DASEIN AND THE PHILOSOPHER:
RESPONSIBILITY IN HEIDEGGER AND MAMARDASHVILI

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Abstract. *The paper deals with the concept of responsibility as one of the central concerns for philosophy throughout the 20th century. It especially refers to two opposing poles, namely, Martin Heidegger's exposition of the fundamental ontological structure of Being and works of post structuralism. Between these two poles, Heidegger's and post-structuralist, lies the Georgian philosopher Merab Mamardashvili, whose analysis of consciousness leads him to pose a conception of responsibility that draws on Heidegger's analysis of Being, while incorporating later critiques of Heidegger's ontology.*

Key words: *responsibility, ontology, being, post-structuralism, Heidegger, Merab Mamardashvili.*

The question of 'what is responsibility?' has been a central concern for Continental philosophy throughout the 20th century. It warranted an extended discussion in Martin Heidegger's exposition of the fundamental ontological structure of Being in *Sein und Zeit* (1928), and it has also become a fundamental problem for post-structuralism in the latter part of the century. Between these two poles lies the Georgian philosopher Merab Mamardashvili, whose analysis of consciousness leads him to pose a conception of responsibility that draws on Heidegger's analysis of Being, while incorporating later critiques of Heidegger's ontology.

This paper reads Mamardashvili's work in the context of 20th century Continental philosophy, examining how his philosophy of responsibility provides an important link between Heidegger's ontology, and post-structuralist critics of Heidegger's ontology.

Heidegger, Conscience, and Responsibility

Division One of *Sein und Zeit* analyses the 'everyday Being-one's-Self' of Dasein, which is the manner in which Dasein *is* in the world amongst Others, and lost to the 'idle talk' of the 'they'. As Heidegger writes, "when Dasein is absorbed in the world of its concern – that is, at the same time, in its Being-with towards Others – it is not itself."[1] It is in Division Two of *Being and Time* that Heidegger examines the manner in which Dasein is able to save its authentic Self from the 'they', by hearing the call of its authentic potentiality-for-Being. The notion of *Schuld* – guilt and debt – is central to this transformation. Dasein's guilt is constituted in the space between its authentic Self, *to* which the call of conscience [*Gewissen*] summons it, and its they-Self, *from* which the call of conscience summons it. Dasein is guilty of neglecting its authentic Self, and this 'Being-guilty' [*Schuldigsein*] is what calls Dasein: it is a call, as Heidegger writes, both "*from* me and yet *from beyond me*" (1998: 320).

Heidegger's argument on Dasein's Being-guilty, which is the basis of Dasein's taking responsibility for its debts, is based on Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of conscience. Heidegger argues that it is conscience that calls Dasein to recognise itself as other to its authentic Self. The summons [*Aufruf*] of Dasein's conscience manifests itself as anxiety [*Angst*, or *Gewissensangst*] and 'uncanniness' [*Unheimlichkeit*]. Dasein's guilt is thus summoned by the experiences of anxiety and uncanniness, which are signs of Dasein's Being-guilty for neglecting its authentic Self. It is by way of an analysis of *Unheimlichkeit* that Heidegger argues that Dasein's Being is itself grounded *as* guilt, and Dasein's debt to, and responsibility for itself is thus born of this Being-guilty.

The Call of Conscience[2]

"What we are seeking," Heidegger writes, in opening his discussion on conscience, "is an authentic potentiality-for-Being of Dasein, which will be attested in its existentiell possibility by Dasein itself… If in this attestation, Dasein itself, as something for which authentic existence is possible, is to be 'given' to Dasein 'to understand', this attestation will have its roots in Dasein's Being" (1998: 312). From the outset, then, Heidegger seeks to establish the ontological foundation of Dasein, defining Dasein as that being for whom Being is an issue, or, as that Being which "*is* in such a way as to be something which un-

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[1] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998) 163. Subsequent citations to *Being and Time* shall be incorporated into the text.

[2] The call of conscience: *Der Gewissensruf*. In the section of *Sein und Zeit* that I am reading here – Div. 2, Section II, 'Dasein's Attestation of an Authentic Potentiality-for-Being, and Resoluteness' – Heidegger draws a distinction between *Gewissen* and *Bewusstsein*; that is, a distinction between what is translated as 'conscience' and 'consciousness'. Although *Gewissen* can also be translated as 'consciousness', Heidegger uses *Bewusstsein* in the sense of 'to be aware of'. That is, he suggests that we can only *be aware* of *Gewissen* as a primordial phenomenon of Dasein. For example, Heidegger writes:

> Wird aber die Frage nach dem, was der ruf sagt, nicht leichter und sicherer beantwortet durch »schlichten« Hinwies daraug, was durchgängig in allen Gewissenserfahrungen gehört bzw. überhört wrid: daß der Ruf das Dasein als »schuldig« anspricht oder, wie im warnenden Gewissen, auf ein mögliches »schuldig« verweist oder als »gutes« *Gewissen* ein »keiner Schuld *bewußt*« bestätigt? (280-281) [my italics]

derstands something like Being… Dasein tacitly understands and interprets something like Being" (1998: 39).[3] Thus, in order for Dasein to realise itself in the authenticity of its self-reflexive Being, it must be the one who calls itself *to* this Being, or who gives itself this Being 'to understand'. This call, Heidegger argues, is that of Dasein's own conscience. Dasein is thus posited at the centre of the existential analysis of conscience, since the '*voice of conscience*' [*Stimme des Gewissens*] is "a *primordial* phenomenon of Dasein [ursprüngliches *Phänomen des Daseins*]." As a "phenomenon of Dasein," writes Heidegger, "conscience is not just a fact which occurs and is occasionally present-at-hand. It '*is*' only in Dasein's kind of Being…" (1998: 313) The purpose of establishing Dasein at the centre of a reading of conscience is to establish the way in which Dasein is able to save itself from the idleness of the 'they' to which it has been lost, and due to whose noise the call of Dasein's own potentiality-for-Being – the call of conscience – has gone unheard. That is, because "Dasein, as a Being-with which understands, can *listen* to Others… it *fails to hear* its own Self in listening to the they-self" (1998: 315). Dasein's hearing of the call of conscience, then, is that hearing in which Dasein, for the first time, hears *beyond* the noise of the 'they' [*das Man*]:

> The "they" has always kept Dasein from taking hold of [the] possibilities of Being. The "they" even hides that manner in which it has tacitly relieved Dasein of the burden of explicitly *choosing* these possibilities. It remains indefinite who has 'really' done the choosing. So Dasein [makes] no choices, gets carried along by the nobody, and thus ensnares itself in inauthenticity. This process can be reversed only if Dasein specifically brings itself back to itself from its lostness in the "they". But this bringing-back must have that kind of Being *by the neglect of which* Dasein has lost itself in inauthenticity. When Dasein thus brings itself back from the "they", the they-self is modified in an existentiell manner so that it becomes *authentic* Being-one's-Self. This must be accomplished by *making up for not choosing*. But "making up" for not choosing signifies *choosing to make this choice* – deciding for a potentiality-for-Being, and making this decision from one's own Self. In choosing to make this choice, Dasein *makes possible*, first and foremost, its authentic potentiality-for-Being. (1998: 312-313).

Dasein is thus summoned *forward* to its existential potentiality-for-Being by the call of conscience. This potentiality-for-Being is the 'something' that conscience gives Dasein to understand (1998: 314). Thus, while the immediate impression of conscience is that it *discloses* 'something', Heidegger suggests that if we "analyse conscience more penetratingly, it is revealed as a *call* [*Ruf*]" (1998: 314). As such, there is a 'corresponding' 'hearing' to the call of conscience – which is, in fact, more than a call, but "an *appeal* [*Anrufs*] to Dasein… to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self; and this is done by way of *summoning* [*Anrufs*]" (1998: 314). The 'hearing' which hears the call of conscience as an appeal and a summons to one's ownmost potentiality-for-Being-one's-Self is a *choosing* to hear this call as a summons. This is a hearing that inverts the passivity of

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[3] "Dasein *ist* in der Weise, seiend so etwas wie Sein zu verstehen. Unter Festhaltung dieses Zusammenhangs soll gezeigt werden, daß das, von wo aus Dasein überhaupt so etwas wie Sein unausdrücklich versteht und auslegt, *die Zeit* ist" (Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1957) 17).

hearing the 'they' into an active *choosing*. Or, as Heidegger writes, "our understanding of the appeal [of conscience] unveils itself as our *wanting to have a conscience*. But in this phenomenon lies that existentiell choosing which we seek – the choosing to choose a kind of Being-one's-Self which, in accordance with its existential structure, we call '*resoluteness*' [*Entschlossenheit*]" (1998: 314).[4] Conscience, in short, is able to appeal through the 'idle talk' of the 'they' because this 'hearing' is *Dasein's choosing itself as its own Being-its-Self*. As Heidegger writes, "Dasein fails to hear itself, and listens away to the 'they'; and this listening-away gets broken by the call if that call, in accordance with its character as such, arouses another kind of hearing, which, in relationship to the hearing that is lost, has a character in every way opposite" (1998: 316). The character of the appeal of conscience, then, is that it "must do its calling without any hubbub and unambiguously, leaving no foothold for curiosity [*die Neugier*]. *That which, by calling in this manner, gives us to understand, is the conscience*" (1998: 316).[5]

The call of conscience is able to break through Dasein's lostness to the 'they' because, unlike the voices of others, which come from the world, the call of conscience is that one voice that comes from a place other than the world of others. The call of conscience is the one call which emanates from a place other than that of others. As such, the voice of conscience is privileged in the manner in which it is able to summon Dasein, since it alone is able to call *in silence*. Heidegger writes:

> 'Nothing' gets called *to* this Self, but it has been *summoned* 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.
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> The call dispenses with any kind of utterance. It does not put itself into words at all; yet it remains nothing less than obscure and indefinite. *Conscience discourses solely and constantly in the mode of keeping silent*. In this way it not only loses none of its perceptibility, but forces the Dasein which has been appealed to and summoned, into the reticence of itself. The fact that what is called in the call has not been formulated in words, does not give this phenomenon the indefiniteness of a mysterious voice, but merely indicates that our understanding of what is 'called' is not to be tied up with an expectation of anything like a communication. (1998: 318)

We can say that the force of the call of conscience is that it delivers a call most clear *because* its silence annuls the noise of the 'they'. As Heidegger reminds us, unlike the idle talk of others, "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 who is

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[4] "In diesem Phänomen aber liegt das gesuchte existenzielle Wählen der Wahl eines Selbstseines, das wir, seiner existenzialen Stuktur entsprechend, die *Entschlossenheit* nennen" (270). *Sein und Zeit*'s translators note that, although the grammar is ambiguous, the '*Entschlossenheit*' to which Heidegger refers here is a resoluteness of Being-one's-Self, not a resoluteness of choosing to hear the appeal of conscience.

[5] Heidegger identifies 'curiosity' – *die Neugier* – as one of the characteristics of the everyday Being of fallen Dasein. See pp. 214-217. It is in this sense that 'curiosity' is seen here to be an unwelcome characteristic of the call of conscience.

meant. When 'delusions' arise in the conscience, they do so not because the call has committed some oversight (has miscalled), 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" (1998: 318-319).

The seeds of Dasein's guilt lie here in its hearing the call of conscience. For, if conscience cannot but call 'truly', which means that conscience *cannot miscall* but can only be *misheard* by the Dasein to which it appeals, then existential responsibility amounts to Dasein authentically hearing – clearly – the clear call of conscience. It is in this sense that we read Heidegger's dictum: "the call comes *from* me and yet *from beyond me*" (1998: 320). The appeal of conscience comes *from* Dasein – it is, after all, only because of its coming from Dasein that conscience can call silently, and thus break through the noise of the 'they'; yet, while this call comes *from* conscience, Dasein must nonetheless move *beyond itself as inauthentic they-self* in order to hear the call authentically.

In one sense, Dasein has *always-already* accomplished its authentic hearing of the call of conscience, since Dasein's conscience is itself the caller of this call. That is, Dasein *is* the authentic hearing of the call of its conscience; or, to paraphrase Heidegger: 'hearing is not only close to Dasein – even that which is closest: Dasein *is* authentic hearing.'[6] That is, because the responsibility for authentically hearing the call of conscience lies with Dasein, who must *move beyond* its they-self in order to hear the call, but who must also already *be* beyond its they-self in order to call itself to that place beyond the 'they', Dasein is able to call itself from the 'they' only because it is *always-already* capable of calling itself authentically. Thus, initially at least, it would seem that the becoming-authentic of Dasein is accomplished in the slightest turn of the gaze away from the 'they' towards its own authentic potentiality-for-Being. And in this sense, Dasein is both burdened with, *but absolved of* the responsibility of hearing its own call and saving its authentic Self, since in order to call itself beyond the 'they' Dasein *must already be that authentic Self* it is summoning its self to save. As Heidegger writes, "the fact that the call is not something which is explicitly performed *by me*, but that rather 'it' does the calling, does not justify seeking the caller in some entity with a character other than that of Dasein [*Daß der Ruf nicht ausdrücklich von mir vollzogen wird, vielmehr »es« ruft, berechtigt noch nicht, den Rufer in einem nichtdaseinsmäßigen Seienden zu suchen*]" (1998: 320-321). That is, although it does not *appear* to Dasein that its own Self is performing this call of conscience, Dasein is nonetheless that 'it' which 'does the calling'. Dasein is 'itself' both in being lost to the inauthentic anonymity of *das Man*, as well as in being the 'it' which calls itself beyond this they-self.

This already-accomplished authenticity does not, however, become a 'way out' for Dasein from its responsibility for hearing the call of its own conscience. Rather, Heidegger writes that this already-accomplished authenticity "brings Dasein, more or less explicitly and authentically, face to face with the fact 'that it is, and that it has to be something with a potentiality-for-Being as the entity which it is'" (1998: 321). Anxiety [*Angst*]

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[6] I am paraphrasing Heidegger from remarks early on in *Sein und Zeit*, where he is making the point that Dasein is not some abstract ontological concept, but is each of us. He writes that "ontically, of course, Dasein is not only close to us – even that which is closest: we *are* it, each of us, we ourselves" (36).

and uncanniness [*Unheimlichkeit*] are the signs of this paradoxical call to authenticity, in which Dasein is confronted concretely with itself as its own caller *beyond* itself. Uncanniness and anxiety are symptoms of Dasein's being called *beyond* the 'homeliness' (*Heimlichkeit*) of the 'they'. As such, we read: "Dasein is anxious with anxiety about its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. *What if this Dasein, which finds itself in the very depths of its uncanniness, should be the caller of the call of conscience?*" (1998: 321)

This question itself is posed from an encounter with anxiety and uncanniness, since, as a rhetorical question, it is posed by oneself *of* oneself as other; that is, as authentically other to one's they-self. This is a question which Dasein poses of itself only when it finds itself in 'the very depths of its uncanniness', when it confronts itself as its ownmost, authentic other. In one way, then, Dasein's potentiality-for-Being is disclosed in this rhetorical question as its own 'caller of the call of conscience'. Uncanniness and anxiety disclose Dasein as authentically other to itself, and the responsibility of hearing the call of conscience becomes one of hearing oneself as other. We must note, however, that this other *is Dasein itself* in its ownmost authentic potentiality-for-Being, and not the others of 'publicness' – *die Anderen* – in whom Dasein has been lost. "The caller is Dasein in its uncanniness: primordial, thrown Being-in-the-world as the 'not-at-home'" writes Heidegger.[7] "The caller is unfamiliar to the everyday they-self; it is something like an *alien* voice. What could be more alien to the 'they', lost in the manifold 'world' of its concerns, than the Self which has been individualized down to itself in uncanniness and been thrown into the 'nothing'?" (1998: 321-322)

RESPONSIBILITY, GUILT AND *UNHEIMLICHKEIT*

The existential character of the call of conscience is that it proclaims Dasein to be 'Guilty!' [*schuldig*]. Heidegger writes that "all experiences and interpretations of the conscience are at one in that they make the 'voice' of conscience speak somehow of 'guilt'" (1998: 325). In Heidegger's discourse of authenticity, *Schuld* signifies not only 'guilt', but also 'indebtedness' and, less so, 'responsibility'.[8] Indebtedness and responsibility are tied to guilt because it is only on the basis of Dasein's being guilty of neglecting its authentic Self that Dasein can responsibly devote itself to its own potentiality-for-Being. Thus, insofar as the character of conscience's call is that it proclaims Dasein to be 'Guilty!', this same call also summons Dasein to its existential responsibility and indebtedness.

In order to understand this guilt, we must first examine the manner in which Dasein is authentically Other than its they-self, *for* which it is guilty, and *from* which it is summoned *to* its responsibility.

The manner in which Dasein's potentiality-for-Being is authentically Other than its they-self is ambivalent. Dasein is called to save its authentic Self from its they-self; yet, in being able to issue this call at all, Dasein *already is this authentic Self*. This apparent inconsistency of being called to save an authentic Self that it already is, is reproduced in

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[7] Heidegger here uses the phrase *Un-zuhause* – the 'not-at-home' – to signify the uncanniness of Dasein, in order to emphasise the 'un-homely' nature of *Unheimlichkeit*, literally: 'unhomeliness'.
[8] See Heidegger, *Being and Time* 325, ftn. 321.

Dasein's 'experience' of *Unheimlichkeit*; that is, in the uncanny or 'disorienting' experience of Dasein calling itself beyond its they-self *from* beyond itself:

> The appeal to the they-self signifies summoning one's ownmost Self to its potentiality-for-Being, and of course as Dasein – that is, as concernful Being-in-the-world and Being with Others. Thus in Interpreting existentially that towards which the call summons us, we cannot seek to delimit any concrete single possibility of existence as long as we correctly understand the methodological possibilities and tasks which such an Interpretation implies. That which can be established, and which seeks to be established, is not what gets called in and to each particular Dasein from an existentiell standpoint, but is rather what *belongs* to the *existential condition for the possibility* of its factical-existentiell potentiality-for-Being. (1998: 325)

The ambiguity of Dasein's relationship to its summons is that while the 'caller' remains, for Heidegger, 'indefinite', the 'whence' of this call – "the uncanniness of thrown individualization" – is not "a matter of indifference," but is likewise "called too in the calling" (1998: 325). That is, the 'whence' of this call becomes the 'whither' "to which we are called back." Thus, the summons of conscience, and the place 'whence' conscience summons, is a concrete reality for Dasein in its authentic hearing of its summons, which is its authentic hearing of itself as its own other. We thus read: "When the call gives us a potentiality-for-Being to understand, it does not give us one which is ideal and universal; it discloses it as that which has been currently individualized and which belong to that particular Dasein." The character of this call, then, is that it "calls us back in calling us forth" (1998: 326). Conscience summons Dasein to where Dasein already is. And while the 'whence' of conscience's call is lost in Dasein's lostness to the 'they', it is nevertheless a 'whence' in which Dasein already resides. The call which 'comes *from* me and *from beyond* me' is, as such, the sign of Dasein's return to its authentic Self.

Dasein's guilt – *Schuld* – thus appears as the *neglect* in its they-self of its authentic Self. This is not a guilt, however, that Dasein can assuage by simply turning and devoting itself to its authentic Self; rather, guilt, Heidegger argues, constitutes Dasein's very 'kind of Being', which leads Heidegger to ask of us: "is it possible that what is understood as 'guilty' in our inauthentic interpretation lies in Dasein's Being as such, and that it does so in such a way that so far as any Dasein factically exists, it *is* also guilty?" (1998: 326). Dasein is guilty with regards to itself, because it is neglectful of its authentic Self.

Dasein is guilty. The call of conscience that proclaims the truth of Dasein's guilt is, first of all, a call of debt: that "one is to give back to the Other something to which the latter has a claim. This 'Being-guilty' [*Schuldigsein*] as 'having debts' is a way of Being with Others in the field of concern, as in providing something or bringing it along… This kind of Being-guilty is related to *that with which one can concern oneself* [*Das Schuldigsein dieser Art ist bezogen auf* Besorgbares]" (1998: 327). Secondly, it is a call which implicates Dasein's Being-guilty as '*being responsible for*' ["*schuld sein an*"]; that is, it is a call which implicates Dasein in a responsible relationship 'to someone', 'for something'. As Heidegger writes:

> 'Being-guilty' also has the signification of *'being responsible for'* – that is, being the cause or author of something, or even 'being the occasion' for something. In this sense

of 'having responsibility' for something, one can 'be guilty' of something without 'owing' anything to someone else or coming to 'owe' him. (1998: 327)

But neither of these two forms of Being-guilty – neither the owing to someone, nor the responsibility for something – are the authentic kind of Being of Dasein's Being-guilty. Rather, the specific mode of 'Being-guilty' which "*is a kind of Being which belongs to Dasein*" (1998: 328) is that in which these two accounts of 'having debts to someone' and 'having responsibility for something' come together in the "kind of behaviour which we call '*making oneself responsible*'. That is, by having the responsibility for having a debt, one may break a law and make oneself punishable" (1998: 327). For Heidegger, the significance of this 'making oneself responsible' is that it means that Dasein's hearing of the call of conscience, which is its *choosing* to hear the call of conscience, is Dasein's *choosing to hear the summons of conscience to make oneself responsible for one's potentiality-for-Being*. The significance of conscience proclaiming Dasein's guilt is not that Dasein merely hears the call of conscience, nor that Dasein chooses to heed the call of conscience; rather, the significance of conscience proclaiming 'Guilty!' is that Dasein chooses to make itself responsible for itself *as needing to be saved from the 'they'*. We thus read that "'making oneself responsible' by breaking a law, as we have thus defined it, can indeed also have the character of '*coming to owe something to Others*'. This does not happen merely through law-breaking as such, but through my having the responsibility for the Other's becoming endangered in his existence, led astray, or even ruined" (1998: 327). This sense of responsibility for the Other, which is the summons to take responsibility for "the breach of 'moral requirement'," is, for Heidegger, "a *kind of Being which belongs to Dasein*" (1998: 328). This is what Heidegger calls *Schuldigsein*: Being-guilty.

Guilt, a phenomenon inseparable from Dasein's primordial Being-guilty, thus offers the ontologist a clear view of Being. In order to clearly gain this view of Being, Heidegger argues that we must separate our understanding of guilt from the way conscience is 'ordinarily interpreted' [*die vulgäre Gewissensauslegung*].[9] That is, we must separate our understanding of guilt from any moral imperative that seeks to tie guilt to our everyday experiences with Others. As we have seen, Dasein's guilt appears as a debt that Dasein owes its own authentic Self for its neglect of this authentic Self in its lostness to the 'they'. In this way, Dasein's guilt does not constitute a social pact definable by an 'ought'; rather, this guilt does extend beyond Dasein and its own conscience. Therefore, our understanding of guilt must:

> be sufficiently *formalized* so that those ordinary phenomena of 'guilt' which are related to our concernful Being with Others, will *drop out*. The idea of guilt must not only be raised above the domain of that concern in which we reckon things up, but it must also be detached from relationship to any law of 'ought' such that by failing to comply with it one loads himself with guilt. (1998: 328)

In other words, Heidegger argues that to understand guilt as the 'primordial' phenomenon of Dasein's Being (the *'ursprüngliches Phänomen'*, or the 'originary' phe-

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[9] See §59 'The Existential Interpretation of the Conscience, and the Way Conscience is Ordinarily Interpreted' in Ibid.

nomenon, from which Being 'springs'), we must strip it of its everyday interpretations, and seek to grasp the way in which Being-guilty "*does not first result from an indebtedness* [Verschuldung]*, but that, on the contrary, indebtedness becomes possible only 'on the basis'* [»auf Grund«] *of a primordial Being-guilty* [ursprünglichen Schuldigseins]" (1998: 329). Indebtedness and responsibility are problems for Dasein only because Dasein's 'kind of Being' is primordially structured as Being-guilty. And Dasein is primordially Being-guilty because, in being *thrown* into a world not of its choosing,[10] Dasein must neglect its authentic potentiality-for-Being and lose itself in the 'they'. Dasein is Being-guilty because it is not its Self authentically. As Heidegger writes, Dasein "projects itself upon possibilities into which it has been thrown. The Self, which as such has to lay the basis for itself, can *never* get that basis into its power…" (1998: 330). Dasein, then, "constantly lags behind its possibilities. It is never existent *before* its basis [thrownness, *Geworfenheit*], but only *from* it and *as this basis*… Dasein is not itself the basis of its Being, inasmuch as this basis first arises from its own projection; rather, as Being-its-Self, it is the *Being* of its basis" (1998: 330). Dasein, therefore, is Being-guilty because it can never commit to itself *as its own basis*, but only ever as the Being of a basis which is itself a 'nullity' [*Nichtigkeit*]: the nullity of its throwness and of its they-self, for instance, which is the nullity of a being which is *other* than its authentic Self. This explains why Heidegger writes that, in *choosing* to hear the call of conscience, Dasein "has devoted itself to itself, but *not* as itself" (1998: 330):

> In uncanniness Dasein stands together with itself primordially [*In der Unheimlichkeit steht das Dasein ursprünglich mit sich selbst zusammen*]. Uncanniness brings this entity face to face with its undisguised nullity, which belongs to the possibility of its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. To the extent that for Dasein, as care, its Being is an issue, it summons itself as a "they" which is factically falling, and summons itself from its uncanniness towards its potentiality-for-Being. The appeal calls back by calling forth: it calls Dasein *forth* to the possibility of taking over, in existing, even that thrown entity which it is; it calls Dasein *back* to its thrownness so as to understand this thrownness as the null basis which it has to take up into existence. This calling-back in which conscience calls forth, gives Dasein to understand that Dasein itself – the null basis for its null projection, standing in the possibility of its Being – is to bring itself back to itself from its lostness in the "they"; and this means that it is *guilty*. (1998: 333)

Dasein's hearing of the call of conscience, then, which is a *choosing* to hear the call of conscience, and is Dasein's 'devoting itself to itself, but *not* as itself,' thus appears here as "a *taking cognizance* of the Fact that one is 'guilty'" (1998: 333). That is, authentically hearing the call of conscience is a choosing to recognise that one *can be* – potentially – responsible, and *can be* indebted to Others. The call to one's potentiality-for-Being, then, as a call to recognise that one is guilty, is a call to choose the possibility of one's responsibility and indebtedness.

The responsibility and indebtedness of Dasein, then, are *potentialities*. They are able to be chosen because Dasein is fundamentally structured as Being-guilty. Responsibility

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[10] "Seiend ist das Dasein geworfenes, *nicht* von ihm selbst in sein Da gebracht" (Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* 284).

and indebtedness are able to be realised, moreover, on the basis of this same guilt, insofar as Dasein can choose to be responsible for its Being-guilty, but are not themselves the basis *of* this Being-guilty.

For Heidegger, the significance of Dasein's hearing the call of conscience is not that it immediately makes possible Dasein's authentically choosing its potential responsibility and indebtedness; rather, in choosing to hear the call of conscience, Heidegger argues that "what is chosen is *having*-a-conscience as Being-free for one's ownmost Being-guilty. '*Understanding the appeal*' means '*wanting to have a conscience*'" (1998: 334). This is "the authentic understanding of the call" (1998: 342). Responsibility and indebtedness are, in turn, made possible because Dasein authentically hears the call of conscience, and wants to have a conscience:

> *Wanting to have a conscience is… the most primordial existentiell presupposition for the possibility of factically coming to owe something*. In understanding the call, Dasein lets its ownmost Self *take action in itself* in terms of that potentiality-for-Being which it has chosen. Only so can it *be* answerable. Factically, however, any taking-action is necessarily 'conscienceless', not only because it may fail to avoid some factical moral indebtedness, but because, on the null basis of its null projection, it has, in Being with Others, already become guilty towards them. (1998: 334)

Responsibility and indebtedness, then, are possible because Dasein is ready for conscience, and is ready to be made *anxious* by its own uncanniness. This attitude of readiness Heidegger calls 'resoluteness' [*Entschlossenheit*]. Resoluteness is, in turn, "that truth of Dasein which is most primordial because it is *authentic*" (1998: 343). It is in being resolute that Dasein devotes itself to its authentic Self, in the face of uncanniness, and upon the basis of Being-guilty. As such, if the call of conscience risks detaching Dasein from its Being-in-the-world, it is resoluteness that places Dasein, as *authentic Being-one's-Self*, back in the world. "Resoluteness," writes Heidegger, "is *authentically* nothing else than *Being-in-the-world*… Resoluteness brings the Self right into its current concernful Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being with Others" (1998: 344).[11]

Resolute Dasein thus 'returns' to the world of the 'they', but as authentic Being-its-Self. This resolute return to the 'they' manifests Dasein's responsibility, for, in returning to the 'they', Dasein becomes the 'conscience' of Others. *And this becoming the conscience of Others is Dasein's responsibility*, for "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. Only by authentically Being-their-Selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another - ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraternizing in the 'they' and in what 'they' want to undertake" (1998: 344-345).

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[11] "Die Entschlossenheit bringt das Selbst gerade in das jeweilige besorgende Sein bei Zuhandenem und stößt es in das fürsorgende Mitsein mit den Anderen" (Ibid. 298).

ETHICS AND RESPONSIBILITY

There is no question of the ontological value of the call of conscience, since it is through this call that Dasein is called back to itself and *beyond* itself. The phenomenon of guilt offers the ontologist a clear view of Being.

From a point of view such as that offered by Emmanuel Levinas, however, there are serious difficulties in accepting the implicit premise of fundamental ontology that the Self and the Other are primordially the Same insofar as they both obey the fundamental onto-logical structure of Being. This ethical sensitivity to difference is not, of course, a primary concern for Heidegger's onto-phenomenology, which seeks to proffer a 'neutral' account of Being. That is not to say that questions of ethics are not important to fundamental on-tology, but that the significance of such questions is that they say something 'more' about the truth of being *qua* being. After all, in order to be able to say "what is Good" one must first grasp something of the fundamental ontological resonance of Being in the verb 'to be'. Thus, the ethical question of "what is Good?" is not primarily a question of 'the Good' but of what '*is*'.

From the perspective of the ethicist, however, it is fundamental ontology, not ethics, which works within a limited horizon, and only an ontology founded on ethics is able to present an account of being *qua* being that is able to do justice (itself a problematic notion for Levinas) to the differences between beings. Indeed, the common thread weaving through Continental philosophy in the second half of the 20th century (and I am here thinking of Derrida, Levinas, Marion, Nancy, Agamben and, perhaps most radical of all: Alain Badiou) is a desire to move beyond the limits that fundamental ontology places on Being by positing *différance*, alterity, the call of Otherness, Being singular plural, and 'potentiality' as *a priori* constitutive of Being.

The question posed of Dasein's responsibility is thus: *Who* is this Other *for whom* Dasein is responsible, whose 'conscience' Dasein becomes? Is the relation to the Other ever a 'for whom', or does it remain a 'for which' – the anonymous, calculated Other? In the guise of 'uncanniness' this 'Other' appears as that neglected potentiality-for-Being which Dasein already is, for which Dasein is Being-guilty, and which calls Dasein for-ward to a place where Dasein must *already be*. For, since there is no differentiation be-tween the inauthentic individual beings of *das Man*, and since the primordial experience of otherness for Dasein is that of uncanniness, which is the *hitherto unheard authentic potentiality-for-Being of Dasein itself*, then one must wonder what is the violence done to alterity when conscience proclaims Dasein's guilt, and when alterity is thus only ever en-countered within the measure of Dasein's Being-guilty. Dasein is thus both implicated in, and absolved of, a relationship to alterity since this alterity is only ever that of uncanni-ness – the alterity of Dasein itself – and as such is only ever the 'other-side' of that au-thentic Being which Dasein already is.

These problems with these preliminary modes of Being-guilty are only *apparently* overcome in the specific mode of Being-guilty which "*is a kind of Being which belongs to Dasein*" (1998: 328). In this 'full' account of Being-guilty, as we have seen, the two prior accounts of 'having debts to someone' and 'having responsibility for something' come to-gether in the "kind of behaviour which we call '*making oneself responsible*'" (1998: 327). But we again read here that Dasein's hearing of the call of conscience, which is Dasein's *choosing* to hear the call of conscience, turns out to be a choosing to hear the summons of

conscience to make oneself responsible for one's own potentiality-for-Being. This call, however, also appears as a summons to take up a 'paternal' role towards others, to take responsibility, as Heidegger puts it, "for the Other's becoming endangered in his existence, led astray, or even ruined." Such a proposition is, of course, perfectly legitimate for fundamental ontology, since Dasein's *kind of Being* is authentic, while the Other Heidegger refers to here is still lost to the 'they'. Indeed, this relationship is suggested in Division One of *Sein und Zeit*, when Heidegger writes of Dasein's comportment to others as one of *Fürsorge*, or 'social welfare'.[12] However, the benevolence suggested by *Fürsorge* as a 'caring-for' is absent in the context of this reading of Heidegger. Rather, from an ethical point of view, this 'full' sense of responsibility *for* the Other implies the prospect of Dasein imposing its own *kind of Being* onto the Other.

The meaning of such a relation of authentic Dasein to others as their 'conscience' is a significant point of contention between Heidegger's sympathisers and his critics. The orthodox Heideggerian argument is that becoming authentic does not place Dasein in a position of power over others, since they too are each Dasein, and are each capable of becoming authentic. In this sense, the 'normativity' of authenticity or of becoming authentic is not 'imposed' upon these others by Dasein; rather, authenticity is normative only in the sense that each of these others is Dasein too, and is therefore – by definition – capable of becoming authentic. The 'normativity' of authenticity thus validates the fundamental ontological argument: that through an analysis of the ontic phenomena of being-in-the-world we can catch sight of and grasp the fundamental existential conditions of Being that are necessarily the same for everyone.

Heidegger's critics, however, argue that there always exist, if not phenomena (which only ever appear inasmuch as they appear to the gaze) then 'existents' that escape or elude the gaze's capacity to grasp onto them or contain them within a 'more fundamental' framework of Being. This is the case brought against Heidegger and fundamental ontology by post-structuralism, for instance. For Levinas, amongst them, the alterity of the other person always exceeds the gaze's capacity to contain it; for Derrida it is the aporia; for Badiou it is the unpresentable 'void'. In each case, to drop a net of Being over all existents amounts to an entrapping of beings within the limits of human comprehension, a violence done unto being in the name of a dogmatic obedience to the idea of Being, as Levinas writes in *Totality and Infinity*. And thus, contrary to orthodox Heideggerians, Heideggerian ontology is a "philosophy of power [which], as first philosophy which does not call into question the same, [is] a philosophy of injustice."[13] And the normativity of existential authenticity is the realisation of this, with Dasein – the 'conscience' of others – serving to impose, in an act of power and injustice, that normative authenticity *upon* those others.

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[12] See Heidegger, *Being and Time* 157, ftn. 154. "There is no good English equivalent for 'Fürsorge', which we shall usually translate by 'solicitude'. The more literal 'caring-for' has the connotation of 'being fond of', which we do not want here; 'personal care' suggests personal hygiene; 'personal concern' suggests one's personal business or affairs. 'Fürsorge' is rather the kind of care which we find in 'prenatal care' or 'taking care of the children', or even the kind of care which is administered by welfare agencies. Indeed the word 'Fürsorge' is regularly used in contexts where we would speak of 'welfare work' or 'social welfare'; this is the usage which Heidegger has in mind in his discussion of 'Fürsorge' as 'a factical social arrangement'."

[13] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998) 46. Subsequent references to *Totality and Infinity* will be incorporated into the text.

THE PHILOSOPHER AND DASEIN: MAMARDASHVILI AND HEIDEGGER

Heidegger himself never claimed his analysis of Being to be ethical, and we should not expect it to be. But these post-structuralist critiques of the relationship between Being and alterity in Heidegger nevertheless provide significant challenges to Heidegger's ontology. It is into this space between Heidegger's arch-modernist account of Being, and these post-structuralist analyses of beings that we can locate Merab Mamardashvili's philosophy of responsibility.

Mamardashvili argues that responsibility is founded in consciousness's encounter with the unknowable Other. According to Mamardashvili, the question of being responsibility therefore confronts everyone who possesses 'language' and 'speech' [*langage*]. So while Mamardashvili writes that it is the particular responsibility of the philosopher to record responsibility as 'the movement of consciousness', this movement is not particular to the consciousness of the 'professional' philosopher, but is constitutive of the 'European identity'.

Mamardashvili proposes an account of consciousness in which responsibility is not simply a responsibility *for* oneself, but equally so a responsibility *between* others. This responsibility, Mamardashvili writes, is the responsibility of man's 'fulfilling' humanity. It is a responsibility that faces *all* human beings, and is realised in the person of the philosopher. As he writes, "there is real philosophy inherent in us, if we live as conscious human beings, if we fulfill our humanity."[14] For Mamardashvili, then, the philosopher is only the model of the responsibility that confronts us all, to "express his consciousness, to give evidence" (1990: 24). And for Mamardashvili, philosophy is the 'record' of the 'movement of consciousness'.

We can already see in this echoes of Heidegger's view that we are all capable of becoming authentic, and it is the particular responsibility of authentic Dasein to return to the inauthentic world of the 'they' to become their 'conscience', and to summon them to their own authentic Selves. But what in Mamardashvili is consciousness moving between, which is recorded as philosophy? And if the philosopher is responsible to this movement, what, then, is humanity's responsibility to itself?

CONSCIOUSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Mamardashvili's account of knowledge and consciousness, in step with his European counterparts, problematises the view that consciousness can know the object 'in itself'. Following Kant, Mamardashvili argues that the imperative of thought is that it enables us to reflect *on* thought as a 'citizen of the world'. Mamardashvili interprets this to mean that we must think "through the eyes of another" (1990: 7). And this "*consciousness of an other*" forms the basis, as we shall see, of the European philosophical tradition. As such, Mamardashvili argues that:

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[14] M.K. Mamardashvili, "The Problem of Consciousness and the Philosopher's Calling," Trans. Philip D. Stewart. *Soviet Studies in Philosophy* 29. 1 (1990): 23. Subsequent references to "The Problem of Consciousness and the Philosopher's Calling" will be incorporated into the text.

consciousness is primarily consciousness of the other. This 'consciousness of an other' does not take the form of one's simply being aware of, or seeing *another object*; rather, this 'consciousness of an other' manifests itself when one finds oneself estranged or suspended from the familiar everyday world in which one exists. In this moment, a person looks at the familiar as if through the eyes of another world, and it begins to appear unfamiliar, nonobvious to him… (1990: 7).

The problem with such a simple conception of a responsible consciousness 'of an other', as Mamardashvili notes, is that this movement towards defamiliarising the familiar is offset by what he describes as man's reluctance to let go of his familiar life. This Mamardashvili describes as "the essence of humans," and is that inertia by which:

[people] are reluctant to detach from the life to which they are accustomed, replacing a whole mass of ideas with actual thoughts and actual feelings. There exist entire layers in which, as a result, some or other thought objects live only because man does not wish to detach from himself. From his precious self. These are, one may say, comfortable truths for him, comfortable feelings that contribute to his capacity to survive in or adjust to the circumstances of his environment, or his existence, and so forth. (1990: 12)

Knowledge and understanding likewise offset and defer the defamiliarisation of the familiar through consciousness becoming 'consciousness of an other', since knowledge and understanding function on the premise that one already knows and understands that which one 'seeks' to know and understand. Knowledge and understanding of the 'other' presents a fundamental challenge to such a premise, since the other is, by definition, that which is unknown. Of the other, Mamardashvili writes that "there are things the knowledge of which or understanding of which is entirely inaccessible to us. We can assume that we can understand it, but… only on the condition that we *already* understand it. Or that we *already* do not understand it, inasmuch as this 'already' is the possibility of our consciousness" (1990: 13-14). According to this account of the inertia of knowledge and understanding, consciousness is constituted no longer on the basis of a split between itself and the 'familiar', but as the attempt to bridge this split: "we cannot understand that which we do not already understand," Mamardashvili argues; thus, "to have consciousness is to have a tautology: we understand because we understand" (1990: 14).

Consciousness, in Mamardashvili, thus takes the form of this *doubling*: consciousness is both consciousness that already knows and understands the other, based on the numerous previous encounters with others, and which is therefore able to contain the alterity of the other within its knowledge and understanding of alterity 'in general'. Yet, consciousness is also only the consciousness that another exists, but that there is no more that consciousness is able to know of the other than *that it exists*. Consciousness is, Mamardashvili writes, simultaneously "a kind of isolation from the world and at the same time an interweaving with the world. This perspective is isolated and at the same time it is differentiated and distinctive. That is, consciousness is simultaneously differentiation. Inasmuch as it 'arises' only by allowing for the possibility of an 'other,' a distinctive perspective does not necessarily follow but only becomes possible. It is one of the possibilities that has been realized" (1990: 8). For Mamardashvili, consciousness is constituted as a split

between itself and the possibility of another perspective, in the consciousness that another exists – that another *perspective* exists – beyond the capacity of consciousness to know or understand that other perspective. And yet, consciousness is unified in the dictum of inertia: that knowledge and understanding allows for this other perspective inasmuch as consciousness already knows and understands this other perspective, thereby annulling its unknowability as such. Mamardashvili's thinking of responsibility is founded in this doubling of consciousness, in which consciousness is split from – and thus denied – itself. He writes:

> Consequently, the problem of human fate, of human destiny begins under these conditions to occupy a person, into whose soul has fallen a fragment of a mirror of consciousness, as the task of a *new* birth into the real world, even though he is at the same time a kind of guest in the world of unreality, or the other. Is such a rebirth possible? Is it possible, without forgetting one's citizenship in an unknown motherland, to be born *for a second time* as a citizen of this world? Is it possible to exist being the carrier of that vaguely perceived harmony that appeared by chance in that mirror fragment of consciousness and that transformed a world so very familiar up to now into something conditional and not at all self-evident? (1990: 8)

Mamardashvili concretely addresses the possibility of reuniting these faces of consciousness in a lecture titled *La responsabilité européenne*, which we will examine shortly.[15] But first, I should note that it is here in Mamardashvili's account of the splitting of consciousness that we can see how he situates his account of responsibility between Heidegger and post-structuralism. On the one hand, we can recognise in Mamardashvili's dialectic between responsibility and the inertia of knowledge and understanding resonances of the Heideggerian dialectic between the summons to authenticity and Dasein's reluctance to detach itself from the world of the 'they'. Yet, we can also recognise that Mamardashvili goes on to present the post-structural counter to Heidegger's ontology, by pointing out that knowledge and understanding actually work to deter responsibility, since they work on the side of inertia, not on the side of defamiliarisation and responsibility.

RESPONSIBILITY AND *LANGAGE*

Let us turn, then, to *La responsabilité européenne*, which both elaborates Mamardashvili's conception of consciousness, and *enacts* his view of responsibility as a 'new birth', or *renaissance*, in the world of unreality as 'the guest of the other'.

In order to signify his being as the guest of the other, Mamardashvili presents his lecture in French, and from the very outset he takes up an apologetic stance for his existence in the other's world:

> Tout d'abord, je vous prie de pardonner mes inévitables imperfections de langage, le français n'étant pas ma langue maternelle; elles sont liées aussi au fait que je ne

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[15] Merab Mamardashvili, "La responsabilité européenne," *Europe sans rivage. Symposium International sur l'Identite culturelle européenne* (Paris: Albin, 1988). Subsequent references to "La responsabilité européenne" will be incorporated into the text.

suis pas capable psychiquement de lire un text préécrit: il faut toujours que je tra-
vaille au moment même de parler.

  Aprés l'intervention d'Alain Touraine, j'ai été tenté de parler le russe. Le russe,
pour moi qui suis Géorgien, c'est de l'espagnol; alors, j'ai choisi cet autre espagnol
qu'est le français pour moi: je vais parler français. (1988: 201)

According to Mamardashvili, his being Georgian has given him a unique point of view
on Europe that is unfamiliar to other Europeans (1988: 201). And what this perspective
on another's reality has allowed him to see is that *l'état européen* and *l'identité eu-
ropéenne* are always in a nascent state [*toujours à l'état naissant*] (1988: 202). This has
been for Mamardashvili the state of European culture and identity since the Renaissance,
and therefore what the Renaissance was a rebirth 'of' is telling of *why* European identity is
always in this state of (re)birth.

The Renaissance, Mamardashvili writes, saw the rebirth of two aspects of European
culture and identity that he argues to be largely irreconcilable: the Graeco-Roman world,
and that of the Gospel:

  Le premier élément, c'est le monde gréco-romain, c'est-à-dire l'idée sociale ou
  civile, ou si l'on veut la croyance qu'une forme concrète, sociale, qu'une commun-
  auté concrète puisse réaliser dans la vie, sur la terre, un idéal infini. C'est-à-dire
  qu'une forme finie puisse être porteuse d'infini…

  Le deuxième élément, c'est l'Évangile. C'est l'idée qu'il y a quelque chose dans
  l'homme qui s'appelle la voix ou la parole intérieure, et qu'il suffit à l'homme de
  being entendre cette voix, cette parole, et de la suivre, pour qui Dieu l'aide en
  route. (1988: 202-203)

The tension between the these traditions, or "la distinction… entre la principe
intérieur, ce qu'on appelle le pouvoir du langage et al loi, la loi extérieure" (1988: 203),
forms the foundation of European identity and culture. It is also, therefore, the foundation
and 'danger' of European responsibility. For while European responsibility is to face itself
in its tensive split between these two principles, the danger facing 'the European' is "la
fatigue ou l'oubli de ses origines: on peut ne pas soutenir cet effort, et c'est cela le danger
européen, c'est la fatigue de labeur historique, l'incapacité de soutenir l'effort qui le fonde,
de le faire renaître à chaque instant, d'être suspendu en l'air, sans garantie et sans
hiérarchie" (1988: 203). The irreconcilability of the one principle to the other, for
Mamardashvili, is what keeps European identity and responsibility in a constant state of
rebirth. In seeking the impossible unification of its split between these two principles 'the
European' is reborn 'in every instant'. Man, as such, "n'existe pas, il devient." Man is
never on his 'own', never owns himself, but, as Giorgio Agamben writes, "in this alien-
ation he owns himself, and in owning himself he alienates himself"[16] (this is what Heideg-
ger terms 'Unheimlichkeit', wherein in choosing to hear the call of conscience Dasein 'has
devoted itself to itself, but *not* as itself'). This is how consciousness is always in another's
world, as a guest of the other, since consciousness is never unitary, but is always split, or

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[16] Giorgio Agamben, *The Man Without Content*, trans. Georgia Albert (Stanford: Stanford University Press,
1999) 48.

is always other than 'itself'. *Consciousness is this split*. Mamardashvili enacts his conception of 'European responsibility' as this engagement with his split consciousness through his use of French (*cet autre espagnol*) and in his identification with French culture and philosophy ("la culture ou la philosophie française qui m'ont formé mentalement" [1988: 201-201]). Mamardashvili is split between his possessing a '*point d'observation privilégié*' from Europe's margins, and the language and culture of that 'Europe' in which he delivers his lecture.

The question that arises for Mamardashvili out of the situation of the European, who is in every moment reborn, and who does not 'exist' but who is permanently arriving, is:

> Est-ce que le changement dans le monde est possible? Est-il possible que l'homme conditionné par des chaînes de cause à effet, par des chaînes déterministes, soit capable de se hausser, et de réaliser dans des formes concètes un parfait infini?…
>
> Vous les gens de l'Ouest et nous les gens de l'Est, nous en sommes au même point historique, l'histoire ne se confondant pas avec la suite des moments chronologiques. Pour moi, il se passe aujourd'hui quelque chose de même nature que ce que la Première et la Seconde Guerre mondiale nous ont donné à voir, nous en sommes au point même où ces catastophes sont nées, au fondement, dans le gisement de la culture européenne; nous sommes devant le même danger et devant la même responsabilité. (1988: 203-204)

From this, Mamardashvili seeks to define responsibility within this frame of catastrophe in which 'the European' finds himself. "Comment définirais-je cette responsabilité, si j'avais à le faire d'une autre manière?" he asks (1988: 204). In light of the catastrophe of the World Wars (the nature of this catastrophe will become clear shortly) Mamardashvili argues that this is a thinking of responsibility in which the responsibility of 'Europe' is to maintain itself against 'modern barbarity'. "C'est la barbarie moderne," writes Mamardashvili, "c'est la barbarie contemporaine qui est le danger. Barbare est un homme sans langage" (1988: 204). Mamardashvili extracts his conception of 'modern barbarity' from the Greek tradition, for whom barbaric was 'that which does not have language'. Mamardashvili, in step with the Greeks, thus appeals to the *agora* as "un espace articulé de présence," as the space in which man is able to defer the barbarity of becoming *sans langage*. "Et le roulement," writes Mamardashvili, "de ces « gueulements » sur l'agora publique, c'était cela le langage" (1988: 204). The *agora*, the space of dialogue, thus occupies a central place to Mamardashvili's conception of responsibility because it is the space "qui médiatise l'effort presque impuissant de l'individu devant la complexité de l'homme, et qui lui permet de formuler ses propres pensées, c'est-à-dire lui permet de penser ce qu'il pense" (1988: 204).

This is the condition of modern consciousness for Mamardashvili. Man – 'European' man, which is to say, the 'man' of the European tradition – is caught between his passion to 'accomplish himself' – "la passion fondamentale… de s'accomplir… faire naître ce qui est à l'état naissant" (1988: 204) – and the *impossibility* of this birth. The danger, and the immanent barbarity facing 'European man', lies in the difficult effort of maintaining himself, despite his passion, in this permanent state of *arriving*, not *being*. "L'histoire est un cimetière de naissances avortées," writes Mamardashvili, "de velléités de liberté, de velléités de pensée, de velléités d'amour, de velléités d'honneur, de velléités de dignité

restées dans le limbe des âmes qui ne sont pas nées" (1988: 204). Thus, while Mamar-
dashvili identifies this 'danger' as the "expérience de non-naissance," in contrast to "la
passion de l'homme c'est de s'accomplir," he nonetheless writes that:

> on ne s'accomplit que dans l'espace du langage, dans l'espace articulé et c'est notre
> tâche à nous. Nous venons assez tard pour accomplir cette tâche, mais je citerai ici
> un mot de Paul Valéry qui disait que « tout homme n'est pas dans l'homme ».
> C'était justement mon idée: la partie la plus grande de l'homme est hors de lui-
> même dans cet espace done j'ai parlé, et que l'ai défini par « espace du langage »,
> et j'ajouterai à cela que l'homme est un très, très long effort. (1988: 204-205).

We can thus see here the paradox at the heart of Mamardashvili's conception of re-
sponsibility. Consciousness is split from itself and is always a guest of the other, and it
turns to language and speech in its passion to 'accomplish' itself. Yet, *langage* is not able
to reconcile or accomplish a unification of consciousness with knowledge and under-
standing precisely because Man is *always outside of himself in its space*. Thus, the path
by which consciousness seeks to reconcile itself to itself only confirms consciousness in
its being split. Mamardashvili's use of French thus exemplifies the condition that he de-
scribes in that language: he is outside of himself – outside his mother tongue – and in the
space of the other's language and speech, and is thus 'conscious of the other' in the mo-
ment that he enunciates such consciousness. In this way, however, the consciousness that
La responsabilité européenne enacts is tautological: it enacts what it already states in its
apology for its use of the other's language; that is, consciousness must already be a guest
of the other in order to 'become', in using the other's language, a guest of the other. It
must, in short, already be responsible in order to become responsible. Again, it is signifi-
cant that this mirrors the tautological structure of Dasein's relation to the call of con-
science, in which Dasein must already be authentic in order to call itself from its inau-
thentic 'they-self' to take responsibility for its authentic Self. But Mamardashvili's account
of responsibility diverges from Heidegger's insofar as Heidegger goes on to argue that
Dasein's responsibility is fundamentally comprehensible in terms of the underlying
structure of its Being-guilty, whereas Mamardashvili's account seeks to break responsi-
bility *from* the grasp of knowledge and understanding. Mamardashvili's view of responsi-
bility is thus a significant revision of Heidegger's concept of authentic existential respon-
sibility, since it identifies with the tautological structure of responsibility that Heidegger
identifies, but it revises Heidegger by taking into account the post-structural criticisms of
Heidegger's ontology.

THE TWO FACES OF RESPONSIBILITY

'European responsibility' thus has two faces. It is both consciousness's passion to ac-
complish itself, as well as being consciousness's suffering (*passio*) of its inability to ac-
complish itself. And responsibility is thus the struggle to maintain this passion/suffering
element of consciousness, to which the Renaissance gave birth, and which is the particular
character of 'European' identity and culture. And inasmuch as barbarity results when con-
sciousness inclines too far towards one of its poles, so then is 'European responsibility' the
responsibility of guarding against the barbarity of being *sans langage*. The danger facing

'the European' is that consciousness will abandon language and speech – that is, the other – in its passion for self-accomplishment, and in so doing will fall into the irresponsible barbarity of being *sans langage*.

This is a danger that Mamardashvili saw to be realised in the two World Wars, the 'catastrophe' of which was that under the promise of an identity accomplished by allegiance to the nation, 'Europe' *forgot the origins of its identity*, forgot that Europe was born of the tension between passion and suffering, and forgot that European identity is not something that can be accomplished but is always 'to come'. In this sense, war is barbarity because it is *sans langage*, without discourse. And we can therefore say that *La responsabilité européenne* is itself responsible inasmuch as it enacts a dialogue between the 'Europe' of French language and culture, and those on its periphery (a model of responsibility also evident in the continuing expansion of the EU).

It is significant that it is in these terms that Levinas saw Heidegger's ontology to be a philosophy of power and injustice, since, he writes, Heideggerian ontology, "which subordinates the relationship with the Other to the relation with Being in general, remains under obedience to the anonymous, and leads inevitable to another power, to imperialist domination, to tyranny. Tyranny is not the pure and simple extension of technology to reified men. Its origin lies back in the pagan 'moods,' in the enrootedness in the earth, in the adoration that enslaved men can devote to their masters.… It is," Levinas writes, "a movement within the same before obligation to the other" (1998: 46-47).

Mamardashvili counters the threat of barbarism by forwarding a view of 'European responsibility' as a responsibility *for the other*: the dialogue and discourse *with* the other, in the space *of* the other, in language *for* the other. Responsibility is not responsibility for the accomplishment of self, but of the deferral of barbarity, which it can achieve only by entering into the space of the other's language and by preventing its consciousness that the other exists sliding into becoming a knowledge or an understanding of the other. *This* is the responsibility of philosophy, which records these movements of consciousness as they appear in 'syntax' (1990: 22).

In these terms, then, it is clear why Mamardashvili is not 'psychologically' capable of reading from a pre-written text [*un texte préécrit*], as he states at the beginning of his lecture. His dialogue with the other cannot be pre-scribed beforehand; rather, his dialogue with the other *happens* in the moment of its being spoken. Mamardashvili cannot predict his encounter with the other, but must responsibly encounter the other in that other's space and language. As such, Mamardashvili qualifies his claim that philosophy is the record of the movements of consciousness, as they appear in syntax, by writing that "it can be recorded, inasmuch as it is non-observable, only if this same movement and not simply a sign of movement takes place within the philosopher himself" (1990: 22). *The movement of consciousness and the encounter with the other must be lived*, in other words. The language in which consciousness seeks, but fails, to express itself cannot be predicted, but must be lived *as an encounter with the other*.

Philosophy thus takes place in the gap between consciousness's passion (for unity; for knowledge and understanding) and its suffering for its failure to achieve that passion. In this way, philosophy is the 'struggle' to record the things that are 'closest' to consciousness, but unknowable by it. As Mamardashvili writes:

> In effect, I keep speaking of something that is doubtless difficult for us to grasp, and yet at the same time is very close to us. What can be closer than that I in fact or in actuality think, or that I move? Or that I speak of something? Thus I propose the following formulation: the closest things to us are at the same time the most difficult and the most important. (1990: 22)

In this way, Mamardashvili identifies what he calls the 'supersensual interval' between consciousness and itself. This interval, he writes, is both constitutive of and devastating to consciousness, since it is the mark of the impossibility of consciousness ever 'accomplishing' itself by unifying its premise of being able to know and understand everything that presents itself to consciousness, with the unknowable 'alterity' constitutive of its other. "When we identify life and thought," he writes, "we at the same time assume that there cannot be any such interval between them. To speak of 'life' is the same as to speak of 'thought,' says Parmenides… But for me, consciousness is some kind of supersensual interval. Or some kind of rhythm, and philosophy is the record of that rhythm" (1990: 22-23).

Mamardashvili identifies this 'interval' as both a 'pause' and a 'distancing' (1990: 23-24), and consciousness is this pausing and distancing from itself. Philosophy, in turn, records the pause and distance between consciousness and itself. This again is the responsibility of philosophy: to preserve in language the movements, both temporal and spatial, of consciousness from itself. That is, philosophy records consciousness's *excurses* in the unfamiliar world of unreality as a guest of the other.

MAMARDASHVILI AND POST-STRUCTURALISM

The conception of philosophy that we have arrived at here betrays Mamardashvili's debt to French thought, since what he proposes here is a thinking of the relation of language to philosophy that is 'classically' post-structuralist, and which locates *La responsabilité européenne* as contemporaneous with Derridean deconstruction or Levinasian ethics. For what is characteristic in Mamardashvili, as it is in Derrida and Levinas, is the imperative that writing confronts itself as being 'deconstructively' or 'ethically' other than itself. From Mamardashvili's point of view, the significance of Derrida and Levinas is that they each record the movement in which consciousness is split from itself (split from logocentrism in Derrida; from the language of ontology in Levinas), while also recognising the insufficiency of the linguistic resources available to philosophy to do so.

What is enacted by Mamardashvili, Derrida, and Levinas is the responsible recording of consciousness's inability to settle in language, which leaves consciousness open to being appropriated by knowledge. And this un-settlement, an *Unheimlichkeit* of which the word 'Unheimlichkeit' says nothing at all, Mamardashvili calls philosophy.

Merab Mamardashvili successfully draws his philosophy of responsibility between the two poles of European thought of the 20th century. Mamardashvili takes as the foundation of his conception of consciousness and responsibility Dasein's own relationship with its ownmost authentic Self. But recognising, along with Heidegger's critics, that Dasein leaves itself open to becoming the conduit through which the catastrophe of barbarism

returns to 'Europe', Mamardashvili insists on a 'breaking' of the tie between consciousness, and knowledge and understanding. In this way, Mamardashvili is a rightful contemporary both of Heidegger, as well as of Derrida and Levinas in the class of 'European' philosophers, operating as an important link between them.

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DASEIN I FILOZOF:
ODGOVORNOST KOD HAJDEGERA I MAMRDAŠVILIJA

Andrew Padgett

Rad se bavi konceptom odgovornosti kao jednim od središnjih problema filozofije u dvadesetom veku. Posebno se odnosi na dva suprotstavljena pola, raspravu Martina Hajdegera o fundamentalnoj ontološkoj strukturi bića i dela poststrukturalista. Negde između ta dva pola, hajdegerovskog i poststrukturalističkog, nalazi se mišljenje gruzijskog filozofa Meraba Mamardašvilija koji u svojoj analizi svesti stiže do koncepcije odgovornosti koja se zasniva na Hajdegerovoj analizi Bića ali u sebi i sadrži kasnije kritike Hajdegerove ontologije.

Ključne reči: *odgovornost, ontologija, biće, post-strukturalizam, Hajdeger, Merab Mamardašvili*