoken to me a *relation*; it does not establish something that, on any account, would be a conjunction—a co-existence, a synchrony, even if ideal—between terms. Infinity would have no meaning for a thought that goes to the limit,

⁹⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 95. In French: "[Est-il] possible, à partir [d'une] herméneutique du témoignage, de remettre en chantier la problématique du *Gewissen*, de la conscience morale, de l'injonction, de la reprendre au point où Heidegger l'a laissée ?"

⁹⁸⁹ Emmanuel Lévinas. "Bad Conscience and the Inexorable." trans. Bettina Bergo. *Of God Who Comes to Mind*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). p. 174.

and the *à-Dieu* is not a finality. It is perhaps this irreducibility of the *à-Dieu* or of the fear of God to eschatology, this irreducibility that interrupts with the human the consciousness that was on its way toward being in its ontological perseverance or toward death which it takes as the ultimate thought, that is signified, beyond being, by the word “glory.” The alternative between being and nothingness is not ultimate. The *à-Dieu* is not a process of Being: in the call, I am referred back to the other human being through whom this call signifies, to the neighbor for whom I fear.⁹⁹⁰

After Ricœur makes his overture regarding a possible *recovery* of Heidegger’s *Gewissen*, what he ultimately recommends is not so much the recuperation as it is the surpassing of the “call of conscience” proposed in *Being and Time*, a surpassing which he considers to be already underway in the Lévinassian approach to testimony. In the aftermath of what he regards as the failure of Heidegger’s existential-ontological project, Ricœur seeks to remove the existential limitations placed upon conscience by Heidegger and to thereby initiate the hermeneutical investigation of an “absolute” source of the phenomenon of testimony.

However, is this really the only way that one can “take up the problem” of conscience where Heidegger “left off”? Must we necessarily discard the methodological principles of *Being and Time* in order to reconsider the experience of *Gewissen*? Does the alleged inadequacy of Heidegger’s “attestation” of conscience leave us with no alternative but to accept the positing of a metaphysical “absolute” and the imposition of the traditional internal/external divide as mandatory for any kind of philosophical inquiry regarding conscience? Or can we—informed by what is indicated by the original meaning of the German word *Gewissen*—point to an alternative way of understanding conscience as a

⁹⁹⁰ Ibid. pp. 175-176. In French: “Appel de Dieu, il n’instaure pas entre moi et Lui qui m’a parlé un *rapport*; il n’instaure pas ce qui, à un titre quelconque, serait une conjonction - une co-existence, une synchronie, fût-elle idéale - entre termes. L’Infini ne saurait signifier pour une pensée qui va à terme et l’*à-Dieu* n’est pas une finalité. C’est, peut-être, cette irréductibilité de l’*à-Dieu* ou de la crainte de Dieu à l’eschatologique par laquelle s’interrompt, dans l’humain, la conscience qui allait à l’être dans sa persévérance ontologique ou à la mort qu’elle prend pour pensée ultime, que signifie, au-delà de l’être, le mot gloire. L’alternative de l’être et du néant n’est pas ultime. L’*à-Dieu* n’est pas un processus de l’être : dans l’appel, je suis renvoyé à l’autre homme par qui cet appel signifie, au prochain pour qui j’ai à craindre.” Emmanuel Lévinas. “La mauvaise conscience et l’inexorable.” *De Dieu qui vient à l’idée*. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1992). pp. 264-265.

possible experience of Being-*amidst*'s "self-testimony" that *respects* the principles of Heidegger's existential approach? This is the possibility which we will now explore.

Existence as the Hermeneutic Struggle of the Witness

As we attempt to identify a possible *experience* of the "call of conscience" formally indicated by Heidegger's existential concept of *Gewissen*, we will turn our attention back to a concept of the "absolute" that we know Heidegger encountered and ultimately rejected as he developed his own existential phenomenon of the call: the concept of divine *synteresis* as it is interpreted phenomenologically by Stoker. More precisely, we will consider a clue found within the word of *synteresis* itself. Emphasizing the connection between the symbolic eagle in Ezekiel's vision and the ancient Greek roots of the word found in St. Jerome's commentary, Stoker describes *synteresis* as the "*caring*" and "*preserving*" spirit that oversees the other "faculties" of the person⁹⁹¹: what is key to Stoker's interpretation is the sense of the Greek verb *tereo*, meaning "to take care of, to watch over closely, to guard."⁹⁹² He insists that the eagle metaphorically matches the meaning of the word *synteresis* and conveys the phenomenon of "guarding" that is essential to the experience of conscience. The phenomenon of care which Heidegger will interpret existentially is described by Stoker as the absolute caring of the spirit placed in each person's soul by God—the light of this "divine spark" is what discloses existence to man. Both from the semantic and philosophical perspectives, we find a remarkable link between *synteresis* and Heidegger's conclusion that the essence of Dasein can be understood as the enactment of "care." In *Being and Time*, authentic care is revealed as the meaning of Dasein's Being and the "call of conscience"—which is assigned by Heidegger the methodological role of producing the required attestation of Dasein's possible authenticity—is characterized as the "call of care." Care is revealed as both the essence of and the required condition for any hermeneutical search for meaning. We are faced again with the aporia of Dasein's

⁹⁹¹ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. pp. 25-28. Stoker holds that unlike the earthbound symbols of the ox (appetite), lion (passion) and man (reason) in Ezekiel's vision, the symbolic eagle of *synteresis* sees beyond the limited horizon of what can be immediately experienced by the senses and known by the mind.

⁹⁹² *Ibid.* p. 27.

testimony described by de Vries: it appears that the Heideggerian “*attestation is made possible by what it makes possible.*”⁹⁹³

By Heidegger’s own account, his existential interpretation of *Gewissen* demands the indication of a possible way of experiencing “self-testimony” without requiring the positing of an “absolute” source of this experience. The aporia of this hermeneutical circle that de Vries describes is problematic for Heidegger not because the “call of conscience” defies traditional logic but because its “circular movement” is interrupted due to the apparent “impossibility” of “self-testimony”: as Scheler had noticed immediately upon reading *Being and Time*, the “call of conscience” appears to cause a “short circuit” that dooms Dasein to solipsism. When he promises in §54 to demonstrate how authentic Dasein’s self-attestation can be experienced by Being-in-the-world, Heidegger reveals that this potential problem remained a major concern for him. To be plausible, Heidegger’s denial of the “certainty” of metaphysical tradition must be complemented with a way of understanding how Dasein—despite its “everyday” existence as an Earth-bound mortal “falling” into self-oblivion—can hear the “call of care” in its own worldly experience without having recourse to an “imaginary” or “external” metaphysical power. To successfully close the hermeneutic circle of conscience and meet the established criteria of his existential-ontological project, Heidegger’s call from “beyond” and “above” must nonetheless be revealed as a possible experience of Being-in-the-world itself.

Dasein as Martyr: Being-Towards-Death’s “Self-Testimony”

In exhibiting the vital role of conscience in *Being and Time* as “self-testimony” and emphasizing that Heidegger’s concept of *Mitsein* conveys the sense of Being-*amidst*, our study of the Heideggerian notion of *Gewissen* indeed points to a possible way that Being-in-the-world can experience its “attesting call”: what is formally indicated in *Being and Time* can be understood as the possibility of Dasein *bearing witness* to itself as authentic “Being-towards-death-*amidst*-the-world.” Unlike the traditional notion of the witness who

⁹⁹³ de Vries. *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*. p. 287.

observes an “external” event and reports on it “objectively” with “distance” and “reserve,” Dasein as a witness of its own “projected” existence must assume responsibility for its own possibilities as Being-towards-death thrown amidst a shared world. The success of the existential-ontological project of *Being and Time* depends ultimately on the demonstration by Dasein itself that such witnessing can be experienced: the phenomenon of conscience must be exhibited as the *experience* of Dasein’s responding to what Jean Grondin describes as an “invitation to self-appropriation that is issued to every Dasein.”⁹⁹⁴ In her analysis of *Being and Time*’s performative hermeneutics, Tanya Staehler observes that Heidegger’s “attestation” implies an experience of “witnessing”:

[What] we ordinarily describe as ‘call of conscience’ can provide [an attestation of authentic existence]. The term ‘attestation’ appears suitable here as it points to an indirect approach. The ‘who’ of *Dasein* cannot be accessed in a direct fashion: we need a witness. Although it will not be possible to point to a witness in the flesh, the prospect of a testifying voice seems quite promising.⁹⁹⁵

However, what Staehler calls the “testifying voice” in Heidegger’s interpretation of Dasein’s structures cannot be grasped as some kind of external authority that illuminates existence and reveals the presence of a material world surrounding the person. What remains outstanding for Heidegger’s project is a way of understanding this witnessing of Dasein’s struggle as a possibility that can be experienced authentically. Can the acts of “self-preserving” and “guarding” conveyed in Stoker’s account of *synteresis* be assigned to Dasein itself without recourse to an external “absolute”? Is there a way that Heidegger’s concept of authentic “care”—the fundamental sense of Dasein’s Being—can be experienced as the “self-testimony” of conscience by Being-in-the-world? Can we reveal an experience of what Courtine calls the “ontico-phenomenal *witnessing*” of conscience

⁹⁹⁴ Jean Grondin. *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*. trans. Joel Weinsheimer. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994). p. 99.

⁹⁹⁵ Tanya Staehler. "Unambiguous Calling? Authenticity and Ethics in Heidegger's *Being and Time*." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 39. 3 (2008). pp. 301-302.

that might inform our question concerning Dasein's "constitutive ipseity" as Being-*amidst* in a shared world?⁹⁹⁶

Just as Heidegger salvages the primordial sense of *Gewissen* by exposing the inauthenticity of the tradition's *conscientia*, his formal indication of *Gewissen* as "attestation" allows us to exhibit the existential problem underlying all "ordinary" interpretations of the Latin tradition's *testimonium*. The most common account of the original meaning of *testimonium* is that the word is rooted in the Latin noun *testis* for "witness," and that the literal meaning of this term is "the third": this theory is based on the supposition that *testis* originated out of the Proto Indo-European root *trei-* for "three."⁹⁹⁷ From a semantic standpoint, this account would seem to confirm the "common sense" notion that testimony proffered by a "third" party is more credible than that of individuals directly implicated in a dispute: the "value" of one's testimony is thus seen to depend on one's perceived neutrality. However, this account of the origins of *testimonium* is disputed: even many of its proponents concede that it is supported by little textual evidence⁹⁹⁸ and cannot be reconciled with the fact that the primary "witnesses" listed in most ancient Greek and Roman contracts are the contracting parties.

Moreover, the priority traditionally accorded to the observations of the "neutral" third-party fails to acknowledge that testimony—since the earliest recorded moments of history—has been associated with a threat to one's existence: both the Athenian and Roman legal systems employed torture specifically because the "testimony" of one whose life and limb are threatened was considered more credible than an "impartial" observer. In ancient Athens, the testimony of tortured slaves (who were often tortured to death) even "appears to have been considered of more value than that of freemen" because the latter

⁹⁹⁶ Courtine. "Voice of Conscience and Call of Being." p. 106.

⁹⁹⁷ Pokorny. *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*. pp. 1090-1092.

⁹⁹⁸ Georges Redard. "Latin *testis* « Témoin = Troisième »?" *Recherches de linguistique : Hommages à Maurice Leroy*. eds. Jean Bingen, André Coupez and Francine Mawet. (Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1980). As Redard observes, the claim that *testis* originally meant the "third" is substantiated by very little evidence, of which the majority are hapaxes.

were protected by decree from being subjected to such “efficient” techniques.⁹⁹⁹ The ancient Greek word for “torture”—*basanos*—takes its name directly from the concept of the “touchstone” or *basanites lapis*: a stone that was “rubbed” or “scraped” against precious metals and stones in order to determine their authenticity or purity.¹⁰⁰⁰ Significantly for our study of the attestation of existential conscience, another procedure was also used in the classical era for determining the authenticity of precious metals: the piece of metal in question would be placed in a crucible and heated to its melting point for analysis. Based on the early Latin word *testum* for the shell, skull or earthen pot used as the crucible for conducting such tests, this procedure came to be called a *test* and its meaning eventually expanded to include various “means” of testing persons to determine their worth.¹⁰⁰¹ Consistent with the evidence that the Gothic *kiuizzitha* was initially used as the translation of *testimonium*, Heidegger’s notion of *Gewissen* as the authentic “self-attestation” of Being-towards-death implies a critique of the priority accorded by modern philosophy to “third-party” testimony of the detached observer. For Heidegger, the primordial sense of testimony arises out of the implied threat to the witness’s existence.¹⁰⁰² In Heidegger’s description of Dasein’s resoluteness as Being-towards-death, we see the antithesis of the traditional notion of neutral “testimony” that exclusively values “objective” statements.

Having established how Heidegger interpreted *Gewissen* as Dasein’s unique way of experiencing authenticity, our study points to a possibility of attesting that reflects Dasein’s

⁹⁹⁹ William Smith and Charles Anthon. *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*. (New York: Harper, 1843). pp. 139-140.

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p. 139.

¹⁰⁰¹ Walter W. Skeat. *A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1882). p. 500. Skeat defines the English word “test” as “a pot in which metals are tried, a trial, proof” and notes its root as being the Latin “*testum*,” meaning “an earthen vessel” or “skull.” These in turn would be related, according to Skeat, to the Latin word for “hard shell”: “*testaceous*.”

¹⁰⁰² In this regard, the *Codex Abrogans* provides additional evidence that the original sense of *Gewissen* as *testimonium* implied that a literally “existential” form of engagement was demanded of the witness. In the *Abrogans* glossary, the entries are not presented in strict alphabetical order but rather grouped by topic. Thus it is remarkable—and telling for our study—that the word appearing immediately before the translation of “*testimonium*” as “*kiuizzitha*” at the end of page 189 of the manuscript is the Latin “*martirium*,” meaning “to martyr,” which is translated as “*martartoam*” in Old High German. “*Codex Abrogans* (St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 911).” p. 189. The image of this page is reproduced as Appendix B of this thesis.

essential structures of Being-*amidst* and Being-*towards-death* unified in the primordial experience of witnessing: the *bearing witness* of the *martyr*. Through the formal indication of the martyr's testimony, the existential phenomenon of Dasein's "wanting-to-have-a-conscience" described by Heidegger can be understood in an "ontical" sense as the authentic experience of "willingness-to-bear-witness." In calling Dasein to its ownmost possibility, conscience summons Dasein to authentic unity as both Being-*towards-death* and Being-*amidst*: in other words, it calls Dasein to assume its destiny as *Being-a-martyr*—the experience of *producing* testimony that places the very existence of the witness "at risk."

In light of the fact that Heidegger characterizes *Gewissen* as the attesting phenomenon of Dasein's bearing witness to its possibility of authentic existence, it is not without significance for our study that the etymological root of the Christian concept of martyrdom is the ancient Greek word *martus*, meaning "witness." In his study of the origins of martyrdom and its relation to testimony, Raymond Panikkar proposes an etymological account of *martus* that emphasizes the "existential" character of the ancient concept of witnessing and squares with our analysis of the phenomena of conscience and attestation as interpreted by Heidegger in *Being and Time*. Most importantly, Panikkar links the meaning of the Greek term to be the experience of anxious remembering that is essential to the Heideggerian concept of authentic resoluteness. Panikkar writes:

The Greek word *martus*... does not give primacy to the juridical aspect, but rather to the anthropological dimension. *Martus* comes from the Sanskrit *mrtu*, from which arise the Greek words *mermera*, anxiety, care, concern and *mermerizo*, to be preoccupied, full of worries, to fret... In following the etymology and history of the word, we arrive at the following description: *marturia*, testimony, is the act or the result of witnessing, that is to say of attesting, of producing a deposition of a conviction that we hold within us, that we worry about, that we remember, and about which we are anxious. The witness is conscious of, knows, remembers, is anxious and concerned, he thinks, considers, is preoccupied with what he will manifest to the other in his testimony.¹⁰⁰³

¹⁰⁰³ Raymond Panikkar. "Témoignage et dialogue." *Le Témoignage; actes du colloque organisé par le Centre international d'études humanistes et par l'Institut d'études philosophiques de Rome, 5-11 janvier 1972*. ed.

In emphasizing the phenomena of anxiety, memory and care, Panikkar reveals in the Greek *martus* what can be interpreted as the essential relation between the original sense of witnessing and Heidegger's existential notion of Being-towards-death. However, Panikkar immediately goes on to relate the recovered phenomenon of the Greek *martus* to the traditional notion of knowledge as something that can be possessed in the subject's mind. Interestingly, Panikkar notes the relation between the Proto Indo-European roots *smer-* (mourning, remembering, caring) and *men-* (memory, mind),¹⁰⁰⁴ but does not point out that the remembering of *smer-* is more directly related to the root *mer-* (to die)—a relation that is of greater significance for our study of the Heideggerian “call of conscience” which reveals Dasein's essence as Being-towards-death.¹⁰⁰⁵

Martyrdom and the Certainty of *Sum Moribundus*

Many commentators of *Being and Time*, including Ricœur, Lévinas and Derrida, have explicitly noted that Heidegger's concept of conscience in *Being and Time* seems to require that Dasein—as resolute Being-towards-death—assume the stance of a martyr in order to produce the required “attestation” of authenticity as described in §54 of *Being and Time*. In Ricœur's reading of the Heideggerian concept of Being-towards-death, this testimony of Dasein remains essentially unreliable and contingent. More importantly, the self-attestation of the martyr cannot convey the phenomenological “truth” of death: in Ricœur's words, “the trial (*l'épreuve*)” of death in martyrdom cannot be equated with

Enrico Castelli. (Paris: Aubier, 1972). pp. 372-374. From Enrico Castelli, ed. *Le Témoignage; actes du colloque organisé par le Centre international d'études humanistes et par l'Institut d'études philosophiques de Rome, 5-11 janvier 1972*. Paris: Aubier, 1972. In French: “Le mot grec *martus*...ne donne pas la primauté à l'aspect juridique, mais à la dimension anthropologique. *Martus* vient de *mrtu* [en sanscrit], d'où *mermera* angoisse, soin, souci et *mermerizo* être préoccupé, plein de soucis, se soucier... En suivant l'étymologie et l'histoire du mot on arrive à la description suivante : *marturia*, le témoignage, est l'acte ou le résultat de témoigner, c'est-à-dire d'attester, de déposer une conviction qu'on porte en soi, dont on se soucie, qu'on se rappelle, et pour laquelle on est anxieux. Le témoin connaît, sait, se rappelle, est anxieux et soucieux, il pense, considère, se préoccupe de ce qu'il manifesterà à l'autre dans son témoignage.”

¹⁰⁰⁴ Panikkar. “Témoignage et dialogue.” pp. 372-374. In French: “La racine indo-européenne sous-jacente est *smer* qui signifie réfléchir, penser, se souvenir, prendre soin de, se soucier, se rappeler (cf. *smrti*, en sanscrit : ce qui est rappelé, ce qu'on confie à la mémoire, c'est-à-dire la tradition). Cette racine est aussi apparentée à *men-* (cf. *meno*) penser, rester (cf. *manas* en sanscrit, *mens* et *manere* en latin). Le mot-saxon *witness* relève aussi de l'ordre de la connaissance (*wit*, *wisdom*).”

¹⁰⁰⁵ Pokorny. *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*. p. 735.

“proof (*une preuve*)” regarding truth.¹⁰⁰⁶ Siding with Lévinas against Heidegger on this point that is determinative for each of these thinkers’ philosophies, Ricœur insists that existence can only be understood by assigning priority to the encounter with an absolute source of life rather than to the “limit situation” of death. Ricœur writes:

The witness is capable of suffering and of dying for what he believes. When the trial of conviction becomes the price of life, the witness changes names: he becomes a martyr. But does the name change? *martus*, in Greek, means “witness.” Certainly it isn’t without danger that we evoke this terrible relation between witness and martyr; the argument of the martyr is always suspect; the cause of a martyr isn’t necessarily a just one. But this is precisely the point: martyrdom isn’t an argument, even less a form of proof. It’s a trial, a limit situation. A man becomes a martyr because he is first of all a witness.¹⁰⁰⁷

For his part, Derrida questions the supposed relevance of Heidegger’s notion of “unexperienceable” death to any attempt to disclose the meaning of existence. To justify his charge, Derrida illustrates how Heidegger’s interpretation of authentic Dasein—with its emphasis on Being-towards-death—appears to have definitely dissociated existence from life. Derrida asks:

But does Dasein have an experience of death *as such*, even through anticipation? What would this mean? What is Being-towards-death? What is death for a Dasein who is never defined in an *essential* way as living? Here we are not opposing death to life, but are asking what meaningful content we can give to death in a discourse for which the relation to death—the experience of death—remains unrelated to the life of the living.¹⁰⁰⁸

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ricœur. "L'herméneutique du témoignage." p. 116.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 116. In French: “Le témoin est capable de souffrir et de mourir pour ce qu’il croit. Quand l’épreuve de la conviction devient le prix de la vie, le témoin change de nom : il s’appelle un martyr. Mais le nom change-t-il ? *martus*, en grec, c’est « témoin ». Certes, ce n’est pas sans danger que l’on évoque ce lien terrible entre témoin et martyr ; l’argument du martyre est toujours suspect ; une cause qui a des martyrs n’est pas nécessairement une cause juste. Mais précisément, le martyre n’est pas un argument, encore moins une preuve. C’est une épreuve, une situation limite. Un homme devient un martyr parce que d’abord il est un témoin.”

¹⁰⁰⁸ Jacques Derrida. *Heidegger et la question : De l'esprit, Différence sexuelle, différence ontologique (Geschlecht I), La Main de Heidegger (Geschlecht II)*. (Paris: Flammarion, 1990). p. 70, footnote 2. In French: “Mais le *Dasein* a-t-il l’expérience de la mort *comme telle*, fût-ce par anticipation ? Qu’est-ce que cela voudrait dire ? Qu’est-ce que l’être-pour-la-mort ? Qu’est-ce que la mort pour un *Dasein* qui n’est jamais défini de façon *essentielle* comme un vivant ? Il ne s’agit pas ici d’opposer la mort à la vie, mais de se

The criticisms of the Heideggerian project made by Ricœur, Lévinas and Derrida reflect their common refusal to accept Heidegger's claim that "attestation (*Bezeugung*)" should itself be considered formally indicative, i.e. an existential concept that can only point to a possibility for Dasein. With his interpretation of conscience as the "testimony" of Being-towards-death, Heidegger is seen by these three French thinkers to be illegitimately basing the meaning of existence or "life" on the phenomenon of "death." There are, indeed, good reasons for raising this objection. As we have seen, many commentators contend—as do we—that Heidegger was unsuccessful in his attempt to demonstrate how the wholeness of Dasein can be attested by the "call of conscience" in *Being and Time*, thus placing his entire existential-ontological project in doubt. In the absence of a legitimate account of how this testimony of "authentic" Being-towards-death can be produced, Heidegger's critics can justifiably claim that his description of Dasein's "everydayness" maligns worldly experience—notably all concern for common morality—without cause.

Notwithstanding the relevance of these concerns regarding the "ethics" (or "non-ethics") of *Being and Time*, our study has exposed an alternative way of understanding the Heideggerian notion of *Gewissen* that both respects the existential spirit of his project and attests to the possibility of experiencing Dasein authentically as a whole. However, to consider how *Being and Time* might disclose a primordial phenomenon of witnessing or producing "testimony" demands that we remain open to Heidegger's existential interpretation of "death." In other words, we must neither allow ourselves to immediately give priority to the notion of "life" nor rashly dismiss Heidegger's approach to Dasein's "death" as being utterly nihilistic. In his *Prolegomena* course given in Marburg two years prior to the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger preempts those critics who would read his existential analysis as a "metaphysics of death":

[The] phenomenological explication of death does not prejudge any attitudes towards death, it makes no decision about whether there is anything after death or what that may be, or whether there is nothing at all. Nothing is decided about immortality and the beyond, the "other side," nor for that

demander quel contenu sémantique on peut donner à la mort dans un discours pour lequel le rapport à la mort, l'expérience de la mort reste sans rapport à la vie du vivant."

matter about “this side,” as if to say how one is to comport oneself toward death and how not. Nevertheless it can be stated that the explication maintains the most radical orientation to “this side,” specifically in regard to what the death of an entity, of the Dasein at its time, can be. ... As long as I have not asked about Dasein in its structure and as long as I have not defined death in what it is, I cannot even rightly ask what could come after Dasein in connection with its death.¹⁰⁰⁹

With these comments on death during the summer semester of 1925 in Marburg, Heidegger also indicates a way of testifying to what he describes as Dasein’s “*utmost, though indefinite, yet certain possibility.*”¹⁰¹⁰ Indeed, he considers such testimony to be the *only* experience of certainty that is possible for Dasein.

This certainty (*Gewißheit*), that “I myself am in that I will die,” is *the basic certainty of Dasein itself (die Grundgewißheit des Daseins selbst)*. It is a genuine statement of Dasein, while *cogito sum* is only the semblance of such a statement. If such pointed formulations mean anything at all, then the appropriate statement pertaining to Dasein in its being would have to be *sum moribundus* (“I am in dying”), *moribundus* not as someone gravely ill or wounded, but insofar as I am, I am *moribundus*. *The moribundus first gives the sum its sense.*¹⁰¹¹

For Heidegger, “certainty (*Gewißheit*)” is the essence of Dasein’s witnessing of itself: the producing of “testimony” in the face of death is the act of Dasein authentically bearing witness to itself. This “statement” that “I am *moribundus*” is neither a communication regarding the “everyday” concept of death nor a form of discourse that is produced for the

¹⁰⁰⁹ GA 20, §34, 434 / 314. In German: “Zweitens aber ist mit der phänomenologischen Explikation des Todes einer Stellungnahme zum Tode nicht vorgegriffen, es fällt keine Entscheidung darüber, ob noch etwas nach dem Tode kommt oder gar was oder, ob nichts kommt. Über Jenseits und Unsterblichkeit wird nichts entschieden, sowenig wie über das Diesseits, als ob gesagt würde, wie man sich zum Tode verhalten soll und wie nicht. Trotzdem kann gesagt werden: Die Explikation vollzieht sich in der radikalsten Diesseitigkeit, nämlich im Blick darauf, was der Tod eines Seienden, des jeweiligen Daseins, sein kann. ... Solange ich nicht dem Dasein in seiner Struktur nachgefragt habe und solange ich nicht den Tod in dem, was er ist, bestimmt habe, kann ich mit Recht nicht einmal fragen, was nach dem Dasein bezüglich seines Todes kommen könnte.”

¹⁰¹⁰ GA 20, §34, 438 / 317. In German: “*Der Tod ist die äußerste, obzwar unbestimmte, aber gewisse Möglichkeit...*” Emphasis is Heidegger’s.

¹⁰¹¹ GA 20, §34, 437-438 / 317. In German: “Diese Gewißheit, daß ich es selbst bin in meinem Sterbenwerden, ist *die Grundgewißheit des Daseins selbst* und ist eine echte Daseinsaussage, während das *cogito sum* nur der Schein einer solchen ist. Wenn solche zugespitzten Formeln überhaupt etwas besagen, müßte die angemessene und das Dasein in seinem Sein betreffende Aussage lauten: *sum moribundus*, und zwar nicht *moribundus* als Schwerkranker oder Verwundeter, sondern sofern ich bin, bin ich *moribundus*—*das moribundus gibt dem sum allererst seinen Sinn.*”

benefit of another: it is rather the resolution of the witness engaged in an existential “struggle” *amidst* the world. The unspoken “self-testimony” of “*sum moribundus*” provides Dasein with its only “certainty” because it reveals that one’s ownmost potentiality-for-Being is the basis of all possible existence, even if this authentic “truth” is most commonly denied by the “they-self”. What is *experienced* in hearing the “call of conscience” is the attestation of Dasein’s essence as Being-towards-death, which can only be recognized through the enacted “fusion” of authentic calling and listening that reveals Being-in-the-world to itself as a “whole.” While Heidegger’s analysis reveals existentially that Being-towards-death is a constitutive phenomenon of Dasein, the experience of one’s authentic mode of existence requires that Dasein recognize its potentiality-for-Being as a “self-attesting” martyr *amidst* fellow martyrs. In this stance of martyrdom, it can embrace its anxiety and willingly bear witness to its own authentic existence—as demonstrated by its caring for the authenticity of itself and of others—in the face of “death.”

The Disclosive Force of *Gewissen* as “Self-Testimony”

How are we then to understand the possibility of an authentic form of witnessing and *producing* testimony that can expose the inauthenticity of public “everydayness”? The existential concept of attestation—which Heidegger introduces in *Being and Time* using the verb *bezeugen*—must be distinguished from the contemporary “legalistic” concept of witness, which has come to convey the sense of the supposedly neutral “third-party” of the Latin *testis*. Our analysis of the “ordinary” interpretation of testimony—which reduces the act of “witnessing” to a possessing of “knowledge”—has confirmed the tendency of “everyday” Dasein to obscure the existential priority of “self-testimony” conveyed by the Heideggerian *bezeugen*. In valuing testimony that is mediated by “objective” detachment and reserve, the tradition of *conscientia* covers up the primordial sense of remembering that was originally conveyed by both the Greek *martus* and the German *Gewissen*: the *producing* of testimony that attests to one’s *care* for authenticity and refuses to submit to the “they.”

In interpreting the experience of *Gewissen* as the martyr's "self-testimony," our investigation also shows how the "attestation" of Heidegger's *bezeugen* can be understood as the disclosing experience of Dasein's bearing witness to authentic existence. The experience of attesting is constituted by the existential phenomena of *remembering* and *indicating*: the enactment of Dasein's "attestation" as Being-towards-death reveals their authentic unity. In his article "The Self and Its Witness," Christopher Fynsk attempts to disclose the original sense of "witness" that he finds in *Being and Time*:

[If] in Being-with [or Being-*amidst*] Dasein is already guilty towards another, this means that Dasein is something like the cause of another's Being as guilty, and is thus fundamentally bound up in the other's essence. And it is perhaps here that the term "witness" appears most appropriate, for in German, the first meaning of "*zeugen*" (the word used to describe the caller's act of attestation), before "witness," is "engender."¹⁰¹²

With his insight regarding the relation between Being-*amidst* and *bezeugen*, Fynsk contributes positively to our effort to understand the *experience* of *Gewissen* as "self-testimony," but he unfortunately does not follow through on this point in his essay. Fynsk concludes his analysis without proposing a way of understanding the "first meaning" or "origin" of Heidegger's "attestation."

Let us immediately take up this unfinished task to see if Heidegger's notion of *bezeugen* might indeed confirm how "witnessing" can be understood as the "productive" act of Dasein's coming into existence as "guilty" Being-*amidst*. The literal meaning of the Proto Indo-European root *dewk-* of Heidegger's *bezeugen* is "to pull," whose meaning expanded over time to other notions of power and authority: "to lead," "to engender," and "to produce."¹⁰¹³ The meaning of the German "witness," *Zeuge*, thus finds its origin in the sense of *producing* testimony, of "disclosing" by "pulling" into view. Heidegger's *bezeugen* literally represents the act of *bearing* witness, of "disclosing" by "pulling" into view, of leading Dasein back the authentic place of its "struggle" as Being-*amidst* projected

¹⁰¹² Fynsk. "The Self and Its Witness: On Heidegger's *Being and Time*." p. 198.

¹⁰¹³ Pokorny. *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*. pp. 220-221.

into the world and burdened with essential guilt.¹⁰¹⁴ In this experience of *bearing* witness, Dasein bears responsibility for itself and for others “*amidst*” the world: the resolute silence of authentic Being-in-the-world is the testimony of one who has chosen to accept the “self-sacrifice” of Being-a-martyr.

When we recognize Heidegger’s interpretation of conscience as the way of enacting Dasein’s authentic “self-testimony,” we find ourselves in the position of being able to indicate the possibility of an “experience” that can overcome Being-in-the-world’s tendency to disperse itself in the ambiguity of public discourse. By searching for a way to “formally indicate” such a possibility, our study has—on the basis of the original sense of *Gewissen* rooted in the act of witnessing—revealed a way of understanding this call to authenticity as an ontical “experience”: Dasein’s encounter with the silent other facing martyrdom.

As Heidegger notes in *Being and Time*, the event of the other’s “passing” cannot inform Dasein in any way about one’s own death. However, can we not understand the silent resoluteness of the martyr *facing* death as something quite different than the factual “death” of another person? The “hearing” of the “silent call” that is essential to Heidegger’s interpretation of conscience cannot be related to the mere fact that a martyr’s lifeless corpse can be “objectively” described as “silent.” From the existential perspective of *Being and Time*, the authentic “silence” of Being-towards-death is communicated instead by the reticent martyr’s *choosing* to face death and accept the sentence of “silence” rather than acquiescing to the profane discourse of the “they.” The existential “silence” of the martyr

¹⁰¹⁴ The meaning of “to pull, to lead, to engender” conveyed by the PIE root *dewk-* at the heart of the German words *bezeugen* and *Zeuge* recalls the sense of the verb *tragen*, “to carry,” which Derrida notably focused on in his analysis of Heidegger’s description of “hearing voice of the friend whom every Dasein carries with it (*als Hören der Stimme des Freundes, der jedes Dasein bei sich trägt*).” SZ §34, 163 / 206. Reflecting on the French translation of *tragen* as *porter*, Derrida notes several implications of Heidegger’s describing the “friend’s voice” as something Dasein “carries” in it. Cf. Jacques Derrida. “L’oreille de Heidegger : Philopolémologie (*Geschlecht IV*) ” *Politiques de l’amitié ; suivi de L’oreille de Heidegger*. (Paris: Galilée, 1994). pp. 347ff. Most notably, Derrida observes that Heidegger’s schema (or choice of words) seems to eliminate the possibility of an encounter with the friend because 1) this friend is reduced to just a voice and 2) this voice only exists because it is carried within Dasein itself. While Derrida offers a very extensive “semantic” interpretation of *tragen* in his analysis of Heidegger’s phrase, he does not mention that its Proto Indo-European root is *tragh-*, meaning “to pull, to drag on the ground, to bear.” (Indeed, this root is also that of the English word “drag.”) Cf. Pokorny. *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*. pp. 1089-1090.

does not originate in—nor even require—the event of the “physical death” of the other. What is essential for Dasein’s experience of the “call of conscience” is the martyr’s active refusal to heed the authority of the “they”—a decision that can potentially free others for their own martyrdom. In hearing the martyr’s “call,” Dasein recognizes the other’s stance as the resoluteness of Being-towards-death willing to risk the utmost penalty in order to preserve his or her authenticity. In this sense, can we not conceive of the silence of the witness who willingly faces “death” as a privileged form of the “call of conscience” which can pull Dasein out of the rhetorical banter of the “they” and back to one’s ownmost possibilities? While the death of the other may appear “meaningless” to Dasein when observed in the mode of “everydayness,” the “resoluteness” of the martyr represents a very different phenomenon and can be understood otherwise: the martyr’s stance can be interpreted as testimony of one’s possibility of authentic Being-*amidst*. If conscience is indeed related to what Heidegger describes as “hearing the voice of the friend whom every Dasein carries with it,”¹⁰¹⁵ then this “friend” can be understood as the authentic witness of one’s Being-towards-death. In hearing the friend’s “voice,” what Dasein hears is the “indefinite (*unbestimmt*)” yet “incontestable (*unbestreitbar*)”¹⁰¹⁶ echo of the martyr’s silent testimony.

Understood existentially, the “voice of the friend” represents the call of Being-*amidst* that finds its source in a possibility of Dasein itself. The “call of conscience” can be described to be simultaneously calling from beyond, from afar and from within because it calls *from the shared world* to Being-*amidst*.¹⁰¹⁷ This existential call indicates the possibility of an authentic encounter with the other through one’s own resoluteness: it invites Dasein to experience the *amidst* of this shared world. The attestation of Being-towards-death through which Dasein experiences its own wholeness also represents the unique way of experiencing an authentic encounter with the other.

¹⁰¹⁵ SZ §34, 163 / 206.

¹⁰¹⁶ SZ §56, 272 / 317.

¹⁰¹⁷ SZ §57, 275 / 320.

With this paradoxical interpretation of Dasein's authentic "care" enacted through the experience of the martyr's silent "self-attestation," our study of Heidegger's "call of conscience" has arrived at the limits of communicable discourse that formal indication ultimately cannot overcome. As stressed by Heidegger in his interpretation of the essential ambiguity of *logos*,¹⁰¹⁸ there is no "absolute" source of meaning that can be assertively established using worldly language to convey the experience of conscience. Furthermore, the act of martyrdom itself inevitably depends upon—and falls back into—the interpretation of existence understood in "public" and "assertive" terms. While we can interpret the "silence" of the martyr as a sublime "call" to authenticity, the conviction of the martyr is necessarily founded on his or her relative understanding of worldly existence that cannot be severed from "everydayness." As Ricoeur observes, "the argument of the martyr is always suspect" because the basis for his or her "absolute" confidence cannot be shared.¹⁰¹⁹ How then can Dasein experience conscience authentically if it is unable to recognize the other as a "legitimate" martyr who has resolved to keep "silent" in the face of death? While the "call of conscience" may be assigned the pivotal role of "attesting" Dasein's possible authenticity, there can be no assurance that Dasein—mired in the worldly concerns of the "they"—will correctly identify the authentic "silence" of the martyr. Moreover, Heidegger's account of Being-in-the-world clearly indicates that Dasein will revert to its "assertive" ways of understanding the martyr's sacrifice as it attempts to plug the disturbing void of "silent reticence" with judgmental statements regarding the martyr's "cause" and the "value" of such acts of "self-sacrifice."¹⁰²⁰

¹⁰¹⁸ SZ §33, 159-160 / 201-203.

¹⁰¹⁹ Ricoeur. "L'herméneutique du témoignage." p. 116.

¹⁰²⁰ Six years after the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger himself—in his role as newly appointed Rector of the University of Freiburg—would demonstrate how the "experience" of martyrdom is essentially mediated by rhetoric. On May 26, 1933, Heidegger participated in a commemorative ceremony marking the tenth anniversary of the execution of Albert Leo Schlageter, a young veteran of the First World War, former Freiburg student and radical nationalist who was killed near Düsseldorf by a French firing squad for his involvement in acts of sabotage against the occupying forces. After Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany in January 1933, Nazi officials had mounted a major propaganda effort to capitalize on Schlageter's fate as "the first Nazi martyr." At the Freiburg event, Heidegger proclaimed to the students and faculty: "As he stood defenseless facing the rifles, the hero's inner gaze (*der innere Blick des Helden*) soared above the muzzles to the daylight and mountains of his home that he might die for the German people and its Reich with the Alemanic countryside before his eyes. With a hard will and a clear heart, Albert Leo Schlageter died

Notwithstanding the paradox of the necessarily “assertive” character of any worldly experience of martyrdom, our investigation has exhibited how Heidegger’s existential “call of conscience” can be understood as the experience of witnessing the martyr’s “silence,” thereby providing an attestation of Dasein’s possible authenticity. While Heidegger’s phenomenological approach does not allow for the production of a fixed “definition” of conscience, the enactment of one’s hearing the disturbing “self-testimony” of the martyr reveals a way for the existential phenomena constitutive of authentic Dasein to come together as a “whole”: the possibility of this hearing allows Dasein to return from its dispersal *amidst* the “they” in experiencing the silence of authentic Being-towards-death.

As our study has documented, Heidegger struggles at various points in *Being and Time* to preserve the wholeness of Dasein while continuing to respect his principle regarding the equiprimordiality of Dasein’s existential structures. In taking up the problem of conscience where Heidegger “left off,” we have attempted to show how Heidegger’s “call of conscience” can be understood to produce the required attestation of Dasein’s authentic wholeness that grounds his existential investigation. As we have shown, the “call of conscience” can be seen to provide such an attestation but only if we accept (or “remember”) that Dasein is both *Being-amidst* and *Being-towards-death in a world it shares with others*. With his interpretation of conscience as Dasein’s experience of “self-testimony,” Heidegger resists the need to posit a metaphysical “absolute” and thus avoids adopting the kind of speculative, theological solution to the problem of conscience that is exemplified by Stoker’s notion of *synteresis* in *Das Gewissen*. Yet in denying the involvement of a divine or external power such as that proposed by Stoker, Heidegger finds

his death, the most difficult and the greatest of all. (*Harten Willens und klaren Herzens starb Albert Leo Schlageter seinen Tod, den schwersten und größten.*) Student of Freiburg, let the strength of this hero’s native mountains flow into your will! Student of Freiburg, let the strength of the autumn sun of this hero’s native valley shine into your heart!” Martin Heidegger. “Political Texts, 1933-1934.” trans. William S. Lewis. *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*. ed. Richard Wolin. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993). pp. 40-41. While the existential “silence” of martyrdom may provide an attestation of Dasein’s *possibility* of authentic experience, as our study has attempted to show, this “experience” of martyrdom also reveals the essentially rhetorical—*ethical* and also *problematical*—character of “*understanding the appeal*” which Heidegger identifies with “*wanting to have a conscience.*” SZ §58, 288 / 334. For more regarding the appropriation of Schlageter’s “martyrdom” by the Nazi movement, cf. Jay W. Baird. *To Die for Germany: Heroes in the Nazi Pantheon*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). pp. 13-40.

himself confronted with the basic problem facing any “philosophy of testimony”: based on what “authority” can one determine the source and sense of any attestation of experience? As Heidegger states in §54 of *Being and Time*, his interpretation of authentic existence requires a way of understanding how the “call of conscience” can be experienced as an attestation by Being-*in-the-world*. In exhibiting Dasein’s possibility of experiencing the silent resoluteness of the martyr, our study has attempted to indicate just such a way.

Conclusion

Our study has focused on the methodological role that Heidegger assigns to the “call of conscience” in *Being and Time* and attempted to understand how he came to interpret this phenomenon as the means of providing an “attestation” of Dasein’s possible experience of authenticity. Our first task was to examine how the phenomenon of conscience emerged as a concept in Heidegger’s work leading up to the existential-ontological investigation of *Being and Time*. We showed that Heidegger’s references to the concept of *Gewissen* in his published texts and course transcripts prior to the publication of *Being and Time* reveal what he consistently sought to distinguish a primordial phenomenon of conscience from the moral notion of *conscientia*, which he associated with the presupposed “ought” underlying traditional metaphysics. While there are only eight references to conscience in Heidegger’s extant work produced prior to his completion of the manuscript of *Being and Time*, these remarks regarding this phenomenon—all very brief and undeveloped—nonetheless indicate a progression in his understanding of its importance for his approach to phenomenological investigation. By the summer of 1925, Heidegger had complemented his criticism of the traditional notion of *conscientia* with a sketch of *Gewissen* as an existential concept: “the phenomenon of willing to have a conscience” was identified as essential to Dasein’s “choosing itself” and coming into “absolute resoluteness” in “running forward toward its death.”¹⁰²¹ Yet while Heidegger had determined conscience to be essential for his existential approach, our review showed that it was not until *Being and Time* that he heralded the pivotal methodological role of conscience as the “attesting” phenomenon that confirms Dasein’s possibility of authentic existence. In this regard, we showed that it was only after Heidegger had completed the first full draft of *Being and Time* that we find conscience described in his work as a “call.”

¹⁰²¹ GA 20, §35, 440-441 / 319.

Seeking to identify the potential influences that might have led Heidegger to understand conscience as an existential “call,” we examined the philosophical sources that Heidegger mentioned with regard to his interpretation of conscience in *Being and Time*. This allowed us to reveal the significance of Heidegger’s encounter with a 1925 book entitled *Das Gewissen* that was written by Hendrik G. Stoker, a South African philosopher and theologian who completed his doctoral studies at Cologne under the direction of Max Scheler. Our analysis showed that Stoker’s book—the only source that Heidegger acknowledges as having positively contributed to his own understanding of conscience¹⁰²²—influenced the existential interpretation of the “call of conscience” in a variety of ways. From a practical standpoint, Stoker advanced Heidegger’s project by providing the author of *Being and Time* with a “destructive” review of a wide range of philosophical and theological theories of conscience that had been proposed since the pre-Socratic era. While Heidegger explicitly criticized the historical review found in *Das Gewissen* for its incompleteness, our analysis showed that his interpretation of conscience in *Being and Time* relied strictly on sources that Stoker had already examined in his thesis dedicated to exposing the “artificial” notion of the judging *conscientia*,¹⁰²³ a notion which the South African felt had corrupted all “genuine” understanding of the phenomenon of conscience “in its true depth.”¹⁰²⁴ Our analysis highlighted the importance of Stoker’s description of the experience of conscience as a “call-of-duty (*Pflichtruf*)”¹⁰²⁵ for the emergence of Heidegger’s own existential description of the “call of conscience (*Gewissensruf*).”¹⁰²⁶ Although the Heideggerian approach implies a rejection of the theological content of Stoker’s interpretation, we established evident similarities between Stoker’s description of the “call-of-duty” that concerns the preservation of the wholeness of a person’s faith and Heidegger’s existential “call of care”¹⁰²⁷: most notably, both thinkers insisted that the “call” conveys no “worldly” content and relates strictly to the existential

¹⁰²² SZ, Footnote to §55, 272 / 495 (note vi).

¹⁰²³ Stoker. *Das Gewissen*. p. 30.

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid. pp. xii-xiii.

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid. p. 276.

¹⁰²⁶ SZ §56, 272 / 317.

¹⁰²⁷ SZ §57, 274 / 319.

unity and wholeness of the one to whom the call is addressed. We also pointed out the significance of Stoker's interpretation of the phenomenon of *synteresis*—the Christian notion of a “divine spark” placed in each person's soul—for our study of the Heideggerian concept of conscience. Although Heidegger never mentioned the term *synteresis* and its important place in the Scholastic debates regarding *conscientia*, we argued that Stoker's identification of *synteresis* as the phenomenological key to understanding conscience served to highlight the problem of the “absolute” in *Being and Time*. Our comparison of Stoker's account of *synteresis* with Heidegger's existential interpretation of conscience illustrated how the problematic “attestation” of Dasein's authenticity at the heart of *Being and Time* seems to require an “absolute source,” notwithstanding Heidegger's refusal to posit one. In exploring this question, we observed that Scheler—who was the editor of Stoker's *Das Gewissen*—was one of the first thinkers to point out this problem of the “absolute” in Heidegger's work when he argued that the “call of conscience” involves an evident solipsism because Dasein is presented as the “source” of its own “attestation.”¹⁰²⁸

Based on our review of the evolution of Heidegger's understanding of conscience prior to *Being and Time*, we considered the pivotal role of the “call of conscience” in the methodological structure of *Being and Time* and exhibited how it serves the means of producing the necessary “attestation” of authentic existence. Conducting a section-by-section review of §§54-60 (the so-called “conscience chapter”) of *Being and Time*, we showed that his recognition of conscience as the experience of hearing a “call” allowed Heidegger to explain how Dasein—despite its “everyday” tendency of “falling” into the concerns of the anonymous “they”—has the possibility of “recovering” its unity and existing authentically, thus making it accessible for existential investigation as a “whole” phenomenon. As Heidegger himself noted, however, his strictly *existential* interpretation of conscience as a “call” was not enough: the phenomenological investigation of *Being and Time* must also furnish a demonstration of how Dasein can *experience* the “call of conscience.” In other words, the “attestation” of Dasein's authentic mode of existence must be shown to be a possible experience of Being-in-the-world. Our study confirmed that

¹⁰²⁸ Scheler. “Reality and Resistance: On *Being and Time*, § 43.” p. 135.

Heidegger's interpretation of conscience—which focused on distinguishing his “call of conscience” from the ordinary notion of conscience as a moral phenomenon—does not fulfill this requirement of “demonstrating” how Dasein can possibly *experience* the “summons”¹⁰²⁹ that “comes *from me* and yet *from beyond me and over me.*”¹⁰³⁰ However, our insistence on the methodological role of conscience in *Being and Time* also allowed us to identify a way of reconsidering this problem of the missing “attestation”: we established a possible link between the “call of conscience” and Heidegger's notion of formal indication, the innovative phenomenological “method” that the young philosopher had developed in Freiburg and Marburg prior to writing *Being and Time*. To test this relationship between conscience and formal indication, we considered how the experience of Heidegger's existential call was informed by what is formally indicated by four phenomena that he identifies as being essential to Dasein's authentic mode of existence: discourse, truth, solicitude and anticipation. While our review of these existential concepts failed to disclose how the “attestation” of conscience can be *experienced*, these four “clues” allowed us to identify a number of conditions that are necessary for any such experience of Dasein's authentic “wholeness”: 1) conscience implies an experience of “silent” discourse, 2) the “truth” conveyed by conscience implies an experience of enactment in resoluteness, 3) the relation between conscience and the phenomenon of “positive solicitude” implies an experience of authentically encountering the other, and 4) the association of anticipation and conscience implies that the “call” authentically exposes Dasein to itself as Being-towards-death.

Guided by these necessary conditions of authentic existence, we finally examined the most “direct” of the formal indication's of Heidegger's concept of conscience: the German word *Gewissen*. Adopting the methodological principles espoused by the early Heidegger, we showed how the etymology of the German term for conscience can allow us to point to a way that Dasein can *experience* the existential call and thereby produce the necessary “attestation” of its authenticity. Following what Heidegger described as the basic

¹⁰²⁹ SZ §56, 273 / 318.

¹⁰³⁰ SZ §57, 275 / 320.

steps of phenomenological investigation,¹⁰³¹ we conducted a “phenomenological-critical destruction”¹⁰³² of the “ordinary” notion of conscience defined as a moral concept that exposed the historical error underlying the widespread belief that *Gewissen* is simply a German translation of the word *conscientia*. Our research revealed that the etymological roots of *conscientia* are unrelated to those of the German word: *Gewissen* has a history that dates back well beyond the 10th century when an anonymous monk at St. Gall first used this term as a translation of *conscientia*. Moreover, our research identified an “original” and very different meaning of the word *Gewissen* that is found in the oldest preserved text produced in the German language: the 8th century *Codex Abrogans*. In this manuscript, the earliest appearance of *Gewissen* is identified as the translation of the Latin word *testimonium*, which literally means “attestation.” With this discovery, our investigation revealed that the first extant document containing evidence of the German term for conscience indicates that its original meaning is directly related to the function of “attestation”—the very function that Heidegger assigned to his existential “call of conscience” in *Being and Time*. Of course, the discovery of this ancient “definition” of *Gewissen* remains insufficient: Heidegger’s phenomenological “method” demands a way of understanding how Dasein can enact this “attestation” in its experience as Being-in-the-world. Examining the connection between *testimonium* and the experience of Heideggerian conscience, we responded to this requirement by showing how the formal indication of the attesting “call of conscience” implied an experience of encountering the other as Being-towards-death. This experience can be understood as Dasein’s hearing the “silence” of the other who faces martyrdom.

¹⁰³¹ GA 59, §5d, 41 / 29.

¹⁰³² GA 59, §5, 29 / 21.

Appendices

Appendix A:

Vortrag gehalten von Prof. Martin Heidegger am Pfingstmontag 1926 in Marburg vor der Akademischen Vereinigung

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Appendix B:

Image of Page 120 of the *Codex Abrogans*

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Appendix C:

Image of Page 189 of the *Codex Abrogans*

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Appendix A:***Vortrag gehalten von Prof. Martin Heidegger am Pfingstmontag 1926 in Marburg vor der Akademischen Vereinigung***

The following 11 pages contain a reproduction of the typescript prepared by Ernst Fuchs of Heidegger's address on the topic of "truth" to the Marburg Academic Association on May 24, 1926. This document represents the first extant record of Heidegger publicly describing the phenomenon of conscience in terms of "calling" (see pages 8-9 of the transcript).

We were provided access to this document—which has not yet been published in German—by the Stevenson Library of Bard College (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY), holder of the *Hannah Arendt Collection*. This copy of the transcript was found among the pages contained in one of Arendt's personal folders which also includes the transcript of Heidegger's course "Interpretationen Aus Der Antiken Philosophie: Aristoteles. Metaphysik. Buch Theta. Zweistündige Vorlesung im Sommer-Semester 1931."

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(<http://www.bard.edu/library/arendt/pdfs/Heidegger-Interpretations2.pdf>.)

Vortrag gehalten von Prof. Martin Heidegger
am Pfingstmontag 1926 in Marburg vor der Akademischen Vereinigung.

Pfingsten, das Fest des Geistes, der Kraft und Wahrheit, verlangt zu seiner Feier, daß wir nicht Beliebiges erörtern. Nicht beliebig in einem ursprünglich Sinn ist das, wonach uns dieses Dasein von sich aus drängt. Das Dasein hat einen inneren Zug nach Wahrheit. Wahrheit aber ist das eigenste Ziel der Wissenschaft. Die Akademische Vereinigung hat nicht nur tatsächlich einen Bezug zur Universität, sondern es gehört zu ihr selbst die ständige Besinnung auf die ausdrückliche Bemühung um ein lebendiges Verhältnis zur Wissenschaft und zur Wahrheit. Solche Bemühung bedarf des Leitfadens, der gesicherten Idee des Zieles, auf das alle Forschung und Lehre zielt. Die Besinnung selbst aber im Sinne der wirklichen Auseinandersetzung des Einzelnen und seines Verhältnisses zu Studium und Universität wird hier nicht erörtert: ihr darf auch nicht vorgegriffen werden. Sie muß offen bleiben und eigenste Sache Ihrer Gemeinschaft sein. Offen muß auch bleiben der Horizont, unter Vorgabe dessen sie sich vollzieht. Diesen Horizont etwas zu klären habe ich mir zur Aufgabe gemacht, zu klären das Wesen der Wahrheit.

Das verlangt, daß wir Frage und Antwort im wissenschaftlichen Gespräch uns näher bringen. Die eisige Luft der kalten Besinnung und Überlegung, die Härte und Notwendigkeit des Begriffs ist das Eine. Die sonnige Heiterkeit von Spiel und Tanz, das freie Ungefähr und das Schwebende des Sich-Findens und -Gebens ist das andere. Beides ist unser Dasein. Beides birgt dieses Fest und beides trägt seine Feier. Beides muß von Ihnen verwahrt bleiben als Symbol Ihrer Gemeinschaft.

Unserer Betrachtungen handeln vom Wesen der Wahrheit.

Dieses Thema bedarf einer genauen Umgrenzung. Das Problem, das ihm zugrunde liegt, verlangt eine vorläufige Kennzeichnung. Die Betrachtung selbst bedarf einer Orientierung ihres Ganges, Vorzeichnung der Folge ihrer einzelnen Schritte. Wir fragen nach dem Wesen der Wahrheit, danach, was sie selbst sei. Diese Nachforschung nach dem Wesen der Wahrheit richtet sich also nicht auf bestimmte Wahrheiten, wir fragen nicht etwa nach einem wahren und echten Leben, nicht nach der Wahrheit des Glaubens, nicht nach wahren Sätzen von bestimmten Wissenschaften. Die Frage steht vielmehr nach dem, was allein Wahrheiten als Wahrheiten bestimmt. Was ist der Sinn der Wahrheit eines wahren Lebens. Untersuchen wir demnach das Eigentliche der Wahrheit eines mathematischen Satzes, das Charakteristische der Wahrheit des Glaubens! Mit solchen Fragen suchen wir allerdings keine bestimmten Wahrheiten, sondern wir fragen nach dem Wahrheitscharakter dieser Wahrheiten. Wir verlangen jetzt ein Verständnis von verschiedenen Wahrheitsformen. Was besagt Lebenswahrheit als solche, Glaubenswahrheit als solche, mathematische Wahrheit als solche? Wir fragen nicht nach Wahrheiten, sondern nach Modifikationen der Wahrheit, Wenn wir so fragen, nach der Wahrheit als solcher und ihren Modifikationen, dann setzen wir immer noch die

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Idee Wahrheit überhaupt voraus, die sich modifiziert zu praktischen, theoretischen, Glaubenswahrheiten. Was macht die Wahrheit zu dem, was sie ist? Nach der Wahrheit überhaupt suchen wir. Das ist eine höchst allgemeine Frage. Wo und wie können wir so etwas wie Wahrheit überhaupt finden, wo wird dergleichen faßbar, daß wir es bestimmen und den zu gewinnenden Begriff in seinem Recht ausweisen können? In der Diskussion einer so allgemeinen Frage wird die Luft dünn. Aber diese Fragen haben ihre eigene Atmosphäre, sie verlangen daher auch eigene Betrachtung und Forschung. Wenn der Begriff Wahrheit kein Phantom bleiben soll, eine Erfindung der Philosophie, sondern ausweisbar ist an dem, was Wahrheit ist, dann muß es einen Weg geben, sich an die Wahrheit selbst und ihr Wesen heranzuarbeiten, womit nicht gesagt ist, daß wir den rechten Weg einschlagen. Das Wesentliche dabei ist, daß Sie das Ganze der Frage nach der Wahrheit in den Hauptzügen sehen.

Wir fragen nach der Wahrheit überhaupt, wie sie ihrem Wesen nach sei, und noch nicht nach Wahrheiten. Ist in der Tat die Sache so bestellt? Suchen wir nicht doch nach Wahrheiten, nach wahren Aussagen über das Wesen der Wahrheit selbst, nach Kriterien wahrer Erkenntnis von der Idee Wahrheit? Offensichtlich! Wir suchen Wahrheiten, bestimmte Sätze, Aussagen, die Aufschluß geben über das Gesuchte. Aber diese philosophischen Wahrheiten, die wir suchen, werden bei dieser Betrachtung nicht Thema der Untersuchung, sondern sie werden nur insofern Wahrheit, als wir in der Untersuchung bleiben, sofern diese die Auszeichnung hat, daß sie nämlich mit dem, wonach sie fragt, bezogen ist auf das Fragen selbst, sofern es Wahrheit sucht. Man hat für diese eigentümliche Rückbezogenheit den Ausdruck, daß wir in diesen Fragen nach dem Wesen der Wahrheit voraussetzen, daß wir bestimmte Wahrheiten, philosophische Wahrheiten, voraussetzen, ja voraussetzen, es gibt so etwas wie Wahrheit. Wie ist es mit dieser Voraussetzung bestellt, besteht sie zurecht? Was besagt es denn: "Es gibt" Wahrheit? Was ist der Sinn dieses "es gibt"? Gibt es sie wie Berge, Häuser oder wie gibt es sie denn? In welcher Weise ist oder sind die Wahrheiten? Wo ist Wahrheit und wo sind Wahrheiten gleichsam beheimatet? Die Besinnung auf das Wesen der Wahrheit schließt in sich die Frage nach dem Sein der Wahrheit und die Frage, warum vorausgesetzt werden muß, daß es Wahrheit gibt und was der Sinn dieser Voraussetzung sei. So konzentriert sich das Problem darauf: Was ist Wahrheit und in welcher Weise ist Wahrheit.

Das Problem der Wahrheitsvoraussetzung und ihres Sinnes wird von altersher in der Philosophie berührt und zwar im Zusammenhang mit der Widerlegung des Skeptizismus. Was aber völlig übersehen wird, ist, daß die Bestimmung der Wahrheit die Frage nach dem Wesen der Wahrheit selbst in sich enthält. Aus dieser Frage wird deutlich, warum Wahrheit so ist, daß wir immer schon voraussetzen müssen. Die Erörterung der Art ihres Seins gehört also notwendig zu der Frage der Wahrheit. Die Philosophie und die Wissenschaft hat in ihren ersten Anfängen noch nicht nach der Wahrheit selbst gefragt. Es liegt im Zuge der alltäglichen Erfahrungen, daß sie nach dem fragt, was ihr zunächst zugänglich ist.

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Eigentümliche Rückwendung auf das Forschen und Fragen ist verlangt. Aber damit ist nicht gesagt, daß ihr das Verständnis der Wahrheit fehlt. So sehen wir z.B. im Lehrgedicht des Parmenides eine zwar nicht Theoretische, aber doch allgemeine Besinnung auf die Wahrheit. Sie selbst wird als Göttin angerufen, als die Leiterin auf dem Wege des Forschens. (In der Übersetzung vorgelesen)

So hat den Parmenides die Wahrheit geführt auf dem Wege, auf dem er die fundamentalste Entdeckung machte, die in der Wissenschaft je gemacht wurde: Das Seiende ist, das Nichtseiende ist nicht. Plato entdeckte, daß auch das Nichtseiende sei, daß auch das Böse und das Unwahre und Schlechte sei. Obzwar er sich anfangs sperrte, mußte er zum Mörder seines Vaters werden und mußte die These: Das Seiende ist, und das Nichtseiende ist nicht, revidieren. Was liegt aber darin? Nichts anderes als daß die Göttin der Wahrheit den Parmenides zur Unwahrheit führte, genauer gesprochen, daß sie ihm verhüllte, daß auch die Unwahrheit als das Nicht-Seiende ist, daß sie ihm verhüllte, daß sie selbst als Wahrheit zugleich die Möglichkeit der Unwahrheit ist.

So hat es etwas Rätselhaftes um das, was wir Wahrheit nennen, Wir wollen versuchen das Rätsel zwar nicht zu lösen aber es zu verstehen.

Diese Aufgabe zerfällt in zwei Teile:

1. Die Ausarbeitung des Begriffs von Wahrheit überhaupt
2. Die Darlegung des Seins der Wahrheit und der Notwendigkeit der Wahrheitvoraussetzung

I.

Wir gehen auf einem Umwege vor. Wir beginnen nicht direkt mit der Charakteristik des eigentlichen Wesens der Wahrheit, weil eine solche Betrachtung methodisch zu hohe Anforderungen stellte. Wir nehmen den Ausgang bei dem traditionellen Wahrheitsbegriff. Wir fragen war von früh an und immer noch mit gewissem Recht unter Wahrheit verstanden wird. Was im traditionellen Wahrheitsbegriff zur Bestimmung kommt, führen wir auf ursprünglichere Fundamente zurück, aus denen der Sinn des traditionellen Wahrheitsbegriffes verständlich werden muß. Der traditionelle Wahrheitsbegriff ist abgeleitete Modifikation des ursprünglichen Begriff. Der Zusammenhang von beiden muß heraustreten.

1. Kennzeichnung des traditionellen Wahrheitsbegriffes
2. Rückgang auf seine Fundamente
3. Die Bestimmung des ursprünglichen Wahrheitsbegriffes aus seinen Fundamenten.
4. Der Nachweis der Herkunft des traditionellen Wahrheitsbegriffes aus dem Ursprünglichen.

Ad. 1. Die Kennzeichnung des traditionellen Wahrheitsbegriffes. Es zeigen sich zwei Charaktere: a) der Ort der Wahrheit ist die Aussage von etwas über etwas, der Logos, oder wie man in der neuzeitlichen Logik sagt, das Urteil, und die Urteile sind von Haus aus wahr oder falsch. Im Urteil ist die Wahrheit beheimatet. Diese These ist Gemeinplatz geworden, man beruft sich mit ihr auf Aristoteles, den Vater der Logik. b) Wahrheit ist die Übereinstimmung des Urteils mit dem Gegenstand, Übereinstimmung der Erkenntnis

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mit dem Seienden, das erkannt wird. Aristoteles de Int.

Die mittelalterliche Philosophie, die in weitem Ausmaß die unausgesprochene Grundlage für die neuzeitliche Philosophie abgibt, übernahm diese Überlieferung 1) durch Boethius (Arist.Kom.) 2) durch die Araber. In lateinischer Prägung allgemein bekannt geworden ist die Formel: veritas est adaequatio intellectus et rei (Buch d. Def. d. Israel D'Israeli, dann auch durch die Araber zu Thomas) Statt adaequatio auch convenientia. In der üblichen Charakteristik pflegt man mit Descartes einen Einschnitt zu machen. Eine neue Philosophie beginne mit Descartes, das Prinzip des Bewußtseins oder des Subjekts werde eingeführt. Erkennbar ist demnach nur, was im Bewußtsein gegeben ist, nicht die Objekte außerhalb des Bewußtseins. Das Erkennen übersteigt nicht die Schranke des Bewußtseins selbst, sondern nur was im Bewußtsein ist, ist erkennbar. Kant hat diesen Ansatz radikalisiert und den neuen Erkenntnisbegriff geschaffen, er vollzog die sog. Kopernikanische Wendung in der Philosophie. Seit Kopernikus wissen wir, daß die Erde um die Sonne geht: So hat auch Kant gezeigt, daß das Erkennen sich nicht nach den Gegenständen, sondern die Gegenstände sich nach dem Erkennen richten. Auf den rechten Sinn dieser These Kants können wir hier nicht eingehen. Die Frage ist, wie faßt Kant das Wesen der Wahrheit? Wie bestimmt er dieses Wesen in dem Werk, das diese Kopernikanische Wendung zur Tat gemacht haben soll, in der Kr.d.r.V.2. Aufl.P.82: "Die alte und berühmte Frage, womit man die Logiker in die Enge zu treiben vermeint ist diese, was ist Wahrheit?"..... Daß sie Übereinstimmung der Erkenntnis mit ihrem Gegenstande sei, wird hier geschenkt und vorausgesetzt." Vergl. dazu Einl. z. trans. Logik: "Wahrheit und Schein sind nicht im Gegenstande sondern im Urteil über denselben, sofern er gedacht wird!" Also auch Kant hält am traditionellen Wahrheitsbegriff fest, so deutlich, daß er ihn erst gar nicht zur Diskussion stellt, sondern ihn einfach voraussetzt.

Ad 2. Rückgang auf seine Fundamente. Was heißt, wir suchen den Rückgang auf die Fundamente? Wir suchen freizulegen, worauf Wahrheit als Übereinstimmung von Erkenntnis mit den Dingen beruht. Was ist notwendig mitgemeint und mitgesetzt? Um diese Fundamente zu sehen, bedarf es eingänglicher Charakteristik dessen, was hier als Wahrheit gesetzt ist: Wahrheit ist Übereinstimmung von etwas mit etwas! Aber wie? Etwas ist so, wie (die Sache selbst), also allgemeiner Charakter einer Beziehung (von etwas auf etwas, Erkenntnis auf die Sache). Wahrheit ist eine Beziehung. Aber nicht jede Beziehung ist Übereinstimmung. Ein Zeichen z.B. ein Wegweiser zeigt auf das Gezeigte. Dieses Zeigen des Zeichens ist Beziehung auf das Gezeigte, aber das Zeigen als Beziehung ist in keiner Weise Übereinstimmung (der Wegweiser stimmt nicht überein mit dem Dorf, das er zeigt). Mit Wahrheit als einer Beziehung ist also im Grunde noch nichts gesagt. Was für eine Beziehung ist die Übereinstimmung? Nicht jede Übereinstimmung ist die, die wir mit Übereinstimmung von Erkenntnis mit den Dingen meinen. 6 stimmt überein mit 16 - 10, hat hier eine Übereinstimmung im Sinne der Gleichung

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Im Hinblick auf das Wieviel. Gleichheit ist Übereinstimmung, Wahrheit aber als Übereinstimmung der Erkenntnis mit Gegenständen besagt nicht Gleichheit. Diese Tafel ist schwarz: dieses Urteil stimmt überein mit dem Ding, so besagt diese Übereinstimmung nicht, das Urteil ist gleich mit der schwarzen Tafel. Was für eine Übereinstimmung ist es denn, die hier in der Wahrheitsbeziehung vorliegt? Nicht Gleichheit oder Ähnlichkeit oder Entsprechung oder Angemessenheit, adaequatio? Aber auch diese Titel sind unbestimmt genug. Der Schlüssel paßt zum Schloß, er ist ihm angemessen, stimmt mit ihm überein, aber der übereinstimmende Schlüssel ist als Angemessenheit an das Schloß nicht die Wahrheit über das Schloß, wengleich wir sprechen von einem falschen Schlüssel bzw. von einem rechten und wahren.

Wir kommen so lange nicht weiter, als wir nicht zugleich ^{das} in den Blick nehmen, wozwischen diese Beziehung als Wahrheitsbeziehung steht. Die Beziehung zwischen Erkenntnis und Gegenstand ist es, was die Wahrheitsbeziehung charakterisiert. Aber wenn wir darauf reflektieren, kommen wir erst in die eigentliche Schwierigkeit. Erkenntnis, Übereinstimmung ist doch ein Verhalten der Seele, des Geistes, des Bewußtseins, es ist etwas im Subjekt. Der Gegenstand, das Ding, ist das Objekt außerhalb des Bewußtseins, jenseits des Inneren der Seele. Wie soll zwischen dem Inneren der Seele und dem Draußen des Objekts eine Übereinstimmung bestehen?

Man hat das Erkennende Verhältnis zwischen Subjekt und Objekt oft im Sinne der Abbildung interpretiert. Der wahre Satz oder die wahre Erkenntnis ist eine Abbild der Dinge draußen. Diese Abbild-Theorie hat man ebensooft widerlegt, freilich nur negativ und aus den Konsequenzen. Diese Interpretation setzt immer schon die Unverständlichkeit der Wahrheitsbeziehung voraus. Soll ich nämlich wahr urteilen über eine Sache, übereinstimmen mit ihr, sodaß die Vorstellungen im Bewußtsein das wirkliche Abbild des Dinges sind, dann muß dieses abbildende Erkennen, das, was abzubilden ist, selbst schon sehen, wie es ist, um gemäß seiner das Bild zu gestalten. Ich muß schon wissen, wie die Dinge draußen aussehen, um sie in der rechten Weise abzubilden. Was besagt es, ich muß schon wissen wie die Dinge draußen aussehen? Ich muß eine wahre Erkenntnis haben von dem Seienden draußen. Eine wahre Erkenntnis um Wahrheit ist ja Abbildung! Wie wird diese Abbildung selbst ausgewiesen als Wahrheit? Auf diese Weise zeigt man, daß die Interpretation der Wahrheit als Abbildung der Dinge im Vorstellen unmöglich ist. Durch deductio ad absurdum sucht man diese Dinge zurückzuweisen. Allein das positive Argument gegen die Abbildtheorie ist ein anderes. Nicht aus den Konsequenzen, sondern aus ihren Grundlagen. Sachlich muß gefragt werden: Hat denn überhaupt das Erkennen den Charakter eines Bildbewußtseins? Die Tafel ist schwarz. Wenn ich wahrnehmend die Tafel so beurteile, habe ich denn da zunächst ein Bild im Bewußtsein, das ich auf etwas draußen beziehe? Nicht die Spur davon ist aufzuweisen. Nichts ist da von dem Bewußtsein einer Abbildung. Die Tafel selbst ist das abgebildete Sein. Die
Tafel

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Theorie ist nicht deshalb zurückzuweisen, weil sie zu unmöglichen Konsequenzen führt, sondern sie ist konstruktiv von vornherein, verfälscht das, was zugrundegelegt werden muß, die Bestimmung des Sinnes des erkennenden, wahren Urteils. Die Abbildungstheorie verfehlt dagegen.

Wie steht es mit der Beziehung Erkenntnis - Übereinstimmung - Objekt auf der einen, Erkenntnisding auf der anderen Seite? Die moderne Logik sagt, die Übereinstimmung sei nicht Übereinstimmung des Vorstellens als eines psychischen realen Vorgangs mit einem realen physischen Ding draußen, sondern die Übereinstimmung bestehe zwischen dem ausgesagten Gehalt der Aussage und dem Seienden, also nicht mit irgendwelchen Vorstellungen, die in meiner Seele herumschweben, sondern mit dem Gehalt des Satzes: Die Tafel ist Schwarzheit. Der Gehalt des Satzes ist das Bedeutungs ganze, das er meint, der Sinn des Urteils. Das Schwarzsein der Tafel stimmt überein mit dem Ding, der schwarzen Tafel. Also Übereinstimmung zwischen Satzgehalt = Urteilssinn und physischem Ding. Der Sinn und der Bedeutungsgehalt des im Satz Gemeinten, was ist denn das? Es ist etwas Ideales, ein ideales Sein. Dieses ideale Sein, das Schwarzsein der Tafel ist dasselbe in allen realen Urteilen, die wir jetzt gleichzeitig und verschiedenzeitig fällen können von diesem Ding. Der psychische Verlauf des Urteils ist in jedem verschieden. Aber der gemeinte Gehalt der Aussage ist derselbe. Diese Selbigekeit des gemeinten Gehalts nennt man den idealen Sinn des Urteils. Er ist überzeitlich, ewig. So hat man ihn identifiziert mit der platonischen Idee, mit gewissem Recht.

Wie ist Übereinstimmung von idealem Sein und realem Sein möglich? Welche Seinsart hat diese Übereinstimmung selbst? Ist das Übereinstimmen etwas Reales? Ist es etwas Ideales oder was ist es? Diese Frage ist wahrscheinlich unlösbar, weil sie auf verkehrtem Ansatz steht. Wir fragen nach dem Tatbestand des "wahren Urteils". Wie ist es denn, wenn ich die wahre Aussage fälle: diese Tafel dort ist schwarz? Bin ich dabei gerichtet auf einen Urteilsgehalt, dessen Übereinstimmung ich ausweise mit einem Ding? In keiner Weise. So wenig ich bezogen bin auf Vorstellung in meinem Bewußtsein, so wenig beziehe ich mich in Aussagen auf einen idealen Sinn, dessen Übereinstimmung ich feststelle. "Diese Tafel ist schwarz", hier bin ich einzig bezogen auf die Tafel selbst. Wenn ich sie nicht sehe, sagt man in roher Psychologie, habe ich bloß eine Vorstellung von der Tafel. Was heißt denn das? Das ist pure Konstruktion. Daß ich bloß eine Vorstellung habe, wenn ich urteile, ohne sie zu sehen, besagt, ich vergegenwärtige mir nur die Tafel, aber was ich meine, ist die Tafel selbst. Auch in der Vergegenwärtigung, also auch im bloßen Vorstellen ist das Seiende selbst gemeint. Das Freiburger Münster ist aus rotem Sandstein gebaut. Ich habe eine bloße Vorstellung, aber ich meine das Münster selbst. Wenn ich aus der Erinnerung heraus urteile, daß damals der Wald so und so war, so ist nicht beurteilt über das Übereinstimmen einer Vorstellung, die ihre Disposition in meiner Seele hat, sondern ich meine den Wald selbst, das Seiende, wie es damals war. Im natürlichen urteilenden Verhal-

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ten bin ich von vornherein bezogen und nur bezogen auf das gemeinte, geurteilte und erkannte Seiende selbst.

Wenn ich den Versuch mache, das Urteil auszuweisen, so besagt das, ich muß die Tafel selbst sehen. Die Ausweisung besteht darin, daß ich durch das Sehen der Tafel selbst das in der Vergegenwärtigung Gemeinte identifiziere mit dem jetzt Angeschauten. Die Ausweisung und Bewahrung eines Satzes besteht darin, daß ich das Gemeinte zur Deckung bringe mit dem Angeschauten, daß ich es als dasselbe Seiende erfasse. Aber auch durch dieses zur Deckung Bringen bin ich nicht auf Vorstellungen in meinem Bewußtsein bezogen, sondern das zur Deckung-Bringen wird vollzogen als Identifizierung desselben gemeinten Seienden selbst. Das Aussagen also, das Verhalten, das wir als wahr charakterisieren, hat die Auszeichnung, daß es sich zum Seienden selbst immer schon verhält. Damit fällt von vornherein eine Voraussetzung, die man meist bei der Diskussion der Wahrheitsbeziehung macht, die ja auch als Beziehung zwischen Subjekt und Objekt gefaßt wird, als sei zunächst nur die Vorstellung im Bewußtsein drinnen gegeben und dann müßte das Bewußtsein hinaus zum Objekt bzw. man müßte versuchen, die Wahrheitsform zu erklären. Dieser Ansatz ist pure Konstruktion. Ich bin schon immer bei dem Seienden draußen, ich bin schon immer in einer Welt. Dieser Grundtatbestand, daß mein eingenes Sein als menschliches Dasein immer schon bei einer Welt ist, das ist die Tatsache, in der überhaupt das Phänomen der Wahrheit gründet. Dieses Fundament müssen wir uns genauer vergegenwärtigen.

Ad 3. Die Bestimmung des ursprünglichen Wahrheitsbegriffs aus seinen Fundamenten.

In-der-Welt-Sein ist Grundcharakter des Daseins, eine einheitliche Grundbestimmung meines Daseins. Sofern überhaupt ein Seiendes ist, das wir Dasein oder Lebendes nennen, ist es in einer Welt. (von hier aus muß verstanden werden die Lehre vom lumen naturale). Philosophisch verstanden können wir sagen, das menschliche Dasein hat die Seinsart, daß es ein Licht in sich trägt, es ist in sich selbst gelichtet. Der Stuhl ist in anderer Weise in der Welt. Er hat nicht das, worin er ist, als Raum. Der Boden, den er berührt, ist ihm unzugänglich, verschlossen; während unsere Art zu sein derart ist, daß wir unserem Wesen nach je schon in einer Welt sind. Auch eine Qualle hat schon, wenn sie ist, ihre Welt. Soetwas wie Welt, Seiendes, das sie nicht selbst ist, ist ihr entdeckt, aufgeschlossen. Für den Stuhl ist sie außerhalb jeder Möglichkeit des Entdecktseins und der Verdeckung. Das Dasein ist also, sofern es seinem Wesen nach in der Welt ist, seinem Wesen nach entdeckend. Es hat das Seiende um es herum in verschiedenen Graden der Deutlichkeit entdeckt. Das Dasein ist, sofern es bestimmt ist durch das In-der-Welt-Sein, seinem eigentlichen Sinne nach entdeckend. Subjekt, Dasein, In-der-Welt-Sein, entdeckend. Es sieht schon und hat schon immer gesichtet anderes Seiendes, das es selbst nicht ist. Das Dasein ist entdeckend: das ist der eigentliche Sinn von Wahrheit. Wahrheit besagt nichts anderes als Entdeckendsein! Dies ist keine beliebige Definition. Der Sinn von Wahrheit als Entdeckendsein ist nichts anderes als der Sinn von Wahrheit, wie ihn die Griechen verstanden haben: a-letheia (lethe = das Verborgene, das Vergessene) das Unverborgene.

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Ho logos aletheu~~n~~i (heute sagt man, das Urteil ist wahr), der Logos ist entdeckend, er ist wahr. Das ist der ursprüngliche Sinn der Wahrheit, wie ihn schon die Griechen ahnten und selbst nicht zugänglich erfaßten. Es ist das Geschick der griechischen Philosophie und wahrscheinlich einer jeden, daß sie selbst das, was zu entdecken sie unterwegs ist, wiederum verbirgt. Sie sahen das Wesen der Wahrheit, ohne die eigentlichen Fundamente zu begreifen. Sie wurden sogar die Veranlassung dazu, Wahrheit als Übereinstimmung zu fassen und so das Wahrsein als Entdeckendsein nicht mehr zu sehen.

Ad 4. Der Nachweis der Herkunft des traditionellen Wahrheitsbegriffs aus dem ursprünglichen.

Wie kommt es von diesem Begriff des Wahrseins im Sinne des Entdeckens zum Wahrheitsbegriff im Sinne der Übereinstimmung? Das Dasein ist entdeckend, die Welt ist ihm erschlossen, es versteht in gewissen Grenzen seine Welt. Aber zugleich mit dem Verstehen seiner Welt versteht das Dasein auch sein eigenes Sein, sein in-der-Welt-Sein, seine Weise, wie es in der Welt sich selbst zu sich selbst verhält. Mitentdeckt und miterschlossen ist schon das eigene Dasein selbst hinsichtlich seiner Verhaltungen und seiner Möglichkeiten zu sein. So gewinnen wir erst den eigentlichen Wahrheitsbegriff dann, wenn wir sehen, daß das Entdeckendsein, das Erschließen von anderem Seiendem sich gleich ursprünglich auch bezieht auf Seiendes, das die Seinsart des Daseins hat, die andere Menschen. Im Dasein also liegt die Erschlossenheit der Welt, des eigenen Seins und die anderer Menschen. Ich verstehe den Anderen in gewisser Weise überhaupt schon, weil er unverständlich ist. Nur deshalb kann er unverständlich sein und bleiben.

Dasein ist seinem Wesen nach in der Wahrheit (Wahrheit als Erschlossenheit.) Das Dasein ist aber zunächst und zumeist alltäglich in einer bestimmten Art der Wahrheit. Alltäglich beschäftigen wir uns mit den Dingen, wir gehen in dem, womit wir zu tun haben, auf, wir verlieren uns an das, was wir betreiben, das eigene Dasein wird dabei vergessen. Aber es besteht die Möglichkeit für das Dasein, sich zu sich selbst zurückzuwenden.

Die ursprüngliche Art des Entdeckens ist nicht das Aussagen über etwas, sondern die primären Verhaltungen, die wir als Sehen und Hören im weitesten Sinne bezeichnen. Ich höre einen Wagen: die Psychologen sagen, ich hätte zunächst Geräuschempfinden, Tonempfinden und hinterher würde das als Geräusch eines Wagens aufgefaßt: pure Konstruktion. Zunächst habe ich nicht Tonempfindung, sondern zunächst höre ich den Wagen. Um ein reines Geräusch zu hören, bedarf es hoher Versuchsanordnung im psychologischen Laboratorium. Die Aussage Expliziert nur das schon entdeckte.

Die Art des Daseins ist entdeckend. So wird auch das eigene Dasein nicht entdeckt durch Psychoanalyse und Seelenschnüffelei, sondern durch die Seinsart, in der es selbst liegt, durch das Handeln. Das Dasein liegt im Handeln. Das Handeln schließt in sich die Entschlossenheit zu etwas. Sie ist die Grundart, in der ich mich selbst finde. Die Entschlossenheit wozu denn?

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Die Entschlossenheit sagt nicht, was ich bin, indem sie über meine seelische Verfassung etwas erzählt, sondern sie bezieht sich darauf, Gewissen haben zu wollen. Die Entschlossenheit dazu, sich selbst das Gewissen nicht zu verstellen, und ihm unmöglich zu machen, das Dasein selbst zu erschließen. Diese innere Stimme des Gewissens ist es, die mir das Dasein, sofern ich bei mir selbst bin, eigentlich erschließt. Diese eigentümliche Art des Entdeckens und Erschließens, die im Gewissen liegt und mir in meinem Sein die jeweilige Möglichkeit vorzeichnet, diese Art des Entschließens hat den Charakter des Schweigens. Die Stimme des Gewissens spricht in der Verschwiegenheit. Alle andere Art des Entdeckens spricht sich aus, wird zum Logos, kommt zum Wort. Es liegt in der Grundverfassung des Daseins die Möglichkeit, von ihm selbst angerufen zu werden, durch das Gewissen und aufgerufen zu werden zu seinem eigentlichen Sein. Die Entschlossenheit zu Gewissen-haben-Wollen, das Gewissen selbst ist also das eigentliche Sein des Daseins. Die eigentliche Wahrheit ist das Gewissen deshalb, weil das Dasein selbst in der Wahrheit ist. Wie kommt es von der Erschlossenheit zum Wahrheitsbegriff der Übereinstimmung.

Zunächst machen wir Aussagen im alltäglichen Besorgen. Das, was wir können und wissen, haben wir zum größten Teil aus dem, was wir gehört, gelesen haben. Vieles, was wir können und wissen, haben wir selbst nie gesehen. Oft genügt es, daß etwas gesagt ist, um wahr zu sein. Man hat es gesagt, so ist es! Weil nun zunächst die Bestimmung des Seienden, so wie es ist, in der Aussage über die Dinge sich zeigt, kam auch in der Philosophie der Logos, die Rede als das in den Blick, was die Wahrheit trägt. Das eigentümliche des Geredes ist, daß es das Seiende meint, ohne es aber in seinem eigentlichen Sein zu erfahren, zu verstehen. Man klammert sich an das Gesagte. Das in der Rede Gemeinte hat nur noch ein leereres Verhältnis zu uns, kein ursprüngliches. Das Gesagte selbst wird gewissermaßen freischwebend, löst sich ab, hat noch gewissen Bezug zu dem, was es meint. Sofern nun weiterhin die Aussage das Geredete als das nimmt, was die Wahrheit in sich birgt, aber nicht fragt, in welcher Weise es gerade selbst ist, es vielmehr fast als etwas, was auch vorkommt, faßt man die Aussage, das Reden als ein vorhandenes Ding. Der Logos ist zusammengesetzt aus Wörtern, Wörter kommen vor, bilden eine Einheit. Im Wortganzen liegt eine gewisse Beziehung auf das gemeinte Seiende selbst. Man hat etwas Vorhandenes vom Charakter des Logos, auf der andern Seite ein Ding. Auf Grund dessen, daß etwas darin gemeint ist, hat man auch noch Beziehung. Diese Ablösung der lebendigen Rede von der Ausweisung führt dazu, daß man die Frage nach der Wahrheit primär ansetzt bei dem freischwebenden Logos selbst. Dem Logos muß man eine Welt ankonstruieren und man leugnet, daß er die Schranke des Bewußtseins transzendiert. Die Wahrheit hat ihren ursprünglichen Ort nicht in der Aussage, sondern die Aussage ist nur deshalb wahr, kann entdecken, weil sie ein Verhältnis und eine Seinsart des Daseins selbst ist.

Die Aussage hat ihre Seinsmöglichkeit in der Wahrheit selbst, der Verfas-

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sung. des Daseins, das es entdeckt. Wahrsein im Sinne des Entdeckens, Erschließens ist ein Charakter des Daseins selbst, die Grundart seines Seins; es ist von hause aus wahr, erschließend. Als Wahrheit bezeichnen wir auch das Erschlossene selbst, das Entdeckte; so, wie die Wirklichkeit wie sie ist, erfaßt ist, das Entdeckte als solches. Dann Echtheit, wahres Gold ist solches, das die Art des Seins hat, daß es seiner Idee entspricht, das besagt, der reinen Möglichkeit, die in der Idee entdeckt ist.

In der Idee der Wahrheit als Erschlossenheit liegt also notwendig, daß sie Erschlossenheit von etwas und für etwas ist (eigen für das Dasein). Jede Wahrheit ist Wahrheit über und Wahrheit für! Diese Relationen sind wesentlich und gehören zur Struktur der Wahrheit selbst. Wesentlich für die Wahrheit ist ihre Verbindlichkeit, sagt man. Verbindlich für alle. Die Wahrheit wäre die höchste, die allgemeingültig ist. Ob etwas wahr ist, entdeckt ist, hängt nicht davon ab, wieviele zustimmen zu dem Satze, der das Entdeckte formuliert. Zur Idee der Wahrheit als Ziel der Wissenschaft gehört freilich Objektivität. Das besagt aber nicht, daß wissenschaftliche Wahrheit für jeden zugänglich sein muß, für jeden einfach verbindlich sein muß, daß sie von allen anerkannt wird. In der Idee der wissenschaftlichen Wahrheit liegt der Anspruch auf Objektivität, das heißt, Sachangemessenheit. Wenn etwas wissenschaftlich entdeckt ist und die Zugangsbedingungen realisiert sind und wiederholt werden können, dann ist wissenschaftliche Wahrheit für jeden verbindlich, abgesehen, was jeder für sich selbst persönlich noch meint und wie er zur Sache Stellung nimmt. Wissenschaft ist objektiv. Das kann sie nur, weil sie relativ ist, relativ, bezogen auf die Zugangsbedingungen und die Möglichkeiten des ursprünglichen Seinsverhältnisses zu dem, was im Dasein entdeckt werden muß.

II.

Wie Gibt es Wahrheit?

Man sagt: Wahrheit besteht an sich, sie gilt absolut und ewig. Wahrheit im ursprünglichen Sinne ist Bestimmung des Daseins. Wahrheit gibt es nur dann und nur so lange als Dasein ist! Dächten wir und die Möglichkeit, daß alles menschliche Dasein in einem Moment ausgelöscht ist, dann gibt es keine Wahrheit mehr. $2 \times 2 = 4$ Der Satz ist noch wahr, wenn kein Mensch mehr existiert: das ist ein Widersinn, sofern daß Wahrheit besagt: Entdecktheit in einem Dasein. Aber damit ist nicht gesagt, daß der Tatbestand, der in einem wahren Satze gemeint ist, in dem Satze $2 \times 2 = 4$ nicht mehr besteht. Wenn das Dasein nicht mehr ist, brauchen die Sätze nicht mehr falsch werden, sie können nicht falsch sein, so wenig wie wahr. Solange Dasein ist, ist Wahrheit! Solange wir sind, sind wir in der Wahrheit! Wir können nicht sagen, was dann noch wäre, und was dann noch ist, wenn Dasein nicht mehr ist. Dann ist auch nicht mehr der Sinn von Sein. Seiendes als in seinem Sein Verstandenes ist dann auch nicht mehr. Die "Welt" könnte ruhig weiter bestehen, wenn auch keine Menschen mehr sind.

Ist dann nicht alle Wahrheit relativ? In der Tat: alle Wahrheit ist relativ. Aber

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das besagt nicht, daß das in der Wahrheit Entdeckte subjektive Meinung wäre, sondern gerade als Entdecktes ist das Seiende so, wie es ist. Seiendes ist nur entdeckbar als Entdeckbares und Wahres. Daß also Wahrheit ist und daß es Wahrheit gibt, ist eine eigentümliche Gewißheit, keine absolute im Sinne einer theoretischen oder mathematischen oder formal-logischen, sondern eine Gewißheit des Faktums des Daseins selbst. Daß es Wahrheit gibt, ist genau so gewiß, wie, daß ich sterben werde. Nur weil das Dasein wesentlich in der Wahrheit ist, ihm seine Welt schon entdeckt ist, das selbst aber sich zumeist verliert und verißt, weil das Dasein so ist, kann es und muß es in der Unwahrheit sein.

Gleich ursprünglich wie die Wahrheit ist, ist faktisch auch der Irrtum. Der Irrtum und die Unwahrheit ist nicht etwas, was man draußen läßt und als unangemessene Zugabe dem gemeinen Verstande zur Diskussion überläßt, sondern Unwahrheit, Irrtum, Wahnsinn, Krankheit sind zugleich ursprünglich mit dem, was wir Dasein nennen. Nur so spüren wir die Kraft und die eigentümliche Weiße, die in der Auszeichnung unseres Seins liegt, daß wir unsere Kraft erkennen und frei sind für die Sache selbst.

Die Wiedergabe beruht auf einer Nachschrift.

Appendix B:

Image of Page 120 of the *Codex Abrogans*

The following page contains a reproduction of page 120 of the *Codex Abrogans*, the oldest extant book in the German language. Slightly more than halfway down the page, the Latin word “*testimoniu*” (sic) is translated using the early Old High German term “*kiuizzitha*.”

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(St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 911, p. 120 <<http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/csg/0911/120/medium>>.)

humercede. thices uparahsleo a.
 Apellece. tememnt. Sinecu
 cullo. Anceheels. rceque. 3e
 spex. *amara*

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 by. unmez. fa bolosi. Rce

Appendix C:

Image of Page 189 of the *Codex Abrogans*

The following page contains a reproduction of page 189 of the *Codex Abrogans*. At the very bottom of the page, the Latin word “*testimonium*” is translated using the early Old High German term “*kiuuizzitha*.” In the preceding entry on this very same page of this wordbook, the Latin “*martirium*” is translated as “*martartoam*.”

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mæ nnae. Quod hoc mæn
 nae. huuæz ift dæz, dæz
 ift moær humillih. Mænuæ.
 pierift, Mænipulæ. kærpa,
 Mænuuit, hænz fol. que
 Mænu dætra huntur,
 Dæz mit hendi z uhtænt,
 Idæ, spolie. Dæz ift ægil
 hendi ræupa. Mæcherne p^r
 lre tum, Sæpæ. z uni,
 Mærenothæ. Mære nærthæ,
 Dm ift, Druhtin unfer,
 Mærtirium, Mærtær
 Tocem, Tæfamonium,
 Te uuis z rthæ,

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