

The call and the response: Martin Heidegger and Martin Buber on responsibility

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ABSTRACT

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the philosophy of subjectivity reached its limits. Various attempts at new thinking appeared as a reaction to these limits. Such attempts involve, among others, the philosophy of dialogue, which was represented in the works of Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber and Eberhard Grisebach. Another approach includes Martin Heidegger's demand for returning to the question of Being. In this article, I intend to present that both attempts are similar in many ways, although their representatives tended to be critical of one another. However, the approaches of Martin Buber as well as Martin Heidegger prove to understand a man as a dynamic being who faces the calling. Firstly, I would like to analyse the thought of Martin Heidegger as presented in *Being and time*, then I will describe the thought of Martin Buber mainly based on his treatise *I and Thou*. Finally, I compare the similarities and differences in the thinking of both philosophers.

KEYWORDS

contemporary philosophy, philosophy of dialogue, continental philosophy, subjectivity

According to Józef Tischner “There is always some more or less clear experience residing at the beginnings of the philosophy around which the thought of philosophers is revolving.”¹ Considering this assumption, we can say that at the beginnings of Post-Cartesian philosophy, there is an experience of separated

¹ TISCHNER 1991: 5: “u początków filozofii tkwi zawsze jakieś mniej lub bardziej jasno określone doświadczenie, wokół którego krąży myśl filozofa” (trans. A.J.). If there is no English translation available I will provide the original text in the footnotes.

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man, Pascal's thinking reed, that wants to deprive the universe of its secrets. Man is a being most capable of getting to know the world and himself. Therefore, by thinking and experimenting, man asks questions and seeks answers in the world.

Philosophers in the twentieth century started at the new position and developed the philosophy of meeting and talking which today we call the philosophy of dialogue. This approach describes man as a being that is called. The calling is an event which man cannot ignore and to which he cannot be indifferent. The Other, not me, is in need and asks. This way he questions my domination, my power. I can regain myself by renouncing the Other and hiding in my inner world or by undertaking the calling and devoting myself to the Other.² Or, in other words, by good or evil. Emmanuel Lévinas points out that in relation with the Other, it is his existence that is beyond question and it is my freedom that is unjustified.³ Ego cannot give a reason for his freedom by himself; he can gain it by devoting himself to the Other.

In this essay, I intend to analyse the question of being called, which is the most important element of understanding human existence for the approach described above. The variety of approaches found among various philosophers is too broad to be covered by this article. Therefore, I will limit myself to two philosophers who appeared at the beginning of the formation of this way of thinking, i.e., the thought of Martin Heidegger as introduced in his *Being and time* and the work of Martin Buber. Although Martin Heidegger's work is not strictly dialogical, I want to show that his philosophy has a strong connection with the philosophy of dialogue when it comes to the question of being called.

The works of both thinkers contain several elements that can be defined as the core of the understanding the calling. As Michael Theunissen points out,

² Compare TISCHNER 2006: 77: "We are talking. It means: You are questioning me and I confirm you in your act of questioning me. It also means that by your act of questioning me you have questioned yourself in order to affirm me in what I will respond; You're leaning toward me, waiting for my response. By responding I confirm myself. In the end it is I who responds. By accepting the response you confirm me — the one who you have previously questioned — and at the same time you confirm yourself who you have also questioned when you turned to me asking." Questioning is a specific act of dethronement and the response is a possibility to confirm both me and the Other.

In original: "Rozmawiamy. To znaczy: ty kwestionujesz mnie, a ja mimo to potwierdzam ciebie w twoim akcie kwestionowania mnie. Znaczy to również, iż ty aktem swego pytania zakwestionowałeś siebie, aby uznać mnie w tym, co ci powiem; właśnie pochylony ku mnie czekasz na moją odpowiedź. Odpowiadając na pytanie, potwierdzam siebie. W końcu to ja odpowiadam. Przyjmując moją odpowiedź, potwierdzasz mnie — mnie, którego przedtem pytaniem swoim zakwestionowałeś — zarazem potwierdzasz siebie, którego też kwestionowałeś, gdy zwracałeś się ku mnie."

³ See LÉVINAS 1991: 84–88. Lévinas states there: "Existence is not in reality condemned to freedom, but is i n v e s t e d as freedom [...]. The presence of the Other, a privileged heteronomy, does not clash with freedom but invests it."

Heidegger's thought is closely related both to Buber's thought as well as to dialogical thinking in general (THEUNISSEN 1986: 375, footnote 9). Even Buber finds in Heidegger's writings excerpts that express a dialogical understanding of man (BUBER 1988: 102). However, both these statements focus on Heidegger's later works. Here I wish to compare the initial works of these two philosophers.

For both Heidegger and Buber, being called is characteristic typical only for man. Therefore, their analyses do not constitute a particular case of being called which could characterize every non-human entity. This is man, among other beings, who is the only subject the calling is aimed at. Thus, being called is the most significant characteristic of man. I intend to show that these two philosophers describe a very similar structure, although they did not find many similarities in their thinking.

The new approach used to recognize the calling as the basic element of human existence entirely changes the perspective of the anthropology. The previous epistemological structure in which the subject was the dominant and active element has been replaced with the model in which ego is not only less important a figure but also a passive one. This completely opens new space for the thought. Instead of observation and contemplating, thinking moves to listening and responding. In both cases this structure has an identical scheme, which centres around calling and, therefore, shifts from a perceivable object to a calling entity. In this way, the ego changes its position and becomes the submissive element in the whole structure. It is capable of acting only after hearing the call, which is always a type of responding. To see that it is not only a mere formal resemblance, we must analyse how the two philosophers perceive the calling.

In Heidegger's *Being and time*, man is ontologically described as a being in a privileged position to ask the question what the verb 'to be' means. Heidegger uses the term *Dasein* to refer to this ontological constitution of human beings. One of his ontological characteristics, existentialia, is 'thrownness' into his existence. This includes the fact that *Dasein* falls into the everydayness and, at its root, is not oneself but it subordinates itself to the 'they', the public opinion, which covers his own possibility of Being. One of the basic features of the 'they' is that no one knows 'who' chooses its ways of being. The falling into everydayness *Dasein* is being called. As Heidegger puts it, "The call reaches *Dasein* in this understanding of itself which it always has, and which is concerned in an everyday, average manner. The call reaches the they-self of concerned Being with Others" (HEIDEGGER 1962: 317 [H.272] — later quote in BT).⁴ In other words, it aims not at the *Dasein* in general but at the one that falls into the everydayness, the one that has had his own kind of Being covered, the one

⁴ The number in brackets refers to German edition of *Being and time*.

that is curious, eager for novelties, pausing only for a moment at the beings and saying-it-in-the-talk, calm and at ease with the world.

If we want to compare Buber, it is obvious that the called one is each individual man in the actuality of his life. While commenting on several Hasidic tales, Buber writes "Every person born into this world represents something new, something that never existed before, something original and unique" (BUBER 1950: 17). Thus, each man is someone unusual who cannot be reduced to anything else, in particular to an object. In his individuality he can only be treated properly as a whole, which he constitutes. Only such an individual and complete man can be called.

We will be able to perceive similarities if we notice the fact that Buber's individual man is the entity characterized by a certain dualism of attitudes which man can have towards another being. On one hand, he can treat the entity as an object which possesses the qualities that can be categorized. On the other hand, it can refer to the entity in the direct relation which joins both of them acknowledging their distinctiveness. Buber described the first attitude using the term 'I-It', which refers to the epistemological approach to the world. The second attitude, 'I-Thou', is perceived by Buber as the source of human existence. The calling comes from Thou and is an invitation to enter the relation. Therefore, it cannot aim at the I from the primary word 'I-Thou' but at the I from the primary word 'I-It'. Like Heidegger, Buber sees the called as a being who is lost in some way.

In both approaches there is someone or something apart from the called one that sends out the call. Heidegger finds the caller in the same *Dasein* that is called; however, this does not mean some inner voice of consciousness. In this case, the caller has a different manner of Being. For Heidegger, the caller is defined by its ownmost way of Being, and because of that it seems for everyday *Dasein* to be the strangest. "What could be more alien to the «they», lost in the manifold 'world' of its concern, than the Self which has been individualized down to itself in uncanniness and been thrown into the «nothing»?" (BT: 322 [H.277]).

Being primarily an entity characterized by facticity, that is, thrownness into the world and by existence, that is, understanding projecting of the Self, *Dasein* escapes from its ownmost kind of Being Self into the 'they'. Yet, by escaping it conforms (acknowledges) its authenticity.

Rising from the fall, *Dasein* modifies its thrownness into the world, which it cannot get rid of because it is determined ontologically by thrownness. A double dependency emerges here in which, on one hand, 'they' is a modification of Being Self, resulting from the escape of *Dasein* from its ownmost kind of Being. On the other hand, the call of conscience is the modification of self-stamped-by-they, consisting in the return to Being Self. This return, however, does not nullify the 'they' in which *Dasein* is absorbed. This is a way of interpreting Heidegger's

words when he states “The call comes from me and yet over me” (BT: 320 [H.275]).⁵

The caller is perceived in a different way by Buber. In his view, there are three spheres where the relation can arise. These are: life with nature, life with men, and life with intelligible forms. Each of these spheres sends out a calling to say the primary word ‘I-Thou’. Therefore, we can speak about three kinds of ‘who’ calling depending on the sphere it comes from. The most important ‘who’ is facing the Other, acknowledging it as a whole being, as something individual and unique.

This description should be supplied with one significant remark. Buber, in the initial parts of *I and Thou* writes that “in every sphere in its own way, through each process of becoming that is present to us we look toward the fringe of the eternal Thou; [...] in each Thou we address the eternal Thou” (BUBER 1958: 6). The third part of his dissertation is entirely devoted to the eternal Thou, which he understands as God. God is such Thou who, by his nature, can never become It.

Another element of the structure is the calling itself. While the analysis of the caller and the called one shows differences, the calling is very similar in both cases. For Heidegger, *Dasein* is called to its ownmost kind of Being. Let’s have a closer look at this issue, what the Self to which *Dasein* is called means. Here is what Heidegger says in *Being and time*.

When the self-stamped-by-they is appealed to, it gets called to the Self. But it does not get called to that Self which can become for itself an ‘object’ on which to pass judgement, nor to that Self which inertly dissects its ‘inner life’ with fussy curiosity, nor to that Self which one has in mind when one gaze ‘analytically’ at physical conditions and what lies behind them. The appeal to the Self in the self-stamped-by-they does not force it inwards upon itself, so that it can close itself off from the ‘external world’. The call passes over everything like this and disperses it, so as to appeal solely to that Self which, notwithstanding, is in no other way than Being-in-the-world (BT: 318 [H.273]).

The calling is indefinite; ontologically it gives nothing that could be understood as a present-at-hand object to realize. As such, it says nothing, it is silent. But the silence is a mode of discourse, only he who has something to say can keep silent. It means that “To be able to keep silence, *Dasein* [...] must have at its disposal an authentic and rich disclosedness of itself” (BT: 208 [H.165]). Silence contrasts with the superficiality of idle talk by concentrating on the dependability of the discourse. This way “reticence Articulates the intelligibility of *Dasein* in so primordial a manner that it gives rise to a potentiality-for-hearing

⁵ “Der Ruf kommt aus mir und doch über mich” is translated by Macquarrie & Robinson as: “The call comes from me and yet from beyond me”, which does not fully represent the meaning of the German preposition *über*. In this instance Heidegger states that the calling comes from me and at the same time it has authority over me, it subdues and obliges me.

which is genuine, and to a Being-with-one-another which is transparent” (BT: 208 [H.165]). By being silent, the call calls *Dasein* to keep silent as well. By doing this, *Dasein* enables in itself the ability to hear the call properly and to rise from the falling into the ‘they’. *Dasein* can understand itself only by keeping silent. Therefore, the call gives no content, “«nothing» gets called to this Self, but it has been summoned to itself” (BT: 318 [H.273]), it does not call to do something but it summons from the fall.

Buber is also of the opinion that the call cannot have specific content that can be described in general terms. The reason for this is that every situation and every calling being is unique; therefore, it cannot be communicated in the language of the world of It, which tries to categorize and organize everything. The lack of specific content is not a negative characteristic of the call because

[...] just as the most eager speaking at one another does not make a conversation [...], so for a conversation no sound is necessary, not even a gesture. Speech can renounce all the media of sense, and it is still speech (BUBER 2002: 3).

The call is always defined by the current situation that brings the whole and unique Thou with it as well. This, however, is not expressible in general terms. The only generalization we can draw from this analysis is the fact that everyone who has been called is bound to make a decision whether to accept the call or to reject it. Thus, the call calls to response, as each of the above choices is a type of response.

The last element of the structure of the calling is the manner and means of the response. In the case of Heidegger’s thought, by hearing the call, *Dasein* brings itself to and before itself. By doing this, it makes a choice, it chooses itself. “Understanding the call is choosing; but it is not a choosing of conscience, which, as such, cannot be chosen. What is chosen is having-a-conscience as Being-free for one’s ownmost Being-guilty” (BT: 334 [H.288]). Wanting to have a conscience discloses *Dasein* in a preferred manner. For this way of disclosure Heidegger uses the term resoluteness. In resoluteness *Dasein* understands itself, the world, and others according to their ways of Being. Resoluteness neither pushes *Dasein* out of the world and others nor sends it to some paradise afterlife, but it allows *Dasein* to have a proper relation to other beings. *Dasein* is first and foremost Being-in-the-world and Being-with. This ontological character of his cannot be erased by the resoluteness but it can be revealed by it. “Resoluteness brings the Self right into its current concerned Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being with others” (BT: 343 [H.297]). Resoluteness as an understanding and projecting decision allows *Dasein* to understand and project properly the Self, the world and others.

Resoluteness reveals ‘there’ (*da*) of the *Dasein* or “the current factual involvement-character of the circumstances” (BT: 346 [H.300]), which Heidegger

calls a situation. Resoluteness does not separate *Dasein* and 'they,' just the opposite. The decision always relies on everyday world because it is part of *Dasein*'s ontological constitution. Resoluteness must continuously confirm the will of having-a-conscience, for the possibility of falling is never closed. *Dasein* must choose its ownmost kind of Being all the time or it will be pulled again into the everydayness. Wanting to have a conscience is a project that needs to be continually confirmed and sustained.

For Buber, responding is the acting, which involves the whole person. For that matter, the relation is exclusive and direct. If man does not have enough courage and does not step with his whole being into the relation, he will betray it. If there is a space for anything else than the connection of I and Thou, the relation cannot come into existence but only a phantom which can be even more deceptive than the world of It.

In the thought of Buber, taking up the calling of the Other — because it is a response — becomes a responsibility for the Other. In order to gain Self, one must surrender oneself and its freedom. But what man is really giving up here is the I from the primary word *I-It*, and he prepares the space for the I from the primary word *I-Thou*. This is how man's freedom manifests itself, by the ability to say *I-Thou*.

The relation has two poles. On one hand, there is something that happens to us and that we cannot influence or force, and on the other hand, there is our decision to step into it. As Buber puts it, "the relation means being chosen and choosing, suffering and action in one" (BUBER 1958: 11). In relation, Thou affects me and I affect Thou and everything we do influences the Other in some way. This conclusion allows Buber to make a transition from 'responding to' to 'responsibility for'.⁶

The responsibility which emerges from responding to the call is love. But love is not a feeling, as feelings are part of the world of It. They are features of the subject upon which it can build its identity. As an internal part of the entity they do not require its correlative to be present. For Buber, "feelings are «entertained»: love comes to pass" (BUBER 1958: 14).⁷ Thou is not a content of the experience and I is not a subject of feeling. Love happens between, in a place where two persons connect in the mutual relation. It does not categorize but it lets both persons be in their presence and recognize their whole existence.

I is formed according to the decision man takes after meeting Thou. The twofold I of man can become either a closed and separated will or a responsible person. In correspondence to this, a human life takes either a shape of

⁶ Just as in English, the German language also shows this transition at the language level: *antworten an* (respond to) becomes *verantworten für* (be responsible for).

⁷ In original: "Gefühle werden «gehabt», die Liebe geschieht". Buber uses passive voice and the past participle of the verb *to have*. Thus entertained should be understood here as being possessed in contrast to active *geschehen* (to happen, to occur).

monologue or dialogue but “the realms of the life of dialogue and the life of monologue do not coincide with the realms of dialogue and monologue even when forms without sound and even without gesture are included” (BUBER 2002: 22). Not every conversation is an example of a dialogical life but the one in which interlocutors refer directly to each other, when they do not hide their agendas or pretend in order to please their interlocutors. Also rich social life is not an instance of a dialogical life because “the life of dialogue is not the one in which you have much to do with men, but one in which you really have to do with those with whom you have to do” (BUBER 2002: 23).

The above description of both approaches allows us now to try to find similarities and differences in the understanding of being called. Both philosophers recognize in a man’s contemporary condition missing his real essence, his life does not correspond to what he really is. A human being has found himself in a world in which he loses his humanity. However, that general statement has several important aspects.

One of the vital issues in both cases is the question of the Other. The Other is an important factor both for the *Dasein*’s ownmost kind of Being as well as for the primary word *I-Thou*. In Buber’s thought, the reality of meeting the Other is explicitly expressed and it is the basis of the entire analysis. In Heidegger’s work, the relation with the Other man is possible in the existentialia of Being-with (*mitdasein*). Heidegger stresses that Being Self does not mean closing in one’s subjectivity. “Only because *Dasein* as such is determined by selfhood can an I-self comport itself toward a you-self. Selfhood is the presupposition for the possibility of being «I», the latter only ever being disclosed in the «you»” (HEIDEGGER 1998: 122). The existentialia of Being-with is equally primal as mineness, as only through reference with *Dasein*-with *Dasein* may be authentically. This stands in opposition to Haim Gordon’s thesis that in Heidegger “emphatic description of *Dasein* as equipment-oriented, Heidegger is impoverishing human relations” (GORDON 2001: 86) and that “in the Heidegger corpus, genuine meetings between *Daseins*, and the exciting possibilities emerging from such meetings, seem to have no primary or lasting relation to *Dasein*’s selfhood” (GORDON 2001: 104). I would stipulate the opposite here. Since *Dasein*-with is from the beginning in relation to *Dasein* it could have a possibility to disclose to *Dasein* its ownmost kind of Being. Janusz Mizera suggests the following interpretation. He writes: “Other *Dasein* is disclosed to my *Dasein* and vice versa. My *Dasein* has no priority over *Dasein* of the Other [...]. The primordial phenomenon is Being with and for the Other” (MIZERA 1991: 85).⁸ An analogous view can be also found at Lévinas: “Fürsorge, as a response to essential destitution, is a mode of access to the otherness of the Other” (LÉVINAS 1996: 33).

⁸ “Inne *Dasein* jest otwarte na moje *Dasein* i *vice versa*. Własne *Dasein* nie posiada żadnego prymatu wobec *Dasein* drugiego. [...] Pierwotnym zjawiskiem jest bycie z drugim i dla drugiego.”

Although many of Gordon's theses are valid and he follows the texts fairly accurately, he seems to forget that he analyses the lectures Heidegger delivered during 1927–1928. This is already after writing and publishing *Being and time* so that Heidegger's lectures should always be interpreted in the light of the *Being and time*. I agree with Gordon that Heidegger rejects I-Thou relation in his writings. But I did not see it as 'impoverishing human relations'. This is because I find his rejection to be based on a different approach. Heidegger's goal at this time is to restate the question of Being, and all his analyses are conducted to show the ontological difference. From this point of view, the I-Thou relation can be viewed at the ontical level, that is, regarding the entities and not Being. That is why Heidegger ignores the 'ontology of love and friendship' (GORDON 2001: 108), as those are relations that are on the ontical level are merely specifications of ontological being-with Others.

Authentic *Dasein* is characterized by authentic solicitude, that is, understanding the other in its authentic Being Self. This attitude causes *Dasein*, in its relation to the Other, to not take or cover their ownmost possibilities of Being, as it happens in the case of 'they', but it allows the Other to be authentically.

It does not so much leap on for the Other as leap ahead of him in his existential potentiality-for-Being, not in order to take away his 'care' but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time. This kind of solicitude [...] helps the Other to become transparent to himself in his care and to become free for it (BT: 158–159 [H.122]).

In other words, "when *Dasein* is resolute, it can become the 'conscience' of Others" (BT: 344 [H.298]). This is the point where we can find a place for encountering living people.

The above statement was thoroughly analysed by Strzelecki. He argues that the authentic mode of solicitude aims at the Being of the Other, and its goal is to disclose to him its ownmost kind of Being. *Dasein* is not indifferent to this project, as it is also its own project of authentic Being — it binds its faith with the faith of the Other (STRZELECKI 2006: 95–96). Resoluteness causes *Dasein* to project to its ownmost kind of Being, which means resoluteness determines the responsibility for authentic Being of the Other. Strzelecki concludes that "resoluteness for Self automatically breaches the everyday covering the possibilities of Being authentically [...] In this sense *Dasein* cannot not be the conscience of others" (STRZELECKI 2006: 97).⁹

Jacek Filek also stresses those fragments that try to give a positive description of Being with others. He points out that hearing belongs to the existentialia of discourse and understanding and states that

⁹ "[...] zdecydowanie na Siebie automatycznie czyni wyłom w świecie publicznej zmywu milczenia o możliwości bycia na sposób własny [...]. W tym sensie zdecydowane *Dasein* wręcz nie może nie być sumieniem innych."

If hearing is based on understanding then *Dasein* — as understanding Being-with others — can obey the Other when it hears its *Dasein*-with ‘correctly’. In this case obedience will have the character of the response to what was, thanks to understanding, heard (FILEK 2003: 130).¹⁰

Resoluteness not only modifies the existentialia of Being-in-the-world but also of Being-with and through that *Dasein* becomes solicitous of Being of others.

Theunissen shows a similar interpretation where he states that

[...] the tendency to admit being-with-one-another into the foundation of *Dasein* is most extreme where Heidegger — in a unique attempt, admittedly — binds the formal structure of the self together with that of being toward the Other (THEUNISSEN 1986: 175).

He refers to the part of *Being and time* where this binding is evident. Heidegger writes that in order to ontologically understand assigning-itself (*Zusammenhang des Sichverweisens des Daseins*) “the «for-the-sake-of-which» signifies an «in-order-to»; this in turn, a «towards-this»; the latter, an «in-which» of letting something to be involved; and in turn, the «with-which» of an involvement” (BT: 120 [H.87]). So Theunissen concludes that

[...] according to Heidegger, only those who cut the I off from the Other must latch onto ‘empathy’ as that act that is supposed to instate the initially absent bond between the I and the Other (THEUNISSEN 1986: 175).

We can see now that Heidegger sees the uniqueness of the Other in the constitution of authentic *Dasein*. Mizera notices that “Being-with nullifies the I-other dualism and thus the element of mediation that would connect I and the other is redundant” (MIZERA 1991: 91).¹¹ This applies especially to the process of transmission of our psychic world to the other, as through the existentialia of Being-with the Other is understood at the same moment as we understand our own Being. “Meeting is made on the primary ground of Being-with” (MIZERA 1991: 85).¹² This understanding of the Other is not just a different type of transmission, this time on the ontological level, but it is understanding his own and unique kinds of Being. This is also the response to Gordon’s critique that Heidegger incorrectly rejects the I-Thou relation. The contrast between

¹⁰ “[...] jeżeli słyszenie opiera się na rozumieniu, to *Dasein* — jako rozumiejące współbycie z innymi — «dobrze» słysząc swoje współ*dasein* ma możliwość stać się mu posłuszne. Posłuchanie będzie miało tu charakter odpowiedzi na to, co dzięki rozumieniu zostało usłyszane.” Filek indicates the vicinity of the terms ‘to hear’ and ‘to obey’, which is not evident in English but is clear in German *hören* and *gehorsam* as well as in Polish ‘słuchać’ and ‘być posłusznym’.

¹¹ “[...] współbycie likwiduje dualizm Ja-inny, sprawiając tym samym, że zbyteczne staje się wprowadzanie czynnika pośredniczącego, łączącego Ja z innymi [...]”

¹² “Napotkanie — Mizera concludes — dokonuje się już na pierwotnym gruncie współbycia.”

Heidegger and Buber is not because of the fact that “*Dasein*’s finding its self is a solitary endeavour of its consciousness” (GORDON 2001: 83),¹³ but rather as Michael Theunissen points out, the term I for Heidegger has mostly phenomenological connotations with the thought of Husserl and Kant (THEUNISSEN 1986: 168–169).

What makes some interpreters, together with Buber, belittle the importance of the Other in Heidegger’s thought? One reason is the fact that *Dasein*-with is not met without any mediation like it is in the case of Buber. *Dasein* meets the Other while using tools. Then it finds something that has not been made or used by it. The Other is an element that breaks the teleological structure of the *Dasein*’s world. Only then it is possible to recognize the Other and relate to it in a special mode of the care, that is solicitude. In this mode of caring, “*Dasein* relates to the Other and in this way it meets it” (MIZERA 1991: 86).¹⁴ Therefore, meeting the Other happens entirely in the *Dasein* and not between them.

Buber objects to this fact and writes: “In man’s existence with man it is not solicitude, but the essential relation, which is primal” (BUBER 2002: 201). The essential relation is the one in which “the barriers of individual being are in fact breached and a new phenomenon appears only in this way: one life open to another” (BUBER 2002: 201). Thus, solicitude cannot reach the Other because “he who has the access without the caring [solicitude] will find it again also in caring; he who is devoid of that access will clothe the naked and feed the hungry in vain” (LÉVINAS 1996: 37). Buber, however, understands solicitude as caring for the needs of the others and does not see the ontological level of solicitude, which does not impose any particular things to do, but only opens the possibility of meeting the Other.

The relation between *Dasein* and *Dasein*-with does not leave the *Dasein*. Solicitude at its basis manifests itself through breaching the idle talk in order for the *Dasein*-with to be able to hear its conscience. There is no meeting of the two beings, as it happens in Buber’s opinion. One of Heidegger’s provides the following summary: “*Dasein*-with cannot be met as actually the other, in his otherness and opposition but it constitutes the structure of *Dasein* just like Being-with” (BARAN 1988: 190–191).¹⁵

For Buber, a man does not know anything about the Other until he meets him by hearing the call. *Dasein*, on the other hand, understands the Being of the Other in a way which cannot be changed by the Other. It is *Dasein*’s duty to take its ownmost kind of Being and by doing so relate to the Other according to its way of Being. That shows the fundamental difference between the two

¹³ Although I agree with Gordon that Heidegger’s analysis focuses on the activity of the subject rather than on encountering others.

¹⁴ “*Dasein* bierze wzgląd na innego i w ten sposób go napotyka.”

¹⁵ “Współ*dasein* nie może być spotykany jako rzeczywście inny, w całej swej odmiennoci i przeciwstawności, lecz stanowi własnici tak samo jak współbicie strukturę *Dasein*.”

approaches. Even the proper mode of solicitude is always mediated by *Dasein*'s own Being. It is "Ownmost kind of Being that «pushes» *Dasein* to the proper way of solicitude in Being with *Dasein*-with" (FILEK 2003: 131),¹⁶ but it is not that *Dasein*-with brings *Dasein* its ownmost kind of Being.

Buber's view on this issue is located on the opposite position. According to him, Heidegger loses the most important element of human relations, which is what he calls Between (*Zwischen*). Between is the plane on which two beings can fully meet, open to each other. This openness aims not at Being of the Other but at the entire person.

The Between is not to be found 'in the I,' that is, neither in the (psychic) interiority of the subjective pole of intentionality nor in the noematic objectivity of a horizontally comprehended world, oriented upon the I, and dependent upon it (THEUNISSEN 1996: 276).

But at the same time the Between does not belong to the Other as well. The sphere of the Between is the characteristic of the I-Thou world, where no mediation is possible. As Theunissen puts it, "the relation to the Thou is, however, immediate because in it the I is separated from its partner, but not through the barrier of the meaning-instituting project" (THEUNISSEN 1996: 275).

The relation that occurs in the sphere of the Between is mutual. Buber states that "Relation is mutual. [...] We live our lives inscrutably included within the streaming mutual life of the universe" (BUBER 1958: 15–16). However, mutuality is not a type of formal symmetry or the identity of reference as "there are some *I-Thou* relationships which, in their nature, may not unfold to full mutuality if they are to persist in that nature" (BUBER 1958: 131). What happened to I and what happens to Thou is not identical but as Thou acts upon I, I by its response acts on Thou. If we now consider the eternal Thou, the mutuality would mean "the divine voice speaking in what befalls man, and man answering in what he does or forbears to do" (BUBER 1998: 17).

Mutuality was strongly opposed by Lévinas, as he saw contradiction between the mutuality and the ethical sense of the relation. According to him,

The originality of the *I-Thou* comes from the fact that the relation is known not from the outside, but from the *I* who brings it about. Its place is therefore not interchangeable with the place occupied by the *Thou* (LÉVINAS 1996: 32).

Otherwise, as Marek Jędraszewski points out "Mutuality could be a subject of objectification and thematization which would push it — in accordance to Buber's thought — to the world of It" (JĘDRASZEWSKI 1987: 134).¹⁷

¹⁶ "[...] właściwe bycie sobą «popycha» *Dasein* ku pełnemu właściwej troskliwości byciu ze swym współ*dasein*."

¹⁷ "[...] wzajemność ta podlega obiektywizacji i tematyzacji, spadając — zgodnie z doktryną Bubera — do rangi To."

The above argument about the destruction of ethics by the formalization of the relation is valid in the respect that it shows the threat of incorrectly perceived relation. If Buber understands the relation as the symmetry and formalism, as Lévinas perceives it, then his objection is legitimate. Buber, however, does not understand the relation in this manner. For him, as the reality of the meeting is not empty, it only cannot be described in the language of the world of It. Maurice Friedman writes that “this mutuality does not mean simple unity or identity, nor is it form of empathy” (FRIEDMAN 1955: 61). Mutuality for Buber does not mean the interchangeable positions but the mutual influence of one person on another.

In order to better understand what Buber has in mind under the term mutuality, let us look at several places where he describes it more closely. Buber had the opportunity to answer Lévinas’s questions, and in a letter to him he writes that

[...] the relation appears to me to reach its greatness and authentic energy when two human beings not very akin to one another spiritually, (who belong rather to different, even opposing, spiritual families) face one another in such a way that even in the course of the sharpest controversy, one of them knows, focuses on, identifies, recognizes, accepts and confirms the other as that particular person (LÉVINAS 1996: 36–37).

This shows that the mutuality is based on the recognition and acceptance of the otherness of the Other. “Though the Thou is not an It, it is also not «another I»” (FRIEDMAN 1955: 61). In the live dialogue of I and Thou, I affirms the otherness of Thou as well as Thou which faces I affirms his uniqueness. In the primary sense, the mutuality of the relation is the affirmation of the encountered being.

There is one more element in the way of responding that Lévinas did not notice. According to Buber:

[...] it may be that I have to respond at once, to this very man before me; it may be that the saying has a long and manifold transmission before it, and that I am to answer some other person at some other time and place, in who knows what language (BUBER 2002: 12).

This shows that the response could not be given at the moment of the meeting but it is transmitted to the other time and people. Although the relation is exclusive, it does not have to end with the return to the world of It.

The mutuality is most widely described when it comes to the relation with the eternal Thou. “Man receives, and he receives not a specific «content» but a Presence, a Presence as power” (BUBER 1958: 110) and the presence contains the fullness of the relation, of being accepted and of being connected as well as confirmation of meaning, the meaning of our life (BUBER 1958: 110). Mutuality appears here as a presence of being face to face, the actual

Gegenwart,¹⁸ the fact that I and Thou are accepted by each other and joined in the sphere of 'between' (BUBER 2002: 241).

Being-with and mutuality express the unique and important position of the Other for the becoming human being. As we can see, both concepts have many similarities, although neither Heidegger nor Buber see that. Just as the mutuality and Being-with define the relation to the Other, they also influence the analysis of man himself. The major difference lies in the directness of the relation. Where Heidegger introduces the care as the mediation between I and Thou, Buber stipulates unmediated openness to the Other and accepting him in his otherness.

Buber acknowledges that responding to becomes responsibility for. His further analysis reveals that "factually, responsibility only exists when the court is there to which I am responsible" (BUBER 2002: 20). Remembering that for Buber each relation with Thou reaches in the end the eternal Thou, it is plain to assume that God becomes the instance that imposes responsibility. Being face to face with God increases the responsibility, as the response is given not to a single entity but to the whole world. Man who is in the face of the eternal Thou

[...] is not freed from responsibility; he has exchanged the torment of the finite, pursuit of effects, for the motive power of the infinite, he has got the mighty responsibility of love for the whole untraceable world-event, for the profound belonging to the world before the Face of God (BUBER 1958: 108–109).

This would suggest that the call not only means that the response to the call of God becomes the responsibility for him, but that it also becomes responsibility before him. Filek points out in this context that "By claiming that there is no responsibility without the instance before which we are responsible and by binding this instance with God, [Buber] shows the coercion to the responsibility" (FILEK 2002: 92).¹⁹

When it comes to Heidegger, there is no explicit analysis of responsibility. However, we can show that his description of inauthenticity and authenticity of the self-stamped-by-they leads to the positive notion of responsibility. Such interpretation has been presented by Filek in his work *Filozofia odpowiedzialności XX wieku* in which he states: "Showing voice of conscience as a mode of discourse allows to see in it the structure of responsibility similar to the one we

¹⁸ This term, which is translated into English as presence, has a very technical meaning. *Gegenwart* is the opposite of *Gegenstand*. The latter literally means object and describes something that stands still in before us. *Gegenwart* has similar structure: it describes something that waits in front of us, waits for our response. While *Gegenstand* is dead and static, *Gegenwart* is a live being.

¹⁹ "[...] twierdząc, iż nie ma odpowiedzialności bez owej instancji, przed którą odpowiadamy, i wiążąc tę instancję z osobą Boga, chcąc nie chcąc ukazuje przymuszenie do odpowiedzialności."

know from the works of the philosophers of dialogue” (FILEK 2003: 116).²⁰ Thus, we can pose a question of the instance imposing the responsibility.

Dasein is being called from his inauthenticity to his authenticity. The one who calls, as well as the one who is called, is *Dasein*. *Dasein* is therefore the only entity that can impose responsibility. It is the authentic *Dasein* that has any right to make a judgement about rising of the inauthentic *Dasein* from falling. Irresponsibility, according to Heidegger’s thought, is a kind of Being that does not respond to the call of conscience (FILEK 2003: 124). The responsibility takes the form of self-responsibility: *Dasein* imposes the responsibility on *Dasein* for its authentic Being.

It could be tempting to try to put the *Dasein*-with in the position of the instance imposing the responsibility. However, such an attempt seems contradictory to the analysis presented in *Being and time*. Although *Dasein* can relate to the Other in care that aims at its Being, this mode of care is not the call of the Other. Because *Dasein*-with cannot directly call *Dasein* to its ownmost kind of Being, it cannot be the instance imposing the responsibility as well. The connection between Being of *Dasein* and *Dasein*-with is possible but only as the help of hearing the voice of conscience and not as the form of the call itself.

The above interpretation clearly shows that in both approaches understanding of the human condition is closely connected to the notion of responsibility. In both cases responsibility is not comprehended as punishment or reward after the committed deed but as a condition of his life that influences all his decisions before taking action. What is more, this way of understanding the responsibility focuses not on the consequences but on the action itself. Both philosophers admit that it is impossible to cancel the everyday attitude. What is important is the readiness to answer when we face the call. That is the place where the responsibility as the decision to respond to the call occurs. Since each way of reacting is a type of responsibility it moves from the feature to the ontological characteristic of man.

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²⁰ “Ukazanie głosu sumienia jako modusu mowy pozwala wypatrzeć w jego funkcjonowaniu strukturę odpowiedzialności, jaką znamy z tekstów dialogików [...], jako charakterystyki sposobu bycia”. See especially pages 111–141 where Filek — in the context of the responsibility — draws a complete interpretation of Heidegger’s thought in *Being and time*.

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