Choosing One's Fate: A Re-Reading of Sein und Zeit §74

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In this article we present (1) a close paraphrase—virtually a translation—of Heidegger’s Sein und Zeit, §74, “Die Grundverfassung der Geschichtlichkeit,” pp. 382-87, together with an analytical outline found in the Appendix; and (2) a brief commentary on the text. What Heidegger says about his own translation of Aristotle’s Physics B 1 applies here as well: “The ‘translation’ is already the interpretation proper. Thereafter only an explanation of the ‘translation’ is called for.”

Our rendering of §74 is hardly uncontroversial and will not please everyone. It is offered, rather, in the interest of reawakening questions about this crucial section of SZ. We welcome any suggestions and criticisms that will improve or correct that effort.

The commentary in Part II presents a justification for some of the key terms used in the paraphrase. Our rendering of the following terms differs markedly from the existing English translations:

- Dasein as “openness” and das Da as the “open”
- überliefern as “to free up” (cf. Der Satz vom Grund, 171.7-10)
- Zukunft/Auf-sich-zukommen, as “becoming” (cf. SZ, 325.29-30 and 199.15)
- Gewesen as “already” and Gewesenheit as “alreadiness” (cf. GA 2: 114.26-36)
- Schuldigsein as “lack-in-being” (cf. SZ, 282.26, etc.)
- sich entwerfen auf as “to understand oneself in terms of” (cf. SZ, 306.7-8, etc.)
- Geschichtlichkeit as “historicalness” and Geschehen as “occurrence”
- Seinkönnen as “ability-to-be”
- faktisch as “specific” or “in its specificity”
Part I
A Close Paraphrase

Being and Time
§74: The Basic Structure of Historicalness

INTRODUCTION

The topic

Openness, in its specificity, always has its "history," and can have it, because the very being of this entity is constituted by historicalness. This thesis needs to be justified, with the aim of explaining the ontological problem of history as an existential one.

We defined the being of openness as care, and care is grounded in temporality. So we must search within temporality for the occurrence that determines existence as historical. Ultimately, therefore, interpreting the historicalness of openness will simply mean spelling out temporality more concretely.

We first uncovered temporality with regard to that mode of authentic existing called "anticipatory resolution." To what extent does resolve entail an authentic occurrence of openness?

Resolution (1) takes over mortality and (2) decides about the situation.

We defined "resolution" as silently and dreadfully understanding oneself in terms of one's own lack-in-being. The authenticity of resolution comes from its being anticipatory. In resolution, openness understands itself in terms of its ability-to-be, to such a degree that it goes right into the teeth of death in order to take over wholly, in its thrownness, the entity that it itself is.

But resolutely taking over one's own specific "open" entails, at the same time, resolve with regard to one's situation. In principle, however, an existential analysis cannot discuss what openness decides specifically in any given case. The present investigation is unable to give even an existential sketch of the specific possibilities of existence. Nonetheless, we must ask about the source from which in general openness draws the possibilities through which it specifically understands itself.

The source of specific authentic possibilities

An anticipatory understanding of oneself in terms of the inevitable possibility of existence (death) only guarantees the wholeness and authenticity of resolution. But the specific disclosed possibilities of existence cannot be drawn from