Freedom for Losing Oneself: Lessons in Spontaneity and Temporality in Kant and Heidegger

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I love the dark hours of my being.
My mind deepens into them.
There I can find, as in old letters,
the days of my life, already lived,
and held like a legend, and
understood.

Then the knowing comes: I can open
to another life that's wide and
timeless.

So I am sometimes like a tree
rustling over a gravesite
and making real the dream
of the one its living roots
embrace:

A dream once lost
among sorrows and songs.

- *Rainer Maria Rilke, The Book of Hours (1899)*

1. Introduction

Heidegger's reading of Kant brings the 'critical' philosophy of *self-consciousness*—i.e., Kant's philosophy of self-determination and self-constitution—to what Heidegger sees as its true *temporal meaning*,[1] a reading which Heidegger himself admits is in some sense "violent" (Ga3: 207). Once self-consciousness is thus transposed, it is a serious question whether Heidegger's reading has done violence simply to Kant's text (and to what extent), or to the spirit of the critical philosophy itself. Admitting such violence is not, Heidegger thinks, grounds for criticism of his approach to Kant, but rather a necessary feature of any hermeneutic: "The interpretation must be animated and guided by the power of an illuminative idea. Only through the power of this idea can an interpretation risk that which is always audacious, namely, entrusting itself to the secret élan of a work, in order by this élan to get through to the unsaid and to attempt to find an expression for it" (ibid.). The Kant-Heidegger relation is complicated in some ways by this hermeneutic, but we might also find it illuminating in other ways, as it presupposes a deep respect for Kant as a *living philosophy*, not as the man in Königsberg. To understand the secret élan of Kant's work is to understand it better than he himself did. But, as Heidegger points out, this

[1] "That is, this interpretation [Heidegger's interpretation of time as pure self-affection] includes the crucial temporal factor of this transcendental apperception, which Kant thought to be free from time." (PIK, *Ga25*: 393), my brackets.

'understanding better' "is no mere rejection of what is understood, but rather is giving it "validity". A philosophy truly has "validity" when its own power is released [...]" (Ga25: 3).

To reveal the character of the whole of the Kant-Heidegger relation would require that we investigate the relation between Kant's philosophy of self-consciousness (of the 'I') and Heidegger's question of the meaning of being in general. A variety of points of contact may be surveyed, but there is one that seems to be a ripe candidate for us, and that is the question of *freedom*. For both philosophers, an understanding of freedom is central to an understanding of human being in the most general sense. For Kant, it is the absolutely self-determining character of practical freedom which provides "the keystone of the whole structure of a system of pure reason" (*KpV* 5:3). For Heidegger, "the question concerning the essence of human freedom is the fundamental question of philosophy in which is rooted even the question of being" (Ga31: 300), and which inquires into "something prior even to being and time" (Ga31: 134). Now, *what* this freedom is will be articulated differently for each, but Heidegger himself appears to see in Kant a kind of kinship with respect to the idea of freedom as the fundamental question of philosophy. In his 1930 lecture course *The Essence of Human Freedom* (hereafter, *WMF*), Heidegger dedicates most of his focus to Kant, and, in the final section he declares that Kant's error was the failure to adequately problematize freedom, instead making it subordinate to a question about the nature of causality. In Heidegger's view, causality is only one categorial determination of being among others: "*The problem of causality is a problem of freedom and not vice versa*" (Ga31: §30). While this represents Heidegger's departure from Kant, it also signals that Heidegger considers his own account of freedom to stand in an even more fundamental relationship to philosophy: "The question concerning the essence of freedom is the *fundamental problem* of philosophy, even if the *leading question* thereof consists in the question of being" (ibid.).

How does one so much as begin to assess the relationship between Kant and Heidegger on this theme? Many roadblocks apparently stand in our way, including not least of all the need to understand how freedom might be the keystone of the *whole* of philosophy while remaining, for Kant, primarily a practical or moral issue. For Kant, as Heidegger understands well, 'freedom' (*Freiheit*) is in one way a theoretical issue—particularly when the possibility of transcendental freedom is considered in the Third Antinomy. But its home is in practical reason, that employment through which it asks, not what *is*, but *what ought to be* (*KrV*, A633/B661) and determines not merely the *form* of the object but also makes it *actual* (*KrV*, Bix-x). Heidegger's remark that both being and time are themselves rooted in freedom would suggest that freedom is beyond the distinction between the theoretical and practical employments of reason. But even for Kant, ontology, which just *is* transcendental philosophy,[2] is carried out only through the spontaneity of the 'I' of understanding—i.e., self-consciously or apperceptively. While the spontaneity with which we know 'what is' is not *Freiheit*, it is pure self-activity (*Selbsttätigkeit*; *KrV*, B130); it is that from which the categories "spring pure and unmixed from the understanding" (*KrV*, A67/B92). For Kant, all that is intelligible depends on such spontaneity or self-activity. For Heidegger too, the 'freedom' in which being and time are rooted is often described in the way in which Dasein in general is described—namely, in terms of self-relatedness: "we inquire into the totality of beings, and this questioning *is itself simultaneously directed to the ground of the possibility of being human*. It takes man into question in the ground of his essence, i.e. it harbours within itself the possibility of a challenge to man, a challenge which does not come from outside but rises up from the ground of his essence" (Ga31:

[2] "For as grammar is the resolution of a speech-form into its elementary rules, and logic a resolution of the form of thought, so ontology is a resolution of knowledge into the concepts that lie *a priori* in the understanding, and have their use in experience" ("Real Progress" essay, 20: 260). See also Heidegger's discussion of this point in *GP*, Ga24: 180-81.

§12, *WMF*, Ga31: 89). This "challenge" is raised through self-questioning by Dasein, which is nothing other than the being who, in its very being, has being as an issue for it (Ga2: 12). With this, we may ask how to understand the Kant-Heidegger relation specifically in terms of their conceptions of the fundamental and pure self-relatedness which is the root of philosophy itself. But we cannot begin at that point. We must begin, in a suitably Heideggerian way, by inquiring into a particular question which may shed light on the whole.

1.1. Brief Exposition of the Problem and a Proposal

The particular problem in which I am interested places us directly at the intersection of Kant's account of practical self-consciousness and Heidegger's interrogation of being. On the side of Kant, it can be described as the problem of the possibility of heteronomy—namely, how the will can possibly *fail* to be autonomous. On the side of Heidegger, the problem can be described as that of the possibility of inauthenticity—namely, how Dasein can possibly fall away from its authenticity and thereby become lost and entangled in 'everydayness'. First, I will spell out how these two problems, separate in many respects, nevertheless share a structure. For Kant, a heteronomous will would be one which does not give itself the law, but which merely follows an impulse or inclination—a *pathological* law (*KpV*, 5:33). This pathology of heteronomy would be "opposed to the principle of obligation and to the morality of the will" (ibid.). Kant's distinction between autonomy and heteronomy apparently regards the constitution of the will itself, and not its particular exercises. So, we might think that, strictly speaking, a heteronomous will is not a real possibility. For, if our will were heteronomous *in constitution*, it could never be such as to perform moral acts at all. But, even if Kant's position is that heteronomy is only a *conceptual* possibility which is opposed to our autonomous constitution, it is a conceptual possibility which nevertheless marks a real threat to autonomous willing. For, what we do when we act immorally, when we are responsible for not obeying the law of the autonomous will, is subordinate a heteronomous principle—a principle of self-love—to the autonomous principle of morality (*Rel.*, 6:36). This opposition to morality is something for which we are morally responsible, and therefore something which ultimately stands within the purview of autonomy. Hence, we must understand how heteronomy can stand in a relation to autonomy not as a mere *opposing state*, but as a possibility from within the domain of autonomy itself—a possibility which, we might say, is *owned* by autonomy.

For Heidegger, correspondingly, there is an important distinction between Dasein's ability to be authentic (*Eigentlich*)—its being "something of its own" (Ga2: 42), and its ability to be inauthentic (*Uneigentlich*)—its being lost to itself (ibid.). The case here is marked with difficulties absent in Kant's case. For one thing, authenticity and inauthenticity represent two modes of Dasein which might appear to be on equal footing; each, Heidegger tells us, is grounded *a priori* in Dasein's essential "mineness", and *in*authenticity is not a 'lesser' or 'lower' kind of being than authenticity, but simply another way that Dasein can be (ibid.). However, as we shall see, the relation between these two possibilities cannot be one of mere opposition. We therefore must understand how Dasein's fallen mode of inauthenticity can stand in a relation to authenticity not as a mere opposing state, but as a possibility which Dasein in some sense owns. The unified puzzle that arises is how, more broadly, freedom (perhaps even spontaneity in a more general sense, bracketing its particular form of deployment) can countenance the possibility of our falling into *unfreedom* or *un-ownedness* without threatening incoherence.

This is a candidate for our starting point in the discussion about the role of freedom in Kant and Heidegger because the real possibility of falling away from autonomy or authenticity is, for both philosophers, an issue at the very heart of understanding our being, and particularly our responsibility for and ownership over ourselves. Even more specifically, it is an issue which, again for both, presupposes a

conception of freedom in which all of philosophical understanding is rooted. Freedom, Kant thinks, is primarily concerned with self-ownership in the sense of being the author of one's own law (i.e., *autonomy* is self-ownership). For Heidegger, I want to argue, there is a similar notion of self-ownership internal to freedom (via the notion of *authenticity*), but in a way that may provide us some insight into his *differences* with Kant's philosophy of self-consciousness (of the 'I', as in 'I think' or 'I can' or 'I must'). I'll propose a way of understanding both the autonomy-heteronomy relation and the authenticity-inauthenticity relation which will serve as an introduction to the kinship as well as the differences between Kant's philosophy of the 'I' and Heidegger's investigation of being through the temporality of Dasein. The proposal will not be, as it were, a view from outside the apparently inexplicable relation between freedom and un-ownedness, but an internal development of the picture such that we will become poised to see how the relation—already unavoidable from the human perspective—can be held onto in Kant's and Heidegger's terms of activity and time.

I sketch this internal picture in a two-fold manner: (1) for Kant and Heidegger, freedom is a form of *energeia*—a self-sustaining and (in some sense) complete or perfected activity. For each it may also be seen as constitutive of our lived experience of time (or temporality, *Zeitlichkeit*) as the limit within which our everyday being occurs, allowing for fallenness or un-ownedness to manifest *inside* time; and (2) for both, the possibility of un-ownedness is to be understood through one form or another of *self-deception*. We will see that these two basic points are inextricably linked: freedom or spontaneity as a self-sustaining activity underlying philosophy *as a whole*, and which constitutes the possibility of activity *in* time, is the condition of the possibility and actuality of the phenomenon of losing one's self-ownership to oneself within time. The inextricable link can be seen in the way that all activity which is properly described as taking place inside time always already presupposes a relation to the energeia constituting the whole of time. This distinction between being in time and being constitutive of time is marked by what we will call the *temporal difference*.

However, the striking disagreement between the two thinkers may also be understood from this same vantage point. I will suggest that this difference lies in the way that Kant thinks of the temporal difference. For Kant, time is a limit condition for concrete theoretical and practical possibilities, but only as time belongs to a general self-consciousness (transcendental apperception)—one which is yet conscious of itself as *not* limited by time, and therefore able to determine temporal boundaries. For Heidegger, by contrast, the horizon of time is that from which any understanding of being whatsoever may be achieved, and therefore any pretension of getting beyond it simply runs up against limits. While we may be tempted to think that Heidegger's shared sense of time as self-activity would land him in roughly the same position as Kant—i.e., in thinking that our understanding of beings is fundamentally self-constituted—we have to realize that there lies here a shift from Kant's notion of transcendental apperception as constitutive of such understanding to the notion of the freedom of productive imagination as the source even of Kant's transcendental apperception. In this, Heidegger is ultimately shifting from the centrality of *Kant's* notion of self-consciousness to the centrality of a form of spontaneity which allows being to, in some sense, exceed our self-constituting powers.[3]

This disagreement, finally, gestures at a way forward for comprehending the relation between Kant and Heidegger more fully—i.e., by asking how properly to understand the difference between the spontaneous or free activity of the constitution of time (as a primordial form of *movement* and *energeia* in Heidegger) and free practical self-consciousness in Kant. One criticism which Heidegger brings to Kant's theory of freedom, as we shall see, is that it concerns *only* a categorematic mode of freedom—namely, the will's

[3] Though we will not have the space to consider this particular theme in this essay.

autonomous *causal efficacy*. But I'll suggest that this is short-sighted on Heidegger's part. While we will not have the space to articulate this in detail, we will end by considering the possibility that Kant's theory of freedom allows not only for a fundamental self-movement or energeia at the very ground of philosophy,[4] but also that his notion of the *timeless* character of this spontaneity is not a return to the categorematic thinking feared in Heidegger's reading of Kant. At the same time, we cannot simply reduce Kant's notion of timeless spontaneity to something temporal. As such, what is at stake here is: (1) whether one can recognize, in an act with an essentially temporal meaning or reference, a timeless aspect; and (2) how this purportedly timeless aspect might be connected to Kant's emphasis on the 'I' as the center of philosophical inquiry generally. Here my aim is not so much to provide answers as to at least formulate the right questions.

2. Kant on the Possibility of Heteronomy

Both in the *Groundwork* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant lays out his distinction between *autonomy* (the will's capacity to give itself the law) and *heteronomy* (the idea of the will's mere obedience to a law given in feeling or inclination). I want to investigate this particular relationship before moving on to Heidegger, Heidegger's reading of Kant, and then finally to the guiding question of the Kant-Heidegger relation.

Kant gives the following characterization of the will (*Wille*):

> Hence the will is not merely subject to the law but subject to it in such a way that it must be viewed as also giving the law to itself and just because of this as first subject to the law (of which it can regard itself as the author). [GMS 4:431]

Two important thoughts can be gleaned from this passage. First, because the will "must be viewed" as author of its law, it is a *principle of our will* (indeed, "the supreme principle of morality"—GMS 4:440) that the will is the author of its own law. Hence it is the principle of our will that we are *autonomous*. Autonomy, on this reading, is not a mere possibility for the will, but a constitutive feature of "pure willing"[5]—pure, in the sense of the will's act of giving itself the law, and so its act considered independently even of how it responds to this lawgiving on the side of being subject to it. Second, because our will has the peculiarity of being both lawgiver *and subject of* the supreme law, our autonomy is also at the same time subject to a kind of threat—a threat not entirely outside, yet not entirely within pure willing. This is the threat of what Kant calls heteronomy:

> If the will seeks the law that is to determine it *anywhere else* than in the fitness of its maxims for its own giving of universal law—consequently if, in going beyond itself, it seeks this law in a property of any of its objects—*heteronomy* always results. The will in that case does not give itself the law; instead the object, by means of its relation to the will, gives the law to it. [GMS 4:441]

A heteronomous will seeks its law in the object, that is, in what it contingently desires to bring about. Kant discusses heteronomy not to suggest that it could be the *form* that our will takes. Then why is it discussed at all? The idea of heteronomy represents a threat to the autonomous form of the will, because to seek the law elsewhere is to adopt for oneself a principle in opposition to the universality of pure willing. Immorality is therefore a kind of resistance.[6] This becomes even clearer in Kant's *Religion*

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[4] We will have to think about just how to relate these notions of energeia and *movement* (Bewegung) so as not to reduce movement to *kinesis*.

[5] See, e.g., *GMS* 4:390.

[6] See also *MS* 6:384

Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason, where it is argued that because the moral law is an incentive, the lack of agreement between the power of choice (*Willkür*) and the moral law would be dependent upon "a real and opposite determination" or a *resistance* (Rel., 6:22n.). A heteronomous will, failing to act from a consciousness of the moral law, is not merely a failure to be autonomous in the sense that it falls outside the bounds of autonomy; it is an active resistance of autonomy.

But notice that such a resistance is possible only from inside the scope of autonomy's authority. To resist the moral law is, at least implicitly, to recognize its authority. Thus, heteronomy does not stand to autonomy as a mere opposing state, as 'the cold' stands to 'the hot'. To will heteronomously is also, therefore, not to entirely fall away from autonomy in the sense of breaking out of its domain.[7] For, if in resisting the moral law we could simply push it out, we could never be responsible for our resistance. As Kant says:

> The restoration of the original predisposition to good in us is not therefore the acquisition of a *lost* incentive for the good, since we were never able to lose the incentive that consists in the respect for the moral law, and were we ever to lose it, we would also never be able to regain it. (Rel., 6:46)

The idea of exiting the domain of the moral law represents our *moral death* (cf. Rel., 6:175). This may appear to make heteronomy impossible, which in turn would seem to preclude the possibility of any genuine threat to autonomous willing. But, on the contrary, I hold that the possible threat of heteronomy can *only* be understood from within a consciousness of autonomy (and therefore from within its jurisdiction). That is, the question of the possibility of heteronomy should not assume that Kant has the latter in mind as a mere contrary to autonomy which excludes the dominion of the moral.

We see this more clearly as we learn from Kant that resistance to the moral law is fundamentally to be understood in terms of self-deception. This occurs as early as in the *Groundwork*, where Kant presents inclination as "so impetuous" that it rises up in a "natural dialectic" to rationalize against the moral law (GMM, 4:405). In the *Religion*'s description of the free origin of evil, Kant notes that the ground of our propensity to evil cannot be traced back to an original evil *principle*, for then sin (which is a *transgression* of the moral law, not a competing principle of its own) would not be sin, but a proper exercise of a capacity (Rel. 6:41-44). That "the human being is evil," Kant says, can only mean that "he is conscious of the moral law and yet has incorporated into his maxim the (occasional) deviation from it" (Rel. 6:32). Hence, evil is explicable (to the extent that it can be at all) only from within an original consciousness of the moral law. Even from a consciousness of the moral law, one becomes fundamentally "entangled"[8] in temptation from the incentives of inclination, and also begins to embrace some such incentives, "downgrading" obedience to the moral law to the status of a conditional means (under the principle of self-love) (ibid). Because this is done not from an original evil principle, but from a "state of innocence" which includes a connection with our predisposition to the good, it follows that we do it from an implicit consciousness of the authority of the moral law.[9] This kind of self-deception is "what we do daily", according to Kant (Rel. 6:42.).

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[7] We might say that we *flee* but do not *escape* our autonomy.

[8] Cf. Rel. 6:41, brackets added: "He should have refrained from it [evil action], whatever his temporal circumstances and entanglements; for through no cause in the world can he cease to be a free agent."

[9] It must be noted here that our predisposition to the good is not *determinate* goodness, for we must make ourselves either good or evil (Rel. 6:44). This is rather the possession of the faculty or power (*Vermögen*—a term which contains the word for possibility, *Möglichkeit*) for good.

Now, we cannot casually mention and then leave aside this *everyday* nature of sin, for it tells us something potentially quite deep about the relationship between autonomy and *time*. I think it is no small matter that Kant indicates sin and self-deception to be *daily* phenomena since these acts inevitably involve a kind of falling away from the tranquility and stillness of virtue, indicating their qualities of resistance, effort, and pain. As Kant says in the *Metaphysics of Morals*:

> The true strength of virtue is a *tranquil mind* with a considered and firm resolution to put the law of virtue into practice. (MM, 6:409)

> Virtue is always *in progress* and yet always starts *from the beginning* [...] That it always starts from the beginning has a *subjective* basis in human nature, which is affected by inclinations because of which virtue can never settle down in peace and quiet with its maxims adopted once and for all. (ibid.)

The tranquil state of a virtuous mind is forever incomplete,[10] but always resolutely committed to its infinite progress. It is never complete as at any given time it faces a new battle with the temptation of sensible nature. Thus, at every moment, the self-legislation of pure willing must begin anew. In this way, self-legislating is a kind of *repetition* in constantly returning to its own beginning. This constant return to the beginning stands in sharp contrast with the more common (though not more familiar) notion of the continuation of an already-begun process, especially if that process is considered as begun at a point in time (i.e., it is not what Heidegger would call the "objectively present past" or the ontically past).[11] Relatedly, the *change* in our fundamental moral disposition is framed by Kant as a new beginning; upon a change of heart, one becomes a "new man", as it were (Rel. 6:73). This fundamental change is a new beginning in the absolute sense that the return counts as a *revolution* in disposition, and hence not a change relative to the rest of the timeline, but one which redefines the timeline. The revolution of the heart is not change *in* time, but *of* time. Or, better: the revolution is the re-constitution of one's timeline. For this reason, when the new man comes along, he is not morally speaking liable for the old man's sins. Things here get complicated, however. Punishment does not lose is appropriateness all together but is instead realized in the act of conversion itself. The conversion is an "emergence from the corrupted disposition into the good" and "entrance into a long train of life's ills which the new human being undertakes in the disposition of the Son of God" (Rel. 6:74). While the old and the new man are *morally* distinct, they are yet *physically* the same (i.e., the same sensible being), and in this sense equally liable. This only strengthens what we are saying here, however, as it illustrates that the act of conversion is not a dateable event. The implication is that the conversion is neither "outside" of time in a timeless realm nor "inside" of time in any determinate way (Rel. 6:73). Instead, it counts as an *intelligible* constitution of our timeline (hence why the act itself is not inside time), but at the same time a *sensible* process of emergence out of one state into another.[12] And now we can see that while the everyday battle with inclination is prior to virtue in time, the autonomous pure willing constitutive of virtue is always prior in capacity—that is, to

[10] Though it always promises a peace, since to be in progress brings hope for the full realization of what is in progress.

[11] In Heidegger's own case, the *a priori* character of Dasein itself exhibits a kind of always-pastness which Heidegger associates particularly with Kant's transcendental philosophy. As he writes in a note of his personal copy of *SZ*, ""Previously" in this ontological sense means in Latin *a priori*, in Greek *proteron tē physei* (Aristotle, *Physics*, A1). More clearly in *Metaphysics* E 1025b29—*to ti ēn einai*, "what already was-being," "what always already presences in advance," what has-been, the perfect. The Greek verb *einai* has no perfect tense; it is named here in *ēn einai*. It is not something ontically past, but rather what is always earlier, what we are referred *back* to in the question of beings as such. Instead of *a priori* perfect we could also say ontological or transcendental perfect (cf. Kant's doctrine of the schematism)" (*SZ*, 85 marginal note, tr. Stambaugh).

[12] On this point, see Korsgaard (1996) and Sussman (2005).

put it as Aristotle does regarding *veritative being* (the being of truth), autonomy is our *dominant* mode of being or dominant possibility, even if our propensity to evil is in some sense *temporally* prior.

All of this might seem to lend a temporal *meaning* even to the "timeless" act of freedom through which the choice of fundamental disposition is made. But this temporal meaning can be understood only through what we will call the *temporal difference*—the difference between being in time and being constitutive of time (or the difference between times and time itself).[13] If we are right to suggest that Kant acknowledges the temporal difference, then the timelessness of the fundamental choice can be understood as its lack of conditioning *by* any aspect of time together with its *determination of* the character of time as a whole.

The everyday nature of sin marks it as a fall into the temptations of sensible nature, and so a failure of acting from an autonomous principle. This fall, characterized by fashioning principles from self-love, is not an escape from self-legislation but a *fleeing* from it. Now, it seems that the proper way of characterizing this flight is by distinguishing its temporal character from that of the timeless aspect of freedom. The distinction is roughly this: in the everyday entanglements of temptation and sin, one is at work in a certain way—namely, by *taking up* time. One's actions in time involve processes of coming to be and passing away, for example of gradually gaining mastery over some inclination and then losing one's resolve.[14] But whatever essential temporal reference the timeless choice may have, as an activity its form is quite different, as it does not involve advancements to and from states, or *change* in the sense of coming to be or passing away. The sense in which the timeless choice of fundamental disposition involves a "change" of heart rests on (1) the way in which that act determines the character of the time *in* which a moral life is carried out, and (2) the fact that this timeless choice is reflected in the overall progression of times. The timeless choice could be seen as the act which, because it is constitutive of all the particular acts across the times in one's life, is also the act through which those particular acts are held together into a coherent unity.[15]

3. Heidegger on the Possibility of Inauthenticity

The above relation between the spontaneous self-constitution of time and the falling away from oneself inside of time can be directly structurally related to Heidegger's treatment of the relation between authenticity and inauthenticity. This comes with its own set of interpretive difficulties. Heidegger frames this relation sometimes as though authenticity is the original form of Dasein, and sometimes as though authenticity is simply one modality among the others.[16] Here I am interested not so much in whether our original mode of being is identical with authenticity, but in whether we ought to think of our possibility for authenticity as in some sense dominant over inauthenticity.

Generally speaking, the way Heidegger discusses the relation between authentic and inauthentic modes of Dasein indicates a crucial asymmetry—namely, that the inauthentic is possible only *through the authentic*

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[13] Kant himself distinguishes between *different times* as the parts of time, and time itself as the pure intuition of time (which is itself a 'nothing'—*ens imaginarium*), *KrV* A32/B48, A292/B349.

[14] Cf. *KpV* (5:119): "From this we can understand how consciousness of this ability of a pure practical reason (virtue) can in fact produce consciousness of mastery over one's inclinations, hence of independence from them and so too from the discontent that always accompanies them [...]"

[15] While the form of activity is in this case an act of practical reason, it is in fact characteristic of cognition in general for Kant that it be self-consciously constituted by holding itself together. On this point, see also Engstrom (2009; 103, 132).

[16] Blattner (1999), for instance, has argued against Dahlstrom's (1995) claim that original temporality *is* authentic temporality.

in the sense that the possibility of inauthenticity depends on a prior understanding (however nascent) of authentic possibilities. For instance:

> And because Dasein is always essentially its possibility, it *can* "choose" itself in its being, it can win itself, it can lose itself, or it can never and only "apparently" win itself. It can only have lost itself and it can only have not yet gained itself because it is essentially possible as authentic, that is, it belongs to itself. The two kinds of being of *authenticity* and *inauthenticity*—these expressions are terminologically chosen in the strictest sense of the word—are based on the fact that Dasein is in general determined by always being-mine. (SZ, 42-43)

According to Heidegger, the essential possibility of Dasein is *marked by* its belonging to itself (its 'being-mine'). Like Kant with autonomy, there is no losing oneself to everyday entanglements without a dominating sense of self-belongingness. For otherwise the fleeing/falling inside of Dasein's everyday entanglement is not a flight or a fall; it is not a state from which we could also *retrieve* ourselves in the crucial moments. As Heidegger remarks in *WMF*, "precisely in this turning away [from the ought] do we experience the fact of the ought most vividly" (199).

The inauthenticity of the everyday, for Heidegger, is of course a mode of being characterized by a form of temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*): "When Dasein has itself in view ontically, it *fails to see* itself in relation to the kind of being of the being that it itself is." (SZ, 321) And in this failure "it [Dasein] *flees* from itself to the they [...] When one is absorbed in the everyday multiplicity and rapid succession of what is taken care of, the self of the self-forgetful "I take care of" shows itself as what is constantly and identically simple, but indefinite and empty" (SZ, 322).

First, if the loss of oneself in time is *dominated* by the possibility of authenticity, then losing oneself *is losing oneself to oneself* quite literally—it is a fall away from myself from within a mode of being which I own. The sense of puzzlement over such a claim may be diminished by considering that losing oneself to oneself is losing one's ontic Dasein to an ontologically presupposed self-belongingness of Dasein. Or, in Kantian terms, it is to lose oneself qua actuality to oneself qua self-constituting form or capacity.[17] One quite simply absorbs into the moment, becoming lost by having no sense of one's own place, history, and direction (each of which, in fact, requires a sense of the other in order for one to become fully transparent to oneself in the moment). This everyday mode of temporality consists in a manifold rapid succession of 'nows' in which Dasein, becoming entangled in itself, finds itself everywhere and nowhere—the exact opposite of what he calls the *Moment* (or 'moment of vision/clarity') [*Augenblick*] (SZ, 347).[18] But it is precisely this being dispersed and entangled in its 'nows' which provides the opportunity for the unity of self found in the Moment. Dasein must have been already entangled in definite possibilities—including, e.g., temptations (ibid.)—in order for it to have had an opportunity to call back and "hand down" to itself some possibility which already "has been" (SZ; 339, 385).

To see all of this a bit more clearly, consider Heidegger's claim that when Dasein is falling into self-entanglement (e.g., in temptation) "this determination has an ecstatic meaning [...]" (SZ, 348). By this Heidegger simply means that the determination of our mode as fallen is accomplished with respect to our relation to the various dimensions of time. In falling into the rapid succession of 'nows', Dasein is

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[17] Because Kant's language of capacity and act is largely missing in Heidegger, there is of course room for doubt about just how neatly this analogy can be mapped. But there is a plausible sense in which Dasein as its own possibility (*Möglichkeit*) stands to itself qua ontic as capacity (*Vermögen*) stands to act.

[18] It is important to note that we can say "entangled in itself" for Heidegger precisely because he seems to agree with Kant that the feelings through which one is susceptible to inclination are always at the same time "self-feelings" (*KPM* Ga3: 156-58).

becoming one of its determinate possibilities, and doing so through "awaiting and forgetting", temporal modes which presuppose Dasein's self-understanding. In order to be forgetting its place, history, and direction, it must be covering up its own original ability to understand those of its features. It must, that is, engage in self-deception. Now, not entirely unlike Kant's observation that our everyday entanglement with inclination presents to us an opportunity for a revolution in our fundamental disposition, Dasein's self-entanglement presents to us an opportunity for a kind of re-integration. So, especially in this connection with our discussion of Kant, there is much significance in the following passage:

> The handing down of a possibility that has been in repeating it, does not, however, disclose the Dasein that has been there in order to actualize it again. The repetition of what is possible neither brings back "what is past," nor does it bind the "present" back to what is "outdated." Arising from a resolute self-projection, repetition is not convinced by "something past," in just letting it come back as what was once real. Rather, repetition *responds* to the possibility of existence that has been-there. But responding to this possibility in a resolution is at the same time, *as a response belonging to the Moment,* the *renunciation* of that which is working itself out in the today as "past." Repetition neither abandons itself to the past, nor does it aim at progress. In the Moment, authentic existence is indifferent to both of these alternatives. (SZ, 386)

The handing down of a possibility to oneself, we might say, *takes up* the past in a way that neither simply makes it present again nor adds on to it. And yet this is a "repetition" (or "retrieval", *Wiederholung*). In what sense? To repeat a possibility is to retrieve it from oneself, and this is the meaning of "handing down". From one perspective, one retrieves the past in the sense of taking up an already-established possibility held by Dasein in its history. Heidegger describes this as Dasein's "coming back to itself" in terms of its "heritage" (*Erbe*). We come to understand our situation anew by determining it with respect to a determinate possibility from the "past", where this possibility is "past" precisely because of its status as an established possibility in one's heritage. It is therefore not simply "ontically" or contingently past, as it would be if it were considered a mere event, but a past which is oriented futurally by our consideration of it as our possibility. When Heidegger says that we are not *convinced* by this past, he seems to be suggesting that we do not simply let a past possibility determine the meaning of the present moment, but instead self-determine our situation through an understanding of how it is and can be related to the past. In other words, we enact a temporal synthesis. The point from which we enact such a synthesis might be a point in time for Dasein (the Moment is called up in time), but the synthesis is a unifying of dimensions or ecstasies of time—a synthesis which is not itself a conglomeration of moments or a process which *takes* time. The Augenblick is like seizing anew the whole of my being and therefore my temporal character. If this is correct, then it is a moment of clarity when Dasein is authentically (in a *self-owning* way, that is) transparent to its being-in-the-world. We now see that the Moment is a repetition not only in the sense of an act for which I can be prompted over and over in the everyday, but also a repetition in the sense of retrieving a past possibility anew. But while this repetition obviously has a temporal meaning, that meaning belongs primarily to its relation to the whole of time—of seeing our Dasein clearly almost for the first time.

Because the Augenblick is not confined *in* time, and since the ownership of my being is presupposed in its pure possibility, we are led to consider Heidegger's description of Dasein itself as a kind of activity which is not originally "within time" but which "temporalizes time" and makes existing within time possible (*SZ* 404-05). The way to this thought is through the understanding of Dasein—human existence—as its possibilities (*SZ* 143). For, as we have already glimpsed above, the notion of a possibility belongs to no single ecstasy of time, but requires an ecstatic interpretation through a synthesis. Dasein is its possibility. It is easy to see what this excludes for Dasein—namely, its being a substance to

which potentialities adhere, or any kind of thing which *has* possibilities.[19] It is less easy to comprehend the meaning of the 'is' here. To say that Dasein is its possibilities is, however, to say that it is ontologically nothing determinate; for it is the *being-possible* which opens up concrete possibilities. The fact that Dasein *is* its possibilities therefore indicates what is certainly one of Heidegger's key claims in *Being and Time*: that possibility is "higher" than actuality (cf. *SZ* 38). This would appear to signal a reversal of the Aristotelian thought that actuality is prior to all possibility. However, things are more complicated than they might initially appear.

For Heidegger, Dasein as pure possibility is also what he calls a *movement* [*Bewegung*] (SZ, 374-75). Complicating this already difficult terminology, Dasein *stretches itself along* [*Sicherstreckens*], an activity which he variously calls *occurrence* [*Geschehen*] and *self-constancy* [*Selbstständigkeit*]. We do not need to have a fully worked out account of what these terms mean in order to understand that Heidegger is articulating Dasein as a form of activity which is characterized not only by movement, but self-sustaining movement. Whatever this "movement" consists in, its being stretched along is a *self-stretching*, and its occurrence in some way holds itself constant. This may now remind us of Kant's notion of cognition in general as self-sustaining judgment. For both Heidegger and Kant, in order to capture the way in which this activity at the root of all philosophy is both self-sustaining and condition of the possibility of occurrences in time, it helps to see how it has roots in Aristotle's notion of *energeia* (ενέργεια). Energeia—actuality or activity—is traditionally distinguished from a mere movement by distinguishing how activities and movements are differently tensed:

> For every movement is incomplete—making thin, learning, walking, building; these are movements, and incomplete movements. For it is not true that at the same time we are walking and have walked, or are building and have built, or are coming to be and have come to be—it is a different thing that is being moved and that has been moved, and that is moving and that has moved; but it is the same thing that at the same time has seen and is seeing, or is thinking and has thought. (*Metaphysics Θ*, 1048b18-1048b34)

For Aristotle, the examples of energeia are examples of what are called 'perfect actions', which are actions that are themselves ends.[20] 'At the same time I am seeing, I have seen' means that in seeing I have always already seen—the *end* of having seen is always already present in the activity. As such, the end of the activity is not its termination, but that which sustains it. In 'stretching itself along', Dasein is the activity of temporality itself. But, as we have also just seen, Heidegger takes Dasein to be its own pure possibility, which is "higher" than actuality. Then in what sense can Dasein be an energeia? How can Dasein in its most original sense be a movement which stretches itself along in self-constancy, but not be an actuality?

If Dasein is movement and self-constancy, it must nevertheless be so without an attachment to any particular end (*SZ*, 43). Here Heidegger sheds some light on our problem. Dasein *is* in the sense of *existing*, but 'existing' need not be understood only in terms of concrete possibilities of existence. Our having concrete possibilities of existence presupposes our having a grasp on what those concrete possibilities are and what they can be. Dasein, then, exists as that which has possibility. But this means that Heidegger is not committed to saying that possibility is higher than actuality *per se*, for our existing as possibility is a *way of being*, an activity. Our possibility is activity. We see this somewhat more clearly from Heidegger's relatively brief discussion of the connection between energeia and 'being' in the Ancient Greek sense of 'constant presence'. This notion, he thinks, will not hold up without our showing

[19] As, for Kant, the 'I' is not a substance bearing properties.
[20] See, e.g., J.L. Ackrill (1965).

it to have a more primordial meaning than the notion of 'presence' that may be contrasted with its contrary 'absence'. So long as we hold onto the notion of being as presence in the sense which stands directly opposed to absence, we have not yet made clear the ontological difference (the difference between beings and their being). But we also have not, in that case, made clear the *temporal* difference (between times and their temporality). There is, Heidegger notes, an available notion of constant presence at the very heart of the Greek *ousia*, but it is prior to the derivative categories of absence and presence (*WMF*, Ga31: 42). Directly connected to this, as I hope we can now see, is the thought that this core notion of presence is inextricably linked with the core notion of temporality through which being gains its meaning. We see here the plausibility of Heidegger's notion that while Dasein is *pure possibility*, this pure possibility itself *is*—i.e., it is itself in actuality and activity, though in a way that precedes a categorial distinction between possibility and actuality or capacity and activity.

Now, turning back to the connection between Kant's and Heidegger's respective understandings of the temporal difference: we have seen that in each case there is an account of how an activity of freedom or spontaneity which is constitutive of time itself makes possible the temporal fleeing characteristic of our falling away from this freedom. It will now be helpful in formulating the most important questions to be asked going forward for us to briefly consider how, from this same vantage point, we might begin to see the ground of their greatest disagreement.

4. Heidegger on Kant's Theory of Spontaneity

We have discussed what it could mean for heteronomy and inauthenticity to be genuine possibilities by developing a perspective from within their relations to autonomy and authenticity, and in particular by articulating the *temporal difference*. One thing to be immediately noted is that all along in our investigation we have skirted around the topic of self-consciousness, suggesting that it is somehow central for both Kant and Heidegger in their respective accounts. However, Heidegger is in fact quite critical of any attempt to identify Dasein with self-consciousness Kant's apperceptive 'I'. And nevertheless, Heidegger often reads Kant in ways that hardly bring this criticism to the forefront. For instance, he understands Kant to hold that "*The "I" in its actuality is pure possibility; this [free] "I can" is just the existing existence*" (*PIK*, Ga25: 380-82). In a passage like this we may be led to think that Kant's apperceptive 'I' is, like Dasein, existence as pure possibility. In fact, Heidegger offers an even friendlier clarification in the following paragraph:

> It would be totally erroneous to interpret this and other passages as though here Kant were saying that transcendental consciousness is nothing actual but merely something logical [...] To be sure Kant maintains that transcendental consciousness is nothing actual; to be sure he maintains that this consciousness is possibility. But "nothing actual" does not mean "not existing at all" but only not existing in the sense of nature, and rather existing in the sense of freedom. And "possibility" here does not mean the logical freedom from contradiction; but rather it means faculty understood as *actus*, as "I can." (*PIK*, Ga25: 380-82)

Heidegger understands Kant to hold that transcendental apperception, seemingly just as we have understood Dasein above, is *possibility* that is at the same time *act*. The 'I' is "nothing actual" only in the sense that it is not something extant in nature, but freedom. And, in turn, this freedom is "possibility" not as abstract logical possibility, but as *act.* But now Heidegger brings his criticism to the forefront:

> However, misunderstanding is encouraged in that Kant indeed fails clearly to differentiate ontologically the concepts of actuality and possibility in relation to Dasein, the "I," and nature. Ontologically, Kant depends entirely on the traditional ontology of what is extant. He clearly grasps the mode of being of the subject only when he grasps this being in an ontic and not

> ontological manner, so that he could inquire as to how the being of the "I" comports itself to the being of nature. Nevertheless his position is so clear that we can say: According to Kant's characterization of the subject's acting freely, possibility is higher than actuality. (ibid.)

In Heidegger's view, what Kant fails to do is grasp the being of the 'I' ontologically. While Kant had prepared the way for such an understanding, and therefore had some grasp of this himself, he still could not see what Heidegger sees, which is that the 'I' is nothing extant. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger makes this point by saying that Kant falls back upon the idea of the 'I' as "something substantial." For, even though Kant understands this 'I' only in its apperceptive connection to its representations, without which it would be nothing at all, "nowhere does Kant show the kind of being of this "connection" and "accompanying"" (*SZ* 321). Most importantly, what Kant misses is the *temporal* determination of the self in 'I think something' (ibid.). What is this temporal determination which is missing in Kant? The criticism in full is difficult to uncover, but Heidegger's brief clarification in the *Phenomenological Interpretation* (392-96) is to make the following basic argument: if time is pure intuition, and pure intuition is rooted in self-affection, then this involves an a priori relation of the 'I' with time. In Kant's case, while he tries to show that the 'I' can identify itself as the same in each 'now', he only succeeds in demonstrating an external relationship between the 'I' as a thinking thing and the moments in which it can identify itself as such:

> [...] not only are we dealing with an "I" which exists free from time and point for point, but also this "I" is, as it were, extant *beside (next to)* time. As much as the *togetherness* of receptivity and spontaneity is again and again important for Kant, he still does not succeed in demonstrating a ground wherein both can be together. At one point in the *Critique* Kant directly speaks of time's "belonging to the unity of myself." But the manner of this belonging remains unclear, and time is simply something present in the subject. (*PIK*, Ga25: 395-96)

It isn't that Kant did not have the basic tools for grasping the relation between the 'I' and time, but that Kant did not properly call this relation into question, and so it was never clear to him from the beginning that the relation needed to be explained in a more adequate way. The more adequate way, we can surmise, is to show that the 'I' is not so heterogenous with what it thinks that it becomes "forced back into an *isolated* subject that accompanies representations" (*SZ* 321). The elimination of this strict heterogeneity involves showing that the 'I' is originally temporal, not timeless. And, as we have seen, Kant does wish to emphasize this timeless character.

So, the question that emerges for us at this point is how to properly conceive the relationship between the 'I' and time. Heidegger of course takes himself to have undertaken precisely this evaluation, but from what we have seen in the above analysis of how freedom or spontaneity underlies the possibility of un-freedom or un-ownedness in time, Kant is not lacking in resources for undertaking the evaluation as well. In some sense, as we have also seen, Heidegger agrees: his reading of Kant involves extracting a *better* understanding of Kant than Kant had of himself, and one result of this is to see that Kant's theory of the freedom or spontaneity of the 'I think' and the 'I can' is already in part an awareness of Heidegger's key move in *SZ* to show that the pure possibility with which we identify Dasein is 'higher' than (categorial) actuality.

Returning to *The Essence of Human Freedom*, and specifically with respect to *Freiheit*, the barrier that Kant's theory of freedom purportedly places in front of a genuine understanding of being is that freedom is primarily concerned with causality—the will's ability to bring forth (cause) new chains of appearances. This is seen by Heidegger as merely one investigation into freedom among others, and so a notion of freedom which itself needs to be subjected to interrogation as to how it relates to the more fundamental notion of Dasein's free self-constancy (its form of energeia). The most I can do here is suggest that

Heidegger's general criticism of Kant's theory of freedom and spontaneity is not obviously merited. At the very least, we can raise a concern about Heidegger's own account on Kant's behalf.

In our discussion of the form of energeia belonging to Dasein, we saw that Heidegger takes it to be higher than the merely categorial distinction between presence and absence, capacity and activity. But, it is also higher than the distinction between perfect activity and movement in Aristotle, because Dasein is both. In this way, I agree with a recent discussion of this point in Carter (2014), who argues that Heidegger's notion of being-towards-death is an illustration of Dasein as 'kineticity' or a *kinêsis* (process of movement) which is also an energeia. Heidegger himself makes this point in his study of Aristotle, when he points out that even walking, which may be a perfect or complete activity in itself, is essentially a process of movement (*GAP*, Ga18: 71). Dasein, too, is not energeia as opposed to kinêsis, but a unity of the two. To see this, one needs only to consider that Dasein is a "complete" activity only in its being *in*complete in the sense of always being-towards its own annihilation. Hence, while the self-constancy of Dasein is not to be understood as a mere conglomeration of temporal parts—not within time—it nevertheless must be understood as a process of movement whose 'end' (in the sense of its limit) is always outstanding.[21] But what is important for our purposes is to see that the unity of energeia and kinêsis need not be taken as an identity. That is, the aspect of energeia which appears to be not *within* and so *outside of* time may have a necessary expression *within* time, but this is not to conflate one notion with the other. And, for Kant, it is quite plausible that this is the point of separating the "timeless" aspect of freedom from the temporal appearance of freedom in the world of phenomena, as we have seen above.

Hence, the real issue standing between Kant and Heidegger, I propose, is not that fundamental freedom or spontaneity is for Kant still a merely 'categorial' topic. I hope we have seen that for Kant, on the contrary, spontaneity generally is to be understood as a self-conscious self-maintenance of (theoretical and) practical judgment, and this stands at the root of all philosophy.[22] Rather, the issue at hand is how to understand the apperceptive 'I'—self-consciousness in general—in its relation to temporality. We have seen that for Kant this fundamental spontaneity can be understood to have a temporal meaning or reference, but only if we allow that it is an act determining the whole of time (as an act that is itself comprehensive with respect to time, and an actualization that does not take up time). And that, in determining the whole of time, it is itself not held to some standard provided by the dimensions or ecstasies of time. Moreover, this temporal meaning with a "timeless" component is not *entirely* foreign to Heidegger. At least, it shouldn't seem so. For Kant, while the free or spontaneous 'I' is in some sense timeless, this does not force it back into an imaginary timeless objective presence (cf. again *PIK*, Ga25: 268). For Kant, however, it also does not make time the *limit* of the 'I'. Hence, there is still a real question here as to how to think of the relationship between the 'I' and time such that we can capture this apparently "timeless" meaning without surrendering its essentially temporal reference. This, I propose, should be our guiding question when asking about the Kant-Heidegger relation.

We have seen that in Kant's practical philosophy, the "temporal" meaning of pure willing together with our fallen moral character is "ecstatic" to the extent that it involves ontological, not *ontic*, syntheses of past, present, and future. There is a question yet to be answered here about whether a similar temporal meaning could be rendered for Kant's theoretical philosophy. Heidegger was critical of what he took to be Kant's failure to fully register the temporal difference in the syntheses of apprehension, reproduction, and recognition, as well as in the schematism more generally. But, it seems unfair to saddle Kant with the

[21] See Carter (2014) for a lengthy and illuminating discussion of this issue.

[22] Of course, how we understand this will depend on how specifically we are to interpret Kant's idea that practical reason is prior to theoretical reason. This is too large a topic to consider here.

conclusion that his conception of time is nothing but the vulgar conception of a series of 'nows'.[23] If we now allow Kant to have a properly 'ontological' notion of temporality, then we are left simply with the question why he insists that the 'I' whose activity is constitutive of that temporality is time-less. I hope to have shown (1) that this question is more complicated than Heidegger thought, and (2) that there is a real opportunity for us to develop a plausible answer on Kant's behalf.

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GAP = Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy
GP = The Basic Problems of Phenomenology
KPM = Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics
PIK = Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason
SZ = Being and Time
WMF = The Essence of Human Freedom

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is cited according to the standard 'A' and 'B' pagination, and the following abbreviations:

GMS = Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals
KpV = Critique of Practical Reason
KrV = Critique of Pure Reason
MS = Metaphysics of Morals
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[23] See a brief discussion of this point in Melnick's *Kant's Theory of Self* (2009, 107-08).

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