THE ROLE OF OTHERS TO BECOME ETHICAL IN HEIDEGGERIAN SENSE AND ITS RELATION TO PRAGMATISM

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ABSTRACT: The title of my paper, *The Role of Others to Become Ethical in Heideggerian Sense*, refers to the three basic pillars of my writing. In what follows, I would like to explain why I suppose the Heideggerian ethics' existence at all, I also would like to highlight what exactly the role of Others is in the Heideggerian ethical sense, and finally I would like to show that this ethics is worth looking into, being different from any mainstream or traditional ethical thinking. I also would like to connect my findings to Pragmatism in two aspects: Heidegger and the pragmatists both find important the readiness of the surrounding world and the company of others.[1]

It may seem controversial to argue for Heideggerian ethics after the appearance of the Schwarze Hefte.[2] Since these volumes appeared, the tone of the ethical questioning regarding Heidegger has changed. The critiques now eagerly analyse Heidegger as a person, whether he was anti-Semite, or even racist, and they want to find evidence of his involvement in National Socialism; while earlier many researchers tried to find hidden signs of the mentioned biases. In my paper, I only refer to these tendencies because I would like to focus on his writings and on what they contain. It is because I think, time is still needed to find the necessary distance to judge his activity.

The way of approaching the questions above will be through analysing the problem of Heideggerian ethics. To reach these aims, it is necessary to foretell that I survey only Heidegger's *early period*, which is between 1919-1929.[3] I rely from this period on especially *Being and Time (1926-27)*, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life (1920-21)*, and the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz (1928).* I also use extensively the *Letter on Humanism (1946)* volume, all of them with the purpose that they give answers to my questions.

The existence of Ethics in Heidegger's early writings

The twentieth century continental philosophy was many sided and so was the philosophy of Martin Heidegger.[4] However, he was against disciplines, he was against ethics, and he was against prescriptive norms. Consequently, there are at least the above mentioned three barriers against Ethics in his thoughts. I believe, though, that these barriers are not real ones but are so rich points that should be analysed as they hide answers for my previous questions. To visualise it, these points resemble of icebergs that show their very tops and hide their huge bodies under the water.

As a consequence, I find necessary to explain the three barriers in details. At first, if we have a close look at his early writings, we can see strong arguments against the disciplinary division of Philosophy into

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[1] In this respect, the mutual ground is the fact that Heidegger rejects Descartes's scepticism (in which he primarily supposes the ego cogito and then he deduces the world from it). This argument was also challenged by Charles. S Peirce, who did not accept Descartes's *introspective reconstruction of philosophy* by saying 'It is certainly important to know how to make our ideas clear, but they may be ever so clear without being true.' (Peirce, 1878, 17.) and added another epistemological notion Belief to the scientific investigation. Further he said: 'But the reality of that which is real does depend on the real fact that investigation is destined to lead, at last, if continued long enough, to a belief in it.' (Peirce, 1878, 16.) According to him, the reality of the world is supported by scientific research. This finding is somehow similar to Heidegger's viewpoint on the non-existence of eternal truths and can also be connected with his structure of Sciences which he only accepted if Ontology was involved.

[2] The Diaries (Band 94, 95, 96, 97) appeared in 2014—2015 and were edited by Peter Trawny. They contain the private notes of the Philosopher himself from 1931-1948 and may be suspicious of being biased. Many researchers tried to clarify the state of Heidegger after facing the volumes (e. g. Schwendtner, *Heidegger and the National Socialism*).

[3] Heidegger's writing period can be divided into many phases, however, I accept the approach of Theodore Kisiel with the addition that until the whole Heideggerian corpus has not been worked through, changes may occur. According to Kisiel, until 1919 we can talk about the *young*, between 1919-1929 the e*arly*, between 1929-1950 the *late* and from the 1950s the *old* Heidegger. Kisiel, 1993.

[4] One focal point of his analysis was for example everyday life that can also be connected with Pragmatism. For Rorty, or for his follower Mark Okrent, Heidegger's viewpoint and Pragmatism have even stronger roots as for them they "belong together". Richard Rorty, Essays on Heidegger and Others, Philosophical Papers II, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1991, 11. From my viewpoint, the social practice of our everyday life is relevant to my ethical inquiry.

Physics, Ethics, and Logic.[5] According to him, the division eliminated the purpose of Philosophy itself. However, it did not mean that he denied the importance or rather the existence of any of the above mentioned fields. What he denied was the *division*, the *fragmentation* of the great scientific field he dealt with and that had the longest written past and heritage of European culture. He also denied the questions that remained the same within the subjects and helped to cover answers for centuries.[6] Should we not include ontological questioning into Philosophy? Would or should we abandon logic in the field of ethics or physics? Could we leave out the principle of excluded middle when making up a physical theory, or applying ethics? That would be hardly possible, desirable and the least according to Heidegger.[7]

The next barrier involved in his works was that he rejected Ethics as a scientific field. However, if I am right and he did not deny the existence of Ethics but only the division of Philosophy, and the inherited and not expandable circle of questions of its 'subjects', then what he surely did not accept in Ethics was its ontical nature. In the early period of his critique of science and later on as well he wrote about his doubts: if a science does not connect itself with being in general and its own

being in particular then that is not a science. [8] Consequently, if it is possible to connect Ethics with being and/or its own structure, then it can reach the 'level' of an ontological science.

Finally, I would like to mention the third barrier. It means that his approach in Philosophy was descriptively phenomenological and explanatorily (meaning-givingly) hermeneutical. With this in mind, it is highly unlikely to understand how we should apply norms, which have imperative force. Consequently, norms should be refused. The reasons why it is so: if this field (Philosophy) itself equals with its method (phenomenology), then imperatively formed ethical norms are expelled from this realm. It also meant that if ethics was a possible part of philosophy, then it should not have had prescriptions either. On the other hand, if we can 'read our lives' phenomenologically, and can make an effort 'to understand' its whys and hows hermeneutically, then we make ethics possible in our every days' each and every *situation*[9] in Heideggerian sense.

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[5] He rejects the division and the inherited questioning of these subjects in 1929/30 ('In this way there ensue three disciplines of philosophy scholastically conceived: logic, physics, ethics. This process of the scholastic development and thereby of the decline of philosophizing proper begins already in the era of Plato, in his own school academy.', Heidegger, 1995, 35-37.) He also mentions many years later, in 1946: 'Even such names as "logic," "ethics," and "physics" begin to flourish only when originary thinking comes to an end. During the time of their greatness the Greeks thought without such headings.', Heidegger, 1998, 241.

[6] If we think of his argument for getting back to the beginning of any philosophical questioning in this period, we can understand his constant aim for the origin. This delicate problem was finally modelled in *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* with the scheme of the Phenomenological investigation (Reduktion, Konstruktion, Destruktion – reduction, construction, and destruction of a given question. (Heidegger, 1975, 31.)

[7] I believe, neither would be imaginable: life without being ethical with ourselves and towards others as well.

[8] 'Dasein's ways of behaviour, its capacities, powers, possibilities, and vicissitudes, have been studied with varying extent in philosophical psychology, in anthropology, ethics, and 'political science', in poetry, biography, and the writing of history, each in a different fashion. But the question remains whether these interpretations of Dasein have been carried through with a primordial existentiality comparable to whatever existentiell primordiality they may have possessed', Heidegger, 1962, 37.

[9] The uniqueness of his Ethics lays right here: we can understand our life events and if something (re)occurs we can act according to our experience (one example is from the correspondence of Kant and Benjamin Constant in *Über ein vermeintes Recht aus Menschenliebe zu lügen.* Here Kant denies the right for lying due to goodwill or mercy, so we must let the future killer of our friend know his state. While applying Heidegger's situational Ethics, we can alter from the rigid norms and imperatives and we can understand and apply our common sense and still remain Ethical. I find strong resemblance between the aforementioned and Dewey. He says: "A situation to which we respond capriciously or by routine has only a minimum of conscious significance; we get nothing mentally from it. But wherever knowledge comes into play in determining a new experience there is mental reward; even if we fail practically in getting the needed control we have the satisfaction of experiencing a meaning instead of merely

From the above mentioned inherent barriers, I believe my point has become visible: they hide but also slowly give some answers to my questions. So far, I have been able to show that Heidegger did not accept the division of Philosophy but neither denied the existence of Logic, Physics, and Ethics; he did not accept the existence of an ontical Ethics that does not question its origin and being itself; and finally he did not accept ethical normativity and imperatives due to his own philosophical method.

After coming closer to the 'barriers', let me explain why I suppose Ethics in the early writings of Heidegger. It is because he says in *Being and Time* so. While analysing conscience in between 54-60. § he says 'When Dasein is resolute, it can become the »conscience« of Others'.[10] I believe without any Ethical dimensions of life, being, and Dasein this sentence could not have been said. Therefore, I think Heidegger had his own idea about what Ethics was like but he did not want to deal with this question (the question of people) openly. He had his own idea about this question, otherwise, how could we find the traces of ethics in his works?[11] The most important of the early period from this respect is the work dedicated to Leibniz that even appoints the place of Ethics in the architecture of the Dasein's existence.

A latent ethics

At this point, I must mention that the supposed ethics can only be connected to the authentic Dasein. Authenticity is analysed throughout *Being and Time*, therefore, we are able to see how one can become

authentic. Heidegger uses three life experiences to show the authentic-inauthentic nature of Dasein. These are anxiety (Angst), death (Tod), and conscience (Gewissen). These phenomena emphasise different characters of the authentic person: the first makes Dasein understand the lonely nature of life, the second makes Dasein understand the limitis of life, while conscience is the one that lets the Others in the life of Dasein (the latter one is very important in the field of Ethics. It is the base of mutual responsibility and the connection with Pragmatism itself).

From those, who tried to detect Ethics in Heidegger, I would like to mention the work of Frederick A. Olafson at first. His volume, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics* with the subtitle *A Study of Mitsein* raises interesting questions. The author places emphasis on the state of Mitsein as the basis of any Ethics in our world. I think, Olafson's viewpoint is right in many cases, however, I do not believe that the Mitsein is the base of the authentic communities. When Heidegger deals with the community of people (Mitsein) in the 26§ he does not think of the authentic community people, what he conveys is the sole description of being-together-with-others, from which the authentic person should depart at first. It is true that there must be an authentic community, but the community of people (Mitsein) is not authentic yet. It can become authentic if members of a community go through the stages of solitude, being-towards-death and awakening conscience and then choose each other.

Another perspective on the Heideggerian Ethics is given by Angus Brook. In his book the author insists on the individual Ethos of people as the source of a person's moral behaviour but he rejects that this behaviour would be able to cumulate and so would create a community. In my opinion, Heidegger knew and accepted the ethical dimensions of life but he did not deal with it because he did not want to loose track of his essential question, being. He clearly stated the existence of Ethics in his work analysing Leibniz (Metaethics, Heidegger, 1978 (GA, 26), 199), while another reference

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reacting physically.", Dewey, 1916, 237. This quote points to the conscious character of a person in a situation – which is quite like the way the authentic Dasein is. (Additionally, the flexibility of Ethics is one aspect, which Heidegger did not open when avoided the question and so avoided the blame of relativity.)

[10] Heidegger, 1962, 344. „Das entschlossene Dasein kann zum »Gewissen« der Anderen werden." (SZ 295)

[11] These works are e. g. the one dedicated to Leibniz, Heidegger, 1978 (GA, 26), 199. Another reference can be found in the Letter on Humanism, and in the Zollikon Seminars.

can be found in the *Letter on Humanism*, and in the Zollikon Seminars (Heidegger, 1987, 273).

The reasons why I suppose Ethics in Heidegger have been shown. Now I would like to explain how this ethics exists. Here the analysis of conscience in *Being and Time* is the key. Needless to say that Heidegger's concept is very different from any other conscience-concepts.[12] From 54-60 § Heidegger mentions how the Dasein can reach its own connection with its ontological base, how it can become itself through the call of Care, and how it can understand the call and its own guilt. They all start with understanding the silent call of conscience, as it calls itself to capture its utmost possibility to be itself.[13] We should listen to this silent call, as due to the thrownness and concealment of factical life, we live life as others say so. To become ourselves we must stop listening to others and start listening to the message, 'Be yourself' sent by our concealed selves. This warning, however, seems to be quite individual, since to be ourselves we need to depart from the Others with the help of the three life experiences. It is just not that obvious what can make us turn to them again.[14]

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[12] He emphasises that conscience belongs to the existentiell structure of Dasein, therefore other concepts that do not target this domain cannot meet the requirements. However, he involves into his analysis other vulgar conscience concepts, as they conceal and show *something* from the phenomenon. Like icebergs, which show only the top and hide the bottom of themselves.

[13] „'Nothing' gets called to [*zu*-gerufen] this Self, but it has been summoned [*aufgerufen*] to itself-that is, to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. The tendency of the call is not such as to put up for 'trial' the Self to which the appeal is made; but it calls Dasein forth (and 'forward') into its ownmost possibilities, as a summons to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self.", Heidegger, *Being*... Op. cit., 318.

[14] A connection between the unauthentic self and other thinkers can be shown, as Heidegger himself refers to Leo Tolstoy and his work *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. Further connections with the Pragmatist Dewey could also be detected concerning the inability of the self. He says: „We rarely recognize the extent in which our conscious estimates of what is worth while and what is not, are due to standards of which we are not conscious at all. But in general it may be said that the things which we take for granted without inquiry or reflection are just

The importance and role of Others in Heideggerian ethics

The most important question now is what makes the authentic person turn back towards others, after departing from them through quite frightening but also enlightening life experiences. The question could be answered from different angles, e. g. the reality of the world,[15] or from the perspective of Mitsein (being with others) as we saw it in Olafson.[16] The most immediate answer, due to the nature of our lives, could be that we live in one and the same world. Additionally, Heidegger does not deny the existence of Others, consequently we have to deal with them. But how? I am trying to highlight here two further interrelated optional answers to the question. One option brings us back to the explicit sentence: 'When Dasein is resolute, it can become the »conscience« of Others'.[17] While the other aspect is the question of intentionality which gives the answer to the way people live together with each other (intersubjectivity).

I am trying to explain how the latter happens with the help of formale Anzeige, or formal indication. (The term was used by Heidegger throughout his early period, and was explained in *Einleitung in die Phänomenologie der Religion: Phänomenologie des Religiösen Lebens* (*The Phenomenology of Religious Life*)**,** in 1920-21**).** At first, the question should be solved: how can the resolute Dasein become the conscience of others. The extended quote has the solution here: 'Dasein's resoluteness

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the things which determine our conscious thinking and decide our conclusions. And these habitudes which lie below the level of reflection are just those which have been formed in the constant give and take of relationship with others.", Dewey, 1916, 16.

[15] From 14-24. §. Heidegger deals with the question of the world and its existence.

[16] Heidegger writes about the question in the 26. §. *The Dasein-with of Others and Everyday Being-with*. However, the emphasis here is 'Thus as Being-with, Dasein 'is' essentially for the sake of Others', Heidegger, *Being*..., Op. cit., 160. This is the starting point of Frederick A. Olafson's *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

[17] Heidegger, 1962, 344. „Das entschlossene Dasein kann zum »Gewissen« der Anderen werden." (SZ 295)

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.'[18] For me it means that the resolute person tells and helps the others to be themselves and to be responsible. Furthermore, here the difference between the two ways of *solicitude* is important: one mode is to *leap in* instead of the other, while the other mode is to *leap ahead/forth* and to hold the other's care and give it back to the person later.[19] What is more, if we continue reading the previous lines, we can acquire another important aspect of the Heideggerian Ethics. 'Only by authentically Being-their-Selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another - not by ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraternizing in the "they" and in what "they" want to undertake.'[20] We cannot have doubts this attitude gives answers how to create *the community of the authentic selves.* This is another important point, which refers to the application of Ethics amongst people.

The other question is how people can fulfil their mutual living by each other, apart from the fact that they live in one and the same world by each other. To explain this, I need to mention the explicational method of the *Religious lectures*.[21] According to these lectures, each and every phenomenon/life experience can be asked about its what-content, its how relatedness, and how-executability. After gaining answers from these questions, the sense-full-ness of these comprehensions can be explained by phenomenology. Furthermore, to avoid any misinterpretation, the formale Anzeige is

applied. Formal indication is part of the phenomenological explication method and it has a twofold nature. On one side, it prevents the one-sided 'reading' of situations (while answering the how-what-how questions), while on the other side it is like a warning and attention-drawing indicator before application. To fulfil these aims, at first formale Anzeige deals with the relatedness of a situation to prevent the content being overwhelming, biased or one-sided. Heidegger himself applies this method to analyse the life situation of Paul the Apostle.

However, the method can be applied to different phenomenon, as Heidegger himself applies it till the end of his early period, even in *Being and Time*. As part of the phenomenological explication, I would like to apply it to the phenomenon of conscience. The authentic Dasein's conscience is related to itself and its message is told at the call before any deeds. However, if a Dasein is the conscience of others it relates to them as well, and tells them to be alike and be themselves and then calls upon the act. It is a very important point here, because without others and being resolutely conscious the Dasein cannot leave the states of lonely anxiety, and being-towards-death. Consequently, the phenomenological reading of formale Anzeige reinforces the applicability of conscience towards others. That is the base of Heideggerian ethics, in our factical, real life situations. With the help of the applied formale Anzeige we can see how one can read one's life itself (how-what-how) which is a help of understanding our standpoint and the background of our deeds.

What is the Heideggerean ethics like?

After the previous textual analysis, it might be good to sum it up and talk about the nature of the Heideggerian ethics and the connections with Pragmatism. Starting with the latter, the connections have been shown: the similarity of rejecting the Cartesian scepticism of the world (Peirce: Belief, Reality), the importance of Other people (Dewey) and the differences between

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[18] The quote follows as: 'When Dasein is resolute, it can become the 'conscience' of Others. Only by authentically Being-their-Selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another - not by ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraternizing in the "they" and in what "they" want to undertake.', Heidegger, *Being…*, Op. cit., 344-345.
[19] Heidegger, *Being…*, Op. cit., 26§, 158-159. I believe these two modes of taking care of the others are the textual proofs that Ethics exists in *Being and Time*.
[20] Heidegger, *Being…*, Op. cit., 344-345.
[21] Heidegger, 1920-21.

conscious/authentic and routinous/inauthentic (Dewey) way of living. From a close look of what has been said by the philosopher many doubts can be blown away. To explain this, we should see what is said by contemporary sources about ethics. According to them, it has three main parts: normative ethics, metaethics, and applied ethics.[22] From these ethical branches, the normative deals with three sub-divisions: virtue ethics, deontological ethics, and consequentialism/utilitarism.[23] If we take *Being and Time* as the first and foremost source of my inquiry, then we cannot forget what Heidegger said about some of these ethical divisions. He straightly rejected Kant and his deontological viewpoint, and also utilitarism.[24] Ha only agreed with Aristotle in some of his practical thoughts, however, did not identify with him in every aspects. The connection between phronesis and conscience/Gewissen was pointed out by Heidegger himself in his early lectures and was remembered by his students (Gadamer). However, Heidegger's notion is different from the Aristotelian phronesis, as it for example does not contain happiness and well-being as an aim. In his phenomenon we can find guilt (debt), self-loss, and care which are all inside sources of one's behaviour. Therefore, we can simply conclude that the ethics of Heidegger is different from others': it is not normative, it is not deontological, not utilitarian and it is not virtue ethics either. It is not

metaethics and it is not a rootless applied ethics. After the negations, some positive characteristics can also be said to be applied in our every day, pragmatic lives. I think, the Heideggerian ethics is universal as it is the ontological possibility of everyone who is willing to listen to the call of its own conscience; it is situational as it is applied in situations but without prescriptive maxims or norms – so it is flexible, it relies on previous experience, and also on our understanding, reading and applicability of the situation.

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[22] See James Fieser, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy http://www.iep.utm.edu/ethics/ (accessed: 21. 06. 2017.), or Peter Singer names two branches of ethics: normative and applied in, *Ethics: Encyclopedica Britannica*, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/194023/ethics, (accessed: 21. 06. 2017.).

[23] Michael SLOTE,*Virtue Ethics: The Routledge Companion to Ethics*, Routledge, 2010, 478-489. https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203850701.ch40. (accessed: 21. 06. 2017.)

[24] With the maxims which one might be led to expect- maxims which could be reckoned up unequivocally-the conscience would deny to existence nothing less than the very possibility of taking action.', Heidegger, Being…, 339-340. Here he refers to the maxims of Kant and previously to utilitarism, both of them blamed to overlook the purpose of conscience, the ontology of Dasein and existence.

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