

Heidegger's Abyssal Ground of Ethics: A Fourfold Approach

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A Fourfold Approach**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of
the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.**

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January 2019.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

**This thesis contains no material that has been extracted
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diploma in any other tertiary institution.**

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DEDICATION

I proudly dedicate this work to my Bishop, Most Rev Dr Lucius Iwejuru Ugorji. Among other things, he insisted that the baby should not be thrown away with the bathwater.

Acknowledgements

In his seminal work, *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger seems to have laid a lot of emphasis on anxiety, guilt and death. With such outlook, one might conclude that he had a deep-seated fascination with death and the horrible aspects of life. However, Heidegger was not a philosopher of anxiety, but rather, one of joy. Interpreted within context, his analyses of anxiety and death are the 'ontological ground' for an authentic appropriation of finitude in which one finds what Heidegger calls an "unshakeable joy." He tells us in SZ that "[a]long with the sober anxiety which brings us face-to-face with our individualised potentiality-for-Being, there goes an unshakable joy in this possibility." (SZ 310/358).

It is this same spirit of joy which Heidegger explores in a radical way in his *Daseinanalytik* that wells up in me as I deeply appreciate the encouragement, support and generosity of the important people who have stood by me as I wrestled with this complex work and eventually brought it to completion.

First, I owe a lot of gratitude to my inimitable supervisor, Dr Richard Colledge. It is rare that one is assigned to a supervisor who is as dedicated, supportive and inspiring as Richard. He encapsulated everything I wanted from a critical reader: challenging, thorough and encouraging. All through my doctoral journey, Richard cared so much about my work even to the extent of going beyond his supervisory role to keep my eyes on the ball in tough times, at the same time, offering invaluable academic and pastoral support. As an excellent Heidegger scholar, he interprets Heidegger with an incredible care and clarity, and I am proud to call him a mentor and role model. This work is as much a product of his astute inquiry, diligence, inexhaustible patience and overall interest as it is mine. My special appreciation also goes to David Newheiser for his immense support.

Although we are yet to meet or speak to each other, I would like to deeply appreciate the significance of Lawrence Vogel and Charles Scott's works for my research project. It was my intense fascination with their insightful thoughts especially on Heidegger's Ground of Ethics that spurred the issues at stake in this essay. Also, no less influential were the profound works of Lawrence Hatab, Angus Brook, Dennis Schmidt and Frank Schalow. I would like to particularly thank five academic figures who— during and prior to my planning and undertaking my doctoral studies at the Australian Catholic

University—each in their own way contributed meaningfully to the development of my project with their wisdom, knowledge and kindness: Rev Dr Ormond Rush; Rev Dr David Pascoe; Dr Terry Veling, Dr Ian Elmer and Professor David Sim.

I appreciate in no small measure, some of the incredible staff who assisted me with the “administrative” aspects of my project: The librarians of the University of Queensland for allowing me have access to some of the original German manuscripts of the early Heidegger works that were invaluable for this research; the librarians of Australian Catholic University, particularly, Kelly Dann whose generosity and grace (which went considerably beyond staff support) provided a huge relief; and finally, Chiara Condotta, the Senior Candidature Officer at Australian Catholic University for her sound and timely research advise. I would like to thank the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane and the Australian Government not only for providing the funding which allowed me to undertake this research, but also for giving me the opportunity to ‘home’ in my being.

I would like to greatly appreciate the support and confidence of my fellow doctoral students from the Australasian Association of Continental Philosophy without whom the ideas of this work could not have been developed. I am profoundly grateful to Dr Emily Hughes who among other things, graced me with her close companionship of thoughtful inquiry and incisive feedbacks during the embryonic stage of my research. Completing this work would have been all the more difficult were it not for the exemplary leadership in Heidegger scholarship provided to me by Monsignor Theophilus Okere and the late Professor Pantaleon Iroegbu. These Heidegger scholars of Nigerian descent seamlessly ‘contaminated’ me with their Heidegger bug and its intense fascination. I have been continuously amazed by the friendship and the intellectual generosity of Prof Mike Ukah. The countless opportunities Prof Ukah provided me to teach and mark philosophy scripts of his students stimulated the thoughts imbedded in this essay.

Particularly crucial to mention here is the affection and fatherly support of my bishop, Most Rev Dr Lucius Iwejuru Ugorji without whom this work could not have seen the light of day. I am especially grateful for the courage with which Bishop Lucius embraced the ups and downs of my research without fear of criticism. The last few years of my research has been as much a journey for Bishop

Lucius as for me, and I am grateful to him for making life worth fighting for and every outcome a victory. It is to him that I dedicate this work.

I would also like to express my unreserved gratitude to my cherished Nigerian and Australian families and friends. In particular, I uphold with respect and gratitude, the great sacrifice my parents made to make my siblings and I who we are today. My beloved mother, Regina Eziego sadly passed away a few months before my submission. Her love for us was no doubt an *abyssal ground* that has so gratuitously shepherded this project to its completion. May God rest her soul. Words cannot properly capture what I owe to my Australian family, the delicate balance between my forerunning resoluteness and disclosive acceptance. Dorrie Van Ansem; Tam Nguyen and Tan Le; Sharon McCourt; and Margaret and Bill Clayton- each in their own way provided me with the priceless opportunities to love and learn life in its manifold ways. Their gift of friendship provided the landscapes that characterised this philosophical thought.

Last but foremost of all, I would like to thank the following friends for their close companionship which has stood the test of time: Chukwudi Chinaka; Louis Mary Ocha; Chima Ofor; Nicholas Okafor; Maria Montana; Gerry Kalinowsky; Daniel Chigbu; Enoch Iheme; Justin Iweha; Gabriel Kalu; Emma Obiche; Paschal Uzoukwu; Odinaka Nwadike; Christopher Obi; Chineme Agu; Emma Aguiyi and Obinna Ohagba. And yet, my longest debt of gratitude also goes to John Ikechukwu Echewodo; Anthony Ekpo; Tam Nguyen and Patricia Chikezie (Obata) for inspiring me to believe that what I was doing was working.

Selected Relevant Conference Papers

Being-in- the-world with others: Heidegger's Affective Domain and the Possibility of Ethics.

Paper presented at The Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy Annual Conference, Brisbane, 5th December 2011.

Heidegger, Levinas and Ethics. Paper presented at Australian Catholic University Philosophy

Research Seminar Series, Brisbane, 23rd August 2013.

Heidegger's Reading of Aristotle on Phronesis: A Framework for his Ontological Ground of

Ethics. Paper presented at The Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy Annual Conference, Melbourne, December 2014.

Heidegger on the Ethics of Empathy. Paper to be Presented at The Australasian Society for

Continental Philosophy Annual Conference, Western Sydney, November 21-23, 2018.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the question of ethics in the thought of Martin Heidegger, focusing especially on his earlier works. While set against the backdrop of the ongoing controversy over Heidegger's associations with National Socialism and the idiosyncratic anti-Semitism of passages in the recently published *Schwarze Hefte*, the thesis is not offered as a contribution to that debate, especially as it relates to its biographical content. Rather, the focus is on the extent to which the "fundamental ontology" Heidegger develops in the 1920s makes a serious contribution towards what I have referred to (with a nod to Frederick Olafson), as Heidegger's 'ontological ground of ethics'. In doing so, I explicitly take up Heidegger's later claim (in his famous *Brief über den 'Humanismus'*) that "If the name 'ethics,' in keeping with the basic meaning of the word $\tilde{\eta}\theta\omicron\varsigma$, should now say that ethics ponders the abode of the human being, then that thinking which thinks the truth of being as the primordial element of the human being ... is in itself originary ethics [*ursprüngliche Ethik*]." (GA9: 356). As such, the thesis looks to examine a web of ideas in early Heideggerian texts of the 1920s that provide a compelling case for such an originary ground of ethics, in the sense of a condition of possibility for moral normativity. Of course, such a ground cannot be understood as a traditional metaphysical foundation, for like Dasein itself, it is an *Ab-grund*, a groundless ground, a *factual* ground. For this ethical ground is eventually nothing other than Dasein itself, a being that, as thrown, "*never* [has] ... power over [its] ownmost Being from the ground up," but must rather take on the ground of its dwelling ($\tilde{\eta}\theta\omicron\varsigma$) in the world.

The thesis proceeds by examining four inter-related themes in the early Heidegger that I suggest interweave in providing what Heidegger refers to in *Sein und Zeit* (in terms of one of these themes), as "the existential conditions for the possibility of ... morality in general, and for the possible forms which this may take factually." (SZ: 286). The first chapter explores Heidegger's reading of Aristotle's notion of $\varphi\rho\acute{o}\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$, as a lens through which the other three themes – *Gewissen* (chapter two), *Eigentlichkeit* (chapter three) and *Mitsein* (chapter four) – might be read most effectively for this purpose. In the light of Heidegger's reading of $\varphi\rho\acute{o}\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ as a practical skill for discerning the best way of acting in relation to factually available possibilities, Dasein can be understood as an ontologised

version of Aristotle's *φρόνιμος*. This phronetic Dasein's deliberative action is tailored to a desired end (τέλος); that for the sake of which (οὐ ἕνεκα) it acts. In this way, ethics is grounded not as a 'science' of definite knowing (επιστήμη, or as a τέχνη), but as phronetic skill and understanding. In this light, Heidegger's analyses of *Gewissen*, *Eigentlichkeit*, and *Mitsein* are inherently phronetic, and the abyssal ground of ethics that emerges is thoroughly hermeneutical. In his presentation of the authentic "call" of conscience, Heidegger provides an account of "the ontological foundations of ... the ordinary way of interpreting conscience" (SZ: 314,) thereby distinguishing the ontological condition of possibility of conscience from its existentiell actualisation in the experience of moral normativity. His account of *Eigentlichkeit*, far from providing an egoistic (indeed Cartesian) understanding of Dasein's 'authentic' self, can then be read as an analysis of emancipatory resoluteness. Dasein as *φρόνιμος*, in taking on its destiny and fate (that are not of its own making), emerges as an engaged Being-in-the-world-with-others, "free[ed] for its world." (SZ: 344). This then leads into an analysis of Heidegger's account of *Mitsein*: of Dasein as Being-in-the-world-with-others. Here I build on Jean-Luc Nancy's interpretation of Dasein as irreducibly (if paradoxically) "singular plural," in which the I of Dasein is absolutely equiprimordial (or "co-originary") with the 'we.' I show how this assessment is consistent with the text of *Sein und Zeit*, and how this branches into Heidegger's account of *Rede* and especially *Fürsorge* in terms of Dasein's authentic "leaping ahead," as this is attested in freedom and responsibility as well as the ethically profound opening that Heidegger allows to a certain sense of empathy. The thesis conclusion includes a few comments about the significance of the thesis' findings for contemporary ethics after Heidegger.

***Im Dasein wird dem Menschen der langhin ungegründete
Wesensgrund aufbehalten, aus dem er zu ek-sistieren vermag.***

-Heidegger¹

¹From *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit im Wegmarken*: 145/189. McNeill's translation: "Dasein [is] the essential ground, long ungrounded, on the basis of which human beings are able to ek-sist."

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY AND SURVEY OF LITERATURE

This thesis examines the question of ethics in the thought of Martin Heidegger. Focusing especially on his earlier works, within which the question emerges most thematically and vividly, it considers both the texts themselves and the substantial body of secondary literature dealing with them in order to contribute to the ongoing scholarly debate concerning this matter.

The question of ethics in Heidegger (and after Heidegger) is a difficult and fraught one for a variety of diverse reasons in which Heidegger himself is deeply implicated. First, across the vast scope of his life's work, the subject of ethics receives negligible attention, at least in any developed and explicit sense. Second, when it is mentioned, Heidegger typically projects a strongly dismissive and oppositional tone concerning the whole field of values-laden discourse and normative ethics, generally portraying it as a by-product of a metaphysical tradition that needs to be overcome. Notoriously, he remarks at one point that philosophy should refrain from "matters better left to the preacher,"¹ and elsewhere, he even goes as far as to argue that "thinking in value is the greatest blasphemy imaginable against being."² Third, if these obstacles were not formidable enough, Heidegger's own disastrous flirtations with National Socialism, and his apparently enduring, albeit idiosyncratic brand of anti-Semitism – the evidence for which has been significantly expanded with the publication of the first volumes (GA 94–96)³ of his *Schwarze Hefte* from 1931–1941 – have raised the stakes still further, rendering the whole issue of Heidegger and ethics something of a moot point for many scholars.

¹ See, Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung* (Frankfurt Am Main: Klostermann, 1985). Translated as Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Aristotle: Initiation Into Phenomenological Research* (GA 61), trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), pp. 124-25. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation GA 61 and the number as it appears in the English translation, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German texts. For example, GA 61: 124-25/164-166.

² "Das Denken in Werten ist hier und sonst die größte Blasphemie, die sich dem Sein gegenüber denken läßt." Martin Heidegger, Brief über den 'Humanismus im Wegmarken' (GA 9) (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 349. Translated as Martin Heidegger, "Letter On Humanism," in *Pathmarks*, ed., William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 265. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation LH and the number/s as it appears in the English translation, followed by the number in the original German text.

³ GA 94-96 is a collection of notebooks published in *Gesamtausgabe*. The volumes contain shocking explicit exposition of Heidegger's anti-Semitic utterances that reignite the debate about his Nazi ideologies and their implications for his implicit ethical project. Martin Heidegger, *Überlegungen II-VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931–1938)* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014). Hereafter, this text will be referred to as GA 94-96.

Yet, despite such obstacles, and perhaps even because of them, this thesis will maintain that the question of Heidegger's complex relationship to ethics continues to loom large, and there is a need to look again at this formidable interpretive issue. While it is clear that Heidegger's fundamental ontology carries no prescriptive weight or normative intent, it is nonetheless suffused with ethical language and trajectories that point toward an ancient pedigree, especially in its evocation of Aristotelian ethics (albeit in importantly transformed senses, as will be seen). The task is to explore how these very different dimensions can be drawn together in an account of Heidegger's relationship to ethics and the role played by ethical thinking in his overall project.

This question of ethics in Heidegger is rich in significance not only in so far as it contributes toward a deeper engagement with Heideggerian thought, but also for what it reveals about the field of ethics as such. While both are major considerations, it is the first of these that will be the prominent thrust of this thesis, while the second will be a subsidiary concern to be addressed only briefly in the thesis conclusion. In terms of the first, the question of ethics is crucial for interpreting Heidegger's account of Dasein, from the analytic of facticity in general, to the meaning of key *existentialia* in *Being and Time*. This matter is of direct relevance also concerning Heidegger's relationship with key interlocutors in the western tradition, Aristotle and Kant perhaps chief among them. Further, it is also a matter that raises important methodological implications, such as the nature of primordially in Heideggerian thought, and the connection between ontological analysis and the so-called ontic disciplines (including not only ethics but psychology and anthropology, the natural sciences, and theology).

HEIDEGGER AND "ORIGINARY ETHICS"

As indicated above, Heidegger's explicit references in his voluminous works to the problem of ethics are few, and those that are made are often brief. However, perhaps more significantly, several of his comments – when isolated from their context – seem decidedly dismissive and even hostile. What is to be made, for example, of the two remarks cited earlier?

"Thinking in value," Heidegger writes in 1947, "is the greatest blasphemy imaginable against being." Such a comment may be read as a programmatic statement of opposition to any sense of

moral normativity. However, when this extraordinary claim is read within the context of the paragraph in which it appears, it is revealed to be pointing in a very different direction. His point is not “to maintain that everything interpreted as ‘a value’ – ‘culture,’ ‘arts,’ ‘science,’ ‘human dignity,’ ‘world,’ ‘God’ – is valueless ... to beat the drum for the valuelessness and nullity of beings.” His point is rather that the discourse of ‘values’ ironically strips things of their intrinsic worth by subjectivising them:

That is to say, by the assessment of something as a value what is valued is admitted only as an object for human estimation. But what a thing is in its being is not exhausted by its being an object, particularly when objectivity takes the form of value. Every valuing, even where it values positively, is a subjectivizing. It does not let beings: be ... The bizarre effort to prove the objectivity of values does not know what it is doing.⁴

A similar point might be made concerning the much earlier remark (made in 1921-22) about it being best for philosophy to leave ethics “to the preacher.” Here again (as he does a quarter of a century later,) Heidegger makes it clear that conceiving philosophy in terms of values is simply a way of limiting it to the level of human speculations and preferences. It is the role of preachers, he argues, to “make certain that people live up to ideals and so reassure themselves that they are on the right track by satisfying tractable rules and public norms.” But such concerns, including the inevitability of our “fall[ing] short of the ideal” is not to be confused with “the ontological sense of factual life.”⁵

What positive sense, then, does Heidegger give to the field of ethics? Perhaps the most helpful comment he makes explicitly on this whole matter appears in his *Letter on Humanism*, an essay that in some important senses looks back upon his early work; to texts that will form the main focus of this study. Here Heidegger explicitly – albeit briefly, and with clear lines of qualification – affirms the notion of an “originary [or primordial] ethics [*die ursprüngliche Ethik*].” His remarks in this passage, delivered from a vantage point some two decades after the publication of *Being and Time*, provide an important note of orientation for the purposes of this thesis, and for this reason

⁴ LH: 265/349.

⁵ GA 61: 124-25/164-166.

they deserve attention at the outset in order that their significance can be unpacked in the chapters that follow. Heidegger's qualified affirmation is delivered as follows:

If the name 'ethics,' in keeping with the basic meaning of the word *ἠθικός*, should now say that ethics ponders the abode of the human being, then that thinking which thinks the truth of being as the primordial element of the human being, as one who exists, is in itself originary ethics [*ursprüngliche Ethik*].⁶

It is significant that having made such an admission (or perhaps better, *concession* to the language of ethics), Heidegger goes on to say little more about what such a conception entails other than to heavily qualify his assent. However, within the little he does say, there are some crucial indications as to his understanding of the nature of the ethical and its relation to ontology, perhaps especially to the fundamental ontology of his early thought.

First: Heidegger is clear that he is not interested in any dismissal of the moral exigencies of his age. To the contrary, he insists:

The desire for an ethics presses ever more ardently for fulfilment as the obvious no less than the hidden perplexity of human beings soars to immeasurable heights ... Who can disregard our predicament? Should we not safeguard and secure the existing bonds even if they hold human beings together ever so tenuously and merely for the present? Certainly."⁷

Heidegger's position here – one that this thesis will show playing out similarly in his early thought – cannot be described as any kind of amoralism or moral nihilism. His response is rather to question the conflation between the response to the urgent moral "predicament" of his time, and the discipline of ethics as it has been traditionally conceived. Thus, the rhetorical question he poses immediately following the quotation above – "But does this need ever release thought from the task of thinking what still remains principally to be thought[?]"⁸ – points to the idea that ethics, traditionally conceived, would amount not to a response, but to a *failure* to respond adequately.

⁶ LH: 271/356.

⁷ LH: 268/353.

⁸ LH: 268/353.

Ethics, as we understand it in the western philosophical tradition, fails to deal seriously with the moral challenges of his (or presumably any) time. Rather, what is required, our “task”, is nothing less than genuinely primordial “thinking”: i.e., *originary ethics*. Of course, what that amounts to, and what it promises to contribute, is yet to be seen.

Second: Heidegger asserts that ethics is akin to other ontic traditions of thought in their collective failure to think deeply or seriously about the subject matter with which they purport to deal. In this context, he cautions that “[b]efore we attempt to determine more precisely the relationship between ‘ontology’ and ‘ethics,’ we must ask what ‘ontology’ and ‘ethics’ themselves are.” And this leads him to appeal to a primordial sense of the ethical that predates even the classical Greek (let alone the modern) sense of ethics as being all about moral normativity:

Along with ‘logic’ and ‘physics,’ ‘ethics’ appeared for the first time in the school of Plato. These disciplines arose at a time when thinking was becoming ‘philosophy,’ philosophy *ἐπιστήμη* (science), and science itself a matter for schools and academic pursuits. In the course of a philosophy so understood, science waxed and thinking waned. Thinkers prior to this period knew neither a ‘logic’ nor an ‘ethics’ nor ‘physics.’ Yet their thinking was neither illogical nor immoral.⁹

Heidegger’s point here is that profound moral concern is possible, and indeed properly and only so, not despite the lack of a ‘science’ of moral normativity, but *because* of such a lack. (The same is true, he suggests, for logic, physics, and other ontic disciplines). What is needed in all cases, is a return to the primordial question of Being, and only in this way will a truly primordial engagement with the ethical become possible again. What this means, he concludes shortly after, is that qua “thinking”, originary ethics “is *not* ethics in the first instance because it is ontology.”¹⁰ Here the extent of the qualified approval Heidegger offers for specifically *ethical* thinking comes into view. Ethics is “thinking” only if it is originary; but if originary, it is only such insofar as it is *really* ontology. The implications for this insistence will play out in the argument to come in this thesis.

⁹ LH: 269/354.

¹⁰ LH: 271/356.

Third: originary ethics as Heidegger defines it here, is, he claims, a return to the original pre-Socratic sense of *ἦθος* as *dwelling*, or to put it in the more common parlance of earlier Heideggerian thought, it is to think the way of Being of Dasein:

A saying of Heraclitus that consists of only three words says something so simply that from it the essence of *ethos* immediately comes to light ... *ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων*. This is usually translated, "A man's character is his daimon." This translation thinks in a modern way, not a Greek one. *ἦθος* means abode, dwelling place. The word names the open region in which the human being dwells. The open region of his abode allows what pertains to the essence of the human being, and what in thus arriving resides in nearness to him, to appear. The abode of the human being contains and preserves the advent of what belongs to the human being in his essence.¹¹

Heidegger is insistent that the notion of dwelling (that is so prominent in his thought after 1935) is already deeply at work in *Being and Time* itself in the notion there of "Being-in." Indeed, "[t]his dwelling is the essence of 'being-in-the-world,'" he insists.¹² In a very direct way, this thesis takes up this challenge issued by Heidegger to read his early writings (including *Being and Time*) in light of this fuller sense of *ἦθος* as dwelling, insofar as it looks to delve into Heidegger's analysis of the dwelling – the Being-in – of Dasein.

Throughout his early works, Heidegger makes it clear that the fundamental structure of Dasein's existence does not make provision for any metaphysically founded ethics because the ability-to-be of Dasein predisposes it to comprehend itself in its finitude rather than being defined by objective ethical norms. "The object we have taken as our theme is artificially and dogmatically curtailed," he argues, "if 'in the first instance' we restrict ourselves to a 'theoretical subject,' in

¹¹ LH: 269/354. Heidegger insists that far from being a retrospective poetic linkage, the relationship between these two ways of speaking (these two 'language games', we might now say) is entirely organic: The reference in *Being and Time* (SZ: 54/79-80) to "being-in" as "dwelling" is not some etymological play. See, Martin Heidegger, *Sein Und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001). Translated as: Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Great Britain: Basil Blackwell, 1962), pp. 79-80. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation SZ and the number as it appears in the original German texts, followed by the number/s as it appears in the English translation.

The same reference is made in the 1936 essay on Holderlin's word, "Full of merit, yet poetically, man dwells upon this earth," is not the adornment of a thinking that rescues itself from science by means of poetry. See Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 213.

¹² LH: 272/358.

order that we may then round it out 'on the practical side' by tacking on an 'ethic.'"¹³ In Heidegger's interpretation, ethics traditionally conceived is a branch of metaphysics which grounds itself in what he refers to as the "metaphysics of *Vorhandenheit*," according to which Dasein is seen as an entity that can be measured in terms of results, or production of an effect.¹⁴ Consequently:

We miss a 'positive' content in that which is called, *because we expect to be told something currently useful about assured possibilities of 'taking action' which are available and calculable*. This expectation has its basis within the horizon of that way of interpreting which belongs to common-sense concern – a way of interpreting which forces Dasein's existence to be subsumed under the idea of a business procedure that can be regulated.¹⁵

For Heidegger, an originary ethics is not an 'applied discipline' that is meant to play its part within an instrumental whole, a view that confuses it with an ontic or scientific discipline. As he puts it in 1930, "philosophy is not theoretical knowledge together with applied discipline,"¹⁶ because Dasein's Being "is not a kind of knowledge which one could acquire directly, like vocational and technical expertise, and which, like economic and professional knowledge in general, one could apply directly and evaluate according to its usefulness in each case."¹⁷

So, what is it to think 'ethically' in a primordial sense? What is it for ethics to become 'original,' and in this way to contribute to the exigencies of our time? Clearly, Heidegger is advocating the need for thought to return to the very sources of the ethical life in the sense of the way in which humans dwell within the world in the first place. An originary ethics would therefore begin on the basis of (and remain always within) an attentiveness to what might be called 'Being-ethical-in-the-world.' In so doing, any sense of ethics as a kind of *τέχνη* and *θεωρία* needs to give way to a mode

¹³ SZ: 316/364.

¹⁴ SZ: 129/167.

¹⁵ SZ: 294/340.

¹⁶ See, Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit. Einleitung in die Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1982). Translated as Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom: An Introduction to Philosophy*, trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum Books, 2002), 14/18. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation GA 31 and the number as it appears in the English translations, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German texts; GA 31: 14/18.

¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (GA 40) (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1983). Translated as Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics* (GA 40), trans. Churchill James S. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 9. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation GA 40 and the number as it appears in the English translations, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German texts: GA 40: 9/10.

of thinking that is rooted in a hermeneutic attentiveness to factual life as such. The knowing of originary ethics cannot be any kind of knowing defined by *τέχνη*. Indeed, the first stage toward the possibility of the return to primordial thinking (in ethics or any other area) is the *critique* of technology in its metaphysical roots. For Heidegger, any ethical system that mandates binding roles, duties and values could not be any further from originary ethics. For him, one doesn't 'do' ethics as an abstract technical exercise that provides the individual with precise details on how to act to bring about good and avoid evil. Ethics cannot be thought at all in isolation from the context of *existing* (in the precise sense Heidegger uses that term in the *Daseinanalytik*). Originary ethics thereby becomes absolutely interwoven with fundamental ontology, with the "*hermeneutics of facticity*," for it cannot be thought outside of the context of Dasein's thrownness and temporality. The reference here to hermeneutics is telling, for any ethical reflection that is organically rooted in the *ἡθικός* will be hermeneutic – not theoretical – in nature; or as will be explored in the following chapter, it will arise not out of *θεωρία* but *φρόνησις*.

Fourth: all this sheds considerable light on Heidegger's quite extreme reticence to speak about ethics at all, let alone to write a substantial account of the same as he records being urged by "a young friend" shortly after the publication of *Being and Time*.¹⁸ Of course, it is possible to point to the extraordinarily forthright passage in *Being and Time* (one to which I will return in what follows), in which Heidegger declares that Dasein's Being-guilty is "the existential condition for the possibility of the 'morally' good and for that of the 'morally' evil – that is, for morality in general and for the possible forms which this may take factually."¹⁹ Notwithstanding the scare quotes around his use of the term "morally" in this sentence, *it would seem* that this provides us with every reason to expect that Heidegger would sanction the development of an approach to ethics that follows up on the existential analytic of Dasein that is enacted in *Being and Time*. Indeed, this would seem to be the very direction towards which Heidegger's "young friend" is gesturing in his reported remark to Heidegger shortly after the publication of these words in *Being and Time*. However, any such expectation will be disappointed. True, there are a few scant passages that might be construed in this direction, such as his 1928 comments concerning metontology in which he tantalisingly opens the possibility that fundamental ontology needs to be supplemented by a

¹⁸ LH: 268/353.

¹⁹ SZ: 286/332.

“*Metontologie*” that emerges from the former’s “overturning [*Umschlag*],” in a “μεταβολή” in which “the question of ethics may properly be raised for the first time.”²⁰ However, what is even more striking than the explicit endorsement that Heidegger appears to give here to an opening to ethics that flows organically from the heart of his fundamental ontology, is the deafening silence concerning this opening in his subsequent work. If subsequent references to metontology thus conceived are nowhere to be found again, so too the opening to the possibility of the “proper ... raising of the question of ethics for the first time” vanishes with it. Apart from a few isolated passages of this kind, Heidegger never returns to his suggestion concerning “the existential condition for the possibility of ... morality in general” to flesh it out, and nor indeed does he again express such confidence in the viable possibility of the development of such an account of moral goodness and evil. Good and evil, it seems, are not topics about which Heidegger has much to say at all (a point that has hardly been lost on his many critics over the last few decades who have lined up to condemn his peculiar brand of anti-Semitism and flirtation with National Socialism.)

However, what emerges in the *Letter on Humanism* are the broad lines of an account as to *why* such a development is difficult or impossible in the present moment, and why attempts to do so fail to live up to the requirements of a genuinely originary ethics. One of these (towards which I gestured earlier) is the *Gestell* of modern technology that has had the effect of all but closing us off (en-framing) entirely from the possibility of thinking primordially. However, if the essence of technology is metaphysics, as Heidegger insists, then a deeper understanding of the obstacles to an originary ethics will need to be recognised in the western tradition of metaphysics more generally. Of the many avenues in which Heidegger enacts his critique of this tradition, one of particular pertinence concerns the understanding of the purported ‘subject’ of ethical thinking. Seen in this light, an originary ethics is only possible on the basis of a genuine μεταβολή in which the metaphysical subject (however it is conceived) is replaced by Dasein. In such a movement, theoretical assumptions about human subjectivity and agency evaporate, and are replaced by a

²⁰ See, Martin Heidegger, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz* (Frankfurt Am Main: Klostermann, 1990). Translated as Martin Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 157. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation GA 26 and the number as it appears in the English translations, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German texts: GA 26: 157/199-200.

summons to the factual life, to the encounter with mortality and radical temporality, and to the recognition that even *in* being oneself, one is always *with* others.

It is testament to the radicality of the shift that Heidegger proposes here that in a sense all other 'bets' are effectively off for now. What this means is that it is profoundly difficult (perhaps impossible) to think and to speak adequately about ethics (or, indeed, logic, physics, the soul, God ...) at all at present, in a time in which metaphysics (and its fruits such as technology) still holds us in its thrall. The movement away from metaphysics towards the new beginning (as he puts it in his later works) will take time and patience; it is something for which we must patiently await: *Gelassenheit* rather than agency. It is not a transition that can be 'brought about.' It is almost as though, for Heidegger, we are only at the beginning of such an epochal transformation, and until such time as the tide has turned, all talk of ethics and normativity is premature. The obstacles to the development of an originary ethics are scarcely yet understood, and it is thus difficult to even imagine a situation in which they do not any longer block the way to originary thinking.

The difficulty here, I'd suggest, is that it leaves us in a profoundly uncertain state as to what can be done in the *present* moment in order to address the moral exigencies of our time. It hardly seems enough to push into a deeply indefinite future the very *possibility* of perhaps one day being able to again think ethically in a practical sense! Indeed, any such suggestion seems to justify the accusations made by some concerning the "quietism" of the later Heidegger, a failing that allegedly over-corrects the equally bankrupt voluntarism of his earlier work. One scholar recently and viscerally summed up this reading of later Heideggerian work:

At a time when the stakes are so very high and decisive action is so loudly and urgently called for, when the ice caps are melting and the bird flu is spreading and the president is selling off our national wilderness reserves to private contractors for quick private gain, Heidegger apparently calls us to do – nothing. When things that matter so much are hanging in the balance, this frustration quickly turns to anger and disgust and even furor. How dare this man, who might legitimately be accused of having done nothing right himself at a crucial time in his own nation's history, elevate quietism to a philosophical principle?

Responsible people have to act, surely, and to suggest anything else is to side with the forces of destruction and short-sighted greed.²¹

Of course, characterisations of early Heideggerian voluntarism and latter Heideggerian quietism are both misreadings, or at best highly selective readings (and insofar as this thesis focuses on the early thought, I will return to the theme of voluntarism in what is to come). However, I would suggest that the *prima facie* feasibility of the quietism reading points to a telling gap in Heidegger's oeuvre concerning this question of 'what now?' Heidegger's scant remarks on this matter, and indeed of ethics more generally, makes multiple readings possible. One might, for example, conclude that Heidegger is proposing simply to collapse 'ethics' back into fundamental ontology, so that 'ethics' effectively disappears even as a possibility. Alternatively, one might read him as indicating that something like ethics (as it is normally understood) becomes possible *only once* it has been fundamentally reoriented (its horizons clarified) through the *Daseinanalytik* and its being thoroughly 'worked through' in the *μεταβολή* mentioned earlier. Such a reading may or may not then be read as consistent with the quietism critique, depending on how this *μεταβολή* is conceived in terms of the 'how' of its emergence into the new beginning.

In what follows in this thesis, however, I will argue that it is possible to read Heidegger in a sense that avoids both of these extremes insofar as his early work provides some key tools with which the understanding of the human can indeed be shifted towards a sense of factual life that is genuinely hospitable to something like the originary ethics towards which Heidegger points. While, admittedly, the explicit textual evidence for such a reading is thin (for it constitutes a portion of an already small number of places where Heidegger discusses the problem of ethics at all), I will maintain that the lines for such a reading are to be found tacitly throughout his early work. While it may be true that the obstacles to the development of an originary ethics are scarcely yet understood, and while the "new" or "other beginning" to which Heidegger points in the *Beiträge*²²

²¹ Ladelle McWhorter, "Guilt as Management Technology: A Call to Heideggerian Reflection," in *Heidegger and the Earth: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, ed., Ladelle McWhorter and Gail Stenstad (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 8.

²² See, Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (GA 65) (Frankfurt Am Main: Klostermann, 1999). Translated as Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 133. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation GA 65 and the number as it appears in the English translations, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German texts: GA 65: 133/169-170.

is difficult to imagine, Heidegger's early work provides sufficient clues and trajectories of thought to allow a substantial start in recognising the major contours of his notion of a genuinely originary ethics, and the demands that it would make on the one seeking to *think* and thus to live ethically – in a broadly Heideggerian sense – in our own times.

METHOD AND ARGUMENT

This thesis, then, will argue that Heidegger does indeed provide an account (and at times a compelling one) of the major lines of an originary ethics in his early work. It is in this sense that I will refer to Heidegger's 'ontological ground of ethics,' with a nod to Frederick Olafson's phrase, though adopted in a broader sense that will be detailed in what follows.²³ While Heidegger specifically does not provide us with normative ethical theories, arguments in applied ethics, or even meta-ethical perspectives in any normally attested sense, his fundamental ontology does nonetheless provide, as he states in *Being and Time*, "the existential condition for the possibility of ... morality in general."²⁴ As such, he implicitly draws attention to possibilities that are overlooked or taken for granted by conventional ethical discourses. In drawing our attention to the facticity of Being-in-the-world, Heidegger's work contributes to the re-envisioning and liberation of ethics from the narrowness of its being cast as a instrumentalist discipline for rationally calculating best courses of action. In this way, ethics is thrown back into the midst of its source and context in the facticity of human concerns.

In what follows, this thesis will explore some of the dimensions of this nascent ontological ground of ethics by analysing the closely inter-related concepts of *Gewissen* and *Schuld* (conscience and guilt/debt); *Eigentlichkeit* and *Entschlossenheit* (authenticity and resoluteness); and *Mitsein* (Being-with). While not used in the usual sense of ethical reflection, this vocabulary, as Heidegger

²³ See, Frederick A. Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Interestingly, this phrase has also been used by Jean-Luc Nancy in his work, Jean-Luc Nancy, "Heidegger's 'Originary Ethics'," in *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy*, ed., François and Pettigrew David Raffoul (Albany New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 67-86.

²⁴ SZ: 286/334. Note that I am making use of Heidegger's words here beyond the more limited sense in which he uses them to refer to "Being-guilty" alone. In this sense, as I outline below, my own argument understands "the existential conditions for the possibility of ... any morality whatsoever" to be comprised of a series of trajectories within *Being and Time*, and other early works, beyond but including conscience.

deploys it, contains an unmistakable ethical trajectory that is held together by a common origin and convergence in Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's category of *φρόνησις*. Indeed, in what follows, I will propose that Heidegger's retrieval (*Wiederholung*) of Aristotelian ethics, and *φρόνησις* in particular (chapter one), provides the framework within which the specifically ethical significance of *Gewissen* (chapter two), *Eigentlichkeit* (chapter three) and *Mitsein* (chapter four) can be appreciated. While Heidegger's retrieval of *φρόνησις* has been often enough linked to the central issues of the *Daseinanalytik*, what is somewhat lacking is systematic work looking into how this retrieval can be understood as linking together the various quasi-ethical thematics that run throughout early Heideggerian thought. It is into this breach that this thesis leaps.

This notion of an 'ontological ground of ethics,' and its relationship to 'originary ethics,' needs further comment and clarification in the context of how it operates both conceptually and methodologically in this thesis. Inevitably, in the case of Heidegger, the methodological "question of grounds" must take centre stage. This is not the place to rehearse Heidegger's detailed analyses of *Grund* [ground/ reason/ principle/ foundation] either in its first elaboration in *Vom Wesen des Grundes* (published in 1929), nor in his more substantial (and self-critical) engagement with it in *Der Satz vom Grund* (1957). But if ethics is to be understood in terms of its ground/s, then (in the case of Heidegger, *par excellence*) it is essential that the meaning of 'ground' is distinguished from any variety of traditional metaphysical foundationalism. Herman Philipse's description of such a metaphysical sense of 'ground' economically captures the salient characteristics:

Like the epistemological foundationalist, the foundationalist in meta-ethics holds that moral propositions are justified only if they can be derived from more fundamental propositions that are also justified. This notion of justification as derivation threatens to lead to an infinite regress unless there are first principles of ethics that are so secure that further justification is not needed. One might reconstruct the history of ethical theory in philosophy partly as an attempt to discover secure first principles of ethics.²⁵

Such a definition is helpful in order to clarify what is *not* intended by my own use of the language of ethical ground: i.e., any foundation that ties everything back to an ultimate antecedent principle

²⁵ Herman Philipse, "Heidegger and Ethics," *Inquiry* 42, no. 3 (1999): 456.

that is both a self-evidently valid first principle of ethics, and one that thereby grounds all other values or principles that are consistent with it. There is, of course, no sense in which Heidegger can be understood to advocate any such sense of ground, particularly if it is construed in terms of a heteronomous foundation as the absolute locus of moral authority (e.g., God, a principle of natural law, a Platonic form, etc.) But further, it is important to note that no claim is being made here that Heideggerian thought provides, or even *could* provide, any kind of pathway towards ‘moral realism’ understood in the sense of stable universally applicable or ‘objective’ norms for behaviour. There is no revisionism afoot in this thesis according to which Heidegger is to be folded back into a traditional metaphysical account of ethics. There is no Heideggerian categorical imperative to be smuggled in; no τέχνη of utilitarian calculation to be found secreted anywhere within the pages of the *Gesamtausgabe*.

Rather, the ontological ground of ethics that is being proposed here, is nothing other than finite, thrown Dasein itself. Dasein, as ground, can only ever be an *Abgrund*, an abyssal ground. It is that from which the possibility of ethics emerges, but it is not, as such, the guarantor of any system of normativity. It cannot be so, since it is not even its own ground. As thrown, *Dasein is given to itself*. Its very self emerges from the factual and “null” context of its Being. Heidegger is absolutely clear and forthright on this point:

Dasein is something that has been thrown; it has been brought into its ‘there’, but *not* of its own accord ... As existent, it never comes back behind its thrownness ...[A]s such, it can exist solely as the entity which it *is*; and *as this entity* to which it has been thus delivered over, it is, in its existing, the basis [*Grund*] of its potentiality-for-Being. Although it has not laid that basis itself, it reposes in the weight of it ... And how *is* Dasein this thrown basis? Only in that it 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; and yet, as existing, it must take over Being-a-basis [*Grundsein*] ... In being a basis – that is, in existing as thrown – Dasein constantly lags behind its possibilities. It is never existent *before* this basis, but only *from* it and *as this* basis. Thus, ‘Being-a-basis’ means *never* to have power over one’s ownmost Being from the ground up [*eigensten Sein von Grund auf*] ... It has been

released from its basis, *not through* itself but *to* itself, so as to be *as this* basis. Dasein is not itself the basis of its Being ... rather, as Being-its-Self, it is the *Being* of its basis.²⁶

However, if any traditional notion of absolute ground is off the table, this serves to open the possibility of a different sense of ground, and a different sense of primordiality. Accordingly, an *originary ethics* is not an ethical system that has been grounded in a universal principle, but rather a thinking about Dasein in its dwelling in-the-world as the 'ungrounded ground' of the $\tilde{\eta}\theta\omicron\varsigma$. Within this transformed sense of ground, it is again possible to look for existential structures in Dasein's factual life that provide the conditions of possibility for thinking ethically. And these are precisely what Heidegger provides in the *Daseinanalytik* in his analysis of authentic, resolute, guilty/indebted Dasein who is always already Dasein-with-others. It is in this sense that I share Olafson's view that Heidegger's ontological analysis of Dasein is "of fundamental importance to any effort to get at the ground of ethics."²⁷

In addition to the question of ground, the meaning of primordiality similarly looms large in any analysis of the methodological aspects of a Heidegger's putative "*ursprüngliche Ethik*." On this similarly formidable issue, I venture just one brief comment via an analogy with what Heidegger says, in *Being and Time*, concerning the primordiality of Being-in; and thus of Dasein's "dwelling." He says:

[I]f we inquire about Being-in as our theme, we cannot indeed consent to nullify the primordial character of this phenomenon by deriving it from others – that is to say, by an inappropriate analysis, in the sense of a dissolving or breaking up. But the fact that something primordial is underivable does not rule out the possibility that a multiplicity of characteristics of Being may be constitutive for it. If these show themselves, then existentially they are equiprimordial. The phenomenon of the equiprimordiality of constitutive items has often been disregarded in ontology, because of a methodologically unrestrained tendency to derive everything and anything from some simple 'primal ground.'²⁸

²⁶ SZ: 284-85/330-31.

²⁷ Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein*, 7.

²⁸ SZ: 131/170.

In a not dissimilar sense, it could be suggested that an originary ethics might emerge holistically not from a single blinding insight (let alone from a valid inference), but from the series of existentialia – *Gewissen*, *Eigentlichkeit* and *Mitsein* – that are at the core of the *Daseinanalytik*. Further, each of these can be framed (or seen holistically) through the lens of Heidegger's hermeneutical reading of *φρόνησις*. Of course, these existentialia that are of especially keen ethical relevance are not absolute founding principles of ethical life; rather, they are no more, but no less, than the primordial operative structures within the *Daseinanalytik* that condition the possibility of ethical thinking. In that sense, they are spoken about here as key features of the ontological ground for the possibility of ethics in early Heideggerian thought.

One final methodological matter needs to be addressed at this point. In a work dealing with Heidegger's relation to ethics, it is impossible to avoid the controversy which is often taken – quite wrongly, I would maintain – to have a decisive say in terms of Heidegger and the question of ethics. I refer here to Heidegger's intellectual involvements with the ideology of Nazism, the record of his complicity with the National Socialist regime in Germany in the early 1930s, and the growing evidence of his idiosyncratic but undeniable anti-Semitic views. Suffice to say I reject the proposition that Heidegger's deeply unfortunate affiliations and undertakings at this time undermines any claim concerning the importance of an ethical ground of ethics in his work. This line of argument has been made often over the past couple of decades in particular, (culminating perhaps in Emmanuel Faye's suggestion that Heidegger's work should be treated as a form of hate speech insofar as his work was pervaded by Heidegger's Nazi ideology)²⁹ and it has taken another turn since the publication of the first volumes of the *Schwarze Hefte* (dealing with the years 1931–1941) concerning Heidegger's views about “the Jews.”³⁰ What is the relevance of these controversies concerning Heidegger, Nazism and anti-Semitism for the view to be developed in this thesis?

One might start with the observation that these matters should rightly shake our confidence that such a deeply flawed character has anything worthy and reliable to say about the ethical life. Hannah Arendt alludes to such a thought when she compared Heidegger to Thales, the Greek

²⁹ See, Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

³⁰ GA 94–96.

philosopher, who became so engrossed in contemplating the heavens that he tripped into a well at his feet.³¹ In her critique of Heidegger's political life, she euphemistically describes him as a person who "was served more than Plato" and as a result, "succumbed to the temptation to change his 'residence' [by] getting involved in the world of human affairs."³² This interpretation cast Heidegger and Nazism into the light of tragic error especially as Arendt faults Heidegger's reprehensible conduct, arguing in the words of Lawrence Vogel that his "fundamental ethics is too indeterminate to guide judgement – or worse yet, that it is susceptible to chauvinistic appeals."³³ Theodore Kiesel goes further in writing of suspicions of "a form of ideological cover-up, a thinly veiled attempt to insulate the purity of the thought from the 'impure' events that are being dredged up from its vital infrastructure."³⁴ Such reservations are understandable and suspicions are warranted. Nonetheless, due philosophical care requires us to carefully separate Heidegger's philosophy and personal biography in order to avoid sacrificing the greatness of Heideggerian thought on the altar of his human frailties and weaknesses. To systematically interpret the early Heidegger's immense collection of works, including his engagements with Dilthey's *Lebensphilosophie*, the existentialism of Kierkegaard, Husserl's Phenomenology, Kantian and neo-Kantian transcendental philosophy, and Aristotelian practical philosophy through the single lens of Nazi propaganda is to introduce a vast systematic distortion all of its own. Furthermore, if the biographical details of Heidegger's life are given undue influence in the assessment of his work, the threat of the genetic fallacy looms large. Heidegger's work is what Werkmeister refers to as an "intellectual product," which "should always be evaluated on its own merits, never on the basis of [his]...characters, actions or life."³⁵ "After all," he asks, should Bertrand Russell's philandering and marital history, Nietzsche's final madness, Schopenhauer's extreme misogyny or innumerable

³¹ Hannah Arendt, "Martin Heidegger at Eighty " *New York Review of Books* 17, no. 6 (21 October, 1971): pp. 50-54. The article was first published in the German periodical, *Merkur* in 1969. Reprinted in Michael Murray, *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy: Critical Essays* (Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 301-2.

³² Murray, *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy: Critical Essays*, pp. 301-2.

³³ Lawrence Vogel, *The Fragile "We" Ethical Implications of Heidegger's "Being and Time"* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1994), 3.

³⁴ Theodore J. Kiesel, *Heidegger's Way of Thought: Critical and Interpretative Signposts*, ed. Alfred Denker and Marion Heinz (Continuum, 2002), pp. 8-9.

³⁵ William Henry Werkmeister, *Martin Heidegger On the Way* (New York: State University of New York, 1996), 16.

other examples of human failings keep us from appreciating the philosophical works of their authors?"³⁶

One might rather look into the details of Heidegger's work, and see within it telling trajectories that are reflected within Heidegger's own life. One might, for example, interpret Heidegger's consistent refusal to provide a sustained discussion of the ethical, and his insistence on the separation of ethics from ontology, as an indication of a deep indifference to ethics, or perhaps even of a positive opposition to normal civilised moral standards. But if so, then a case will need to be built that justifies moral condemnation of Heidegger's work in terms of the evidence of the texts themselves. And as has been indicated thus far, in my judgement, it is difficult to make any such case in a systematic way. To the contrary, there is much in Heidegger's work – especially in its early period, on which this thesis focuses – that points toward a very different conclusion.

Jurgen Habermas' remarks on this issue (albeit from some years ago) bring together both the biographical and the textual, and are worth quoting at length:

Questionable political conduct on the part of a thinker certainly throws a shadow on his work. But the Heideggerian oeuvre, especially the thought in *Being and Time*, has attained a position of such eminence among the philosophical ideas of our century that it is simply foolish to think that the substance of the work could be discredited, more than five decades later, by political assessments of Heidegger's fascist commitments ... The path breaking achievement of *Being and Time* consists in Heidegger's decisive argumentative step towards overcoming the philosophy of consciousness. This achievement may be illuminated by the motivational background of a personal life-crisis but is not impeached by it.³⁷

³⁶ Werkmeister, *Martin Heidegger On the Way*, 16. Julian Young makes a similar point in his defence of the integrity of Heidegger's work in *De-Nazified Heidegger*. He argues that Heidegger's work has to be understood within the context by which it was written, and according to the foundational context of Heidegger's work was that of *Volk* (People). Young claims that against the claim of Nazi origin of his work, Heidegger "affirmed the priority of the *Volk* over state, [and] that he regarded the German state as the vehicle of the German *Volk*, is implicit in the vocabulary used in the political speeches to refer to the German collectivity: the dominance of *Volksgemeinschaft* (community of the people)." See Julian Young, *Heidegger Philosophy Nazism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 20.

³⁷ Jurgen Habermas and John McCumber, "Work and *Weltanschauung*: The Heidegger Controversy from a German Perspective," *Critical Inquiry* 15, no. 2 (1989): 433.

It is difficult to disagree with Habermas on this point. In what follows, I engage with Heidegger's work on its own merits and explore what it has to say about the nature and ground of ethics on that basis, even if the matter of Heidegger's anti-Semitic learnings and complicity with the National Socialist regime must inevitably 'haunt' the analysis to come and give legitimate pause at various points. This is an issue to which I will return in my concluding remarks.

SURVEY OF THE SCHOLARSHIP

Before proceeding, however, it will be useful to provide a brief survey of some major scholarly voices and schools of thought concerning the matter at hand which will be picked up in one way or another, in what follows. The debate concerning the value of Heidegger's thought for the thinking of ethics is rife with fundamental (and sometimes polarised) differences of interpretation. At one extreme would be those who have portrayed Heideggerian thought as an ethical vacuum in need of stringent critique, and here I would include figures such as Emmanuel Levinas and even (if somewhat more equivocally) Hannah Arendt, but also more recent figures such as Emmanuel Faye³⁸ and Richard Wolin,³⁹ who have focused on Heidegger's association with the Nazism and anti-Semitism as providing evidence of moral bankruptcy. At the other extreme are those scholars – most notably Frederick Olafson,⁴⁰ Jean-Luc Nancy,⁴¹ Michael Lewis,⁴² Lawrence Hatab,⁴³ Joanna

³⁸ See Faye, 2011. For deep and searching critiques of Faye's presentation of Heideggerian thought, see Thomas Sheehan, "Emmanuel Faye: The Introduction of Fraud Into Philosophy?," *Philosophy Today* 59, no. 3 (2015): 367, and Patricia Cohen, "An Ethical Question: Does A Nazi Deserve a Place Among Philosophers," *The New York Times Online* (Nov. 9, 2009): C1, accessed, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/09/books/09philosophy.html>.

³⁹ See, Richard Wolin, "'Over the Line': Reflections on Heidegger and National Socialism," in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed., Richard Wolin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 315. Also see, Richard Wolin, *The Politics of Being: The Political Thought of Martin Heidegger* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

⁴⁰ As will be seen, here, Olafson makes clear that the argument of nihilism distorts the fundamental message of *Being and Time*. He argues that though Heidegger fails to explicitly develop his notion of Being-with, it is within the ambience of this concept that one can fully grasp the ethical implications of his work. For a further discussion on Olafson's argument on the ethical character of *Being and Time*, see, Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein*, pp 3-68.

⁴¹ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, ed. Werner and Wellbery E. Hamacher (Stanford University Press, 2000).

⁴² Michael Lewis, *Heidegger and the Place of Ethics: Being-with in the Crossing of Heidegger's Thought* (London: Continuum, 2006).

⁴³ Lawrence Hatab, *Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contributions to Moral Philosophy* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

Hodge,⁴⁴ Charles Scott,⁴⁵ and Lawrence Vogel⁴⁶ – who see Heidegger's work as imbuing a deeply ethical trajectory, and one that is in significant critical continuity with the western tradition of ethics stemming from Aristotle. As will be seen in what follows, my own view might be characterised as fitting somewhere within this broad school of thought, for reasons that will be outlined. Then there are those scholars – such as Hubert Dreyfus,⁴⁷ Taylor Carmen,⁴⁸ William Blatter,⁴⁹ and Saulius Geniusas,⁵⁰ – who take a quite neutral view about the extent towards which Heidegger's work can inform an understanding of ethics.

As early as the 1930s, Levinas expressed profound mistrust of Heideggerian thought, and by 1961 he contended that Heidegger's fundamental ontology follows a philosophical tradition that is intrinsically unethical.⁵¹ Levinas conceived Heidegger's *Daseinanalytik* not only as a recapitulation and promulgation of the theory of the autonomous self that has characterised much of the western tradition, but also as its deification via the extraordinary manner in which Heideggerian Being (an intransitive neuter concept) is prioritized over the particular interpersonal existence of human beings.⁵²

Hannah Arendt is another of the second generation of phenomenologists who offered a strong rejection of Heidegger's fundamental ontology in terms of its ethical implications.⁵³ Arendt shared Levinas' disdain for Heidegger's relationship with the National Socialists. However, more

⁴⁴ Joanna Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

⁴⁵ Charles E. Scott, *The Question of Ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 91-210.

⁴⁶ Vogel, *The Fragile "We" Ethical Implications of Heidegger's "Being and Time"*.

⁴⁷ Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (London: The MIT Press, 2001).

⁴⁸ Taylor Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in Being and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁴⁹ William D. Blatter, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 28.

⁵⁰ Saulius Geniusas, "Ethics As Second Philosophy, or The Traces of The Pre-Ethical In Heidegger's Being and Time," *Santalka, Filosofija* 17 (3), no. 1822-430X (2009): pp. 62-70.⁵¹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1997), 44.

⁵¹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1997), 44.

⁵² Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Lingis Alphonso (The Hague: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 45.

⁵³ Matthew C. Weidenfeld, "Heidegger's appropriation of Aristotle: Phronesis, conscience, and seeing through the one," *European Journal of Political Theory* 10, no. 2 (2011): 254.

importantly, despite her political theories owing much to Heidegger's concept of worldhood,⁵⁴ Arendt considered Heideggerian thought to be promoting a kind of moral decisionism. The freedom and dignity of human beings which Kant championed in the *Grundlegung* was not meant as an individual project, but rather as pointing to the inclusiveness of all human beings, the significance of which lies not in the arbitrary care-structure as Heidegger suggested, but in obedience to the moral law. Individual freedom, on the other hand, is possible only to the extent that other people's rights and dignities are upheld.⁵⁵ Further, she rejects later Heideggerian "mythologizing confusions as Folk and Earth as a social foundation for his isolated Selves."⁵⁶ In sum, she sees Heidegger's Dasein as a being that is care-less and nonchalant, failing to provide anything like an originary ethics, and in fact in some ways it points in the other direction.

It is interesting that American pragmatist interpretations of Heidegger on the matter of ethics have tended to offer a more neutral account, seeing his thought neither as intrinsically anti-ethical, but nor as offering much by way of positive contribution. Hubert Dreyfus suggests that the possibility of ethics in *Being and Time* is severely curtailed by the fact that *Dasein* can neither "interpret things in a radically new way" nor attempt to modify itself. While *Entschlossenheit* generally entails firmness of purpose in the act of making decisions, in Heidegger's account, factual Dasein cannot have any such lucidity of choice.⁵⁷ Dasein simply interprets its facticity as what its state of affairs demands, and the result is "not a determination to take responsibility for [its] deliberate choices

⁵⁴ Arendt argues, for example, that Heidegger's *das Man* is indeed a sufficient description of the modern space of appearance: "[Heidegger's] phenomenological descriptions [of the worldhood of Dasein] offer most penetrating insights into one of the basic aspects of society, and moreover, insist that these structures are inherent in the human condition as such ... Their limitations appear only if they are taken to cover the whole of public life." See, Hannah Arendt, *Essays in understanding, 1930-1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn, 1st ed. (New York: New York : Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1994), 433. Also, in *The Human Condition*, the traces of Heidegger's *das Man* are palpable in Arendt's characterisation of the public realm as the "rule of nobody." According to her, society "expects from each of its members a certain kind of behaviour, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to 'normalize' its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or achievement." See, Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (United States: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 40.

⁵⁵ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 44. Also see, Hannah Arendt, "What is Existenz Philosophy," in *The Phenomenology Reader*, ed., Dermot Moran, Mooney Timothy (London: London Routledge, 2002), 355.

⁵⁶ Arendt, "What is Existenz Philosophy," 357.

⁵⁷ Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (London: The MIT Press, 2001), 25.

(as in the ethical sphere), [but] rather ... an empty, open, spontaneous way of being-in-the-world.”⁵⁸

According to Taylor Carman, “Heidegger’s negative characterisations of inauthenticity seem to remain attuned to the Romantic discourse of self-estrangement and subjective disintegration,”⁵⁹ though his positive characterisation of authenticity as forerunning resoluteness fails to elicit much sense of “wholeness, completion, or unified subjecthood.” In this way, a genuine openness to the ethical is deeply constrained. Carman adduces two reasons for this limitation. First, Dasein lacks the “subjective integrity envisioned by philosophers like Rousseau, Hegel, Kierkegaard, and Dilthey,”⁶⁰ since its immersion in everydayness (facticity), means that Dasein is “always unfinished, subject to error, and thus unfit to provide an ethical account of itself as a whole.”⁶¹ Second, the “vagueness” and formality of Heidegger’s accounts of authenticity and inauthenticity in Division II of *Being and Time* means that they cannot be the basis for any evaluative function that might underpin the possibility of ethical normativity.

An interesting case is the view William Blattner develops in his “temporal idealist” account of early Heideggerian thought. According to Blattner, the whole issue of whether or not Heidegger provides anything like an opening to ethics is entirely moot. This is because authenticity is only ever a “‘factual ideal’ (SZ 310) for the life of Dasein.”⁶² Given the fact that Dasein’s existence is always and essentially temporal in its constitution rather than authentic, Blattner argues that the ideal of authentic forerunning resoluteness, and perhaps ethics as such, is largely irrelevant in Heidegger’s analytic of *Dasein*.

A final case in point here is the position put by Saulius Geniusas, who suggests instead that Heidegger’s fundamental ontology simply provides two sharply contrasting and irreconcilable tendencies: i.e., the anti-ethical and the ante-ethical. The question of whether fundamental ontology is *ultimately* anti-ethical or ante-ethical can never be finally decided because these

⁵⁸ Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I*, 321.

⁵⁹ Taylor Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in Being and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 267.

⁶⁰ Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in Being and Time*, 267.

⁶¹ Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in Being and Time*, 278.

⁶² Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism*, 28.

accounts are incompatible. The irreconcilable conflict between them indicates that “moral regulations and moral motivations have different origins of sense: while moral motivations are grounded in guilt and conscience, moral regulations are grounded in the rules of *das Man*.”⁶³ The implication of this assertion is “that one can be moral only as a split subjectivity.” Hence, “the phenomenological significance of the question of ethics in *Being and Time* composes precisely the disclosure of this existential and ontological conflict that qualifies the moral dimension of human existence.”⁶⁴ Nonetheless, the very presence of the anti-ethical and ante-ethical dimensions in *Being and Time* highlights the inherent problem of the lack of ethical congruence in Heidegger’s works.

While acknowledging (in ways explored below) aspects of these critical readings of Heidegger, the approach developed here is nonetheless marked by a more positive appraisal of Heidegger’s tacit contribution to ethical reflection. In this way, it shares most in common with a comparatively small but important group of scholars who have looked to rehabilitate Heidegger’s legacy in this area though the identification of substantial ethical trajectories within his existential analytic. For Frederick Olafson, Heidegger’s notion of *Mitsein* is key to the ethical horizons of his early work. *Mitsein* unlocks the “ground of ethics” in Heidegger insofar as our relations to others can by itself yield standards of right and wrong. In disregarding scientific images of the self, Heidegger draws our attention to the ordinary, though generally overlooked discourse of life that provides us with genuine principles of conduct.⁶⁵ Olafson contends that this ordinary but profound ground of ethics is not simply “an empirical fact,” but is utterly ontological in nature, comprising “a constitutive element” in the mode of being of both self and others. He identifies two key aspects to the ethical significance of *Mitsein*: empathy and *Fürsorge* (that he translates as “caring for”.) Olafson notes the many loose ends in Heidegger’s account, such as the issue of just how *Mitsein* actually engenders *Fürsorge*, though his suggestion is that it is resoluteness itself that “pushes us into a caring *Mitsein* with others.”⁶⁶ Further, *Mitsein* implies reciprocity, and in this mutual or cooperative interchange “there is a kind of partnership among human beings and... this partnership carries with

⁶³ Geniusas, "Ethics As Second Philosophy, or The Traces of The Pre-Ethical In Heidegger's Being and Time," 69.

⁶⁴ Geniusas, "Ethics As Second Philosophy, or The Traces of The Pre-Ethical In Heidegger's Being and Time," 69.

⁶⁵ Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein*, pp. 17, 22-3, 28, 35, 99-101.

⁶⁶ Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein*, 5.

it a binding character of a specifically ethical kind.”⁶⁷ While he provides only a sketch of the possibilities, Olafson offers a tantalising glimpse of the potential for developing a fully-fledged account of ethical normativity on the basis of Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein.

Jean-Luc Nancy is another scholar who looks to develop a radical account of Heideggerian *Mitsein* with a view to showing its far-reaching ethical implications. Indeed, in what follows (especially in chapter four), I will discuss Nancy’s account at length, and it will play an important role in the development of my own interpretation of *Mitsein*. Of particular importance here is Nancy’s notion of the “being singular plural,” or otherwise put: the being-with (*Mitsein*) of being-there (*Dasein*.) In Nancy’s hands, *Mitsein* is interpreted not simply as one existentials among others that adds an intersubjective element to an otherwise singular being, but as an absolutely core feature of the existential analytic that secures the singular and the plural as “co-originary” dimensions of what it means to be Dasein.

The work of a lesser known Australian philosopher, Sarah Sorial, builds on Nancy’s legacy in interesting ways.⁶⁸ In arguing for the continuity of Heidegger’s account of Dasein’s individuation with his account of *Mitsein*, Sorial sees in these both “an ethics ... of responsibility for existence, and more specifically, for one’s own existence.”⁶⁹ Indeed, Dasein’s care for itself is a source of ethical potency in *Being and Time*. For Sorial, Heidegger’s Dasein is a being that is fundamentally structured to be both its own mediating agency and a “subject that is open to the world and the other,”⁷⁰ and in this way, she sees fundamental ontology as invoking not only ethics but also political action. If Olafson and Nancy’s focus is on *Mitsein* as the key ethical category in early Heideggerian thought, Michael Lewis focuses instead largely on ontological difference: that is, “the necessity of one being amongst the totality of beings stretching outwards beyond this totality and

⁶⁷ Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein*, 11. While I find Olafson’s account to be exceedingly helpful in many respects, I have some reservations concerning his claim that “our relation to one another can by itself yield standards of right and wrong,” as well as his rather sweeping claims concerning Heidegger’s appeals to empathy. His account of “ground” is also very sketchy in a text that makes a formidable claims concerning the “ground of ethics” in Heidegger.

⁶⁸ For a full discussion of Sorial position, see, Sarah Sorial, “Heidegger, Jean-Luc Nancy, and the Question of Dasein’s Embodiment: An Ethics of Touch and Spacing,” *Philosophy Today* 48 (2) (2004): pp. 216-30.

⁶⁹ Sarah Sorial, “Heidegger and the Problem of Individuation: Mitsein (Being-with), Ethics and Responsibility” (Doctoral Thesis, School of Philosophy, The University of New South Wales, 2005), 11.

⁷⁰ Sorial, “Heidegger and the Problem of Individuation: Mitsein (Being-with), Ethics and Responsibility,” 183.

reaching for [its own] being.”⁷¹ In a bid to offer a rejoinder to Levinas’ critical response to Heidegger’s prioritisation of ontology, Lewis claims that for Heidegger ontological difference is a principle that articulates “the uniqueness of a being ... the singularity of an entity before and beyond any wider horizon of meaning which might subsume it and render it comprehensible.”⁷² Lewis links this to Heidegger’s evocation of the early Greek sense of *ἦθος* as dwelling, which itself refers to a relation with Being through which beings as a whole become intelligible to themselves in the clearing of understanding. Consequently, argues Lewis, ethics in its originary sense comes to mean “dwelling near to being, seeking it and responding to it.” It is on this basis that he is then able to work back to *Mitsein*, for the latter encapsulates the primary objective of fundamental ontology which is the ontological difference itself.”⁷³ Dasein is being-with, because it is the placeholder within beings as a whole, distinguished utterly from them (unabsorbed into “the undifferentiated mass of beings”)⁷⁴ and related to others in their uniqueness or singularity. However, this singularity of the other is not the Levinasian “concrete other of intersubjectivity,” but rather a fundamental “relation between singular possibilities, which are my own, and a nullity, which is neither mine nor yours.”⁷⁵

Lawrence Hatab’s approach to the question of Heidegger’s contributions to ethics is perhaps the most multi-faceted of these accounts that have emerged over the last couple of decades. For him, Heidegger provides a much needed ontological basis for ethics, for while the latter is “rich in its analysis of normative topics [it is] poor in attention to our *being*-ethical-in-the-world”.⁷⁶ Arguing for Heidegger’s insight into the irreducible finitude of ethical life, Hatab’s examination of the implications of Heidegger’s contributions touch on many of the themes investigated in this thesis, including the Aristotelian basis of Heidegger’s thinking, the problem of subjectivity, dwelling as *ἦθος*, *Mitsein* and language. However, his account is also marked by a strong emphasis on moral virtues such as courage, compassion and especially empathy.

⁷¹ Lewis, *Heidegger and the Place of Ethics: Being-with in the Crossing of Heidegger's Thought*, 6.

⁷² Lewis, *Heidegger and the Place of Ethics: Being-with in the Crossing of Heidegger's Thought*, 8.

⁷³ Lewis, *Heidegger and the Place of Ethics: Being-with in the Crossing of Heidegger's Thought*, 1.

⁷⁴ Lewis, *Heidegger and the Place of Ethics: Being-with in the Crossing of Heidegger's Thought*, 14.

⁷⁵ Lewis, *Heidegger and the Place of Ethics: Being-with in the Crossing of Heidegger's Thought*, 55.

⁷⁶ Lawrence Hatab, “Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contribution to Moral Philosophy.” *International Philosophical Quarterly* XXXV, No 4, no. 140 (1995), 403.

Joanna Hodge identifies what she sees as a repressed ethical dimension in Heidegger's writings within the parameters of Dasein's relationship with others, both known and unknown. Hodge goes as far as to assert that "the question of ethics is the definitive, if unstated problem of Heidegger's thinking."⁷⁷ In her view, Heidegger's assumption seems to be that Being's withdrawal makes ethical theory impossible, since it leads to the forgetting of Being and the loss of a sense that there is anything other than a domain of facts. But, to the contrary, she maintains, this withdrawal could also divulge the reality of human responsibility.⁷⁸

Similarly, Charles Scott maintains that, ethics is a primary theme in Heidegger's work, even if in so doing he thoroughly questions conventional ethical assumptions. "In Heidegger we ... find the question of ethics functioning with exceptional force", he claims, "so forcefully that many commentators have confused his early work with nihilism or a stance that is indifferent to ethics."⁷⁹ Scott locates the ethical core of early Heideggerian texts in the self-disclosure and authenticity of Dasein, especially in its authentic-being-towards-death.⁸⁰ While this disclosive movement undermines any tendency toward certainty, or any inclination to absolutize ethical principles, Dasein's authentic resolve calls it to assume responsibility for its own existence and to be concerned about its world and other people.

Finally, for Lawrence Vogel, the ethical trajectory of *Being and Time* comes to the fore in its cosmopolitan orientation. Indeed, he suggests, it is *only* via this lens that fundamental ontology can be defended against "the charge of moral nihilism."⁸¹ This cosmopolitan dimension, that flows from Heidegger's analysis of Dasein's Being-with, highlights that in Dasein's "authentic individuality" or resolve also lurks Dasein's "authentic community." *Fürsorge* is also a major theme in Vogel's reading. Heidegger's discussion of "liberating solicitude," he suggests, flows from Dasein's authentic self-relation.⁸² In this relation, Heidegger emphasizes the mutual interchange or correlation between the awareness of my own freedom and the freedom of others. Thus: "I

⁷⁷ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 1.

⁷⁸ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, pp. 32-34.

⁷⁹ Scott, *The Question of ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, 2.

⁸⁰ Scott, *The Question of ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, 104.

⁸¹ Vogel, *The Fragile "We" Ethical Implications of Heidegger's "Being and Time"*, 7.

⁸² Vogel, *The Fragile "We" Ethical Implications of Heidegger's "Being and Time"*, 70.

cannot face 'I-myself' without acknowledging that other peoples, insofar as they are 'existences' like myself, are called to own up to themselves, too."⁸³

There are substantial continuities between the position to be developed in this thesis and the overlapping approaches of this latter group of scholars. Like them, I see Heidegger as implicitly developing a series of trajectories that are ethically potent, though without any account of how they come together to provide an explicit basis for thinking about the exigencies of moral normativity. In my own account, however, I endeavour to show not only how these various trajectories emerge from Heidegger's early texts, and interweave with the existentialia of the existential analytic, but also how they might be read as coming together in the context of Heidegger's overarching phenomenological reappropriation of Aristotelian *φρόνησις*.

⁸³ Vogel, *The Fragile "We" Ethical Implications of Heidegger's "Being and Time"*, 82.

Chapter 1

ΦΡΟΝΗΣΙΣ AND HEIDEGGER'S GROUND OF ETHICS

In this chapter, I want to demonstrate how the ground of ethics in the early Heidegger emerges from, and structured according to, his reading of Aristotle's account of *φρόνησις*. Through a comparative analysis of Aristotle's concept of *φρόνησις* and Heidegger's inventive retrieval of this concept, the chapter will show that although Heidegger speaks forcibly against ethics traditionally conceived (as has been seen), his appropriation of *φρόνησις* implicitly establishes the major structures for a reconceived understanding of the ethical, starting with its ontological 'ground'. On this basis I will also provide a concise anticipation of the fuller accounts to come of how *Gewissen*, *Eigentlichkeit* and *Mitsein* emerge out of key aspects of Heidegger's retrieval of *φρόνησις*.

The chapter proceeds as follows. I begin with some remarks on the importance of Aristotle for Heidegger in his overall project of fundamental ontology. Second, I discuss Heidegger's retrieval and use of Aristotle's concept of *φρόνησις* and how he understands this vis-à-vis Aristotle's accounts of *σοφία* and *ποίησις*. In the third part of the chapter, I analyse some elements of Heidegger's understanding of *φρόνησις* in connection with his account of conscience, which leads him to describe *φρόνησις* as "nothing other than conscience set in motion which makes an action transparent."¹ Fourth, his focus on self-knowledge as the defining feature of *φρόνησις* permits us to see how *φρόνησις* as conscience is linked to his reading of *φρόνησις* as authentic resoluteness. These key elements of *φρόνησις* as Heidegger employs them, provides his analysis of Dasein with a rich understanding of the origins of ethics. Finally, I argue that far from denying the interconnectedness of Dasein with others, Heidegger's retrieval of *φρόνησις* as conscience and authenticity is consistent with a deeply-rooted conception of Dasein as always already Being-with others.

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes* (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1992), pp. 55-56. Translated as Martin Heidegger, *Plato's Sophist*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Andre Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 39/55-56. Hereafter all references to this work will be cited as GA 19 followed by the number as it appears in the English translation and then the corresponding page number/s in the *Gesamtausgabe* or other original German text.

1.1 HEIDEGGER AND THE ARISTOTELIAN LEGACY

The interpretation of Heidegger's originary ethics presented here is premised on the claim that any such account must take the Aristotelian background of Heideggerian thought very seriously. Heidegger's reading of Aristotle as a proto-phenomenologist plays a crucial part in the evolution of his own early thought, as he himself explains in his short piece titled, *My Way to Phenomenology*:

The clearer it became to me that the increasing familiarity with phenomenological seeing was fruitful for the interpretation of Aristotle's writing, the less I could separate myself from Aristotle and other Greek thinkers. Of course, I could not immediately see what decisive consequences my renewed occupation with Aristotle was to have.²

Few would doubt that Aristotle was a massive influence on the young Heidegger, even if Heidegger's explicit engagements with him are comparatively few.³ In *Being and Time*, Heidegger acknowledges his debt to Aristotle by describing him as the first philosopher to effectively articulate a "systematic hermeneutic of the everydayness of being-with-one-another."⁴ At another point, he tells us that "the question touched upon here [concerning his fundamental ontology] sustained the avid research of Plato and Aristotle, only to subside from then on as a theme for actual investigation."⁵ In his *History of the Concept of*

² Martin Heidegger, "Mein Weg In Die Phänomenologie" in *Zur Sache Des Denkens* (GA 14) (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2007), pp. 97-98. Translated as Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 78. Hereafter all references to this work will be cited as GA 14 followed by the number as it appears in the English translation and then the corresponding page number/s in the *Gesamtausgabe* or other original German text.

³ Thomas Sheehan has noted that Heidegger "published only one essay entirely devoted to Aristotle ... and even there the theme is not explicitly the influence of the Stagirite on Heidegger." Further, "in *Sein und Zeit*, where Aristotle appears directly or indirectly on virtually every page, the nature of the influence is concealed behind the language of *Lebensphilosophie*." See Thomas J. Sheehan, "Heidegger, Aristotle and Phenomenology," *Philosophy Today* 19, no. 2 (1975): 87. It should be noted, however, that (as a prerequisite to secure a chair at Marburg) Heidegger did publish an entire work on Aristotle and submitted it to Natorp and Misch. The text of this course was to be published but it was later lost and the only remaining copy, discovered in the closet of Gadamer, was again lost during the bombing of Leipzig. But a few years later, the text submitted to Misch was uncovered together with other relatively old texts of Heidegger's works which were put together and published to mark the centenary of Heidegger's birth, in 1989. See, Franco Volpi, "In whose name?: Heidegger and 'practical philosophy'," *European Journal of Political Theory* 6, no. 1 (2007): pp. 33-34. Also see, Franco Volpi, "Being and Time: A Translation of the Nicomachean Ethics?," in *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thought*, ed., Theodore Kisiel and John Van Buren (State University of New York Press: New York, 1994), pp. 195-211.

⁴ SZ: 138/179.

⁵ SZ: 2/21.

Time lectures, he remarks that “phenomenology radicalised in its ownmost possibility is nothing but the questioning of Plato and Aristotle brought back to life: the repetition, the retaking of the beginning of our scientific philosophy.”⁶ Heidegger’s comment that Aristotle played a pivotal role in the evolution of his thought and that he “could not immediately see what decisive consequences [his] renewed preoccupation with Aristotle was to have,” supports Walter Brogan’s description of Aristotle as the “hidden interlocutor”⁷ in Heidegger’s early writings. More importantly, for the purposes of this chapter, one can also justifiably claim that being the focal point of his early career, Heidegger’s work on Aristotle played a significant role in the evolution of his thinking about the ontological ground of ethics.

Those most deeply familiar with Heidegger’s work have attested to the depth of Aristotle’s influence on Heidegger. Hans Georg Gadamer, for instance, praised the inherent profundity of Heidegger’s Aristotle interpretation and the new philosophical vista it unveils, noting that this was because it was no simple exegesis. “In Heidegger’s lectures,” he recalled, “we were often so personally touched that we no longer knew whether he was speaking of his own concern or that of Aristotle,” and that “no one would doubt that the basic purpose of Heidegger’s preoccupation with Aristotle was a critical and destructive one.”⁸

Beyond Heidegger’s own students, the view that Heidegger’s revolutionary interpretation of Aristotle constituted a formative influence in the development of his own thought is widely attested in the scholarly literature.⁹ Walter Brogan suggests that Heidegger’s

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs (GA 20)* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann Klostermann, 1979), pp. 184-185. Translated as Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time (Prolegomena)*, trans. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 136. Hereafter all references to this work will be cited as GA 20 followed by the number as it appears in the English translation and then the corresponding page number/s in the *Gesamtausgabe* or other original German text.

⁷ Walter A. Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being* (New York: State University of New York, 2005), 2.

⁸ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics* trans. David E. Linge (London: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 200-01.

⁹ Franco Volpi goes further, seeing Heidegger’s Aristotle interpretation as genuinely important in its own right. He maintains that Heidegger’s work “is the most significant philosophical confrontation with Aristotle in our century” in which he retrieves for “us a sense for the problems that Aristotle first set forth.” Volpi suggests that Heidegger’s questioning of the traditional notion of truth, which was set in motion by Husserl’s phenomenology, facilitated his strong ontological reconfiguration of some of the key texts of

purpose in reading Aristotle was “to uncover *der Sinn von Dasein*,” that is, “the various categories that constitute the way of being which in some manner always already is in relationship to being.”¹⁰ According to Brogan, Heidegger frames his readings of Aristotle “in the context of the overcoming of a certain kind of dualistic Platonism, to which he argues Aristotle is responding.”¹¹ Further, “Heidegger not only reads Aristotle as a phenomenological thinker, but also derives his own unique sense of phenomenology from his dialogue with Aristotle.”¹² Similarly, in his classic work, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time*, Theodore Kisiel highlights the importance of both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Metaphysics* for Heidegger. In his reading of Aristotle’s account of the various modes of truth in *Nicomachean Ethics VI*, Kisiel suggests that “Heidegger thought he also found an original experience of the *καίρως* paralleling that of primitive Christianity.”¹³ And in this retrieval of Aristotle, Heidegger saw *φρόνησις* as a tangible sign of his phenomenological project that endeavours not only to rethink being and temporality, but thinking itself and human existence as well.¹⁴ Van Buren goes further to suggest that Heidegger couched his fundamental ontology on Aristotle’s own endeavour in the *Nicomachean Ethics* to conceive ethics as the categorical explication of the sense of being which Heidegger takes up and radicalises.¹⁵ Further, “Heidegger actually modelled his destruction of Aristotle’s metaphysics ... on Aristotle’s own attempt in the *Nicomachean Ethics* to destroy Plato’s science of a separate, universal, and timeless idea of the Good.” For him, Heidegger learned from this vantage point of Aristotle’s practical philosophy, “how to reinscribe the Greek question about being from out of its ground question in his own new beginning.”¹⁶

There have been some dissenting views on this matter. Back in 1989, Robert Bernasconi suggested that regardless of the incontestable influence of Aristotle on Heidegger, the

Aristotle’s practical philosophy especially his *Nicomachean Ethics*. See Volpi, “Being and Time: A Translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*?,” 195.

¹⁰ Walter Brogan, “The Place of Aristotle in the Development of Heidegger’s Phenomenology” (New York: State University of New York Press), 215.

¹¹ Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being*, xii.

¹² Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being*, xii.

¹³ Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 229.

¹⁴ Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time*, 267.

¹⁵ John van Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 220-34.

¹⁶ Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King*, 226.

academic venture of discerning the nature of this influence seemed like “a somewhat reckless undertaking.”¹⁷ Given that many of the key sources of Heidegger’s retrieval of Aristotle were still unavailable, any claim about the nature of Heidegger’s re-inscription of Aristotle in his works of the 1920s leading up to *Being and Time* can therefore be only tentative and provisional.¹⁸ While Bernasconi’s caveat is well taken on the basis of the unavailability of the evidence of Heidegger’s courses on Aristotle at the time he wrote, over two decades later we are much better placed to appreciate the inherent links between Heidegger’s reading of Aristotle and his own thought. The publication of the full set of Heidegger’s early lecture courses in the *Gesamtausgabe* are crucial here. For a holistic understanding of Heidegger’s retrieval of Aristotle, we need, as Volpi contends “to look above all to the courses that Heidegger held in his first period of teaching in Freiburg (1919–23), when he developed the ‘phenomenological interpretation’ of Aristotle that was to become decisive for him.”¹⁹ The growing availability of these courses and those following has made possible the rapid rise in scholars’ interest over the past two decades concerning the influence of Aristotle on the evolution of Heidegger’s thought.

A more recent objection to the proposal to read Heidegger through an Aristotelian lens has been put forward by Panagiotis Thanassas. Thanassas is of the view that regardless of the prominence of Heidegger’s texts on Aristotle, Heidegger “certainly seeks more the distance from the Aristotelian texts than the proximity to them.”²⁰ Thanassas claims that although one can easily perceive a synergy between Heidegger and Aristotelian thought, Heidegger’s work is not only anti-Aristotelian, it has also released itself from this confrontation. As he puts it, “[Heidegger’s] interpretation [of Aristotle], as any interpretation, delimits a field of tensions between the poles of proximity and distance. An interpretation is successful to the extent that it balances efficiently between these two poles.”²¹ According to Thanassas, while Heidegger frequently attributed his early undertakings in philosophy to Aristotelian influence, the publication of all his early Freiburg lectures faults this self-description. To

¹⁷ Robert Bernasconi, "Heidegger's Destruction of Phronesis," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 28, no. 1 (1990): 130.

¹⁸ Bernasconi, "Heidegger's Destruction of Phronesis," 130.

¹⁹ Volpi, "In whose name?: Heidegger and 'practical philosophy'," 32.

²⁰ Panagiotis Thanassas, "Phronesis Vs Sophia: On Heidegger's Ambivalent Aristotelianism," *The Review of Metaphysics* 66, no. 1 (1 September, 2012): 41.

²¹ Thanassas, "Phronesis Vs Sophia: On Heidegger's Ambivalent Aristotelianism," 41.

the contrary, rather than being determined by Aristotelian philosophy, Heidegger's early philosophical formation was occasioned by a relentless "quest for an 'authentic' life, and especially by a phenomenological approach to religiosity, in a quest for an originality experienced within the communities of early Christianity."²² For Thanassas, Heidegger not only fails to appropriate Aristotle in his early works, but he saw the whole of Greek "philosophical tradition, especially in its Aristotelian ... version, as an obstacle to be overcome in order to formulate what Heidegger refers to as a road to an original Christian theology – free from the Greek elements."²³

Thanassas' reading of Heidegger's Aristotle interpretation is not without merit, but his conclusions are questionable. Heidegger's Aristotle reading is, of course, a radical one. As Brogan puts it, it "aims to show the greatness of Aristotle, not because he gave birth to metaphysics, which is not untrue, but because he preserves ... an echo of originary Greek thinking."²⁴ What Heidegger recovers from Aristotle is an originary sense of truth, and factual life that for him had been covered over by the western metaphysical tradition. In short, while Thanassas is right to point out the radical (even violent) nature of Heidegger's use of Aristotle, this does not undermine the case for the importance of Aristotle for the development of his own thought.

In what follows, I will trace the significance of Heidegger's reading of Aristotelian *φρόνησις* for his thinking concerning ethics in substantial agreement with Franco Volpi's reading.²⁵ Accordingly, this chapter will carefully investigate Book IV of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, especially the section on *φρόνησις*, in order to show how Heidegger explicitly takes up the analysis of *φρόνησις* and uses the structure of the concept as a linchpin for the development of his own thoughts on conscience, authenticity and *Mitsein*. In essence, Heidegger reads Aristotelian *φρόνησις* as a way of accessing factual being. Although Heidegger never fully outlined an account of the relation between fundamental ontology and ethics, this chapter will illustrate how Heidegger's reading of *φρόνησις* is pivotal for

²² Thanassas, "Phronesis Vs Sophia: On Heidegger's Ambivalent Aristotelianism," 35.

²³ Thanassas, "Phronesis Vs Sophia: On Heidegger's Ambivalent Aristotelianism," 35.

²⁴ Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being*, 2.

²⁵ With Volpi, I claim that Heidegger interprets Aristotelian *Nicomachean Ethics* as an ontology of human existence, centred on an interpretation of human existence (Dasein) as *πρᾶξις*." See Volpi, "In whose name?: Heidegger and 'practical philosophy'," pp. 31-59.

understanding the structure of his ontology of finite contingency that is at the core of his account of the practical concrete life of Dasein. Of particular importance here are Heidegger's *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*, a summer semester course he taught in 1924, and his Winter Semester Course on *Plato's Sophist* that contains a comprehensive interpretation of Book 6 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

I maintain that it is only through careful attention to the Aristotelian context that Heidegger's concepts of conscience, authenticity and *Mitsein* can be properly understood to constitute an ontological ground for ethics. Such an ethics brackets out systems of moral norms to conceive of the ethical within an "ontological horizon" in terms of "the movement of human life."²⁶

1.2 READING HEIDEGGER READING ARISTOTLE ON *ΦΡΟΝΗΣΙΣ* IN THE *NICOMACHEAN ETHICS*

In his reading of Aristotle, Heidegger came to believe that by the virtue of his thought on the originary nature of life in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle developed a comprehensive phenomenology of the being-in-the-truth of Dasein.

1.2.1 : Orientation to Heidegger's Reading

It is important to note that Heidegger's reading of *Nicomachean Ethics* is both through the lens of phenomenology and a reaction to (and refinement of) Plato's science of a distinct, universal and timeless conception of the Good.²⁷ For Heidegger, unlike Plato's approach that is driven by the universal and timeless idea of the Good, Aristotle instead highlights the originary nature of life.²⁸ This nature is not, as John van Buren puts it, "something

²⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation)* was first published in F. Rodi and O.F. Bollnow, *Dilthey-Jahrbuch VI/1989.: Für Philosophie und Geschichte der Geisteswissenschaften* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), pp. 35-38. Translated by Michael Baur, "Phenomenological Interpretations with respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation by Martin Heidegger," *Man and World* 25, no. 3 (1992): 391/48-9. Hereafter references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles* followed by the number as it appears in the English translations, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German manuscript.

²⁷ GA 19:8-9/11-15.

²⁸ GA 19: 9-10/12-15.

magnificent and beyond.”²⁹ It is rather the reality of history whereby the life that is channelled towards the good manifests itself not under the rule of the single king or ruler, but in a highly distinct manner that shows a great variety of historically changing principles of action.³⁰

According to Heidegger, Aristotle recognises and makes a distinction between five modes “in virtue of which the soul possesses truth”: *φρόνησις*, *τέχνη*, *σοφία*, *επιστήμη* and *νοῦς*.³¹ He states further that these modes through which truth is disclosed to the world relate to various sorts of activities. For instance, *σοφία* and *επιστήμη* have to do with only those activities that cannot be otherwise, while *τέχνη* and *φρόνησις* always deal with those human actions that can be otherwise. And while *τέχνη* deals with *ποίησις*, *φρόνησις* is concerned with *πράξις*.³² According to Aristotle, these different manners of disclosing human actions can only be delineated by the virtue of the objects they recognise and make transparent.

The phenomenological lens of Heidegger’s reading is also crucial in his lecture courses on Aristotle between 1919 and 1925.³³ However, this is no neutral reading, for as Thanasis’

²⁹ Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King*, 220.

³⁰ Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics,” in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed., Jonathan Barnes (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1995), 1731. Hereafter references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation NE followed by the number as it appears in the original Greek text and the page number/s as it appears in Barnes’ translated work. Translations of Aristotle are mine unless otherwise stated.

³¹ Aristotle says, “let it be assumed that the states by virtue of which the soul possesses truth by way of affirmation or denial are five in number, i.e. art, knowledge, practical wisdom, philosophic wisdom, comprehension; for belief and opinion may be mistaken.” See NE: 1139b14-18/1799.

³² NE: 1139b19-35/1799.

³³ For instance, in his correspondences with Karl Jaspers, *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers’ ‘Psychologie der Weltanschauungen,’* Heidegger claims that in contrast to Jaspers who views philosophy as a kind of self-summoning, philosophy should rather be understood as a questioning of Being—a questioning that has for the most part been forgotten by the western metaphysical tradition. Heidegger sees his approach to Jaspers’ review as a way of freeing up the real tendencies. He suggests that those real tendencies are facts which pertain to the use of Aristotelian practical philosophy to rediscover the original or primal matrix out of which the fundamental experiences of philosophy are located. For Heidegger, instead of understanding philosophy from a fixed ideal of scientific or logical rigour, philosophical problems should rather take up “the concrete self” and bring it to the “level of interpretation that is related to the factual experience of life as such.” This review essay is a part of Martin Heidegger’s *Wegmarken* (GA 9) (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), pp. 35-36. Translated by John van Buren as Heidegger, “Comments on Karl Jaspers’ Psychology of Worldviews,” pp. 30-31. Note that for all the quotations from or references to Heidegger’s *Critical Comments on Jaspers’ Psychology of Worldviews* cited in my text, I have used the English translation proposed by John van Buren. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation: *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers*, and the number/s as it appears in this English translation, followed by the number as it appears in the German text.

critique made clear, it is achieved via crucial changes of both sense and terminology. Most obvious is the change from five modes of truth that can be possessed by the soul, to the different modes of uncovering the truth of Dasein.³⁴ The interpretation of the Aristotelian modes of truth becomes for Heidegger a way of uncovering the ontological capacity and the “most genuine possibility of Dasein and to preserve them as uncovered.”³⁵ This is a matter of active and creative retrieval; not exegesis in any usual sense. As such, Heidegger is looking to determine the mode through which the fundamental uncovering movement of life (in the form of *ποίησις, πράξις, θεωρία*) and their corresponding disposition (*τέχνη, φρόνησις* and *σοφία*) can arrive at truth. For Heidegger, therefore, Aristotle’s ethics constitutes the thematization of the ontological structure of being-in-the-world. He suggests that we can learn from Aristotle that “[d]isclosure ... is itself a mode of Being ... of the beings we call human Dasein,” and that Aristotle “conceives of this mode of [human] Being as *αληθεύειν*,” which means disclosive uncovering.³⁶ What Heidegger discovers in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is the major component of what was to become his ontology of Dasein. In other words, the specific viewpoint through which Heidegger retrieves the fundamental elements of Aristotle’s practical philosophy is his keynote interest in the Being of human

Also, in his critique of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, where Kant vehemently denied the theoretical knowledge in the realm of traditional metaphysics, employing the Aristotelian practical philosophy, Heidegger argues that Kant’s aim in his critique is not to formulate another theory of knowledge but rather to lay a foundation for metaphysics. According to him, the real role of philosophy is to reveal the “essence of man” which cannot be achieved without a detailed analysis of “the essence of man in the real world.” Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1991), 225. Translated as Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 220. Hereafter all references to this work will be cited as GA 3 followed by the number as it appears in the English translation and then the corresponding page number/s in the *Gesamtausgabe* or other original German text.

³⁴ Heidegger claims that “the full existential meaning of the principle that ‘Dasein in in the truth’ can be restored by the following considerations: First, to Dasein’s state of Being, *disclosedness in general essentially belongs*. It embraces the whole of that structure-of-Being which has become explicit through the phenomenon of care. To care belongs not only Being-in-the-world but also Being alongside entities within-the-world. The uncoveredness of such entities is equiprimordial with the Being of Dasein and its disclosedness. Second, to Dasein’s state of Being belongs *thrownness*; indeed, it is constitutive for Dasein’s disclosedness. In thrownness is revealed that in each case Dasein, as my Dasein and this Dasein, is already in a definite world and alongside a definite range of definite entities within-the-world. Disclosedness is essentially factual. Third, to Dasein’s state of Being belongs *projection*-disclosive Being towards its potentiality-for-Being. As something that understands, Dasein can understand itself in terms of the ‘world’ and Others or in terms of its ownmost potentiality-for-Being.... Fourth, to Dasein’s state of Being belongs *falling*. Proximally and for the most part Dasein is lost in its ‘world.’ Its understanding, as a projection upon possibilities of Being, has diverted itself thither. Its absorption in the “they” signifies that it is dominated by the way things are publicly interpreted....” See SZ: 222/264.

³⁵ GA 19:21/29-31.

³⁶ GA 19:12/17-18.

beings. This is a retrieval that is also a denial. As Volpi puts it, Heidegger assigns Aristotle's practical philosophy "an ontological character while simultaneously depriving it of the value of human action."³⁷ Heidegger is quite open about this move, explicitly noting at one point that it will be necessary to provisionally set aside the "specific problem of ethics,"³⁸ so as to secure the ontology of Dasein.

[I]f [ethics] should be neglected ... this does not mean that what is subject to the normative determination must be investigated so that the norm can be fitted to what it is supposed to determine normatively. Rather, the claim is much more a matter of principle. The sense of the norm and normative lawfulness cannot be established as long as one does not envision what type of being is meant by a *normatively determined and determinable being*. The possibility of normativity cannot be explained without being investigated as normativity for something and, that means, without the "for what" being investigated in terms of its structure of being.³⁹

This is a crucial statement, I would suggest, of Heidegger's whole approach to the question of ethics. The point is not that moral normativity is disregarded; rather that there is no point in arguing about such norms unless we first understand *for whom* these norms are to apply. This is the context of Heidegger's disengagement from matters of explicit normative concern: not that such concerns are unimportant, but that they can only proceed on the basis of an understanding of the ontological ground within which they are rooted. This ground is accessed only through, and *as*, the analysis of Dasein. And so we see Heidegger's sidelining of Aristotle's keynote emphasis on living well, a silence that is echoed throughout Heidegger's earlier and later works. Two decades later, Heidegger

³⁷ Volpi, "In whose name?: Heidegger and 'practical philosophy'," 41.

³⁸ Here, Heidegger makes it clear that foregoing the "specific problem of ethics ... is not simply an oversight, a failure to pay attention to something that could subsequently be done, but instead that what is here neglected is neglected in the manner of a concern for it [*in besorgender Weise*]. That is, the genuine sense of the critique of historicism." Further, he claims that "the task of the normative science is set up with the aim of regulating and consolidating human existence." Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung* (GA 17) (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2005), 84-87. Translated as Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 63/84-87. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation GA 17 and the number as it appears in the English translations, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German texts.

³⁹ GA 17: 63/84-87.

makes essentially the same point when, in the *Letter on Humanism*, he refers to the existential analytic as an “originary ethics” that “is not ethics in the first instance, because it is ontology.”⁴⁰

Heidegger’s sidelining of the normative is also seen in his focus on Books VI and X of the *Nicomachean Ethics* thereby disregarding Books I and V where Aristotle discusses the ethical mean and the extreme, in addition to the virtues of courage, generosity, magnificence, kindness, benevolence, sincerity and justice.⁴¹ Of course, such inattention for ethics in its practical application, is grist to the mill of the numerous relentless critiques of Heidegger’s privileging of ontology over ethics.⁴²

Nevertheless, there are also fundamental correspondences or conceptual correlations between Heidegger and Aristotle which provide an insight into how Heidegger characterises Dasein’s ontological structures of being-in-the-world. Relevant to our purpose in this chapter are those conceptual correlations which reflect in the significant connections between the concepts and terminologies Heidegger uses in his early works and the concepts and terminologies Aristotle employs in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. The discussion to come will be limited to the different conceptual correlations between Aristotle and Heidegger that will aid the elucidation of how and why Heidegger came to describe Dasein and its fundamental features as an ontologically interpreted version of Aristotelian *φρόνησις*. These correlations will disclose how Heidegger retrieves Aristotle’s various modes of being and finally settles with *φρόνησις* which he describes as the concrete relation or encounter that properly characterises Dasein’s factual interactions with its world.

⁴⁰ LH: 271//356.

⁴¹ Taminiaux Jacques, “The Interpretation of Aristotle’s Notion of Arete in Heidegger’s First Courses,” in *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy*, ed. Francois Raffoul and David Pettigrew, (Albany, New York State University of New York Press, 2002), accessed. pp. 17-18.

⁴² Thomas Hohler argues that while Aristotle discussed *φρόνησις* from the perspective of ethical life, “Heidegger’s ontological interpretation of *φρόνησις*, creatively transforms *φρόνησις* to highlight a tension between ethics and fundamental ontology.” According to him, Heidegger does not discredit a universalist-based ethics, rather his call is for “*φρόνησις* to respond to the need for universalization to [both] overcome the parochial limitation [and] also incorporate an ontological disclosive power.” Thomas P. Hohler, “Phronesis Transformed: From Aristotle to Heidegger to Ricoeur,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (2007): 347-72.

The conceptual correlations are basically the modes of the Being of beings Heidegger differentiated in *Being and Time* as *Zuhandenheit*, *Vorhandenheit* and *Dasein*; and the Aristotelian concepts of *ποίησις*, *θεωρία* and *πρᾶξις*. These correlations can be represented as follows:

Heidegger	Modes of Being-in-the-world	<i>Vorhandenheit</i>	<i>Zuhandenheit</i>	<i>Dasein</i>
Aristotle	The disclosive movements of life	<i>θεωρία</i>	<i>ποίησις</i>	<i>πρᾶξις</i>
	Accompanying dispositions [Aristotle: "Modes in virtue of which the soul possesses truth"]	<i>σοφία</i> <i>επιστήμη</i> <i>νους</i>	<i>τέχνη</i>	<i>φρόνησις</i>

In what follows, I will unpack these fundamental conceptual correspondences and the nomenclatural parallelism between Aristotle and Heidegger with a view to the development of Heidegger's accounts of *Gewissen*, *Eigentlichkeit* and *Mitsein*. To this end, and in due course, the interpretation of Aristotle's *φρόνησις* will come to take centre stage.

1.2.2 : Heidegger's Translation of Aristotle's *Θεωρία* and *Ποίησις*

Before considering the keynote matter of Heidegger's retrieval of *φρόνησις*, it will first be helpful to consider the other two sets of thematic pairs or correlated themes. The first is Aristotle's *θεωρία* and the corresponding *σοφία* and Heidegger's *Vorhandenheit*. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle defines *θεωρία* as the virtue that takes up the best part of us, in such a way that the *ἐνέργεια* of that part in line with its own *ἀρετή* must be *εὐδαιμονία*.⁴³ According to Aristotle, *θεωρία* is the best part of us because being part of

⁴³ According to Aristotle, "If happiness (*εὐδαιμονία*) consists in activity (*ἐνέργεια*) in accordance with virtue (*ἀρετήν*), it is reasonable that it should be activity in accordance with the highest virtue; and this will be the

the *ψυχή*, *θεωρία* showcases being as much as it is needed, and the purpose towards which the activity of *θεωρία* is directed is not something different from the activity of contemplation itself.⁴⁴ Aristotle sees *θεωρία* as the contemplation of kinds of knowledge that we already possess, and for him, the corresponding mode of disposition of *θεωρία*, *σοφία*, surpasses practical *ἀρετή* because *σοφία* is the knowledge of being qua being, “the first philosophy” which is directed towards the first, eternal, universal and necessary principle.⁴⁵

Heidegger’s implied connection to Aristotle’s *θεωρία* and *σοφία* (its corresponding type of knowing) is affirmed in his early works where Heidegger informs us that when Dasein takes up the uncovering attitude of *θεωρία*, it assumes the mode of Being of *Vorhandenheit*, in this way existing in indifference and isolation. For Heidegger, such a mode has nothing in common with Dasein’s existence because it involves an ontological distortion: Dasein is placed *alongside* its world.⁴⁶ In Heidegger’s view, “there is no such thing as the ‘side-by-side-ness’ of an entity called Dasein with another entity called ‘world.’” Rather than living alongside its world, Dasein exists by encountering and relating to entities with its world, and as such the truth of Dasein is determined by the possibility of discourse on the varying degrees of encounters it has with entities in its world. “Dasein is essentially an entity with Being-with, it can explicitly discover those which it encounters environmentally, it can know them, it can avail itself of them, it can have the ‘world.’”⁴⁷

The second conceptual correlation between Aristotle and Heidegger can be seen in the correspondence between Heidegger’s *Zuhandenheit* and Aristotle’s *ποίησις*. In Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle distinguishes between *σοφία* and *ποίησις* which has its

virtue of the best part of us. Whether then this be the intellect (*νοῦς*), or whatever else it is that is thought to rule and lead us by nature and to have cognizance (*ἐννοίαν*) of what is noble and divine, this itself being divine or as being relatively the divinest part of us, it is the activity of this part of us in accordance with the virtue proper (*οἰκείαν ἀρετήν*) to it that will be perfect happiness (*τελεία εὐδαιμονία*); and it has been stated already that this activity is the activity of contemplation (*θεωρητική*)” See NE: 1177a11-18/1860.

⁴⁴ NE: 1177b20–5/1860-1861.

⁴⁵ Aristotle, “Metaphysics,” in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed., Jonathan Barnes, 1620. Hereafter references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation META followed by the number as it appears in the original Greek text and the page number/s as it appears in Barnes’ translated work. Translations of Aristotle are mine unless otherwise stated. META: 1026a1-30/1620.

⁴⁶ SZ: 55/81.

⁴⁷ SZ: 58/84.

corresponding mode of knowing as *τέχνη*. For Aristotle, these two modes of truth are underpinned by what he calls *ἐνέργεια* and *γένεσις*.⁴⁸ Accordingly, though not itself a practical science, *σοφία*, which has the activity of contemplation, regulates the order of human activity, while *τέχνη* or craft engenders a kind of coming into being. Furthermore, Aristotle suggests that coming-into-being takes place during production, and as such, *τέχνη* is the quality of the product and not of the producer.⁴⁹ As a universal knowledge, Aristotle claims that in *σοφία*, the wise person is thought to be able to know all things without needing to know each thing individually; to know things difficult to know; to be more accurate; to be more capable of teaching the causes; to pursue knowledge for its own sake; and to set the order rather than being set in order.⁵⁰ However, the skills in craft or *ποίησις* is a capacity rather than an activity or virtue like *σοφία* and it belongs to a “know-how” which can be put to good or bad use.⁵¹

According to Heidegger, in its everyday mode of Being-in-the-world, Dasein does not encounter entities as things present-at-hand (*vorhanden*), but as equipment ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*), and as such, this ready-to-hand equipment is to be *used* rather than being brought under a theoretical scrutiny. For Heidegger, useful things which have meaning for Dasein are revealed in their handiness, and these handy things are not properties of things; rather they disclose the existence within Dasein’s world of relations and connections.⁵² In Heidegger’s view, *ποίησις* signifies an uncovering attitude of production and manipulation, a disposition which is assumed with the sole aim of production. Further, this is only possible insofar as the relations are part of the world. As he puts it, “[t]he derivative form ‘worldly’ will ... apply terminologically to a kind of Being which belongs to Dasein, never to a kind which belongs to entities present-at-hand ‘in’ the world.”⁵³ What Heidegger suggests here is that like Aristotle’s *τέχνη*, Dasein’s everydayness is often linked to work and “that which is to be produced at the time” or in each case is thus primarily taking care of, a ready-to-hand thing, which “bears with it that referential totality within which the

⁴⁸ NE: 1140a1-20/1799-1800.

⁴⁹ META: 1046a; 1047b–1048a/1650-1655.

⁵⁰ META: 982a1-b1-25/1553-1555.

⁵¹ NE: 1112b12–16/1756-1757.

⁵² SZ: 65/93.

⁵³ SZ: 65/93.

equipment is encountered.”⁵⁴ In other words, for Heidegger, taking care is like *τέχνη* for Aristotle, a mode of truth that differentiates Dasein from other beings. For Heidegger, as for Aristotle, *ποίησις* as *τέχνη* signifies that the everydayness of Dasein is work-related and thus a function of the mode of *Zuhandenheit*.⁵⁵

1.2.3 : Aristotle’s *Φρόνησις* and Heidegger’s Characterisation of the Mode of Being of Dasein as ‘to-be’

The third fundamental conceptual correlation between Aristotle and Heidegger emerges in Heidegger’s elaborate discussion of Aristotle’s concept of *φρόνησις* and his characterisation of the manner of the Being of the authentic Dasein. This is the one that is of particular interest for the argument of this thesis. But before exploring the Heideggerian interpretation of Aristotelian *φρόνησις*, it will first be helpful to examine Aristotle’s treatise on *φρόνησις* in its own right.

At the beginning of *NE VI 3*, Aristotle delineates *φρόνησις* along with *επιστήμη*, *τέχνη*, and *σοφία*. As opposed to *σοφία* and *τέχνη*, which disclose that which cannot be otherwise, Aristotle suggests that human action cannot simply be disclosed through technical application of truth discovered by theory and science. In other words, for Aristotle, there is a particular mode of human thinking that commences from the beginning at *πρᾶξις*.⁵⁶ While elaborating the different types of behaviours or habits that are required to be cultivated in order to live a good life, Aristotle develops a model of the *φρόνιμος*, arguing that the agent of this virtue is the one who is consistently able to skilfully find the best way of acting. The relationship between Heidegger’s “Dasein” and Aristotle’s “*φρόνιμος*” is crucial for what is to come.

While explaining *φρόνησις* within the context of the dianoetic virtues, Aristotle claims that there are two types of realities that people encounter in their daily lives. The first are those realities that appear unchangeable, for example, the rising of the sun. The second kind of realities are those that are always changing, such as human affairs. In Aristotle’s view, for one to engage these different realities one is required to talk about both the realities

⁵⁴ SZ: 70/99.

⁵⁵ SZ: 71/101.

⁵⁶ NE: 1140-1141/1800-1801.

experienced and one's own disposition towards them. Aristotle calls the account-rendering comportment that is linked to those things that cannot vary, *epistēmonikon* or “scientific” or systematic; whereas that connected with what can change is called *λογιστικον* or “approximating.”⁵⁷ He argues that approximation or estimation is inevitable for those human realities that vary or change because of the lack of the absolute ability to stop and fix what is changing. The reality here is that one intentionally makes effort to determine what constantly changes, but always falls short of this expectation. However, both capacities of comportment are ways of giving-account (*λογον εχον*). In other words, both capacities suggest a discursive production where one constantly produces good discourse and deliberates well.⁵⁸

After surveying the fundamental differences between *φρόνησις*, *επιστήμη*, *τέχνη* and *σοφία* in *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle turns his attention to the main characteristics of *φρόνησις*. *Φρόνησις* is situated within the capacity of accountable disposition to what changes, and therefore can be categorised as an approximation and not as scientific. It is within this approximating disposition that one arrives at the distinction between making and acting (*ποίησις* and *πρᾶξις*). In Aristotle's view, the difference here lies at the *τελος*, and its correlations with both activities. This correlation brings to fore the distinguishing factor between *τέχνη* and *φρόνησις*. As Aristotle writes, “while making [*ποίησις*] aims at an end [*τελος*] distinct from the act of making, action cannot; for good action itself is its end.”⁵⁹ In other words, what *τέχνη* brings into existence is something that is already independent of the making. For example, the activity of constructing a well-designed cupboard built by a carpenter ceases to go on when the activity itself stops.⁶⁰ In *πρᾶξις*, however, the situation is different. What *πρᾶξις* launches into existence is nothing outside its own existence. The end in action (*πρᾶξις*) is nothing other than its own activity and the end here remains inalienable or indistinguishable from the action itself. Aristotle stresses that every action (e.g., planting, playing, marrying), is tailored or aims towards what is good or bad for human beings. Consequently, the orientation of every action is solely for the

⁵⁷ NE: 1141a1-1141b/1801-1802.

⁵⁸ NE: 1141b/1802.

⁵⁹ NE: 1140b4-5/1800.

⁶⁰ META: 1022a1 and 1032b1/1613 & 1630.

benefit of the one acting; action makes reference to oneself and relates to an agent.⁶¹ For Aristotle, given the fact that *πρᾶξις* starts and ends with the agent, the *τελος* and *αρχή* of action is the same.⁶² Thus, while *τέχνη* denotes making and producing things, *φρόνησις* is associated with human action. Once the end is accomplished in *τέχνη*, the making of the action ceases. With *τέχνη*, the end, once accomplished, brings the making to a cessation. But, *φρόνησις* deals with action and not production. In other words, the *φρόνιμος* is an open-ended person who is constantly kept in focus while the discussion is ongoing.

Aristotle similarly distinguishes *φρόνησις* and *επιστήμη* insofar as the way of encountering the world in *επιστήμη* cannot sufficiently encapsulate the way human beings encounter the world through *φρόνησις*. If *επιστήμη* captures reality through demonstration, which is the perception of first principles through *νοῦς*, *φρόνησις* discloses things through *πρᾶξις*. His suggestion is that “to deliberate [*φρόνησις*] and to calculate [*επιστήμη*] are the same thing, but no one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise.” Thus, given that “the calculative is one part of the faculty which possesses reason, “[w]e must, then, learn what is the best state of each of these two parts; for this is the virtue of each,” that is related to its own proper activity or function.”⁶³ For Aristotle, *φρόνησις* takes place as a result of the collaboration between two faculties: reason and desire. He remarks that “since virtue of character is a state involving choice, and choice is a deliberative desire, the reasoning must be true and the desire correct, if the choice is to be good, and the desire must pursue what reason asserts.”⁶⁴

Aristotle remarks further that the uniqueness of every action is measured by the particular context in which it is applied. In other words, what the *φρόνιμος* does in any given circumstance depends significantly on the context of the action. Thus, in *φρόνησις*, the exactitude of the desire and true deliberation work together in order for action to take place. In *De Anima*, Aristotle emphasizes that “that which is the object of [desire] is the stimulant of mind practical; and that which is last in the process of thinking is the beginning

⁶¹ NE: 1141b10/1802.

⁶² NE: 1141b20/1802.

⁶³ NE: 1139a15–19/1798.

⁶⁴ NE: 1139a21–26/1798.

of action.”⁶⁵ So desire is not limited to the principles of *λογος*; it has its own access to reality. As opposed to *επιστήμη*, which deals exclusively with the eternal and necessary truth, phronetic deliberation is the hermeneutic thrust of every practical act of thinking.

Deliberation, for Aristotle, has two basic aspects. First, the outcome of deliberation is choice, and choice indeed *is* deliberative desire.⁶⁶ Second, deliberation places special emphasis on the particular over the universal, which means that *φρόνησις* is “concerned with human affairs, namely, with what we can deliberate about.”⁶⁷ The focus of *φρόνησις* is on actions in their specific concrete context.⁶⁸ The *φρόνιμος* is “able to deliberate well about what is good and useful for him [*sic*], not in some single area, (for instance what is good for his health or strength), but what is advantageous in terms of living well as a whole.”⁶⁹ The *φρόνιμος* is concerned with how to live the “good life” by discerning and deliberating on how the good life could be achieved.

Heidegger’s interpretation of the Aristotelian concept of *φρόνησις* takes up the first part of his *Plato’s Sophist* and *Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutic Situation*.⁷⁰ He begins both texts by discussing the real object of *φρόνησις*, the essential characteristics of *φρόνησις* as disclosure, its limit and how it relates to Dasein’s possibilities. Heidegger suggests that because Aristotle endeavours to “grasp and to grasp ever more sharply what [the disclosure of the truth of Being] ordinarily means,”⁷¹ Aristotle’s *φρόνησις* retraces itself back to the phenomenology of Being. *Φρόνησις* therefore belongs to the proper mode of the being of Dasein.⁷² The reason for this, he argues, is because *φρόνησις* is a mode of disclosure, and it is ontologically ascertained as discourse and *πρᾶξις*.⁷³ What it discloses is the right and proper way to be Dasein. As Daniel Smith puts it, as a disclosure, *φρόνησις* considers Dasein in its wholeness

⁶⁵ Aristotle, “De Anima,” in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed., Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 598. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited in the text with the abbreviation *De Anima* and the number as it appears in the original Greek text, followed by the number/s as it appears in McKeon’s translation. De Anima: 433a15/598.

⁶⁶ NE:1139a23/1798.

⁶⁷ NE:1141b8–9/1802.

⁶⁸ NE:1140b1, 1142a23–25/1802-1803.

⁶⁹ NE:1140a25–28/1800.

⁷⁰ GA 19: 34/47-49. Also see *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles*: 377-78/29-31.

⁷¹ GA 19:21/29-31.

⁷² GA 19:34/47-49.

⁷³ GA 19:34/47-49.

as a being; it guides Dasein against any inclination to hide or “cover its wholeness through technical and theoretical excesses.”⁷⁴

The status of *φρόνησις* as a mode of disclosure is consistent with its belonging to the dianotic virtues which falls under the arena of *αλήθεωειν*. As such, Heidegger suggests, it involves “taking entities that are meant in each case and as such, into true safekeeping as disclosed.”⁷⁵ But such a reading of Aristotelian *φρόνησις* is highly suggestive of Heidegger’s own characterisation of the Being of Dasein as “a to-be [*Zu-sein*].”⁷⁶ Dasein is a being that is understood in *action*. Quoting the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Heidegger suggests that Dasein’s whole life is “πρακτική μετὰ λόγου” –characterised in actions.⁷⁷ Thus, the proper way to understand human Dasein as ethical is not via the lens of theoretical moral principles, but through understanding it as a deliberating and acting being. As a phronetic being, Heidegger’s Dasein is its own point of departure. It is fundamentally concerned not with abstract principles but with the task of deciding among a range of factual possibilities.⁷⁸

A significant moment in Heidegger’s retrieval of Dasein’s fundamental manner of being as ‘to-be’ through Aristotle’s *φρόνησις* is evident in his deconstruction of *σοφία*. For him, *φρόνησις* and *σοφία* are “the concrete ways of actualising the truthful safe-keeping-of-Being [*Seinsverwahrung*],” and “on account of the authentic movement which is available to *σοφία*, the Being of life must be seen exclusively in the pure temporalizing of *σοφία* as such.”⁷⁹ Gadamer remarked in *Truth and Method* that he was astonished by the pre-eminence Heidegger accords to *σοφία* over *φρόνησις* as a mode of temporalizing that defines Dasein’s mode of life.⁸⁰ However, it must be pointed out that in the aforementioned statements Heidegger was not only trying to retrieve the fundamental characteristics of Dasein as ‘to-be’ from Aristotle’s practical philosophy, but also to exemplify how Aristotle has been taken over by the tradition. As a result, Heidegger’s intention here is to first locate *σοφία* within the temporal context provided by the factual

⁷⁴ Daniel L. Smith, “Intensifying Phronesis : Heidegger, Aristotle, and Rhetorical Culture,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 36, no. 1 (2003): 88.

⁷⁵ *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristotele*: 381/35.

⁷⁶ SZ: 86/118.

⁷⁷ NE:1140a1–5/1799.

⁷⁸ GA 19: 34/47-49.

⁷⁹ *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristotele*: 381-83/35-38.

⁸⁰ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and method*, 2nd ed. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1993), 318.

movement in order to show that *σοφία* possesses a temporal structure. But Heidegger also goes further to hierarchically displace *σοφία* by saying that it is simply an “unconcerned, time-possessing,” that shows itself in “purely observational dealings.”⁸¹ But when Dasein is understood and interpreted within a concrete historical context, this is accomplished in Aristotle’s other concrete actualisation of the truthful safe-keeping of Being, *φρόνησις*. Unlike the detached observational approach of *σοφία*, *φρόνησις* is a determination of life’s *πρᾶξις*, and this is because it reveals “the way of truthfully safe-keeping the full moment of [Dasein’s] insight.”⁸² In Heidegger’s view, *φρόνησις* reveals the truth of Dasein and it does this by uncovering the ‘how’ of Dasein’s actions.⁸³ In short, through its disclosive movement, *φρόνησις* furnishes us with a critical insight into Dasein’s facticity.

Later, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger reappropriates and modifies this Aristotelian focus on the pre-eminence of action. Just like Aristotle’s *φρόνιμος* who is determined by the possibility of disclosure, Heidegger claims that Dasein does not understand itself on the basis of itself but from the openness of Being by virtue of which it always finds itself grounded.⁸⁴ Just as Aristotle would see every human action as presupposed by determinate contingent circumstances, Heidegger’s Being-in-the-world sees Dasein as a being within an ineluctably contingent context.⁸⁵ Dasein qua *φρόνιμος* is deeply engaged in examining its situation with care and solicitude. In this way, *φρόνησις* brings to the fore the ground for the comportment of human life; it reveals or discloses how one can go about his/her business. As such, as *φρόνιμος*, Dasein is caught up in web of relations where, as Van Buren puts it, its dwelling “with things and other persons involves the care, mood, understanding, interpretation, and language of the whole human being.”⁸⁶ So, in the mode of *πρᾶξις*, Dasein lives in its world as a factual being; a being that lives ‘from out of’ its

⁸¹ *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristotele*: 386/41.

⁸² *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristotele*: 382/36.

⁸³ Heidegger puts it this way: “The being in the How of its possible “as-what-determinations” is not simply there; it is a “task”. And the being in the ‘How’ of its Being-uncovered... is that which must be taken into truthful safe-keeping against possible loss.” See, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristotele*: 379/32.

⁸⁴ SZ: 191/235.

⁸⁵ GA 19: 93/134-135.

⁸⁶ Van Buren also suggests that it is because Heidegger sees philosophical thinking as “a more genuine form of dwelling and praxis that guards the house of being,” that Heidegger characterises every philosopher as “house-friend,” and “thinking as original ethics, home-coming, being-on the way, building the house of being, thanking, remembrance, and poetising.” See Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King*, 37.

world.⁸⁷ Also, in keeping with Aristotle's practical philosophy, Heidegger contends that Dasein "lets itself to be seen," and "is taken explicitly, as unveiled, into truthful safekeeping."⁸⁸ Daniel Smith captures this sense well in maintaining that Heidegger's aim in interpreting Aristotle is to show "how Aristotle thought about the movement of disclosure, that is, movement of ἀλήθεια, and how such movements are inseparable from the being-there that is Dasein."⁸⁹

Heidegger's interpretation of Dasein as φρόνιμος needs also to be understood in terms of Dasein's web of relations according to which it is "already dispersed [zerstreut] in manifold ways of taking care of things."⁹⁰ For Heidegger, 'care' constitutes the fundamental structure that underlies each and every particular human existence.⁹¹ 'To take care' is to live a life of action or πράξις and this human action generally constitutes the fundamental framework of the Being of Dasein. Translating the Greek, ὀρέγω ('reaching out,') Heidegger retranslates 'care' (Sorge) as 'being-towards,' which for him encapsulates what Smith calls "the fundamental movement of life ... the movement of the repeated actualisation of Dasein's fundamental potential, an openness to being-out-toward-and-meaningfully-involved-with-the-world."⁹² 'Care' for Heidegger, as Volpi suggests, is "the root of the practical structure of the existence of Dasein."⁹³ Understood within a practical perspective, care presents Dasein as possessing "the practical structure as a being of "having-to-be," a being whose being "is not realised in the stability of Being and pure act, but is, in its finitude, a potentiality-for-being [Seinkönnen] which projects ahead of itself."⁹⁴

In sum, it is therefore plausible to view Heidegger's characterisation of Dasein's way of Being as a depth retrieval and translation of Aristotle's practical philosophy. However, Heidegger's retrieval of φρόνησις changes its sense in powerful ways. This is because, in

⁸⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Ontologie: Hermeneutik der Faktizität* (Frankfurt Am Main: Klostermann, 1988). Translated as Martin Heidegger, *Ontology-The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, trans. John Van Buren (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 24/29-30. Hereafter, references to this work will be cited as GA 63 followed by the number of the translated text and actual number as it appears in the German text.

⁸⁸ *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles*: 381/83.

⁸⁹ Smith, "Intensifying Phronesis : Heidegger, Aristotle, and Rhetorical Culture," 82.

⁹⁰ SZ: 62/89.

⁹¹ SZ: 183/227.

⁹² Smith, "Intensifying Phronesis : Heidegger, Aristotle, and Rhetorical Culture," 80.

⁹³ Volpi, "In whose name?: Heidegger and 'practical philosophy'," 39.

⁹⁴ Volpi, "In whose name?: Heidegger and 'practical philosophy'," 39.

his reading of Aristotle's *NE VI*, Heidegger markedly changed the nature, function and conditions of *φρόνησις* from having a practical and normative orientation to a something fundamentally ontological in character. This ontological retrieval appears to have emptied out *φρόνησις* of its orientation towards the good, even to the extent that one is left wondering, with Francisco Gonzalez, whether the two varied ways of looking at *φρόνησις* are ultimately compatible. Gonzalez suggests that Heidegger's retrieval of Aristotle's ethics is so radical as to be a distortion. According to him, although Heidegger's appropriation of *φρόνησις*, *ἀρετή*, *τέχνη*, and *εὐδαιμονία* could be seen as the elucidation of the different modes of uncovering the truth of Dasein's Being, these concepts, "emerge from Heidegger's transformations with the ghostly remnant of an ethical connotation ... one that is a complete inversion and perversion of their ethical meaning in Aristotle."⁹⁵ This challenge is a formidable one. Does it make sense for *φρόνησις* to be converted into an ontological principle according to which its normative sense drops out entirely? Is there any ethics left in Heidegger, or was Levinas eventually justified in his critique of Heideggerian totalisation?

In what follows, I propose to address this serious concern by exploring several key elements of *φρόνησις* as Heidegger employs them, elements which together provide Heidegger's analysis of Dasein with a rich phenomenological foundation for the understanding of ethics. Accordingly, I track the way in which Heidegger's radical appropriation of *φρόνησις* relates to his accounts, in the *Daseinanalytik*, of conscience, authentic resoluteness and (in a less explicit sense) Being-with others. In doing so, I will highlight a few basic features of these accounts, thereby preparing the way for the more detailed discussions of each of these three themes to come in subsequent chapters. Heidegger's deployment of *φρόνησις* is crucial in all three cases, and it is through such an analysis that it is possible to discern the implicit ontological ground for ethics that emerges in early Heideggerian thought, even if Heidegger himself never explicitly draws out the full implications of such a ground.

⁹⁵ Francisco J. Gonzalez, "Beyond or Beneath Good and Evil? Heidegger's Purification of Aristotle's Ethics," in *Heidegger and the Greeks: Interpretive Essays*, eds. Drew A. Hyland and John Panteleimon Manoussakis (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006), 129.

1.3 ΦΡΟΝΗΣΙΣ AS GEWISSEN (CONSCIENCE)

I turn first to Heidegger's phronetic account of conscience. Within the process of describing *φρόνησις* as a mode of truth that lies more in *πρᾶξις* than in *λογος*,⁹⁶ Heidegger identified *φρόνησις* with conscience. *Φρόνησις*, Heidegger notes, "is nothing other than conscience set in motion [*das in Bewegung gesetzte Gewissen*] which makes an action transparent."⁹⁷ According to him, as conscience, *φρόνησις* is a mode of unconcealment and its primary end is purely the "observational understandings" which "brings into truthful safekeeping the being ... [which] is in the manner that it necessarily and always is what it is."⁹⁸ Also, as conscience, Heidegger suggests that *φρόνησις* emphasises the Being-true of oneself and "brings into truthful safekeeping the-toward-which of the dealings of human life." This dealing as he tells us, is "*πρᾶξις*, action with itself in the how of the dealing that does not produce, but rather in each case only precisely acts."⁹⁹

While drawing on his reading of *Nicomachean Ethics VI*, Heidegger compares *τέχνη* and *φρόνησις* as conscience. Invoking *Nicomachean Ethics*,¹⁰⁰ where Aristotle points out that "*φρόνησις* is an ἀρετή but not a τέχνη," he claims that given its failures, *τέχνη* influences development and improvement but obeys the laws of all or nothing.¹⁰¹ He argues further that while that which *τέχνη* produces is able to be completely forgotten because of the inherent capacity of the 'know-how' of *τέχνη* to be lost, with respect to *φρόνησις* on the contrary, "there is no possibility of falling into forgetting."¹⁰² *Φρόνησις* cannot be forgotten because it is not just a logical disposition, like *τέχνη*, that can be acquired as a skill and can then be forgotten. Rather, "*φρόνησις* is new on each occasion," and being similar to conscience"¹⁰³ *φρόνησις* directs us towards the truth that is connected to practical things, things that are always concrete, particular and new.

To understand why *φρόνησις* as conscience cannot be forgotten, Heidegger insists that the voice of conscience does not summon individuals in the form of activity, but rather

⁹⁶ GA 19: 96–7/139–141.

⁹⁷ GA 19: 39/55–56.

⁹⁸ *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristotele*: 381/34.

⁹⁹ *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristotele*: 381/35.

¹⁰⁰ NE:1140b24/1800.

¹⁰¹ GA 19:26/36–38.

¹⁰² GA 19:26/36–38.

¹⁰³ GA 19:39/55–56.

manifests itself in the process of the authentic-being-oneself of an individual. In this process of becoming an authentic individual, Heidegger suggests (in line with Aristotle) that the *φρόνιμος* is “able to deliberate finely about things that are good and beneficial to himself [*sic*], not about some restricted area ... but about what sorts of things promote living well in general.”¹⁰⁴ Therefore, as opposed to *τέχνη*, which produces a finished product that is located beyond the being that performs the action, *φρόνησις* seen as conscience is concerned with Dasein’s inescapable Being. In other words, *φρόνησις* as conscience is synonymous with self-knowledge which is “the gravest of all knowledge, since it is concerned with human existence itself.”¹⁰⁵ Also in contrast to the existence of the separate and independent objects which *τέχνη* produces, Heidegger claims that *φρόνησις* as conscience provokes the deep structure of Dasein where it sees itself as concerned with its own as Being-possibility. He reiterates that, while the *ἀρχή* of *τέχνη* is located outside the being that performs the action, and *σοφία* “deals with the highest beings,” the being which *τέχνη* and *σοφία* produce “are not ones that concern [human beings] in their existence. Rather, “[w]hat concerns Dasein is Dasein itself... namely, *εὐδαιμονία* ... And for this, *φρόνησις* provides direction. It is supposed to render Dasein transparent in the accomplishment of those actions” which lead it to the good life.”¹⁰⁶

It must be noted that the self-knowledge and transparency to which *φρόνησις* as conscience appeals is not to be understood dualistically. Tamininiaux makes this point well in maintaining that we should not interpret Heidegger as intending “a sense of good in opposition to bad, of justice in relation to injustice, but as the power each time renewed that the singular Dasein has of being revealed to itself as a whole and authentically.”¹⁰⁷ Further, *φρόνησις* as conscience is not to be understood as an introspective posture towards the possibilities of life, for what Heidegger has in mind is far from an independent subject contemplating who it should become. Rather, as Weidenfeld puts it, *φρόνησις* as conscience unveils “the concrete possibilities of being in a situation with regard to a self-understanding.”¹⁰⁸ In other words, *φρόνησις* involves paying attention to experiences

¹⁰⁴ GA 19: 40/56-58.

¹⁰⁵ GA 19:93/134-135.

¹⁰⁶ GA 19:93/134-135.

¹⁰⁷ Jacques, “The Interpretation of Aristotle’s Notion of Arete in Heidegger’s First Courses,” 21.

¹⁰⁸ For instance, “[i]n the classroom, *φρόνησις* reveals the moment to ask the question as part of self-understanding of what it means to teach well, but this understanding is not kept in mind; instead, it is

which disclose Dasein's understanding of living well, not from the theoretical or subjective perspective, but from a pre-theoretical and pre-subjective level. This experience, for Heidegger, is "one that is related to the *πρᾶξις*, that is, in the experiential or concrete life experiences of the individual Dasein."¹⁰⁹ The *τέλος* of *πρᾶξις*, the goal of action, is the "action itself, and specifically it is the *εὐπραχία*, acting well."¹¹⁰ The concern or the goal of action is not necessarily the accomplishment of a concrete or specific task (hence, *ποίησις*), but rather it is of acting well, that is, in making sure that "the action comes to pass in the correct way, so that it attains its end in what it can be."¹¹¹ Acting well for Heidegger entails making sure that the action itself is in harmony with the self-understanding of the agent where the agent does not just have the clearer picture of the directed action of the good, but must also have a clear comprehension of the concrete situation into which he/she is thrown, and from which he/she must act. Thus, in a manner similar to Aristotle's practical syllogism, Heidegger remarks that *φρόνησις* involves two premises. The first premise is the good towards which an action is directed and the second is that the "circumstances and the situation of the action are such and such."¹¹²

Heidegger's description of *φρόνησις* as an experience that unveils the concrete situation of Dasein parallels his interpretation of conscience in *Being and Time* as the voice that summons Dasein to its "authentic potentiality-of-being a self."¹¹³ He begins his description of conscience in *Being and Time* by clarifying that, like *φρόνησις*, "[c]onscience gives us 'something' to understand; it discloses."¹¹⁴ Further, he notes that on a more general level,

revealed in the moment of question asking." Therefore, "[t]o have performed poorly in the classroom is not felt to be a failure of technique (though it may be tied to this), but as a failure to teach well, to be what one would like to be, and this only comes to light in the experience of teaching." See Weidenfeld, "Heidegger's appropriation of Aristotle: Phronesis, conscience, and seeing through the one," 259.

¹⁰⁹ GA 19: 95/137-138.

¹¹⁰ GA 19: 102/148-149.

¹¹¹ GA 19: 102/148-149. Trevor Tchir suggests that in Heidegger's reading, "[t]he *τέλος* of *φρόνησις*, Dasein itself, is a 'for the sake of which,' not an 'in order to.'" According to him, given that for Heidegger "human beings themselves are the object of the disclosure in *φρόνησις*, they must be initially concealed to themselves, so that they need an explicit disclosure to become self-transparent." Trevor goes further to claim that it is exactly this sense of reading Aristotle's *φρόνησις* by Heidegger that "leads to his development, in *Being and Time*, of a notion of authentic Dasein, called by conscience out from the everydayness of the 'They' that clouds its self-understanding of existential possibilities." See, Trevor Tchir, *Hannah Arendt's Theory of Political Action Daimonic Disclosure of the 'Who'* (Ontario: Canada: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 107.

¹¹² GA 19: 109/158-159.

¹¹³ SZ: 313/269.

¹¹⁴ SZ: 314/269.

conscience brings about disclosure and that which conscience discloses is our “ownmost potentiality-for-Being [*eigenstes Seinkönnen*].”¹¹⁵

As Pedersen points out, Heidegger understands the term ‘own’ (*eigen*) or ‘ownmost’ (*eigenste*) in two significant senses.¹¹⁶ On one hand, ‘*eigen*’ can imply or mean something ‘proper’ in the sense of appropriate. That is why in his description of Dasein, Heidegger suggests that the proper way to be Dasein is to exist authentically and this “authentic [*eigentliches*] potentiality-for-Being is attested by the [voice of] conscience.”¹¹⁷ On the other hand, in his understanding of conscience as the ‘ownmost potentiality for being,” Heidegger also claims that conscience summons or calls us back to understand ourselves not according to the dictates of our dominant everydayness but for us to own ourselves in the manner that is quite appropriate to our own proper mode of Being:

In the call of conscience, what is it that is talked about, in other words, to what is the appeal made? Manifestly Dasein itself. This answer is as incontestable as it is indefinite. If the call has so vague a target, then it might at most remain an occasion for Dasein to pay attention to itself. But it is essential to Dasein that along with the disclosedness of its world it has been disclosed to itself, so that it always understands itself. The call reaches Dasein in this understanding of itself which it always has, and which is concerned in an everyday, average manner.¹¹⁸

Rather than understanding *φρόνησις* as conscience in light of modern subjectivity, according to which self-presencing is privileged, Heidegger’s take on *φρόνησις* is deeply factual in nature, showcasing Dasein as a radically finite being who comes out of concealment by defying the voice of its everydayness and owning up to itself by capturing the manifold determinations of its existence. William McNeill makes this point well:

‘[C]onscience’ here does not belong to an already existing subject; it does not refer to the activity of an individual who ‘has’ ‘conscience,’ but rather to the full unfolding as the coming into full (finite, concrete) presence of the finite action itself. It is the

¹¹⁵ SZ: 318/273, 322/277, 324/279.

¹¹⁶ Christian Hans Pedersen, “The Concept of Action and Responsibility in Heidegger’s Early Thought” (University of Southern Florida, 2009), 157.

¹¹⁷ SZ: 277/234.

¹¹⁸ SZ: 317/272.

event of presencing itself that cannot be forgotten, for insofar as we are, we always already 'stand in' this very event.¹¹⁹

According to McNeill, what is crucial in Heidegger's connection of *φρόνησις* with conscience is that *φρόνησις* constitutes the "truth which is related to Dasein itself."¹²⁰ Similarly, for Smith, *φρόνησις* is "a mode of comportment in and toward the world, a way of orienting oneself and thus of caring-seeing-knowing."¹²¹ *Φρόνησις* as conscience is an instant individuation which furnishes us with the motivation for actions in the face of the possibilities of factual life. Understood as the "truth of Dasein," the truth unveiled by *φρόνησις* is the for-the-sake-of-which that orients one to view oneself as an issue for oneself. It repeatedly summons the individual. The voice is manifested not in the activity of the individual, but in the mode of finite individuation where the truth of the Being of Dasein unfolds in its originary character.

Heidegger insists that in its core formulation conscience is "revealed as a call [*Ruf*], and this calling appears as a mode of discourse."¹²² When conscience calls, it summons us towards the mode through which we can make sense of the possibilities of factual life. It is in its readiness to pay heed to the summoning of the voice of conscience which happens through the disposition of wanting-to-have-a-conscience (*Gewissen-haben-wollen*) and of resoluteness, that Dasein is able to accomplish the existential task of its authentic realisation. When conscience calls, it discloses and discourses what Weidenfeld describes as "our ability to articulate the structure of our world, and expresses how its significance hangs together meaningfully, though this need not be expressed explicitly."¹²³ In line with Aristotle, Heidegger claims that *φρόνησις*, seen as the practical knowledge which characterises the apparent circle of *πρᾶξις*, can only be actualised in living well. And living well is Dasein's ability to always heed the call of conscience which provokes the deeper structure of Dasein which is its potentiality-to-be.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ William McNeill, *The Glance of the Eye: Heidegger, Aristotle and the Ends of Theory* (Albany: State University of New York press, 1999), 116.

¹²⁰ SZ: 270/228.

¹²¹ Smith, "Intensifying Phronesis : Heidegger, Aristotle, and Rhetorical Culture," 88.

¹²² SZ: 314/270.

¹²³ Weidenfeld, "Heidegger's appropriation of Aristotle: Phronesis, conscience, and seeing through the one," 259.

¹²⁴ SZ: 318/273.

Since conscience is the centre point that properly manifests Dasein's potentiality for Being, or rather the originary practical determination of Dasein, one can then argue that for Heidegger, conscience is integral to the ontological formulation of *φρόνησις*. As Volpi aptly puts it, "[t]he passages from the *Nicomachean Ethics* which arouses the Heideggerian exclamation to the effect that *φρόνησις* is *Gewissen* furnishes ... both the occasion and the motive for an ontologizing operation."¹²⁵ As per Aristotle's *φρόνησις*, conscience is the truth which reveals the apparent sphere where *πρᾶξις* can be realised as living well. *Φρόνησις* as conscience is fundamentally and inseparably connected to the facticity of Dasein and (to look ahead somewhat to the following section), Dasein's "ownmost potentiality of Being-its-Self."¹²⁶

Of course, qua factual, *φρόνησις* as conscience is to be sharply distinguished from any notion of free-floating volition. Conscience, as Weidenfeld neatly puts it, is for Heidegger "only a matter of taking over what our background has opened up."¹²⁷ Conscience informs the capacity for openness; it is "the resoluteness in which Dasein comes back to itself, in terms of the heritage that resoluteness, as thrown, takes over."¹²⁸ The call of conscience is "an abrupt arousal" that "reaches him who wants to be brought back."¹²⁹ As a thrown Being, Dasein always listens to the voice of its everydayness. However, in most cases, this everydayness silences its own inner promptings. Conscience summons Dasein back to itself; it is the voice that lets Dasein see what is new in every situation and then leaves it with a deep, uncanny sense of responsibility. Conscience does not exhort Dasein to perform a particular action, or to refrain from doing something in the way of deontological prescription. Rather, it is calling back to nothing more, and nothing less, than authentic resoluteness, which (as will be seen in the following chapter) is the very condition of possibility for anything like moral normativity.

¹²⁵ See Franco Volpi, "Dasein as Praxis: The Heideggerian Assimilation and the Radicalization of the Practical Philosophy of Aristotle," in *Critical Heidegger*, ed., Christopher Macann (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 56.

¹²⁶ "eigenste Selbstseinkönnen." SZ: 269–71; 313–315.

¹²⁷ Weidenfeld, "Heidegger's appropriation of Aristotle: Phronesis, conscience, and seeing through the one," 267.

¹²⁸ SZ: 387/390.

¹²⁹ SZ: 360/316.

1.4 ΦΡΟΝΗΣΙΣ AS *EIGENTLICHKEIT* (AUTHENTICITY)

If *φρόνησις* as the call of conscience reveals Dasein's proper form as a being of disclosure, then its "readiness to be called" points to Dasein's choice of self, that is, its authenticity, or in its fuller form, its authentic resoluteness. By attending to the voice which reminds Dasein of its finitude, Dasein (as a phronetic being) projects itself upon possibilities of its Being by taking over a basis for itself.¹³⁰ As Heidegger puts it, in *φρόνησις*, "states of affairs are grasped ... as they show themselves."¹³¹ For him, what Aristotle shows us is that *φρόνησις* aims to foster a "genuine resoluteness toward something venturing the action itself,"¹³² an "acting resolutely" in accord with right desire.¹³³ Heidegger links conscience to authentic resolve, as follows:

Our understanding of the appeal [of conscience] unveils itself as our wanting to have a conscience [*Gewissenhaben-wollen*]. 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."¹³⁴

Φρόνησις as conscience is a disposition which discloses the truth of Dasein as a being of action, and the mode of bringing this "disclosive appropriation" of that action is Dasein's authentic resoluteness. But, if according to Heidegger, *φρόνησις*, which is the deliberation that leads to proper action, inherently involves authentic choice, and if action inherently carries both a form of disclosure and decision,¹³⁵ then how does *φρόνησις* translated as conscience (which involves having the capacity to disclose practical situations), also operate as an authentic resoluteness where Dasein acts on the insight provided by its factual situation? Heidegger provides a clue for answering this question when he informs us that *φρόνησις* as authentic resoluteness becomes possible as an "existentiell

¹³⁰ SZ: 284/330.

¹³¹ GA 19:110/159-160.

¹³² GA 19:103/149-150.

¹³³ GA 19:104/151-152.

¹³⁴ SZ: 270/314.

¹³⁵ Roy Martinez, "An "Authentic" Problem in Heidegger's "Being And Time", " *Auslegung: a journal of philosophy* 15, no. 01 (1988): 15.

modification of the ‘they.’”¹³⁶ The significance of this clue will be fleshed out in what follows.

In his elaboration of the features of *φρόνησις* as conscience, Heidegger identifies *φρόνησις* as the highest mode of human knowledge. *Φρόνησις* is a disclosure whose proper form is the unveiling of Dasein’s authentic Being according to which, through an existentiell modification, Dasein calls its own Self back to its concrete possibilities. As Christopher Long points out, this highlights Dasein as “a self-referential and self-reflective” being. As *φρόνιμος*, Dasein’s Being is essentially decisional and this decisionality is a testament to its ontological decisiveness.¹³⁷

But how does *φρόνησις* make Dasein an essentially decisional Being? Heidegger addresses this question in his discussion of Aristotle’s *προαίρεσις* which he translates (in his summer 1924 lecture course on Aristotle) as “Being-resolved (*Entschlossenheit*).” Heidegger differentiates here between *προαίρεσις* and *δόξα*. While *δόξα* is an opinion or view in general, *προαίρεσις* is to have to resolve or decide on something. Heidegger claims that a *προαίρεσις* “is concerned with the *πρακτον* [an action to be done], that which is decisive for taking care [*Besorgen*] of something at the moment;”¹³⁸ it means “committing oneself to, and deciding for something.” *Προαιρεσις*, Heidegger maintains, “aims at *συμφέρον*, namely something which, if undertaken, will be to my advantage in taking care of some matter that I might take in hand.”¹³⁹

What emerges here is a clear link between resoluteness and discourse. Deliberation, decision and resolution are structured according to discourse, since, “[t]here is no *προαίρεσις*, no being-resolved for living things that do not speak. Speaking belongs to *προαίρεσις*.”¹⁴⁰ *Φρόνιμος* aims at proper deliberation, the deliberation of both the overall

¹³⁶ SZ: 130/168.

¹³⁷ Christopher P. Long, “The ontological reappropriation of *phronēsis*,” *Continental Philosophy Review* 35, no. 1 (2002): 44.

¹³⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2002). Translated as Martin Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* (GA 18), trans. Robert D. Metcalf and Mark B. Tanzer (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002). Hereafter all references to this work will be cited as GA 18 followed by the number as it appears in the English translation and then the corresponding page number/s in the *Gesamtausgabe* or other original German text. GA 18: 99/145-147.

¹³⁹ GA 18: 101/148-150.

¹⁴⁰ GA 18: 98/145-147.

possibilities from the Being of Dasein and the deliberation of the concrete possibilities of Dasein's situation.¹⁴¹ But deliberation is "a discursive seeking" and thus "a bringing-to-language of what is *συμφέρον*:"

In this bringing-to-language of what is *συμφέρον*, of the world as it is concretely there, the world is authentically brought into the 'there.' The 'now' and 'here' of human existence [*Sein*] becomes explicit in a particular deliberation, and through this deliberation the human being is – in modern terms – in the concrete situation, in the authentic *καιρός*. In this *πρᾶξις*, *λέγειν* as *λογιζεσθαι*, the Being of the human being has the world there, in such a way that I am in the world here and now in a particular situation.¹⁴²

Heidegger clearly holds that Dasein orients itself within *προαίρεσις* and through this deliberative process Dasein gains access to its disclosure as Being-in-the-world. This 'deliberative-bringing-to-language' with oneself, the taking counsel with oneself, frames *φρόνησις* as a circumspective self-debate.¹⁴³ *Φρόνησις* is accomplished through communication.¹⁴⁴ Deliberation is a mode of *πρᾶξις*, understood here as the "asserting of something as something ... and insofar as I assert something about something, the asserting has taken apart the being of spoken."¹⁴⁵ For Heidegger then, *πρᾶξις* is essentially an emphatic declaration that articulates the Being of Dasein. Therefore, in line with Aristotle's practical syllogism, he suggests that through *πρᾶξις* Dasein's actions are disclosed and carefully enunciated for the sake of which the action is carried out. This properness of every action of the *φρόνιμος* lies in self-debate (conscience) and resolution (decision).¹⁴⁶ In hearing the voice of conscience, Dasein comprehends itself as care (*Sorge*) and comports itself in accordance to the dictates of the call.¹⁴⁷ The call of conscience summons at every moment, and this summons involves a form of deliberation that comes to light in authentic resolution.¹⁴⁸ This call initiates the self-return of Dasein; it

¹⁴¹ GA 19: 95/137–138.

¹⁴² GA 18: 42/59–60.

¹⁴³ GA 19: 95/137–8.

¹⁴⁴ GA 19: 99/143–44.

¹⁴⁵ GA 19: 99/143–44.

¹⁴⁶ GA 19: 103/149–50.

¹⁴⁷ SZ: 266/245.

¹⁴⁸ Weidenfeld, "Heidegger's appropriation of Aristotle: Phronesis, conscience, and seeing through the one," 261.

communicates both the origin and τέλος of every action. As Frank Schalow puts it, the call “yields the avenue for disclosure through listening to the more discreet intimations of care.”¹⁴⁹

Heidegger’s use of the term *Entschlossenheit* suggests that his reading of *φρόνησις* assumes a powerful convergence of freedom and truth. When translated literally, Being-resolved means ‘revealing’ or ‘unlockedness’, thereby indicating a freeing up to speak the most primordial truth of who we are.¹⁵⁰ This Being-resolved is utterly different from the Kantian conception of freedom as the autonomous self-determination of will guided by the moral law. Rather, for Heidegger, the *φρόνιμος* is understood in its capacity as the “existentiell mode of ‘holding for the true’ on the dynamic advent of truth as concealing-revealing.”¹⁵¹ Being resolved, as Taylor Carman puts it, means for Heidegger, a “confident awareness of what one is about, which is a kind of certainty, or more precisely a non-cognitive being-certain about oneself.”¹⁵² In Being-resolved, *φρόνησις* summons Dasein to its ownmost possibility of being and “exacts of it that it should be this potentiality authentically,”¹⁵³ in the context of its thrown condition.

While critically examining Aristotle’s *φρόνησις* in his 1925 *Sophist* lectures, Heidegger first highlights the truth character of both the intellectual (*ἐπιστήμη*) and deliberative (*τέχνη*) modes.¹⁵⁴ According to him, neither is capable of assuming the good life, which he followed Aristotle in calling *εὐδαιμονία*, and which he describes as a genuine or authentic and properly developed possibility of unconcealment.¹⁵⁵ *Φρόνησις*, he argues, has the sense of authentic possibility of uncovering or unconcealment, and in this way, it completes or assumes the status of *εὐδαιμονία* in the form of self-elucidation. This is contrasted to *τέχνη* which does not.¹⁵⁶ Like *τέχνη*, *φρόνησις* entails deliberation; but unlike *τέχνη*, *φρόνησις* is

¹⁴⁹ Frank Schalow, “The Topography of Heidegger’s Concept of Conscience,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* LXIX, no. 2 (1995): 264.

¹⁵⁰ SZ: 297/273.

¹⁵¹ Schalow, “The Topography of Heidegger’s Concept of Conscience,” 265.

¹⁵² Carman, *Heidegger’s Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in Being and Time*, pp. 297-8.

¹⁵³ SZ: 354/307.

¹⁵⁴ GA 19: 39/55–56.

¹⁵⁵ GA 19: 33/46–47.

¹⁵⁶ Thanassas suggests that interpreting *φρόνησις* as a mode of unconcealment or self-elucidation modifies *φρόνησις* into a kind of theory of which human beings are the “acting subjects.” According to him, this is a somewhat “moral neutralization” of *φρόνησις* which “will be followed by a theoretical neutralisation of

Dasein with *πρᾶξις*. Rather than understanding itself as an entity whose aim is only to be exteriorly used, Dasein is a being whose aim is to decide or deliberate amongst multifarious possibilities concerning what it does with its own Being.

Heidegger's point is clear: Dasein as *φρόνιμος* is a being that uncovers its own self-reference in a practical sense. As a mode of unconcealment, *φρόνησις* plays the originary role of opening human beings to become transparent to themselves.¹⁵⁷ *Φρόνησις* gives credence or guarantees the "for which and how" of the dealings that concern human life, dealings which entail actions with the character of *πρᾶξις* rather than being merely productive in the manner of *ποίησις*. Also while disclosing the link between *φρόνησις* and deliberation, Heidegger maintains that *φρόνησις* is an inclination that brings to light the very being that performs the action, and deliberation is the particular manner of bringing about the "disclosive appropriation of that action."¹⁵⁸ The whole process of acting or functioning entails making choices and taking decisions, and these are fundamental conditions that are directly related to Heidegger's account of *Eigentlichkeit* as "forerunning resoluteness" (*vorlaufende Entschlossenheit*).¹⁵⁹ *Φρόνησις* upholds the truth which makes action transparent in itself, and through deliberation *φρόνησις* shapes the self-knowledge or the ability to understand our own actions.

However, while it is important to note the finely textured nature of Heidegger's retrieval of Aristotle in this link he makes between *φρόνησις* and deliberation, it is also crucial to highlight the aforementioned way in which Heidegger's account significantly departs from the thrust of Aristotle's text in its evacuation of any sense of concrete normativity. Aristotle describes the *φρόνιμος* as "*ποια προς το εθ ζεν ολος*:" that is, as an individual who deliberates well especially in the midst of things that provide for a good life and shared by all.¹⁶⁰ However, Heidegger modifies this to "the one who deliberates in the right way ... regarding 'what is conducive to the right mode of being of Dasein as such and as a whole.'" ¹⁶¹ Furthermore, whereas Aristotle describes *φρόνησις* as an "*ἀλήθεια* disposition

Σοφία, which effectively renders the Aristotelian insistence on the primacy and superiority of this virtue null and void." See Thanassas, "Phronesis Vs Sophia: On Heidegger's Ambivalent Aristotelianism," 50.

¹⁵⁷ GA 19: 36/51–52.

¹⁵⁸ GA 19: 99/143–144.

¹⁵⁹ SZ: 349/302.

¹⁶⁰ NE: 1140a28/1800.

¹⁶¹ GA 19: 34/47–49

relative to action and concerning the things that are good for human beings [τα ἀνθρώπινα ἀγαθὰ],”¹⁶² Heidegger interprets *φρόνησις* here as “a disposition of human Dasein such that in it I have at my disposal my own transparency.”¹⁶³ Heidegger describes the essential element of *φρόνησις* as the moment of truth of “transparency” through a genuine deliberation. Understood in this sense, *φρόνησις* signifies not adherence to pre-defined norms of action, but an instant of accurate deliberation which entails “the correct openness of resolve [*Entschlossenheit*] as the transparency of the action.”¹⁶⁴ To the extent that *φρόνησις* possesses no specific τέλος of action, its genuineness is entirely a function of deliberative action as such: self-transparency and resolution alone.¹⁶⁵ The τέλος of any action is the action itself which makes Dasein a being of authentic resolution.

If Aristotle’s account of *φρόνησις* is shot through with a normative sense, Heidegger’s retrieval stops well short of the same. In his hands, *φρόνησις* is the mode of uncovering that provides the *ground* of ethics in the authentic resoluteness of Dasein. But as to *how* Dasein ‘ought’ to act to bring about eudaimonic flourishing, is another question entirely.

1.5 ΦΡΟΝΗΣΙΣ AS MITSEIN (BEING-WITH-OTHERS)

Unlike the two previous categories, Heidegger does not explicitly link *φρόνησις* to *Mitsein*. However, there is clearly a fundamental connection between the two, a connection that is implicit in early Heidegger’s thought and is consistent with his otherwise enacted Aristotle retrieval. As such, like his retrieval of *φρόνησις* as conscience and authentic resoluteness, I propose that Heidegger’s concept of *Mitsein* provides another essential angle on the way his early work provides a ground for ethics.

Mitsein stands as one of the most striking but enigmatic of the *existentialia*, one that calls for much fuller development and incorporation into the other segments of this complex work. The retrieval of *φρόνησις* as conscience and authentic resoluteness, does not in itself

¹⁶² NE: 1140b5/1800.

¹⁶³ GA 19: 37/52-53.

¹⁶⁴ GA 19: 150/216–218.

¹⁶⁵ GA 19: 150/216-218.

account for how individual Dasein can exist authentically with others. However, the brief sketch of *Mitsein* in *Being and Time* addresses this gap, for it is here that Heidegger insists that we can only be alone or with others insofar as “Dasein in itself is *essentially* Being-with.”¹⁶⁶ From Heidegger’s perspective, the fact that Dasein hears the call of conscience and cares for its own existence does not mean that it should be understood as belonging essentially to itself alone in ontological isolation from all others. To the contrary, despite his use of ‘mineness’ or individuation as the trademark of Dasein’s authentic existence (*Eigent-lichkeit; Jemeinigkeit*), Heidegger maintains that Dasein has its way of Being always in association with “Daseins with us [*die Mitdaseienden*].” As Mariana Ortega rightly puts it, for Heidegger, “to be in the authentic situation after we understand the call of conscience, is to be at a time in ... situations that *include others*.”¹⁶⁷

Of course, *Mitdasein* is not to be understood in terms of side by side external “*vorhanden*” relations between human beings. Rather, Dasein is essentially ‘with’ because the presence of the other constitutes the Being of Dasein, and this presence involves an attunement to the particularity of others. Heidegger writes:

Being-with is such that the disclosedness of the Dasein-with of Others belongs to it; this means that because Dasein’s Being is Being-with, its understanding of Being already implies the understanding of Others. This understanding, like any understanding, is not an acquaintance derived from knowledge about them, but a primordially existential kind of Being, which, more than anything else, makes such knowledge and acquaintance possible.¹⁶⁸

From the above description, it is clear that – as Heidegger puts it in his summer 1927 lecture course on phenomenology – “Dasein is determined *from the very outset* by being-with-others.”¹⁶⁹ This insistence amounts to an extraordinarily firm rebalancing of the emphasis

¹⁶⁶ SZ: 156–7/120–121. My emphasis.

¹⁶⁷ Mariana Ortega, “When conscience calls, will Dasein answer? Heideggerian authenticity and the possibility of ethical life,” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 13, no. 1 (2005): 24.

¹⁶⁸ SZ: 124/161.

¹⁶⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (GA 24), (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1975), 419–421. Translated as Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 296. GA 24: 296/419–421. My emphasis. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited as GA 24 and the number as it cited in the English translation, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German text.

(as discussed above, and in the following chapters) on *Jemeinigkeit* and individuation. If Dasein is “from the very outset” a being that is in relationship with others, then far from being a matter that might be considered down the track once the basic ontology of Dasein has first been established, *ῥῑθος* must rather be understood as integral to the very ontological constitution of Dasein in the first place. Dasein’s *Eigentlichkeit* and *Jemeinigkeit* need to be understood in the context of *Mitdasein*, not as contradictory assertions sitting side by side, but as equiprimordial existentialia, with each qualifying the others. Relations with others go ‘all the way down,’ so to speak. Regardless of the attitude any particular individual might have ontically toward others, Dasein is *ontologically* Being-with. Heidegger is perfectly clear on this point:

Even if the particular factual Dasein does not turn to Others, and supposes that it has no need of them or manages to get along without them, it *is* in the way of Being-with.¹⁷⁰

As *φρόνιμος*, then, Dasein’s disclosiveness does not project it as a ‘monarch’ focused simply on its own self-interest. Rather, what is implied is a fundamental openness to the interests of others. As Heidegger puts it, the for-the-sake-of-itself of Dasein “does not assert ontically that the factual purpose of the factual Dasein is to care exclusively and primarily for itself and to use others as instruments [*Werkzeug*] toward this end.”¹⁷¹ In fact, Dasein, is “the ontological presupposition for the selflessness in which every Dasein comports itself toward the other in the existent I–thou relationship.”¹⁷² In this sense, the ethics of inter-personal relationships, and the condition of possibility for morally rich relationships, is this very ontological constitution of Dasein as Being-with; or as Heidegger

¹⁷⁰ SZ: 123/160.

¹⁷¹ GA 24: 296/ 419–421.

¹⁷² GA 24: 298/422. Here, Heidegger seems to relate *Mitsein* with Martin Buber’s dialogical I–thou–relationship. There is here an apparent nod to Buber’s strong emphasis on inter-subjectivity. However, Heidegger is just as keen to distance himself from some of the implications of such an approach. For example, he expressly opposes the symmetrical I–Thou encounter proposed by Buber on the grounds that “it would be erroneous to assume that the ‘I–Thou’ relation as such primarily constitutes the possible discovery of the world.” As opposed to a truly dialogical I–thou–relationship, Dasein is first concerned about its own existence and it is on this basis that it can be with another self as a ‘thou’ in the world. Also, see SZ: 170/214. The Heidegger–Buber relationship will be discussed more fully below in chapter 4.

puts it in *Being and Time*: “[O]nly on the basis of Being-with does 'empathy' become possible.”¹⁷³

Nonetheless, the brevity of Heidegger’s account of *Mitsein* means that many questions are left unanswered. In what way, for example, does Dasein express itself as a Being-with? How specifically does *Eigentlichkeit* and *Jemeinigkeit* relate to Dasein qua Being-with-Others? My proposal is that these questions might perhaps be best understood in the context of the way Heidegger implicitly appropriates Aristotelian *φρόνησις* in its political dimension. Accordingly, Heidegger takes over Aristotle’s understanding of human beings as “*σύνεσις*,” that is, as beings that are naturally disposed to live together and cooperate through hearing and speaking,¹⁷⁴ and who dwell together in close ontological proximity in the *πολις*.¹⁷⁵

To properly elaborate on the implicit connection Heidegger makes between *φρόνησις* and *Mitsein*, one needs to reiterate what was mentioned earlier concerning Aristotle’s account of *φρόνησις* as that which directs action, and in particular, political action, which entails cultivating individual friendships and learning how to care and to be cared for by others. Heidegger’s notion of Dasein’s acting on the basis of real possibilities should be read in this Aristotelian context. In his view, as *φρόνιμος*, Dasein’s existence is premised on its mineness, that is, those particular actions that help it to project its own authentic possibilities. However, far from isolating individual Dasein, this spurs it towards developing a political life; that is, forming relationships with other people. To explore the significance of Dasein’s political life, Heidegger retrieves the Aristotelian sense of the human being as a being with language.¹⁷⁶ Thus, he insists that “we need to understand the basic concepts of Aristotle in concrete Dasein and in its basic possibilities of speaking with its world, within which Dasein is.”¹⁷⁷ Hearing and speaking are fundamental to ontology because “[i]n hearing I am in communication with other human beings insofar as being a human being means speaking.”¹⁷⁸ Further, “whether or not seeing in the context of *θεωρεῖν* reveals the

¹⁷³ SZ: 125/162.

¹⁷⁴ See Aristotle, “Politica,” in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, pp. 1127-28. Hereafter, references to this work will appear as *Politica*, the number in the original Greek text and followed by the number in the text as translated by McKeon. For example, *Politica*: 1252b29–30/1127-1128

¹⁷⁵ GA 18: 43/60-62.

¹⁷⁶ GA 18: 43/60-62; NE: 1098a3–4/1735.

¹⁷⁷ GA 18: 31/42-44. Emphasis mine.

¹⁷⁸ GA 18: 32/44-45.

world in the authentic sense, it is actually hearing, because it is the perceiving of speaking, it is the possibility of Being-with-others.”¹⁷⁹

This is a key moment in understanding the deeply Aristotelian context of Heidegger’s account of *Mitsein*, which is rooted in Aristotle’s insistence on human beings as fundamentally linguistic creatures. In Aristotle’s view, hearing and speaking are essential to the manner in which human beings live together in the world. Heidegger affirms Aristotle’s view that every human being is by nature a *πολις*-oriented animal (*πολιτικον ζoon*).¹⁸⁰ Aristotle asserts the significance of the city when he highlights that the *πολις* was the most fundamental mode of the community, and that as such it constitutes an indivisible aspect of human existence. For him, to the extent that every human being lives in the city, the *πολις* is the *τελος* of human association, because it constitutes the context in which the individual can live the good life. In this way, Aristotle links the *πολις* with speech and ethics, with all three being constitutive of human beings:

Now, that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animal is evident. Nature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal whom she has endowed with the gift of speech. And whereas mere voice is an indication of pleasure or pain, and is therefore found in other animals ... the power of speech is intended to set forth the expedient and inexpedient, and therefore likewise the just and unjust. And it is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings, who have this sense makes a family and a *πόλις*.¹⁸¹

According to Aristotle, while insects like bees *appear* to be constituted by *πολις* and partnership, human beings are the only genuinely political animals. Human beings are the only beings that can have their world in a genuine way with others. This is because of speech: human beings are determined by a *λεγειν* concerned with what is good and beneficial for human *πρᾶξις*. This *πρᾶξις* does not relegate the individual within its own private space; rather, it is the natural process that provides the space within which human

¹⁷⁹ GA 18: 72/104-105. Emphasis mine

¹⁸⁰ *Politica*: 1253a1/1129.

¹⁸¹ *Politica*: 1253a10-15/1129.

beings live and by which they share a common world together. For Aristotle, the *πρᾶξις* brings human beings into a direct and immediate engagement with one another. For Heidegger, Dasein similarly lives in and out of a communal *λογος* and its being is at its core concerned with action. While contemplation relates to a solitary activity, *πρᾶξις* is only possible in a community. Dasein in its very being is thus political. It is the *ζῶον λόγον εἶχον* (rational animal, “life that has speech”) and thus the *ζῶον πολιτικόν* (political animal).

Having said that, Heidegger goes far beyond Aristotle in his understanding of the intrinsic nature of human Being-with-others. His is a far more radical view that makes the *πολις* part of the constitution of Dasein’s singularity. Aristotle argues that through *συνεσις* and *πολις*, the *φρόνιμος* exemplifies that human beings are concerned with other beings about which they can raise questions and deliberate together.¹⁸² But for Heidegger, the phenomenological assertion that “Dasein is essentially *Mitsein*” does not imply that Dasein is dialogical or Being-with-others from the point of view of human beings living together in a *vorhanden* sense according to which they see each other and listen as others speak. Being-with needs rather to be understood in a more radical sense in its specifically ontological significance. *Mitsein* names Dasein in its *own kind* of being. It does not occur on the basis of any notion of “internal/external” reference. Heidegger is clear on this point: “*Mitsein* is in every case a determination of one’s own Dasein [*je eigenen Dasein*].”¹⁸³

Heidegger takes Aristotle’s claim that the genuine self-sufficiency and completeness of a human being can only be achieved through the *πολις*, as a desire to

show that the *πολις*, a characteristic way of being-together, is not brought to humans by chance, but rather that the *πολις* is the being-possibility *φύσει*, that itself lies enclosed and traced out in advance in the human being’s genuine being.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Aristotle says “[f]or understanding is neither about things that are always and are unchangeable, nor about any and every one of the things that come into being, but about things which may become subjects of questioning and deliberation.” See NE: 1143a6/1805.

¹⁸³ SZ: 120/156.

¹⁸⁴ GA 18: 33/48-50.

Thus, to think of Being is to assume “our definite being-with-another.”¹⁸⁵ *Mitsein* is not an essential “add on” to an already constituted Dasein. It is essential to Dasein because it is at its very ontological core. As Heidegger puts it in *Being and Time*:

In Being-with and towards Others, there is thus a relationship of Being [*Seinsverhältnis*] from Dasein to Dasein. But it might be said that this relationship is already constitutive for one’s own Dasein, which, in its own right, has an understanding of Being, and which thus relates itself towards Dasein.¹⁸⁶

Heidegger goes as far as to remark that Dasein “is essentially for the sake of Others”, adding that this “must be understood as an existential statement as to its essence.”¹⁸⁷ As will be explored later in chapter four, Being-with is essential to the way Dasein historicizes itself; not as an isolated being but as a being who is ontologically constituted to be both self-responsible and to show responsibility for others.

One contemporary scholar who has highlighted the radical nature of Heidegger’s insight into Dasein as *Mitsein* is Jean Luc Nancy. Nancy reads Heidegger’s conception of Dasein’s Being-with as implying that Dasein’s Being is “singularly plural and plurally singular.”¹⁸⁸ For him, the ‘with’ of Dasein is co-constitutive of Dasein, not as an insertion to the prior Being of Dasein, but as co-constitutive of it; the ‘with’ constitutes the essence of Dasein’s Being, “a constitution that undoes or dislocates every single, substantial essence of Being itself.”¹⁸⁹ Thus, on one hand, the singularity of Dasein hinges on the ground that the Dasein self is a unique being who individuates itself by revealing its difference from other Beings. But on the other hand, this singularity is only possible on the basis of its prior constitution as Dasein qua *Mitsein*. As Sarah Sorial puts it, the singularity of Dasein is “ecstatic, it is exposed, open and vulnerable to the Other, always affected, touched and invaded by the Other.”¹⁹⁰ I return to Nancy’s radical account of *Mitsein* in chapter four, below.

¹⁸⁵ GA 18: 33/45-47.

¹⁸⁶ SZ: 124/162.

¹⁸⁷ SZ: 123/160.

¹⁸⁸ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 28.

¹⁸⁹ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 28.

¹⁹⁰ Sorial, “Heidegger, Jean-Luc Nancy, and the Question of Dasein’s Embodiment: An Ethics of Touch and Spacing,” 219.

Having said all this, one might nonetheless agree that such insights into the constitutive and elemental importance of Being-with for understanding Dasein are not given the prominence that they deserve by Heidegger, and that more individualistic and insular strands tend to dominate in his account. As seen earlier, Arendt criticized Heidegger for the contempt with which he held public life, and claimed that a self taken in utter isolation from human relationships cannot really be at all.¹⁹¹ Levinas too attacked Heidegger on the same grounds that his authentic or 'own-most' (*eigent-lich*) individual is incapable of a genuine I–Thou relationship because the “I–myself” is ultimately in monologue with itself to the exclusion of others.¹⁹²

There are many passages throughout *Sein und Zeit* that justify such a view if taken in isolation. These include especially those passages where Heidegger writes of Dasein's authentic Being-towards-death in which it is “released from the illusions of the ‘they’,” and which is factual, certain of itself, and anxious.”¹⁹³ However, while *Mitsein* is marginalised in such passages, they need to be read together with other moments of Heidegger's account. True, Heidegger does emphasize ways in which authenticity is undermined by the influence of idle talk, but that is to be distinguished from the more essential Being-with-others that for Heidegger constitutes Dasein's very Being. Turning away from the tranquilising effect of *das Man* is not the same thing as becoming a *solitary Cogito*. Heidegger puts it this way:

As the non-relational possibility, death individualises – but only in such a manner that, as the possibility which is not to be out-stripped, it makes Dasein, as Being-with, have some understanding of the potentiality-for-Being of Others.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 4.

¹⁹² This critique is explored in chapter 4, below.

¹⁹³ SZ: 266/311.

¹⁹⁴ SZ: 264/309.

1.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have provided a preliminary sketch of how Heidegger's accounts of *Gewissen*, *Eigentlichkeit* and *Mitsein* are best understood through close attention to his retrieval of Aristotelian *φρόνησις*. However, I have also argued that in taking up Aristotle's *φρόνησις*, Heidegger finds it worthwhile to distance himself from Aristotle by 'ontologising' *φρόνησις* in order to implicitly establish the major structures for the development of the existential analytic. Thus, with Heidegger, *φρόνησις* must be interpreted not as a category in normative ethics, but as a central insight into the ontological constitution of *Dasein*. Further, it opens up to what Christopher Long calls "the possibility of developing an ontology of finite contingency [which is] guided by and must remain responsible to the concrete individual with which it is engaged ... [and] ... one that recognises itself as inherently ethical."¹⁹⁵ If *φρόνησις* is recognisable as intrinsically ethical in just this sense, then this orients the whole existential analytic in a specifically ethical direction.

In the chapters that follow, I develop the introductory account sketched in this chapter concerning the way Heidegger's understanding of Aristotelian *φρόνησις* unifies his notions of *Gewissen*, *Eigentlichkeit* and *Mitsein*. My argument is that far from closing down the possibility of a theory of ethical obligation, Heidegger's ontologisation of the Aristotelian *φρόνησις* lays down, in Heidegger's own words, "the existential conditions for the possibility of ... morality in general."¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Long, "The ontological reappropriation of *phronēsis*," pp. 54-55.

¹⁹⁶ SZ: 286/332.

Chapter 2

GEWISSEN

In the last chapter, I showed how the ground of ethics in Heidegger can be understood as premised on the structure and fundamental concepts of Aristotelian *φρόνησις*, and that Heidegger's accounts of *Gewissen*, *Eigentlichkeit* and *Mitsein* can be interpreted profitably through close attention to his retrieval of Aristotle's *φρόνησις*.

The aim of this chapter is to build on this in more detail by illustrating the way in which Heidegger's phronetic discourse on conscience contributes to the critical structures for the development of an ontological ground of ethics. By exploring Heidegger's distinctive characterisation of the call of conscience, I intend to show how the attestation of Dasein's possible authenticity "sets forth" what Heidegger calls "the ontological foundations of ... the ordinary way of interpreting conscience."¹ In a similar way to the sense that Rebecca Kukla has argued for the notion of "transcendental conscience"² using Heidegger's account (see below), I will claim that, as an ontological ground, the call of conscience provides us with a precondition for the understanding of ethics. As we will see, conscience plays this role for Heidegger not by suggesting concrete norms for action, but by calling Dasein to shed its identity as the they-self and undergoing an "existentiell modification of the 'they'" that allows for the possibility of "authentic Being-one's-self."³

Support for my argument that Heidegger's phronetic discourse on conscience provides us with an ontological ground of ethics will be gleaned from Heidegger's passing engagements with conscience in three very early works (his 1919 *War Emergency Semester lectures* titled *The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview*; *Critical Comments on Jaspers' Psychology of Worldviews* (1920); and his 1920 lecture on *The Concept of Time for the Marburg Theological Faculty*), as well as some of the key moments in Heidegger's account of conscience in *Being and Time*.

In the first section of this chapter, I analyse Rebecca Kukla's insightful discussion of the notion of 'transcendental conscience' as an exemplar for my broader argument, bringing it

¹ SZ: 269/314.

² Rebecca Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," *Continental Philosophy Review* 35, no. 1 (2002): pp. 1-34.

³ SZ: 267/312.

into conversation also with a similar proposal by Charles Scott. I use such approaches as a springboard into the main discussions of the chapter. The reading that is presented here in this first section in rather condensed terms, is then fleshed out in detail in the textual analyses of sections two and three.

In the second section, I examine the early works of Heidegger (as noted above) in order to show how Heidegger presents conscience as the potential 'source' of philosophy's renewed concern for the 'how' of existence, and to identify the key concepts in his interpretation of conscience that 'indicatively' reveal how conscience plays the role of an ontological ground of ethics. By revealing those clues and the prevalent themes that are related to his interpretation of conscience in his early work, we will be able to discern how Heidegger's dynamic description of conscience in his early work offers us a different approach to the traditional understanding of the concept as is expressed in the philosophical propositions of his neo-Kantian contemporaries. I suggest that Heidegger's early account of conscience plays a transcendental role of grounding ethics as phronetic disclosure.

In the third section, I focus on Heidegger's account of conscience in *Being and Time*, especially his account of conscience as the call to primordial Being-Guilty (*Schuldigsein*) and explore the profound ethical implications of this analysis. I argue that although primordial guilt (*Schuld*) does not justify ethical obligation, it does provide a ground of ethics in the sense that it serves as a precondition for the possibility of Dasein's 'indebtedness' to care for its own being. I will also explore how the call to primordial Being-Guilty makes freedom the groundless ground by generally calling Dasein to project its own authentic possibilities. In the final section of the chapter, I will briefly address the likely misunderstanding that conscience as a ground of ethics is an annihilation of the Other. I argue that in Heidegger's view, inasmuch as Dasein's authentic care for its own Being means wanting to have a conscience, Dasein does not only want the Other to have a conscience, it also wants the Other to be receptive to its ownmost possibilities as well.

2.1 ON CONSCIENCE AS A TRANSCENDENTAL GROUND FOR ETHICS

Rebecca Kukla's discerning 2002 discussion of the notion of 'transcendental conscience' in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, provides a fine insight into the way in which Heidegger's notion of conscience can be read simultaneously as an account of the ontological ground of ethics. It is for this reason that a close reading of her discussion follows as a way of establishing the broad outline that will be filled out in the remainder of this chapter.

Kukla's reading of Heidegger's account is transcendental in a squarely Kantian, or Neo-Kantian sense.⁴ Critics of Heidegger, Kukla contends, have often assumed that such a reading either abstracts the ethical from the world, or (in Heidegger's words,) "detach[es] Dasein from its world, isolating it so that it becomes a free-floating 'I.'"⁵ In Kukla's view, this is a problematic understanding of Heidegger's account of conscience. Thus, far from annihilating objective moral norms, Kukla insists that the call of conscience in Heidegger is "such that hearing its call constitutes subjects as responsive and responsible negotiators of normative claims."⁶ Kukla is clear what she thinks such an account of "transcendental conscience" does and does not do. Heidegger, according to Kukla, is "arguing from the existence of normative responsiveness to the conditions of its possibility, not proving the possibility of such a responsiveness from a starting point that makes no appeal to it."⁷ For Kukla, the role of this transcendental conscience:

is not – or not merely – to normatively bind the subject, but such a foundational call and its proper reception serve as conditions of possibility, invoked (in those theories in which they appear) in order to explain how it is that we can hear and be bound by particular calls of ordinary conscience.⁸

Kukla reminds the reader that the factical structures which individualise Dasein in *Being and Time* are not immanent properties, but *existentials*. The aim of this ontological structure is to restore a sense of responsibility of existence, so that Dasein can recover a more profound sense of what it means to be. Accordingly, Dasein's ontological structure is

⁴ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," pp. 1-2.

⁵ SZ: 298/344.

⁶ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 1.

⁷ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 4.

⁸ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 1.

the condition of possibility of all ontic ways of existing. Kukla's Heidegger thus stands the western metaphysical tradition of ethics on its head. Instead of appealing to universal values, Dasein always already "inhabits a normative space in the sense of negotiating the world through concerned dealings, rather than mere causal interactions, and recognizing the binding force of the claims of norms."⁹ By meaningfully engaging normative structures rather than living according to their dictates, Dasein adopts a normative responsiveness which is "a condition for possibility of Dasein's individuated existence."¹⁰

From the outset, Dasein is engrossed in the standards, values and concerns of the 'theyself.' Though Dasein is always absorbed and bound by the norms of the 'they,' the normativity of the 'they' "can only make a genuine claim on us in the context of our ability to step out of our lostness in the everyday and commit to norms by taking responsibility for their legitimacy, rather than taking them as simply found."¹¹ Kukla points out that in Heidegger's understanding, our actions are considered authentic only when our everydayness is disrupted and we are forced to reflect and act from this distanced position thrust out of the everyday, which is a constitutive condition of genuine normative responsiveness. Authentic Dasein, in Kukla's interpretation, is the transcendental condition for the possibility of the normativity of its everydayness, as Heidegger's discourse on conscience in *Being and Time* seeks to clarify.¹²

In Kukla's view, Heidegger's denial of any external locus of normative obligation is very strong. Accordingly, conscience, in its ordinary everyday understanding, is corrupted by codified moralities that decide ahead of time how the individual should act. Because "there is no particular content that could be assigned to this little voice that would be sufficient to initiate our normative responsiveness by its sheer power,"¹³ the call of conscience frees us from the monopolising power of the identities that define us and requires us "to recognize ourselves as the kinds of beings upon whom demands can be made."¹⁴ When the call helps us to recognize our situation as structured by norms, our relationship to it

⁹ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 3.

¹⁰ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," pp. 4-5.

¹¹ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 4.

¹² Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 4.

¹³ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 6.

¹⁴ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 6.

changes. So, instead of disclosing the power and binding force of norms, conscience reveals that norms bind us only in virtue of our recognition of their normative authority.

The implication of this is that no one is able to recognize or acknowledge any normative claim upon him/her, without having already heeded the call of conscience. It is helpful to quote Kukla at length on this point:

Heidegger's 'call of conscience' 'attests' to the possibility of our acting authentically and thereby demands of us that we so act. Our recognition of the claim that this demand makes upon us, or our hearing of the call of conscience, constitutes our commitment to authentic action. The call of conscience enables Dasein to be more than a mere manifestation of the They ... We must say that the call of conscience is a necessary condition of Dasein's existence – this call discloses Dasein, by uncovering the implicit normative structure of Dasein's fallen dealings, but in doing so it also constitutes Dasein in its individuated being.¹⁵

What Kukla has shown so far is that the interruption of Dasein's 'theyself' by the call of conscience is the constitutive movement of Dasein that puts it in touch with itself. This constitutive movement, as Bernhard Radloff suggests, is the having-to-be that alerts Dasein that it always is, yet must live up to its Being in its "movement (*κίνησις*) ... into its own proper limit and form."¹⁶ Along similar lines, Irene McMullin notes that its the "rising to the occasion of existence is demanded by Dasein, but meeting this norm occurs only by Dasein taking responsibility for the constraints that are, qua *existentials*, always already operative."¹⁷ Heidegger sees Dasein as a mediating agent who ordinarily chooses based on something other than itself. When Dasein makes a choice, it does so as a being that has already been constituted in history and customs. This normative structure of the everyday world from which Dasein makes its choice is not readily transparent to Dasein because it possesses a vague and pervasive image of normalcy that Heidegger calls '*das Man*.' Thus, in its constitutive role as an ontological ground, the call of conscience views norms not as finished determinate properties. Rather, as Kukla puts it, "the call must take some special

¹⁵ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 7.

¹⁶ Bernhard Radloff, *Heidegger and the Question of National Socialism: Disclosure and Gestalt* (Toronto Buffalo London: University of Toronto, 2007), 100.

¹⁷ Irene McMullin, *Time and the Shared World: Heidegger on Social Relations* (United States Of America: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 216.

form that allows it to perform as a constitutive demand, somehow enabling us to recognize ourselves as the kinds of beings upon whom demands can be made.”¹⁸ Kukla writes:

My existential determinations are not ‘finished’ properties that I possess, but temporally extended commitments that I am in the midst of living up to. For instance, if I am a professor, then this means that I am in the midst of trying to be a professor, and this is a norm-governed, ongoing project with respect to which my success always continues to be at issue. The demand that I ‘be myself’ is thus the demand that I strive to responsibly determine my necessarily incomplete character, and I must in some sense always be making this demand of myself, in order for me to *be* any way at all, no matter how fallen I am. However, my *recognition* of this demand will necessarily bring an end to the immediacy of my immersion in my projects, and the resulting distance will require me to put into question the legitimacy of my commitment to these projects.¹⁹

Charles Scott’s reading of conscience as an ontological ground for ethics complements Kukla’s:

The voice of Dasein’s possibility ‘calls’ in the midst of our involvements. Heidegger uses the experience of conscience, not its contents, as his phenomenal field ... [T]he call itself discloses not the power of an ethos but the difference of human being, in its being, from its traditional ways of life ... The voice of conscience as the disclosure of Dasein’s being in the midst of its everyday values and standards functions to make those values and standards uncertain and to ‘call’ Dasein to its difference from who it is in its efforts to be someone recognizable in its culture. [Through the call of conscience, our everyday norms] function as the general, anonymous agency by which we desire, decide, and constitute ourselves within a range of options that define proper identity in our broad culture and specific society.²⁰

For both Kukla and Scott, “Heidegger is not asking which norms bind or ought to bind Dasein, nor even whether there are such norms.”²¹ Rather, by heeding the call of

¹⁸ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 7.

¹⁹ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 8.

²⁰ Scott, *The Question of Ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, pp. 106-7.

²¹ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 8.

conscience, Dasein's "thought is disciplined by efforts to maintain questionableness by learning how to ask questions in given settings, and by finding its own heritage and its problems."²² Transcendental conscience therefore indicates an obtrusion in our everyday normative structures, one that disempowers our everyday values, placing them in question. As Scott puts it, by hearing the call of conscience,

[Dasein] learns to name things anew, to become alert to exclusions and to forgotten aspects in a people's history, to overhear what is usually drowned out by the predominant values, to rethink what is ordinarily taken for granted, and to find out how to hold itself in question.²³

If there is therefore no 'definitive' way of life for Dasein, this is because it is not a determinate being with an immediate nature to be realised. Rather, its ontological structure, as enabled by the call of conscience, provides it with the basis for raising the question of being, a constitutive demand that somehow frees Dasein to recognize itself as the kind of being upon whom demands can be made. Consequently, as Kukla puts it, "asking for empirical proof of the legitimacy of this voice of [transcendental] conscience is confused, because its claims are ontologically prior to any practical claims with empirical ramifications."²⁴ Of course, this point does not mean that anything can be justified. Rather, the validity of transcendental conscience depends "upon its ability to genuinely disclose normative authority and to enable Dasein to respond to its normative force."²⁵ Again, the legitimacy of Heideggerian conscience is not measured by the possibilities it discloses to Dasein, because the question, as Charles Scott puts it, is "whether [by heeding the call of conscience], Dasein can find options to ground normativity as the basis on which it comes to be who it should be."²⁶ Kukla warns that when Heidegger tells us that the source of the call of conscience is Dasein itself, who demands of itself that it be itself, this should not be interpreted "as an ontic demand that Dasein replace the particular determinations it now has with others that better reflect some 'true' or 'inner' character."²⁷ The call is not an ontic demand of any kind, which entails that the demand it makes on Dasein cannot be

²² Scott, *The Question of Ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, 7.

²³ Scott, *The Question of Ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, 4.

²⁴ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 6.

²⁵ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 6.

²⁶ Scott, *The Question of ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, 104.

²⁷ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 7.

interpreted in terms of relinquishing or even adding to Dasein's existential determinations. On the contrary, the call makes "a formal, ontological demand that Dasein live up to the commitments that existentially determine its individuated being."²⁸

As the condition of possibility for the interruption of everyday values and norms, conscience is therefore closely linked to anxiety. The call uncannily interrupts the familiar and usual basis of action, unveiling "the ontological structure of caring Dasein".²⁹ The experience of uncanniness happens when our comfortable dealings with the normatively structured everyday world are disrupted. Uncanniness reveals to Dasein the way in which its situation is made up of normative projects, and it forces it to thematize its relationship to these projects. Uncanniness creates a distance between Dasein and its situation that makes it impossible for it to unreflectively follow the norms governing the situation. Stepping back from them Dasein has to commit freely to these norms in the sense of recognizing that they do not immediately compel it, and to thus take responsibility for their legitimacy.

Such an account of Heidegger conscience as transcendental makes it possible to understand how conscience functions in the existential analytic to create the condition for the possibility of Dasein's individuated self. As such, it is the attestation of Dasein's authentic potentiality-for-Being. Accordingly, the call of conscience constitutes a necessary condition of Dasein's existence in the sense that it "discloses Dasein, by uncovering the implicit normative structure of Dasein's fallen dealings, but in doing so it also constitutes Dasein in its individuated being."³⁰

Inspired by Kukla and Scott, this section has sought to provide a broad interpretation of Heidegger's account of conscience as operating within a transcendental structure that

²⁸ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 7.

²⁹ It is worth noting here that Michel Foucault captures this idea of ontological ground (though in a different way) in his conception of freedom. He argues that moral norms have "a tyrannical power over us only when we have not taken care of ourselves. But [not so] if you take proper care of yourself, that is, if you know ontologically what you are, if you know what you are capable of, if you know what it means for you to be a citizen of a city ... if you know what things you should and should not fear, if you know what you can reasonably hope for and, on the other hand, what things should not matter to you, if you know, finally, that you should not be afraid of death – if you know all this." Michel Foucault, "The Ethics of Care For the Self As A Practice of Freedom: An Interview With Michel Foucault Conducted by Raul Fornet-Betancourt, Helmut Becker, Alfredo Gomez-Muller," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 12, no. 2-5 (1987): pp. 5-6.

³⁰ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 16.

establishes it as an ontological ground for ethics in general. In what follows in this chapter, three early Heideggerian texts will be explored in order to present something of the development of this idea in his thought (with its specific ontological and phenomenological features), before I then return to his main account in *Being and Time* in order to explore the performative features of conscience that secure it as such a ground.

2.2 CONSCIENCE AND ETHICS IN THE YOUNG HEIDEGGER

Several very early Heideggerian texts are helpful for understanding the origins and development of Heidegger's notion of conscience, especially how he came to interpret the meaning of *Gewissen* in a way that is so radically different from the traditional notion of moral conscience. These texts reveal a principled opposition to both the thought value of the neo-Kantians, and more so the ethical principles of Max Scheler. Heidegger comes to recognise the potential significance of conscience as directing us to a phenomenon of existential 'testimony' that is very different to the 'call of duty' issued by any objective principle of morality. Notably, however, the development of a transcendent account of conscience was gradual. Compared to *Being and Time* where conscience finds its most radical formulation, the transcendental tone of these early texts is quite subtle and often laced with the language of volitional ego in the sense of self-willing, wanting, choosing, remembering and making something transparent. In these texts, conscience is not presented as a 'call,' but is characterised as the potential "source" of philosophy's renewed concern for the "how" of existence. Like *φρόνησις*, which does not start with anything hyperbolic or beyond the being of *Dasein*, the how of conscience is experienced in a *πρᾶξις* that brings about disclosure and that which conscience discloses is our "ownmost potentiality for-Being."³¹ This approach is later rolled into the fuller account given in *Being and Time*.

³¹ SZ: 318/273, 322/277, 324/279.

221 : Passing Engagements with Conscience in *The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview*

In his *The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview* (*Die Idee der Philosophie und das Weltanschauungsproblem*), given during the first quarter of 1919, Heidegger writes:

[Let] us inquire further into the immanent character of the sense of [the critical-teleological] method. Supposing the method were clarified to the extent of showing that ... there is a new kind of lived experience of the ought, of the giving of ideals. Does a blind power announce itself in the ought experience ('thrust into conscience' [*ins Gewissen geschoben*]), or does this ought give itself as self-certifying [*als sich selbst ausweisendes*]? If the latter, on what basis self-certifying?³²

As Theodore Kisiel notes, this is the first reference Heidegger makes to *Gewissen* in his very early lecture courses prior to *Being and Time*.³³ In this "mere allusion,"³⁴ the young Heidegger analyses the immanent character of the "critical-teleological method," prescribed by the neo-Kantian scholars. He calls into question the groundless "presuppositions" of neo-Kantian philosophy because of its "absolutely blind [*absoluter Blindheit*]" dependence on an absolute "ought experience."³⁵

This 'passing mention' of conscience in 1919 is an early sign of Heidegger's rejection of what he later describes in *Being and Time* as the "ordinary interpretation of conscience [*vulgäre Gewissensauslegung*]" that gives standards for moral behaviour.³⁶ Already in this early text, Heidegger criticises the "critical-teleological" method of the neo-Kantian philosophy in its being determined by the "blind power" of conscience, and he sees this as

³² See Martin Heidegger, *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie* (GA 56/57) (Frankfurt Am Main: Klostermann, 1987), pp. 45-47. Translated as Martin Heidegger, "The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview," in *Heidegger: Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2008), 36. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation GA 56/57 and the number as it appears in the English translations, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German texts. GA 56/57, 36/45-47.

³³ Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, 498.

³⁴ Kisiel, *Heidegger's Way of Thought: Critical and Interpretative Signposts*, 48.

³⁵ GA 56/57: 36/44-45.

³⁶ SZ: 289-239/335-339. Interestingly, Sadler notes in his forward to his translation of Heidegger's *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie* that Heidegger's "first course, 'The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview,' is of great importance" because of "its anticipation of ideas that find more complete expression in *Being and Time*." See Heidegger, "The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview," x.

intrinsically linked to the overall “theoretical comportment” of the western metaphysical tradition.³⁷ He goes as far as to disparage conscience qua “ought experience,”³⁸ as “the disaster of all previous philosophy.”³⁹ This understanding of conscience as an “absolute ought,” he argues, is the reason for the seeming “supra-empirical validity [*übererfahrungsmäßigen Geltung*]” and “primordial objectivity [*Urgegenständlichkeit*]” that he considers an offshoot of western metaphysical tradition.⁴⁰ The whole system of traditional philosophy must undergo a “refutation and radical overcoming [*Zurückweisen und radikale Überwindung*]”⁴¹ of this thread, in order to restore philosophy as “the science of absolute honesty” whose preoccupation is to unravel the “genuineness of personal life as such.”⁴²

Highly pertinent here is the way in which this passing reference to conscience effectively construes it as the ground of ethics insofar as it is a “genuine starting-point” for “the method of primordial science” to access “lived experience.”⁴³ When Heidegger states that conscience plays the role of “the genuine starting point” for an authentic understanding of our “lived experience,” what he implies is that, like Aristotelian *φρόνησις* which sees through the general situation to unveil the particularities of our respective contexts, conscience not only situates us, it also provides us with the lenses to view values before we can be obligated by them. With this in mind, Heidegger therefore suggests that conscience must be properly understood, for whenever philosophy depends on an ought experience of conscience, it is “obscure at its very core.” Such approaches must give way for what he describes as a radically genuine method of philosophy that is tailored towards the possibility of a “self-certifying” experience.⁴⁴ Such an experience clearly presages the cardinal methodological role played by the phenomenon of conscience in *Being and Time* where (as will be seen later) Heidegger describes conscience as that which provides the

³⁷ GA 56/57: 59/74.

³⁸ GA 56/57: 37/46.

³⁹ GA 56/57: 9 /12.

⁴⁰ GA 56/57: 36/ 44-45.

⁴¹ GA 56/57: 39/49.

⁴² GA 56/57: 165/220.

⁴³ GA 56/57: 36/45-46.

⁴⁴ GA 56/57: 36-37/45.

“attestation of Dasein’s ownmost potentiality-for-Being—an attestation which is [*seiende*] in Dasein itself.”⁴⁵

In this early work, Heidegger is clear about the need to “renew” the concept of conscience in order to “return” it – and philosophy in general – to its “genuine origins of the spirit” and “the vitality of genuine research.”⁴⁶ It is in this context that he identifies the neo- Kantian tradition as highly problematic to the degree that it aligns the “theoretical concept of the ‘ought’ with the “ethical standards” imposed by the “dictates of conscience.”⁴⁷ This “misunderstanding of the problematic of primordial science,”⁴⁸ fails to see that conscience is not an ‘ought,’ but a phenomenon that “grounds the ideal in its absolute intrinsic validity, so that in the experience of the ought a value is constituted.”⁴⁹ The broad outlines of a transcendental account of normativity is evident here, and at one point Heidegger gives this a quasi-biographical expression:

But is every value given to me as an ought? Clearly not. I experience value-relations without the slightest element of ought being given. In the morning, I enter the study; the sun lies over the books, etc., and I delight in this. Such delight is in no way an ought; ‘delightfulness’ as such is not given to me in an ought-experience. I ought to work, I ought to take a walk: two motivations, two possible kinds of ‘because’ which do not reside in the delightful itself but presuppose it. There is, therefore, a kind of lived experience in which I take delight, in which the valuable as such is given.⁵⁰

Clearly, then, like *φρόνησις* which unveils the essential possibilities of practical existence, Heidegger privileges lived experience as the basis for normativity, and in this way, he rejects the neo-Kantian construal of the “ought” of conscience as the validating source for the axioms of “critical-teleological” philosophy. In this way also, Heidegger brackets Windelband with the general neo-Kantian tendency to anchor their “critical-teleological

⁴⁵ Gregor Bartolomeus Kasowski, “Conscience and Attestation: The Methodological Role of the “Call of Conscience” (Gewissensruf) in Heidegger’s Being and Time ” (Université de Montréal 2001), 23.

⁴⁶ GA 56/57: 4-5/5.

⁴⁷ Kasowski, “Conscience and Attestation: The Methodological Role of the “Call of Conscience” (Gewissensruf) in Heidegger’s Being and Time ” 24.

⁴⁸ GA 56/57: 34/42.

⁴⁹ GA 56/57: 37/46.

⁵⁰ GA 56/57: 37/46.

method” on the grounds of an unexplained “ought.” Windelband, Heidegger argues, is unperturbed by the problem of “how” one experiences conscience, and by so doing, he expresses his unwillingness to doubt the “validity” of what Heidegger describes as the unclarified phenomenon of “value-giving.”⁵¹ Heidegger’s refusal at this point to adopt the traditional term of “moral conscience” lies in a deliberate decision by the young thinker to free his philosophy from the normative principles of neo-Kantianism with its “ideal goal of universally valid truth.”⁵²

While endorsing primordial experience as the basis of conscience, Heidegger calls for a “rebirth of the genuine scientific consciousness and life-contexts.”⁵³ The “factual content” of normative principles for Heidegger is the original primal experiences of life and world that occur pre-theoretically and prior to the life-world.⁵⁴ Such experiences must be the primary loci or “the original manner of value-giving upon which the ought is founded.”⁵⁵ Heidegger explains:

If the ideal, the goal of knowledge, truth, is a value, this does not at all need to announce itself in an ought. The value is something in and for itself, not an ought, but just as little a Being [*ein Sein*]. The value 'is' not, but rather it 'values' in an intransitive sense: in being worth-taking [*Wertnehmen*], 'it values' for me, for the value-experiencing subject. 'Valuing' becomes an object only through formalization. 'Object' is a misleading designation: our language is not adequate to the new basic type of lived experience involved here.⁵⁶

The point Heidegger repeatedly makes in this lecture course is that if philosophy is to reclaim its reputation as the “primordial science,” it must be alive to the fact that “the awakening and heightening of the life-context of scientific consciousness is not the object of theoretical representation, but of exemplary pre-living [*Vorleben*].”⁵⁷ At this point, Heidegger hesitates to use the language of “conscience” to refer to this “new basic type of lived experience” that allows philosophy as a “primordial science” to “go back to the

⁵¹ GA 56/5: 38-39/47-48.

⁵² GA 56/57: 31/38.

⁵³ GA 56/57: 4/4.

⁵⁴ Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, 21.

⁵⁵ GA 56/57: 37/46.

⁵⁶ GA 56/57: 37/46.

⁵⁷ GA 56/57: 4/5.

origin.”⁵⁸ However, his critique of the neo-Kantian dependence on the “blind power” of conscience and suggestion for a “genuine” question of how lived experience can be “self-certifying,” does suggest the beginning of a movement in this direction. Such development of the role of conscience indicates a precondition for ethics. After all, the notion of “self-certifying experience,” prefigures the claim in *Being and Time*, that the call of conscience is an “attestation” of Dasein’s authentic potentiality-for-Being,” as an expression of its potential for ownedness, *Eigentlichkeit*. In as much as conscience involves “a genuine question of how lived experience can be self-certifying,”⁵⁹ it would then seem that in Heidegger’s view, moral normativity is possible only on the basis of a cognisance of primordial concrete life.

222 : Conscience in the “Critical Comments on Jaspers’ Psychology of Worldviews” (September 1920)

The theme of conscience is also raised in an oblique yet telling way in Heidegger’s essay on Jaspers the following year. Here, conscience is presented as a means of reading Jaspers in a sophisticated manner. Accordingly, Heidegger contends that to avoid reading Jaspers’ work as “a finished philosophy that has been established on some secure foundation,”⁶⁰ or as “an absolute validity of truth,”⁶¹ it is important that we:

sharpen our consciences regarding the need to inquire into the genuine sense of the ‘history of ideas,’ and return radically to the original genetic motivations in this history that led to the establishment of such epistemological ideals in philosophy ... It is certain that such sharpening of the conscience cannot be taken care of, or approached in any genuine manner whatsoever, by ‘creating’ a ‘new’ philosophical program; rather, it must be enacted in a very concrete manner in the form of destruction that is directed precisely to what has been handed down to us in the history of ideas.⁶²

Unlike *Being and Time*, where Heidegger describes conscience as a call to an “attestation” of Dasein’s “authentic potentiality-for-Being,”⁶³ here Heidegger does not make any

⁵⁸ GA 56/57: 36-7/ 45-6.

⁵⁹ GA 56/57: 36-7/45-46.

⁶⁰ *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers*: 2-3/3.

⁶¹ *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers*: 2-3/3.

⁶² *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers*: 2-3/3. Emphasis added.

⁶³ SZ: 268/312.

clarifications on the exact meaning of the phenomenon of conscience. Rather, he highlights that a 'sharpened conscience' is a *conditio sine qua non* or rather "concretely necessary" for a "creative" reconstruction of the 'theories' of traditional philosophy.⁶⁴ Although Heidegger refrains from offering the exact explanation of how conscience undertakes this role, or how the "sharpening" of conscience can be realised, by granting conscience the methodological role of renewing philosophy's "sense of originality," his mention of conscience in this work is rich in its implication as an ontological ground of ethics. Accordingly, conscience is seen as a phenomenon that helps us to think without presuppositions in order to arrive at a "genuine confrontation with the history that we ourselves are."⁶⁵ Evidently, this is phronetic history, that places our factual situation not under any universal norm, but in a dynamically differentiated principle of action. Thus, in a way that anticipates his account of conscience in *Being and Time*, Heidegger insists that the "roundabout understanding enacted in [conscience] ..." helps us to determine "whether we have really so thoroughly come to terms with that which we ourselves purportedly 'have' and 'are.'"⁶⁶

Towards the end of the essay, Heidegger explicitly identifies the role of conscience as that which is "both the content and the 'how' of the anxious concern of the self about itself."⁶⁷ "In this anxious concern," claims Heidegger, "the specific past, present, and future of the self are not experienced as temporal schemata for objectively classifying facts; rather, they are experienced within a non-schematic sense of anxious concern that has to do with the enactment of experience in its 'how.'"⁶⁸ Conscience is here already something like an ontological *ground* of ethics in the manner by which it is specifically differentiated from its traditional meaning. Accordingly, conscience does not call to any specific way of life; it rather takes humanity back to itself as the very source of itself and the precondition for the understanding of ordinary conscience:

In accord with its fundamental sense, conscience is understood here as the enactment of conscience, and not merely in the sense of occasionally having a

⁶⁴ *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers*: 3/3.

⁶⁵ *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers*: 4/5.

⁶⁶ *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers*: 5/5.

⁶⁷ *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers*: 28/33.

⁶⁸ *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers*: 28/33.

conscience about something (*conscientia*). Conscience is a historically defined 'how' of experiencing the self ... In indicating this connection between the sense of historical experience and the sense of the phenomenon of conscience, we are not giving the concept of the historical a broader meaning; rather, we are understanding it in such a way that it is being returned to the authentic source of itself. And this is also the factual though concealed source from which historical experience in the sense of the development of objective historical knowledge (the historical human science) arises.⁶⁹

By condemning the modern scientific movement and traditional philosophy for their inability to recognise the primordial phenomenon of conscience, Heidegger reveals it as a "fundamental" phenomenon that constitutes the "historically charged way of experiencing one's self" as the fundamental "source" of all possible experience. If in *Being and Time* Dasein is said to exist mostly in the forgetfulness of Being in its everydayness (*Alltäglichkeit*), Heidegger concludes his essay on Jaspers by contending that "our concrete and factual life-experience has of itself a characteristic tendency to fall away into the objective kinds of significance in the experienceable world around it." Yet, when "we are unable to see phenomena of existence today in an authentic manner, we no longer experience the meaning of conscience and the responsibility lying in the historical self."⁷⁰

223 : Conscience in the Lecture on *The Concept of Time* for the Marburg Theological Faculty (July 1924)

One final early text sheds further light on Heidegger's coming development of the theme in *Being and Time*. Heidegger makes an incidental and thematically undeveloped remark on conscience in his 1924 lecture on the concept of time: a work Hans-Georg Gadamer has referred to as the "*Urform*" of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, (and indeed, in *Being and Time* itself, Heidegger somewhat oddly acknowledges this lecture as the origin of his account of conscience in the latter work).⁷¹ Echoing his earlier reference to conscience in the Jaspers

⁶⁹ *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers*: 28/33.

⁷⁰ *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers*: 29/33.

⁷¹ See SZ: 268/313. See Martin Heidegger, *Der Begriff Der Zeit* (GA 64) (Frankfurt Am Main: Klostermann, 2004). Translated as "*The Concept of Time* (Lecture of July 24, 1924.) I have chosen to use the English translation proposed by William McNeill in Martin Heidegger, *Der Begriff der Zeit (The Concept of Time)*, trans. William McNeill (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992). Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation GA 64 and the number as it appears in the English translations, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German texts. In his translator's postscript to the *Concept of Time*

essay, Heidegger here sees conscience as the “coming back” that constitutes the authentic experience of historicity. He writes:

“[t]he manner of [Dasein’s] coming back is, among other things, conscience. Only the 'how' can be repeated. The past – experienced as authentic historicity – is anything but what is past. It is something to which I can return again and again.”⁷²

Nonetheless, despite this similarity, the account of conscience provided here involves a significant shift from his earlier presentation. Of note, for example, is his integration of conscience into “Dasein,” which Heidegger now uses in preference to “self.” This coalescing of the language of Dasein and conscience is a key moment. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger writes that “we are looking for a potentiality-of-being of Dasein that is attested by Dasein itself in its existentiell possibility,”⁷³ and for the most part, conscience has to do with this possible attestation of the self-being. In other words, Heidegger is searching for a place where we can undoubtedly find the possibility of being-one’s-self, and he finds it in this very special phenomenon of the call of conscience. This phenomenon attests to the possibility of authentic (own-most) existence.

Nevertheless, it is only with Heidegger’s account of conscience in *Being and Time* that this relationship receives full development. It is only there that conscience emerges clearly as something like a transcendental ground of ethics by which Dasein grounds its own factual possibilities.

2.3 CONSCIENCE IN *BEING AND TIME*

As the foregoing section has shown, there would appear to be a development in Heideggerian thought prior to *Being and Time* in which conscience comes to have an increasingly important place. In these earlier works, conscience is associated with

lecture, William McNeill notes that Heidegger’s reference to conscience in his 1924 lecture course “gives the impression that the key analyses of conscience were presented 'as theses' in the 1924 lecture, while the lecture itself only mentions conscience on one occasion and fails to develop it thematically.” (McNeill translation notes, 25.)

⁷² “Im Zukünftigsein ist das Dasein seine Vergangenheit; es kommt darauf zurück im Wie. Die Weise des Zurückkommens ist unter anderem das Gewissen.” GA 64: 19E/122-123.

⁷³ SZ 267/311 “Gesucht ist ein eigentliches Seinkönnen des Daseins, das von diesem selbst in seiner existentiellen Möglichkeit bezeugt wird.”

transparency, accountability, self-will, wanting and choosing. Overall, Heidegger tends not to develop a positive account of conscience to describe Dasein's authentic potentiality of Being (as comes later), but rather uses it in a negative way to deconstruct the ground of philosophical certainty as espoused by traditional philosophy.

In *Being and Time*, though, conscience comes to the foreground as Heidegger looks to "trace [it] back to its existential foundations and structures and make it visible as a phenomenon of Dasein, holding fast to what we have hitherto arrived at as that entity's state of Being."⁷⁴ Heidegger sees his account of conscience in *Being and Time* as an "ontological analysis" of the phenomenon, one that is "prior to any description and classification of experiences of conscience, and likewise lies outside of any biological" (or psychological) explanation of the phenomenon.⁷⁵

In this section, I will examine how – as a 'call' – "conscience [possesses] the character of summoning (*Anruf*) Dasein to its ownmost potentiality of being a self."⁷⁶ There are various structures in Heidegger's account that constellate to inform Heidegger's description of this phenomenon, and together these make up a series of windows on the way in which conscience is implicitly revealed as a ground upon which ethics is based. As Heidegger puts it himself: this account "sets forth" "the ontological foundations of ... the ordinary way of interpreting conscience."⁷⁷

The section will proceed as follows: On the basis of an initial discussion of the sense in which Heidegger's account of conscience in *Being and Time* functions as a transcendental ground for ethics, I then tease out some key themes in Heidegger's account, and to show the way in which they work together to ground ethics. First, the nature of the call as 'discourse' is analysed. I then follow Heidegger's own demarcation of the topic by dwelling on the three questions he identifies: i.e., who is called by the call?; what does the call disclose?; and who is the one who calls? This then raises the further question of *how* Dasein is enabled to understand the call, a question that raises the complex notion of Dasein's understanding of its own Being-guilty. Finally, I turn to the question of the relation of

⁷⁴ SZ: 269/313.

⁷⁵ SZ: 269/313.

⁷⁶ SZ: 269/314.

⁷⁷ SZ: 269/314.

‘individual’ Dasein to others, a discussion that can be only just identified at this stage, pending a thorough analysis in Chapter four, below. Throughout this discussion, the focus will remain on the way that each aspect of this Heideggerian account of conscience underpins its status as providing an ontological ground for the possibility of ethics in the ordinary normative sense.

2.3.1 : Conscience as an Ontological Ground of Ethics

Heidegger’s ‘canonical’ account of conscience – in the second chapter of Division Two (§§54-60) of *Being and Time* – sits at the heart of the existential analytic, and in this way, it intersects with a series of other key structural components of this vast work. In the conscience chapter, Heidegger shows how Dasein can counter the tendency of fallenness by “attesting to its existentiell possibility” so that it can authentically come into “disclosedness” and achieve a “transparent” understanding of itself and its engagement in the world.⁷⁸

The first move in the investigation, Heidegger claims, is the requirement that conscience be “[redirected] back to its existential foundations and structures and [be made] visible as a phenomenon of Dasein.”⁷⁹ Heidegger embarks on an untrodden path here, one which situates his account of conscience within the domain or trajectory of Aristotelian *φρόνησις* where Dasein is disclosed as a radically finite being who comes out of its concealment by disrupting the entanglement of its everydayness and owning up to its ability-to-be. Accordingly, while reproaching the neo-Kantians for embracing value-thinking and polarising the ‘ought,’ Heidegger insists that in exhibiting the constitutive phenomena that are essential to Being-in-the-world, the attestation of conscience does not prove the truth of anything because “Da-sein is always its possibility.”⁸⁰ In other words, the attestation of the call of conscience does not come from any speculative or external source like God or other people. It is also not being ‘inspired’ by any biological phenomenon for which one can demand an “inductive empirical proof.”⁸¹ Rather, in Heidegger’s words, this “attestation” must “have its roots [*ihre Wurzel*] in Dasein’s Being.”⁸² This confinement of

⁷⁸ SZ: 267/312.

⁷⁹ SZ: 269/313.

⁸⁰ SZ: 42/67.

⁸¹ SZ: 275/320.

⁸² SZ: 267/312.

the phenomenon of conscience to Dasein's factual hermeneutic experience has the effect of shielding the analysis from traditional biases. Heidegger notes that this prejudice of tradition "rests upon an ontological perversion of [the] phenomenon" and the inability to acknowledge that conscience is different "from what is environmentally present-at-hand."⁸³ Admitting that his existential conscience "is necessarily a far cry from everyday ontical common sense," he submits that this reversal of the meaning of the "call of conscience" provides the "ontological foundations" of all "everyday" notions or ordinary interpretation concerning the "voice" of conscience.⁸⁴ It is, in other words (and as explored above), a *transcendental* notion of conscience, and not an empirical one.

In Heidegger's account, right from the outset, Dasein has always already been determined by the standards, values and concerns of its concrete world. "With Dasein's lostness in 'the they,'" Heidegger argues, "that factual potentiality-for-Being which is closest to it (the tasks, rules, and standards ...) has already being decided upon."⁸⁵ Therefore, the authentic turn requires undergoing a calling or a twisting free of conventional mode of identifications to embrace the possibilities of Being. Conscience does not call us to be first determined or articulated by a set of imposed normative requirements (a sense that is invited by traditional ontic accounts of conscience); rather its role is to first and foremost reveal to Dasein that it must "bring itself back" from the 'they' in order to understand authentically. Prior to any normative moral 'ought,' Dasein is therefore already ethical in an ontological sense, even prior to any heeding of the call of conscience by which Dasein is brought back from its immersion in the 'they.' 'Being-ethical' is thus not a matter of submission to pre-ordained moral laws, for Dasein is always already hermeneutically caught up in, and concerned with, the everyday world which in and of itself is an ethically defined space governed by the 'they.' Far from positing its own 'new' normative oughts, conscience does not unveil any new "content;" instead, the call *disrupts* definitive values and makes Dasein the condition of its own possibility. The point is not to *deny* the place of values or moral norms; it is rather a matter of priority, where as a *φρόνιμος*, Dasein first considers 'the being-true' of itself which determines the extent and way in which it is to be obligated by moral norms. Heidegger's point is that the analysis of Dasein's Being precedes moral

⁸³ SZ: 269/313-314.

⁸⁴ SZ: 269/314.

⁸⁵ SZ: 268/312.

normativity, for only a being of Dasein's kind is open to anything like the call of conscience in this sense. Otherwise put, *the call of conscience is not primarily to do with morality*. It is, as Joanna Hodge puts it "concerned with specifying the nature of the entity, which can be thus in breach or fail; how it is both possible to be both judged and judging."⁸⁶

Having said that, the 'contentlessness' of conscience does not equate to utter vacuousness. Heidegger is clear on this point: "[c]onscience gives us 'something' to understand; it discloses."⁸⁷ Accordingly, Dasein is summoned by the call to understand itself *as* itself; in its thereness; in its thrownness. Heidegger drives home this point through his analysis of hearing and listening. He writes:

If Dasein is to be brought back from the lostness of failing to hear itself, and if this is to be done through itself, it must first be able to find itself, to find itself as something that has failed to hear itself and continues to do so in listening to the 'they'. This listening must be stopped, that is, the possibility of another kind of hearing that interrupts that listening must be given by Dasein to itself. The possibility of such a breach lies in being summoned immediately. Dasein fails to hear itself, and listens to the 'they', and this listening gets broken by the call if that call, in accordance with its character as call, arouses another kind of hearing which, in relation to the hearing that is lost, has a character in every way opposite. If in this lost hearing, one has been fascinated with the 'hubbub' of the manifold ambiguity which idle talk possesses in its everyday 'newness', then the call must do its calling without any hubbub and unambiguously, leaving no foothold for curiosity. *That which, by calling in this manner, gives us to understand, is the conscience.*⁸⁸

To 'hear' oneself here, is to explore oneself. Authentic Dasein has a special kind of listening that gives it the capacity to be answerable to its actions and omissions. This peculiar kind of calling back of one's own self is a jolting of everydayness. In this moment, morality (in the ordinary sense) is first made possible, not *by* the call, but *because* of the call. Through the call, Dasein understands its finitude, its Being-unto-death, and it is affirmed in its anticipatory resoluteness. Thus, like *φρόνησις*, conscience relates to self-knowledge and

⁸⁶ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 197.

⁸⁷ SZ: 269/314.

⁸⁸ SZ: 271/315-6.

concerns itself with its own ability-to-be. Because Dasein habitually privileges what Kierkegaard calls the “dogmatic” as it discerns its response to already established moral norms,⁸⁹ the temporal demand of the call of conscience compels Dasein to transcend the moral systems provided by the theyself and to believe that no one, no history, no community authorises its individual self. The call forces Dasein to its forward run [*Vorlaufen*] of existence where it takes over its existence by decentring and rupturing its conventional (theyself) moral system.

2.3.2 : Conscience as Discourse

Heidegger sums up the core aspects of his account as follows:

If we analyze conscience more penetratingly, it is revealed as a call [*Ruf*]. Calling is a mode of discourse. The call of conscience has the character of an appeal to Dasein by calling it to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-itself; and this is done by way of summoning it to its ownmost Being-guilty.⁹⁰

Jean-François Courtine argued that Heidegger describes conscience as a ‘call’ in order to show phenomenologically how conscience constitutes the *ipseity* of Dasein, in the attesting of its authentic being-able-to-be.”⁹¹ Kisiel makes the same point when he says that Heidegger speaks of conscience as a ‘call’ so as to highlight Dasein’s being brought before its “absolute responsibility.”⁹²

The account of the call begins by identifying it as a peculiar form of discourse. As already noted, Dasein “fails to hear [*überhört*] its own self” because of its lostness “in the publicness and idle talk of the ‘they.’”⁹³ To take hold of itself again in a more primordial way, “this listening-away [of the ‘theyself’] must get broken off;” and thus, “the possibility of another kind of hearing must come forward; one that will interrupt the theyself, while at the same time coming from Dasein itself.”⁹⁴ As a mode of discourse, conscience delivers to Dasein the only kind of unambiguous “giving-to-understand” that can enable it to “hear”

⁸⁹ Søren Kierkegaard, ed. *The Concept of Anxiety: a Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation On the Dogmatic Issue of Heredictory Sin*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 14.

⁹⁰ SZ: 269/314.

⁹¹ Jean-François Courtine, “Voice of conscience and call of being,” *Topoi* 7, no. 2 (1988): 106.

⁹² Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, 498.

⁹³ SZ: 271/315.

⁹⁴ SZ: 271/316.

authentically and thereby find itself.⁹⁵ It is this "voice [*Stimme*]," that calls, and in so doing it hermeneutically opens and unveils Dasein.

As a mode of discourse, conscience makes conventional normative ethics possible. To negotiate moral norms, conscience uses discourse to reach into the deepest threshold of care in order to articulate through words the elemental flow and pattern of existence. Likewise, through discourse, Dasein listens to hear the repressed voice of its possibilities that lie frozen and hidden and are often passed over by the trivialising speech of 'everyday ethics.' Frank Schalow elaborates on this role:

As a disclosive power, [discourse] provides the vocabulary to express the ineluctable drama of existence, the subtleties, twists of phrase, and nuances to articulate the meaning of care as finite. [Discourse] tests its own limits in order to express the following paradoxes: the individual's giving him/herself up to death to experience the vitality of life, Dasein's relinquishing the spoils of worldly conquest to win itself, or committing self-sacrifice to receive the bounty of love. The conveyance of care from the depths of its 'as structure' defies univocity in order to capture manifold determinations of existence, the modalities of self-understanding. The primitive gesture or indicator 'that for-the-sake-of' provides the pre-conceptual pattern to index all the determinations of existence.⁹⁶

Michael Hyde offers a similarly illuminating reading of conscience as a mode of discourse. For him, "[t]here is to be sure, a challenge-response logic at work when conscience calls," and appropriately so, since "[n]o moral system could exist without it." After all, he contends, Heidegger would want us to realise that our nature as spatio-temporal beings is in and of itself "a challenge calling for response."⁹⁷ The call evokes, and at the same time provokes Dasein by summoning it to "be responsible for its existence; to take charge of [its life] ... to affirm [its] freedom through resolute choice."⁹⁸ (Of course, the *prima facie* 'heroic individualism' of this account of the call needs to be strongly tempered by the equally

⁹⁵ SZ: 271/316.

⁹⁶ Frank Schalow, "Language and the Social Roots of Conscience: Heidegger's Less Travelled Path," *Human Studies* 21, no. 2 (April, 1998): 144.

⁹⁷ Michael J. Hyde, *The Call of Conscience: Heidegger and Levinas, Rhetoric and the Euthanasia Debate* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), pp 40-41.

⁹⁸ Hyde, *The Call of Conscience: Heidegger and Levinas, Rhetoric and the Euthanasia Debate*, 41.

primordial 'collectivism' of Heidegger's accounts of *Mitsein* and *Fürsorge*, on which more to come below.)

Heidegger emphasises that conscience as a mode of discourse gives Dasein the propensity to 'speak' and 'hear,' capacities that emanate out of the threshold of Dasein's *Verstehen*. But, if the call is truly a singular determination of "discourse" or of discursiveness [*Rede*], Heidegger is clear that conscience is "voiced" without any vocal emission or phonetic exteriorisation. Conscience calls *in silence*, addressing itself to a well-defined kind of 'listening'. Further, the call emits no explicit or fixed message: it "asserts nothing, gives no information about world-events, has nothing to tell. Least of all does it tries to set going a 'soliloquy' in the Self to which it has appealed."⁹⁹

Silence is crucial to Heidegger's understanding of the potentiality of the call to dispel idle talk and thereby open up the possibility of genuine listening. For what he says earlier in *Being and Time* about the role of silence in discourse more generally holds true in the specific case of the discourse of conscience:

Keeping silent authentically is possible only in genuine discoursing. To be able to keep silent, Dasein must have something to say – that is, it must have at its disposal an authentic and rich disclosedness of itself. In that case one's reticence makes something manifest, and does away with 'idle talk'. As a mode of discoursing, reticence articulates the intelligibility of Dasein in so primordial a manner that it gives rise to a potentiality-for-hearing which is genuine, and to a Being-with-one-another which is transparent.¹⁰⁰

It is by providing us with the necessary incitation that provokes the self to be alive to its own possibilities, that the silent call of conscience works to provide the condition of possibility for genuine normative ethical reflection. As Schalow puts it, "the *logos* which is expressed in the silent call supplies the governance to direct the self back to who it already is." And this happens, as Schalow suggests, because "the call addresses Dasein with a degree of specificity and distinctness that corresponds to its own capacity to hear."¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ SZ: 273/318.

¹⁰⁰ SZ: 165/208.

¹⁰¹ Schalow, "The Topography of Heidegger's Concept of Conscience," 259.

Ironically, it is through the very silence of the voice of conscience, that Heidegger emphasises the “hearing” role of discourse that is necessary for disclosedness. Accordingly, to understand authentically, Dasein must reticently “hold its tongue” so that it can “hear” what is disclosed to it. Thus, in another irony, as Courtine insightfully notes, when we examine how Heidegger speaks of the call, “everything becomes a question of listening” rather than speaking.¹⁰² The “keeping silent” of discourse reflects the “reticence” of one “who already understands.”¹⁰³ Thus, like *φρόνησις* which unveils the factual possibilities of being in a situation with respect to individual self-understanding, when Dasein “listens” to the reticent voice of its conscience,¹⁰⁴ it first adapts itself to its pre-given surroundings, and as Katherine Sepulveda contends, by so doing, it “makes itself to understand than to seek to be understood.”¹⁰⁵ Sepulveda further claims that, in this “listening” through which Dasein rediscovers the truth that resonates with it, Dasein “partake[s] in the call and become[s] aware of it. [It] become[s] aware of a call that comes from [it], and yet over [it].”¹⁰⁶

But this ‘keeping silent’ also resonates with the ‘nothingness’ of the appeal of the call. This, surely, is the most counter-intuitive sense of discourse: a call that is silent, and a responder who listens and keeps silent! Yet, in its nothingness, the call of conscience demonstrates its contrast with what Van Buren calls “the noisy power and *gloria* of decisionism”¹⁰⁷

2.3.3 : The Call’s Disclosure and its Dative

Early in his account of conscience in *Being and Time*, Heidegger sets out three key questions concerning the structure of the call: i.e., who is called by the call?; what does the call disclose?; and who is the one who calls? In order to more clearly indicate the role of conscience as providing a ground for ethics, these questions need closer scrutiny. I engage the first two in this section, and the third in the section that follows.

¹⁰² Courtine, “Voice of conscience and call of being,” 106.

¹⁰³ SZ: 164/208.

¹⁰⁴ SZ: 163/206.

¹⁰⁵ Katherine Sepulveda, “The Call: Heidegger and the Ethical Conscience ” *Res Cogitans* 2, no. 1 (2011): 77.

¹⁰⁶ Sepulveda, “The Call: Heidegger and the Ethical Conscience ”, 77.

¹⁰⁷ Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King*, 303.

Who does the call address? In answering this first question concerning the dative, Heidegger is clear that it is “[m]anifestly Dasein itself,”¹⁰⁸ but that much more needs to be said. Accordingly, conscience is a summon to “Dasein's Self,” a self that has been lost in the ‘they.’¹⁰⁹ The call is directed to the ‘Dasein Self’ that is not simply the theyself of ordinary familiarity, but which is also not simply separable from it. The call changes Dasein in a mysterious sense, by reaching through the layers of idle talk that defines Dasein’s own self-understanding, and in this way, discloses Dasein to its own self. At this point, the first question (of the addressee) is seen to be inextricable from the second question (what is disclosed). Heidegger describes the situation as follows:

[It] is essential to Dasein that along with the disclosedness of its world it has been disclosed to itself, so that it always *understands itself*. The call reaches Dasein in this understanding of itself, which it always has, and which is concerned in an everyday, average manner.¹¹⁰

By so doing, the call returns Dasein to its “own Self” and “pushes [the ‘they’] into insignificance.”¹¹¹ This passage is worth recalling in its full careful detail:

The call reaches the they-self of concerned Being with Others. And to what is one called when one is thus appealed to? To one's *own* Self. Not to what Dasein counts for, can do, or concerns itself with in being with one another publicly, nor to what it has taken hold of, set about, or let itself be carried along with. [This] ... sort of Dasein gets passed over in this appeal; this is something of which the call to the Self takes not the slightest cognizance. And because only the Self of the they-self gets appealed to and brought to hear, the “they” collapses. But the fact that the call passes over both the ‘they’ and the manner in which Dasein has been publicly interpreted, does not by any means signify that the ‘they’ is not reached too. Precisely in passing over the ‘they’ (keen as it is for public repute) the call pushes it

¹⁰⁸ SZ: 272/317.

¹⁰⁹ SZ: 274/319.

¹¹⁰ SZ: 272-73/317.

¹¹¹ SZ: 273/317.

into insignificance. But the Self, which the appeal has robbed of this lodgement and hiding-place, gets brought to itself by the call.¹¹²

It is difficult to consider a more thorough ground for the possibility of ethics than what Heidegger here describes. Here the silent but searching 'voice' of conscience is affirmed in its capacity to address the 'truest' (though Heidegger avoids this term) self, the self that – as much as this is ever possible factically – is other than the public or everyday self of everyday self-understanding. Is this not what is assumed in the ordinary conception of conscience: self-reflection that is 'honest' and even brutal in its stripping away of all pretension? Yet here Heidegger provides an account of the ontological possibility of such an ontic psychological or spiritual state. The 'self' that is addressed is not the self that is the stuff of idle talk and self-deception, but the self that authentically *is*. As such, conscience "calls Dasein forth (and 'forward') into its ownmost possibilities, as a summons to its ownmost potentiality-for Being-its-self."¹¹³ Accordingly:

If Dasein is to be able to get brought back from this lostness of failing to hear itself, and if this is to be done through itself, then it must first be able to find itself – to find itself as something which has failed to hear itself, and which fails to hear in that it listens away to the 'they'.¹¹⁴

In addressing this first question, the second question has already been broached. The silent and contentless disclosure of the call is ultimately nothing other than a summons to authentic resoluteness, without which – I have maintained – the ordinary idea of conscience is without obvious grounding.

From Heidegger's perspective, Dasein's lostness in the 'they' is a condition of possibility for its ordinary everyday inauthentic Being-in-the-world. When the call of conscience arouses in Dasein "another kind of hearing" rather than "hearing the noise of the manifold ambiguity of everyday new 'idle talk,'" Dasein has the opportunity to transgress the moral normativity of the 'they.' In this sense, ethics depends absolutely on Dasein's ability to twist

¹¹² SZ: 273/317.

¹¹³ SZ: 273/318.

¹¹⁴ SZ: 271/315-16.

itself free from its lostness in idle chatter, and in this way to take responsibility for its ethical life.

For Heidegger, though, the call is both unequivocal *and* open to misunderstanding. It is “unequivocal, even though it may undergo a different interpretation in the individual Dasein in accordance with its own possibilities of understanding.”¹¹⁵ This is a key point, for (like the ordinary notion of conscience), Heidegger’s transcendental account is consistent with the possibility of delusion and error, not vis-à-vis error or misunderstanding of putative moral absolutes, but in terms of the perversion of the call itself:

When ‘delusions’ arise in the conscience, they do so not because the call has committed some oversight (has mis-called), 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.¹¹⁶

If the call of conscience can be perverted, and if the call is the condition of possibility for moral normativity, this raises interesting questions about a sense in which the $\tilde{\eta}\vartheta\omicron\varsigma$ can be entirely distorted and misconstrued even before concrete moral reflection can begin. This raises the possibility of something like systematically distorted normative structures. Here again, Heidegger opens a rich avenue for ethical consideration that he leaves almost entirely unexplored.

Before moving on to consider Heidegger’s third question concerning the call (the identity of the caller), it is perhaps important to make a few brief remarks about the relationship between this Heideggerian account of the call of conscience by comparison with Kant, on one hand, and Nietzsche, on the other.

One might well suggest that there is a superficial level of similarity between Kant and Heidegger in the sense that both reject heteronomous influence on the ‘moral agent.’ If autonomy is a central plank of Kant’s *Grundlegung*, it is difficult to deny a hint of the same in Heidegger’s rejection of the authority of established normative frameworks and his preference for the authentic ‘inner’ discourse of conscience. Nonetheless, moral

¹¹⁵ SZ: 274/318.

¹¹⁶ SZ: 274/318-319.

discernment (insofar as this notion makes any sense in the content of *Being and Time*) must not be understood in Heidegger in anything like the Kantian sense qua a rational faculty that gives the moral law to itself. Rather, in line with Scott, I suggest that being an ontological structure of possibility, Heideggerian conscience “puts in question the combination of axioms, [their] authorising disclosures and judgements ... in such a way as to expose [their] underlying assumptions or implicit ideological stance.”¹¹⁷ While Kant would perceive the call of conscience fundamentally, as a “court of justice”¹¹⁸ which has an implicit significance to the idea of “the moral law,” Heidegger sees in the call an orientation to *πρᾶξις* which highlights what Van Buren calls the “practical insight (*φρόνησις*) in individual situations as what is fitting (*προσαρμογή*) in relation to us (*σε σχέση με εμάς*), that is, in relation to each individual in his or her own circumstances.”¹¹⁹ If Kant conceives conscience as “practical reason holding the human being’s duty before him for his acquittal or condemnation in every case that comes under a law,”¹²⁰ Heidegger appeals not to a rational faculty of the mind, but to an ‘understanding’ that characterises the “running ahead [*Vorlaufen*]” of its finitude.¹²¹

A similarly superficial similarity might be discerned with Nietzschean thought insofar as Heidegger advocates the summoning of the self beyond the limits of all established moral absolutes, with its institutionalized laws and principles.¹²² One might discern here echoes of Nietzsche’s “self-overcoming movement” that frees the individual to affirm itself. However, for Nietzsche, conscience here collapses into the will to power, by which the individual transcends itself to become more than what inherited forces and traditional ideas prescribe for us. As he puts it, “the man [sic] who does not wish to belong to the mass needs only to cease taking himself easily; let him follow his conscience, which calls to him

¹¹⁷ Scott, *The Question of ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, 104-5.

¹¹⁸ SZ: 272/316.

¹¹⁹ John van Buren, “The Young Heidegger, Aristotle, Ethics,” in *Ethics and Danger: Essays on Heidegger and Continental Thought*, eds. Arleen B. Dallery, Charles E. Scott, and P. Holley Roberts (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 175.

¹²⁰ Emmanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Allen W. Wood (London: Yale University Press, 2002), 37. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited as GMM followed by the number in the original German text.

¹²¹ Hua Wang, “Conscience and Ethos: Thinking Across the Limit of Normativity” (The Pennsylvania State University 2006), 63.

¹²² SZ: 336/290.

[sic]: 'Be your-self.'¹²³ Or as he asks in *The Gay Science*: "What does your conscience say? You must become who you are."¹²⁴

However, such an approach is far from the Heideggerian notion of the call of conscience, which is hardly reducible to will to power. While Heidegger's account is consistent with an *existentiell* decision to reject traditional moral norms, all such matters lie beyond the scope of the existential analytic itself. Indeed, ontic conformity with established norms would appear to be as much in line with authentic resoluteness as their rejection. Further, in its focus on calling Dasein back to its Self, what is missing is any strong volitional dimension. The call is thus "unmediated and beyond willing," as Scott puts it:¹²⁵ As Heidegger puts it himself, "the call is precisely something which we ourselves have neither planned nor prepared for nor voluntarily performed, nor have we ever done so ... [Rather] 'It' calls, 'against our expectations and even against our will.'" ¹²⁶ Or as Scott elaborates: "the call is neither an intentional act of expectation, desire, or belief, nor a 'performance' by the 'agent' in the world."¹²⁷ In a sense that points forward to later Heideggerian themes and beyond the existential analytic itself, the call of conscience is, most basically, *the call of Being itself*.

2.3.4 : The Source of the Call and Uncanniness

On the basis of the foregoing brief exploration of the first two Heideggerian questions concerning the structural features of the call of conscience, this section turns to the third question concerning the identity of the caller. It is here that the notion of 'care' for one's Being arises, and with self-care a sense of genuine freedom arises.

Heidegger submits that the "caller maintains itself in conspicuous indefiniteness [*auffallenden Unbestimmtheit*]" and refuses to answer questions about its name, status, origin, or repute."¹²⁸ Against its everyday perception or 'worldly orientation,' he tells us that the "peculiar indefiniteness" of the caller of conscience is often interpreted as

¹²³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche: Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 127.

¹²⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Thomas Common (New York: Dover Publications, 2006), 270.

¹²⁵ Scott, *The Question of Ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, 109.¹²⁶ SZ: 275/320.

¹²⁶ SZ: 275/320.

¹²⁷ Scott, *The Question of Ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, 109.

¹²⁸ SZ: 274/319.

“nobody or nothing.” However, existentially understood, “that which calls the call, simply holds itself aloof from anyway of becoming well-known, and this belongs to its phenomenal character.”¹²⁹ Further:

The peculiar indefiniteness of the caller and the impossibility of making more definite what this caller is, are not just nothing; they are distinctive for it in a positive way. They make known to us that the caller is solely absorbed in summoning us to something, that is heard only as such, and furthermore that it will not let itself be coaxed.¹³⁰

Reiterating what he has been saying in his account of conscience, Heidegger notes that when Dasein is appealed to by the call from the “they-world,” it is “its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-itself [that] functions as the caller.”¹³¹ Otherwise stated, the caller is the Dasein’s “authentic self:”

[The] call is precisely something which we ourselves have neither planned nor prepared for nor voluntarily performed, nor have we ever done so. ‘It’ calls against our expectations and even against our will. On the other hand, the call undoubtedly does not come from someone else who is with me in the world. The call comes from me and yet from beyond me and over me [*Der Ruf kommt aus mir und doch über mich*].¹³²

Caught up in the underlying structure of its “everydayness,” Dasein “is not itself;” for here, Dasein’s “potentiality-for-Being- its-Self,” its possibilities, come under the “dictatorship” of the ‘they’ – a dictatorship of habits, customs, and conventions that can all too easily cause Dasein to forsake and forget its authentic temporality and thus its potentiality-for-Being.¹³³ But when Dasein understands itself authentically, it becomes the Heideggerian *φρόνιμος*, who understands what conscience discloses to it: “the fact ‘that it is, and that it has to be something with a potentiality-for-Being as the entity which it is.’”¹³⁴ Therefore, the indefinite caller of conscience is authentic Dasein that seeks to find itself by calling out to

¹²⁹ SZ: 275/319.

¹³⁰ SZ: 275/319.

¹³¹ SZ: 275/320.

¹³² SZ: 275/320.

¹³³ SZ: 126-127.

¹³⁴ SZ: 276/321.

the Being-in-the-world who is always “listening away.” In its bid to find itself authentically, the caller is “anxious with anxiety about its ownmost potentiality-for-Being” and summons Being-in-the-world to find itself “in the very depths of its uncanniness [*im Grunde seiner Unheimlichkeit*].”¹³⁵ Opposing “everyday” Dasein’s desperate flight into publicness, Heidegger contends that conscience ceaselessly appeals in its “uncanny mode of keeping silent” and makes possible a return to authentic self-understanding.¹³⁶

Uncanniness is the basic kind of Being-in-the-world, even though in an everyday way it has been covered up. Out of the depths of this kind of Being, Dasein itself, as conscience, calls. The ‘it calls me’ is a distinctive kind of discourse for Dasein. The call whose mood has been attuned by anxiety is what makes it possible first and foremost for Dasein to project itself upon its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. The call of conscience, existentially understood, makes known for the first time what we have hitherto merely contended: that uncanniness pursues Dasein and is a threat to the lostness in which it has forgotten itself [*selbstvergessene Verlorenheit*].¹³⁷

It is on the basis of describing conscience as the ‘uncanny mode of keeping silent’ that Heidegger exposes conscience as that which “manifests itself as the call of care.”¹³⁸ In his view, “the call of conscience—that is, conscience itself—has its ontological possibility in the fact that Dasein, in the very basis of its Being, is care.”¹³⁹ Care confers upon Dasein its phronetic status and by so doing helps it to see itself as its own point of reference, by summoning it in “the depth of its uncanniness” to “the reticence of its existent potentiality of-being.”¹⁴⁰ As a call of care, conscience reveals the individuality and the mineness of Dasein, and the reason for this, as Heidegger indicates, is because “at bottom, conscience is essentially always mine, not only in the sense that one’s most proper potentiality-of-being is always summoned, but because the call comes from the being that I myself always am.”¹⁴¹ The call of conscience discloses the individuality and the always-being-mine of

¹³⁵ SZ: 276/321.

¹³⁶ SZ: 277/322.

¹³⁷ SZ: 277/322.

¹³⁸ SZ: 277/322.

¹³⁹ SZ: 278/322-323.

¹⁴⁰ SZ: 277/321.

¹⁴¹ SZ: 278/323.

Dasein and attests to the authenticity of its being. Heidegger designates this eminent, authentic disclosedness attested in Dasein itself by its conscience, “resoluteness [Entschlossenheit]” – “the reticent projecting oneself upon one’s most proper being-guilty which is ready for anxiety.”¹⁴² Anxiety discloses Dasein’s fundamental possibility of “being free for the freedom of choosing and taking hold of itself,”¹⁴³ and this is its ownmost potentiality of being. That is so even if this coming into its own as an authentic individual needs to be also understood equiprimordially as its being-freed for authentic relations with others (in ways to be explored later). As the uncanny, the existential “not-being-at-home with one’s self,” anxiety reveals Dasein as always already ahead of itself, always “beyond itself,” thrown into a world of possibilities which it may or may not actualize for itself.¹⁴⁴

Here again, the ethical potency of the angst-filled call of care comes to the fore. The discourse of conscience as care articulates Dasein’s ability-to-be which gives Dasein the ontological space to “free itself for its world of authentic potentiality for being, a potentiality which reveals the being of beings as they are “in themselves,” including both inner-worldly beings and Dasein itself.”¹⁴⁵ Conscience thus frees up Dasein from its everydayness to be self-responsible. This notion of self-responsibility is given quite extreme expression in the early (1925) *History of the Concept of Time* lectures, when Heidegger comments that Dasein “can choose itself, [and] what is chosen in this choice is nothing other than willing to have conscience.”¹⁴⁶ In his 1930 lecture on the *Essence of Human freedom* Heidegger gives this a Kantian twist in the comment that “[p]ractical freedom as autonomy is self-responsibility, which is the essence of the personhood of the person, the authentic essence, the humanity of man.”¹⁴⁷

Importantly, as Craig Nichols has noted, the sense of freedom that Heidegger is proposing here is “an understanding of freedom with a content, a ‘toward which’ ... [that] stands as an alternative to the common, ‘ordinary’ understanding of what may be called ‘negative’

¹⁴² SZ: 297/343.

¹⁴³ SZ: 188/232.

¹⁴⁴ SZ: 191-92/235-6.

¹⁴⁵ SZ: 298/274

¹⁴⁶ GA 20: 441/319.

¹⁴⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit* (GA 31) (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1982), 296. Translated as Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom: An Introduction to Philosophy*, trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2002), pp. 202-03. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited as GA 31, followed by the number in the translated work and the original German text.

freedom, an uncritically conceived notion of freedom understood as a mere lack of restraint or simply a freedom from.”¹⁴⁸ Further, by manifesting itself in freedom, conscience as care highlights the necessary responsiveness of the hearing Dasein. Notwithstanding the state of thrownness, to care for our Being – to be *eigentlich* – means having the agency to subdue the exigencies that define who we are. Like *φρόνησις*, it is a freedom that necessitates the exercise of hermeneutical judgement, drawing upon knowledge and the understanding of individual concrete situations that far transcend already established norms. Without such a sense, ethical normativity of any kind is ontically impossible. Kukla makes this point with such clarity, that I give her the final word:

[I]f we were merely carried along by the everyday, then our relationship to it would not be normative at all. The norms of the They would function for us like laws of nature, compelling us immediately at the level of blind impulse, rather than binding us in virtue of our recognition of their force and our commitment to them. If the legitimacy of a norm is not something I can even call into question, or if the choice to transgress is not even a notional possibility for me, then I cannot follow the norm out of a commitment that is responsive to its normative force ... Every normatively bound action inherently contains an individuating moment: actions that are responsive to norms must be actions that belong to someone in particular who is responsible for them.¹⁴⁹

2.3.5 : The Call as a Summons to Primordial *Schuldigsein*

If the foregoing has worked its way through Heidegger’s three key questions dealing with the structure of the call – its sender, its content, and its addressee – and the relevance of all three to the question of the ground of ethics in *Being and Time* in particular, what has yet to be broached is the absolutely central and additional question of how Dasein can authentically come to *understand* the appeal of conscience. This points to the key distinction Heidegger makes between what he calls ‘ordinary’ guilt and primordial guilt/debt [*Schuld*], and the significance of this ontological sense for understanding the tacit ethical ground that emerges from the pages of *Being and Time*. In this connection,

¹⁴⁸ Craig M. Nichols, "Primordial Freedom: The Authentic Truth of Dasein in Heidegger’s ‘Being and Time’ " *Thinking Fundamentals, IWM Junior Visiting Fellows Conferences* 9 (Vienna 2000): 2.

¹⁴⁹ Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 4.

Heidegger asks two fundamental questions. “[What] is it that is essentially implied when the appeal is understood authentically? What is it that has been essentially given us to understand in the call at any particular time, even if factually it has not always been understood?”¹⁵⁰

In putting to one side ordinary psychological notions of having “a ‘good’ conscience” or feeling guilty,¹⁵¹ Heidegger insists that it is necessary to consider *Schuld* in an appropriately ontological sense: i.e., Dasein’s “idea of guilt [must be drawn] from the Interpretation of its own Being.”¹⁵²

The primordial being-guilty of Dasein [*ursprüngliches Schuldigsein*] as Heidegger defines it, is “being the ground of being defined by a not [*ein Nicht*] – that is, being-the-ground of a nullity [*Grundsein einer Nichtigkeit*].”¹⁵³ Central to Heidegger’s account is that Dasein is ontologically – and not merely contingently – guilty, or in debt. He is aware of the radicality of this position, and contrasts it with the everyday understanding of guilt that perceives it as a contingent lack: e.g., Dasein can be guilty by incurring a debt by owing something to the other “which is due to him.”¹⁵⁴ Similarly, one can be guilty by “being to blame or being responsible for [*schuld sein an*]” a lack, for an absence of something that ought to belong to the other.¹⁵⁵ For Heidegger, such understandings of guilt as “owing,” “having debts,” “being responsible for,” “making oneself punishable,” being “laden with moral guilt,” and so on, are pervaded by the same assumption concerning “something which ought to be and which can be is missing,” and of something “not-Being-present-at-hand.”¹⁵⁶ Accordingly, understood as a lack, the notion of “moral guilt” deforms the primordial sense of the word by shifting Dasein’s attention to a concern for worldly affairs. For him, Dasein’s existential Being-guilty is unconnected to any debt, obligation or “ought” that can be quantifiable or measured. The Being-guilty (or Being-indebted) of Dasein is not because Dasein ‘lacks’ something or must make restitution for something in order for it to be corrected. It is more a matter of understanding Dasein in its facticity as such.

¹⁵⁰ SZ: 280/325.

¹⁵¹ SZ: 281/326.

¹⁵² SZ: 281/326.

¹⁵³ SZ: 283/328.

¹⁵⁴ SZ: 281/326.

¹⁵⁵ SZ: 282/327.

¹⁵⁶ SZ: 283/324.

For Heidegger, *Schuld* is an essential characteristic of Dasein because it “has been thrown [geworfen]” into existence and “brought into its ‘there,’ but not of its own accord.” Dasein exists as a “thrown” entity that “can *never* get [its] basis into its power.”¹⁵⁷ Nonetheless, Dasein is essentially responsible for its thrownness. In other words, “as existing, Dasein must take over Being-a-basis ... [and] be its own thrown basis.”¹⁵⁸

To this entity it has been delivered over, and as such it can exist solely as the entity which it is; and as this entity to which it has been delivered over, it is, in its existing, the basis of its potentiality-for-Being. Although it has not laid that basis itself, it reposes in the weight of it, which is made manifest to it as a burden by Dasein’s mood.¹⁵⁹

Heidegger emphasises that the “not,” of *Schuldigsein* does not have “the character of a privation, of a lack as compared with an ideal which is set up but is not attained in Dasein.”¹⁶⁰ Rather nullity defines Dasein in its very Being; or as Heidegger puts it: “entities whose Being is care ... are guilty in the very basis of their Being.”¹⁶¹ In a sense, then, the guilt, or the nullity, is *constitutional*: it relates not to something we *do*, but to who we are as a being that has found itself in the midst of the world, not of its own making. The call to recognize our primordial *Schuldigsein* is a phronetic call that requires an understanding of “the hermeneutic Situation,” recognizing as thrown the possibilities from which we choose. Crucially, Heidegger is absolutely explicit that this notion of constitutional nullity relates directly to the condition of possibility for ethics in the usual ontic sense.

[T]his Being-guilty is what provides, above all, the ontological condition for Dasein’s ability to come to owe anything in factically existing. This essential Being-guilty is, equiprimordially, the existential condition for the possibility of the ‘morally’ good and for that of the ‘morally’ evil – that is, for morality in general and for the possible

¹⁵⁷ SZ: 284/329.

¹⁵⁸ SZ: 284/330.

¹⁵⁹ SZ: 284/330.

¹⁶⁰ SZ: 285/331.

¹⁶¹ SZ: 286/332.

forms which this may take factically. [But the] ... primordial 'Being-guilty' cannot be defined by morality, since morality already presupposes it for itself.¹⁶²

As a ground of ethics, the nullity of conscience points toward the the fragility out of which every obligation or duty in ethics emerges. In other words, ethics needs to be ontologically attuned in order to take into account the type of being that is its ultimate subject. This is a being that (as Dreyfus has suggested) is called to understand its ontological emptiness – its nullity – and to engage in moral reflection within this context of awareness.¹⁶³ The call of conscience summons us to freely face our death by accepting the nothingness of our finitude which requires engaging face to face with the truth of our existence. And herein lies the irony: that the ground of ethics – authentic Dasein, as the very condition of possibility for moral normativity – turns out to be an *Ab-Grund*, a null ground, a ground which factical Dasein – as the ethically reflective being that seeks norms to guide its actions – “can *never* get ... into its power; and yet, as existing, it must take over Being-a-basis.” This is ironic, but also paradoxical: a fecund but abyssal ground that makes possible all normativity of action. “And how is Dasein this thrown basis?,” Heidegger asks. “Only in that it projects itself upon possibilities into which it has been thrown.”¹⁶⁴

Finally, Heidegger's analysis of conscience points to the priority of responsibility, for *Schuldigsein* “also has the signification of 'being responsible for' [*schuld sein an*] – that is, being the cause or author of something. The call predisposes authentic Dasein in accordance with its fundamental character as a being of care. Heidegger elaborates this point in his summer 1930 course on human freedom, in which freedom is placed at the core of what it means to be human, making us “being[s] capable of accountability ... [since the] essence of person, the personality, consists in self-responsibility [*Selbstverantwortlichkeit*].”¹⁶⁵ This self-responsibility is integral to the choices Dasein makes as it projects itself upon possibilities into which it has been thrown (a theme that points the way into the subject matter of the following chapter.)

¹⁶² SZ: 286/332.

¹⁶³ Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I*, 318.

¹⁶⁴ SZ: 284/330.

¹⁶⁵ GA 31: 182/262-264.

It is the primordial chasm of the 'not' that makes possible the freedom that provides the condition for the proper understanding of ethics. In this sense, the existential 'not' of Dasein's nullity paradoxically turns out to be a transformative presence that grants the openness of freedom, and in this way, the condition of possibility of the authentic moral life. As Frank Schalow puts it, Dasein "first locates the origin of its freedom in the abyss" and then "observes the constraints of moral grounds."¹⁶⁶

2.3.6 : Conscience and the Obscured Priority of the Other

As already hinted above, the sketch of the ground of ethics that has been provided in this chapter invites a severe criticism that has been levelled often enough at Heidegger. I speak here not so much of his own moral failings in terms of his disastrous liaisons with National Socialism, but rather of the perceived hyper-individualism of his account in *Being and Time*. Indeed, if Heidegger's account of conscience in §54-60 of this text were the only sections of relevance to this pervasive theme, one certainly could be excused for concluding that authentic Dasein is a deeply isolated being devoid of any primal bond with another. After all, the call of conscience as Heidegger develops it in these sections *specifically* involves a call coming *from* Dasein, *to* Dasein, *about* Dasein's own Being. Further, insofar as interpersonal otherness appears at all, it is represented largely by *das Man*, and in this sense the 'other' stands for the *frustration* of conscience, and with it the very possibility of the ethical life.

However, as I will elaborate below (especially in the fourth chapter on *Mitsein*) this is to deeply foreshorten the full scope of Heidegger's account in *Being and Time*. Of course, one might well argue – and indeed, this is a very reasonable complaint – that Heidegger is himself partly responsible for this very misunderstanding, given the brevity of his engagement with dimensions of authentic otherness, both in this work and perhaps in most others. Yet, it would be wrong to suggest that clear and unmistakable glimpses of a fuller picture are not staked out in Heidegger's texts, even if they are so often left without the level of development they invite, and without the integration with other elements that they so clearly require.

¹⁶⁶ Frank Schalow, *Heidegger and the Quest for the Sacred: From Thought to the Sanctuary of Faith* (New Orleans: Springer & Business Media, 2001), 68.

Two examples must suffice. The first case of such pointed lack of development is Heidegger's passing allusion (and that is really all it is) to "the voice of the friend whom every Dasein carries with it."¹⁶⁷ The allusion occurs in his discussion of discourse, linked to his earlier discussion of *Mitsein* (on which, more later). Yet the potential to link this to his analysis of the call of conscience is left completely undeveloped. Are we to assume that the "voice of a friend" must always be understood only in the context of an internalised "idle talk" that works against the possibility of an authentic heeding of the call of conscience? Or is there the possibility that such a reference might rather be tied into Heidegger's account in the sense of aiding the intensity and directionality of the call? Heidegger doesn't say.

Yet (and here is the second more substantial example) Heidegger does at one point in his account of conscience allude to the ontological 'positivity' of Being-with-others in the context of resoluteness: i.e., "a potentiality-for-Being in the manner of concerned solicitude [*Fürsorge*]."¹⁶⁸ Heidegger is here very clear (albeit from a bare couple of paragraphs!) that Being-with-others can be a genuine source of momentum in Dasein's being called back to authentic resoluteness; and even facilitating the calling back of others. After all, as Heidegger reminds his reader,

Resoluteness, as *authentic Being-one's-Self*, does not detach Dasein from its world, nor does it isolate it so that it becomes a free-floating 'I'. And how should it, when resoluteness as authentic disclosedness, is authentically nothing else than *Being-in-the-world*? Resoluteness brings the Self right into its current concerned Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being with Others.¹⁶⁹

For Heidegger, the 'internal' (so to speak) dialogue of the call of conscience makes possible an ethical encounter with the other. After all, in a work that so fundamentally challenged the 'inner-'outer' distinction that separated the Cartesian *cogito* from the 'external world,' there is no basis for separating Dasein from the world of others. To be in-the-world is always to be in-the-world-with-others. And this Being-with-others immediately has ethical implications. This is a point that Heidegger so clearly, and yet so briefly, makes:

¹⁶⁷ SZ: 163/206.

¹⁶⁸ SZ: 300/348.

¹⁶⁹ SZ: 298/344.

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 – not by ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraternizing in the 'they' and in what 'they' want to undertake.¹⁷⁰

There is so much to unpack here that Heidegger's text omits to carry forward. A fuller account of the implications of these two passages must await, especially until the existentialle of *Mitsein* is considered in chapter four, below. Nonetheless, suffice to say for now that one wonders how *Being and Time* might have been changed had this notion of a "solicitude which leaps forth and liberates" the other been developed, or of what it means ontologically for Dasein to become "the 'conscience' of others" had received the substantial elaboration that it deserves. Nonetheless, the trajectory of these comments are clear, insofar as the very nature of conscience is transformed by such a vision, no longer being simply a matter of self-interest or self-involvement alone. When the call of conscience summons Dasein to authentically take up the issue of how it will be in the world, Dasein – it would seem – is at the same time called to assume the responsibility for caring for others and its world. Here, indeed, ethics – in its fully-inter-personal and full-blooded sense – is presupposed in its ontological grounding, for Dasein is at the same time *summoned* to take care, to care for [*Fürsorge*] others.

2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the ethical implications of Heidegger's account of conscience. On the basis of an exploration of Rebecca Kukla's discussion of the notion of 'transcendental conscience' (in the first section), I then traced how the phenomenon of conscience evolved from his early work (section 2), culminating in his developed presentation in *Being and Time* (section 3). Throughout the chapter, I examined how Heidegger distinguished the primordial phenomenon of conscience from the moral notion

¹⁷⁰ SZ: 298/344-45.

of the concept, which he associated with the presupposed 'ought' underlying traditional metaphysics, but also the way in which the traditional understanding is grounded in an ontological conception of conscience. The upshot of Heidegger's account of conscience is clear. By heeding to the call, Dasein acts not as a servant who is constantly delivered over to the conventional moral wisdom of its day, but as an authentic self-responsible and resolute being that is aware of its own finitude, and in that anxious comportment is ready to heed the summons of care to act in line with its authentic potentiality-for-Being. It is in this way that conscience as *φρόνησις* reveals the "truthful safekeeping"¹⁷¹ of Dasein as a being of *πρᾶξις* and by so doing provides it with a proper ontological ground for ontic moral reflection. As Kukla rightly puts it: "in every response to a call as normatively binding, there exists the implicit figuration of conscience as an authoritative speaker."¹⁷²

In the chapters that follow, Heidegger's account of authenticity (chapter 3), and then Being-with (chapter 4), will similarly be presented in their profound significance for the possibility of moral normativity.

¹⁷¹ *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristotele*: 382/36.

¹⁷² Kukla, "The ontology and temporality of conscience," 24.

Chapter 3

EIGENTLICHKEIT

Having shown how the key notions Heidegger deploys in describing *φρόνησις* as conscience suggest conscience as a precondition for the possibility of ethics, the aim of this chapter is to examine how Dasein becomes authentic when “it understands itself as wanting to have a conscience.”¹ Through an investigation of how Heidegger discloses the existential structure of the ‘experience’ of authenticity, I intend to show how the different key elements of the concept constellate to further contribute to an ontological basis for ethics. To this end, the chapter will examine the very idea of authenticity in the early Heidegger, analyse some of the key metaphors and vocabularies Heidegger employs to discuss it in his very early work, and then chart how this language and these themes are then developed more fully in key moments in his account of authenticity in *Being and Time*.

The chapter proceeds in three phases. In the first section, I examine some of the scholarly debates surrounding Heidegger’s account of authenticity via Benjamin Crowe’s helpful suggestion concerning three interpretive trends: the “ontological”, the “narrativist”, and the “emancipatory” readings. On the basis of a focus on the last of these, I explore how (understood in terms of emancipation) Heideggerian *Eigentlichkeit* evokes Aristotelian *φρόνησις* when Dasein “understands the call [of conscience] undisguisedly.”² While each of Crowe’s three interpretive trends sheds light on the key features of Heidegger’s notion of authenticity, I think that the emancipatory account proves to be the most useful interpretation that fully illustrates the relevance of authenticity as a condition for the possibility of ethics. Thus, seen as an emancipatory resoluteness, authenticity serves as an existential condition for the possibility of ethics when it opens Dasein up to break free from the enclosing structures of the normative world into which it is thrown and to act in light of the fact that it has to own (*eigentlich*) its being by taking responsibility for the force of the norms by the virtue of which it acts.³

¹ SZ: 295/342.

² SZ: 295/342.

³ Steve Crowell, *Normativity and Phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 63.

To flesh out this emancipatory account of authenticity so as to achieve more clarity on how the concept maps onto my thesis concerning Heidegger's ground of ethics, the second section of this chapter embarks on an investigation of some of the varying vocabularies and metaphors in Heidegger's very early work that foreshadows his talk of authenticity in *Being and Time* itself. The section will specifically survey the published and unpublished post-war courses of Heidegger that span from 1919 to 1923. By analysing these early works, I explore the longer trajectory of his thought on authenticity (even as he makes use of different metaphors) that culminates in *Being and Time*. As will be shown, while Heidegger never explicitly uses the language of authenticity in these early texts, the thematic threads are both clear and important.

In the third section, I focus on Heidegger's explicit examination of authenticity in *Being and Time*. This discussion will first expose the dynamic interplay between the features of Dasein's inauthentic and authentic ways of life and the profound ethical implications of this analysis. It will also seek to examine three key components of authentic experience (anxiety, Being-towards-death and resoluteness) which make possible the existentiell modification of the Being of inauthentic Dasein. By exploring these key features of authentic experience, I will show why Heidegger views conventional ethics as inauthentically oriented because of its failure to see the 'ontological essence' of Dasein as an ability to be (*Seinkönnen*), the "for the sake of" (*Worumwillen*) which constitutes the fundamental ground of all moral norms.

The chapter will conclude with an examination of Dasein's authentic historicity. My core claim here is that Heidegger roots *Eigentlichkeit* in *Geschichtlichkeit* (which at this stage in his thought, and on the basis of the texts themselves, is not to be construed in any German nationalistic sense). Thus, reading Heidegger against the existentialist critique, I suggest that understood as an emancipatory account, authenticity does not announce Dasein as a self-determining being with absolute freedom. Instead, as Heidegger himself puts it *Being and Time*, authentic experience is "a modified way in which ... everydayness is seized upon."⁴ So, by implication, as a condition for the possibility of ethics, Heidegger's account of authenticity does not involve the creation of values *ex nihilo*. Instead, it provides for a

⁴ SZ: 129/166.

creative reappropriation of Dasein's historical tradition which makes Dasein "the being of its [ground]," a [ground] that "is never anything but the [ground] for an entity whose Being has to take over Being-a-[ground]."⁵ In taking over its ground, Heidegger says that "Dasein lets its ownmost Self take action in itself [*in sich handeln*] in terms of that potentiality-for-Being which it has chosen."⁶

3.1 THE DEBATE CONCERNING AUTHENTICITY IN THE EARLY HEIDEGGER

Despite being one of the central concepts of Heidegger's fundamental ontology, the meaning of the term *Eigentlich[keit]* is heavily contested in the scholarship. Of course, the meaning of this term as it is understood in Anglophone scholarship, will be heavily influenced by how it is rendered into English. In this essay, I have chosen to follow usual practice by translating *Eigentlich[keit]* as authentic[ity]. There are, of course, limitations in doing so. On one hand, the sense of genuine[ness] or proper[ness] that is evident in normal German usage of the term is preserved. But on the other hand, what is lost is the more literal meaning that points to Dasein as 'own-most' (*eigent-lich*), along with the possibilities for associations with other cases of this fecund semantic field in Heidegger's work, (including, for example, his later vocabulary around *Ereignis* and its cognates).⁷ Clearly both associations are important, and in this way Heidegger's usage of the language of *Eigentlichkeit* in *Being and Time* picks up on his earlier emphasis on the call to a life of genuineness or inwardness.⁸

In his book on *Heidegger's Religious Origins*,⁹ Benjamin Crowe provides an insightful demarcation of three different interpretations of Heidegger's account of authenticity that provides an excellent lens with which to progress the argument of this chapter. As I highlighted earlier, although each of these three readings sheds light on the fundamental components of the concept of authenticity, the emancipatory account brings together the

⁵ SZ: 285/330.

⁶ SZ: 288/334.

⁷ On the basis of their own translation of *Eigentlich(keit)*, Macquarrie and Robinson themselves note how the "connection between '*eigentlich*' ('authentic', 'real') and '*eigen*' ('own') is lost in translation". See SZ: 43/68, fn.3.

⁸ See Hans W. Cohn, *Heidegger and the Roots of Existential Therapy* (London: Continuum, 2002), 85.

⁹ Benjamin D. Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity* (Bloomington, United States: Indiana University Press, 2006).

key features of the other accounts and at the same time supplements them with the element of Dasein's retrieval to its concrete possibilities which receives little or no attention in the narrativist and ontological accounts alone. In what follows in this section, I explore one at a time, noting the way in which the third is especially important for the furthering of the argument of this thesis. Of course, in following Crowe's threefold demarcation, I will omit other more critical readings that certainly have their advocates and their place within a broader account of the legacy of Heideggerian 'authenticity' than is offered in this chapter. These include accounts such as those by Karl Löwith and Richard Wolin that focus on authenticity in its moral and political contexts, including its potential for enlistment into authoritarian and nihilistic projects; and by Theodor Adorno who linked it to the ideology of capitalism.¹⁰ To these one might add accounts – such as that by Sonia Sikka¹¹ – that read Heideggerian authenticity simply as a version of the Kantian ethics of autonomy. While such accounts undoubtedly contain important insights into the wider significance of Heidegger's account, they lack the specifically exegetical approach to Heidegger's texts that is required here.

3.1.1 : The Ontological Account of Authenticity

Crowe's designation of the different interpretations of authenticity starts with the analysis of the 'ontological' account – a feature he considers outstanding because, according to him, "it integrates Heidegger's analysis of authenticity into a more general account of his philosophical project as a whole."¹² Citing Michael Zimmerman and Thomas Sheehan as the proponents of this view, Crowe argues that in the ontological reading, Heidegger's authenticity is best described "as a kind of cognitive achievement," a "more general theory

¹⁰ See Wolin, *The Politics of Being: The Political Thought of Martin Heidegger*, 30.; Karl Löwith, ed. *European Nihilism: Reflections on the European War*, Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1995), 160.; Theodor Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), *passim*.

¹¹ See, Sonia Sikka, "Kantian Ethics in Being and Time," *Journal of Philosophical Research* 31 (2006): 319. Sikka argues that just as Kant divided the human being into a freely acting, moral self, and a mechanically acting, empirical self, in *Being and Time*, "Dasein also has two 'selves,' or possible ways of being, one of which involves an unsteady being driven about by daily concerns, and the other a self-possessed choosing to be responsible." (SZ 319/366-367)

¹² Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 166.

about human nature” that Zimmerman calls “temporal openness” and Sheehan understands as “excessive appropriation into recess.”¹³

Zimmerman notes a certain unresolved doubleness at the heart of Heidegger’s account of authenticity. On one hand, the state of inauthenticity degrades Dasein to the status of a mere “continuing ego-subject” and by so doing conceals the fact that fundamentally, Dasein is defined by openness. However, on the other hand, an authentic individual “resolves to accept the openness which [it is] paradoxically.”¹⁴ To be authentic “involves an ontological transformation of the temporality of an individual life,” and “through its ontological openness, the authentic individual gains a more ‘appropriate’ understanding of him/herself.”¹⁵

As Crowe points out, Thomas Sheehan’s reading complements Zimmerman’s. For Sheehan, to resolve or to be authentic simply means waking up to and ‘allowing’ one’s appropriation-into-beingness (*Ereignis*).¹⁶ Sheehan contends that in authenticity, one encounters one’s own true or proper being. Here, “one recuperates one’s essence and thus attains ‘authenticity’ by becoming one’s proper (or ‘authentic’) self.”¹⁷ Further, Sheehan argues that this retrieval does not occur in the sense of “overcoming and controlling” ourselves, but in the sense of “accepting [ourselves] as ever recessive.”¹⁸

Crowe’s discussion succeeds in showing the commonality between Sheehan’s and Zimmerman’s accounts. They share the view that in becoming authentic, the enclosure created by self-deception and dispersal in inauthentic everydayness is defrayed so that Dasein can bring itself to its own moment of vision. Accordingly, the ontological account of authenticity sees it as a specific way of life in which openness to Being is revealed as Dasein’s basic structure. Through this openness, Dasein uncovers its intelligibility and

¹³ Crowe, *Heidegger’s Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 165.

¹⁴ Crowe, *Heidegger’s Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 164.

¹⁵ Crowe, *Heidegger’s Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 164.

¹⁶ Crowe, *Heidegger’s Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 164.

¹⁷ Crowe, *Heidegger’s Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 164.

¹⁸ Crowe, *Heidegger’s Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 165. Also see Thomas Sheehan, ed. Introduction: Heidegger, the Project and the Fulfilment in *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker* (New York: Routledge, 2017), xviii.

“clearly brings the alienated nature of inauthentic life, and its overcoming in authenticity, to the forefront of the discussion.”¹⁹

Beyond those approaches considered by Crowe, other examples of such a reading of Heideggerian authenticity abound. Christopher Macann, for example, has argued that Heidegger’s concept of authenticity in *Being and Time* could be assumed to be the climax of Nietzsche’s slogan “Become who you are!” which Nietzsche employs in his last work, *Ecce homo*. According to him, Nietzsche’s ‘Death of God’ and Heidegger’s ‘Finitude of Dasein,’ could be “taken as the only remaining salvational recipe, the last bulwark against nihilism.”²⁰ On a different but related tack, Meghan Craig draws a similarity between Heideggerian authenticity and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. According to Craig, the question “to be or not to be” evokes questions of what it really means to ‘be’,” and is picked up later in the play when in Polonius’ earnest advice to his son Laertes: “To thine own self be true.”²¹

Yet Crowe’s critique of this ontological reading is equally perceptive. He is opposed to what he describes as the “abstractness and theoretical flavour”²² of this reading. This includes the apparent disconnect between “the cognition of what we are and some kind of transformation of how we are.”²³ While leaving open the possibility that this disconnect is endemic to Heidegger’s own presentation, Crowe criticises Zimmerman’s and Sheehan’s failure to point out the problem of this disconnect as such: i.e., how the uncovering of Dasein’s basic structure of intelligibility translates into a practical dimension. Further, Crowe questions the possibility of this reading maintaining the difference between the existential and existentiell. The achievement of the *Daseinanalytik* is not the right theory about the human nature, but a resolve to live one’s life in one’s own way.”²⁴ In Crowe’s reading, the theoretical orientation literally sucks the blood out of Dasein’s firsthand lived experience in the world. A credible interpretation of authenticity should avoid “reifying Heidegger’s categories as far as possible”, by which it becomes “some sort of theory of

¹⁹ Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 167.

²⁰ Christopher Macann, "Existentialism, Authenticity and the Self " in *The Continuum Companion to Existentialism*, ed., Jack Reynolds and Ashley Woodward Felicity Joseph (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 198.

²¹ Meghan Craig, "To Be Or To Be: Understanding Authenticity from an Existential Perspective," *Journal of Society for Existential Analysis* 20, no. 2 (2009): 292.

²³ Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 166.

²³ Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 166.

²⁴ Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 166. Crowe cites SZ: 300f/346f.

‘essence’ or ‘true self’ underpinning ordinary life. For when this happens, it runs the risk of “sliding into what Heidegger was wont to call the “language of metaphysics.”²⁵

3.1.2 : The Narrativist Account

Crowe takes Charles Guignon’s account of authenticity as a classic example of what he calls the “narrativist” account. The major merit of this reading, according to Crowe, is that it sees the aim of authenticity as re-establishing a sense of “the gravity and responsibility of existence by unveiling a more profound understanding of what it means to be.”²⁶ As against the popular existential interpretation which sees an authentic individual as a free agent who authors its own life independent of any external moral principle, the narrativist reading shifts the discourse on authenticity to incorporate the ineradicable “role of tradition and community in Heidegger’s more general account of ... authenticity.”²⁷ In this way, authenticity makes room for historicity, because as Guignon puts it, authentic historicity sheds light on the transpersonal element that “points towards a communal sense of responsibility for realising goals.”²⁸

In this way, for Guignon, Heidegger’s fundamental ontology is ‘a fundamental historicity’ because its central role is “to combat the groundlessness of the contemporary world by uncovering enduring values and meanings within the framework of worldliness and human finitude.”²⁹ But further, Guignon perceives authenticity to be best understood as a mode of Being in which Dasein lives moments as part of a coherent and cumulative narrative, and in which it clear-sightedly faces up to the inevitable truth of its own finitude. Guignon’s authentic Dasein possesses a kind of coherent and cumulative narrative, as he puts it himself, “a well-crafted story” with “a beginning, a development, and an ending that gives the whole its point.”³⁰ Inauthenticity, on the other hand, is described as “a failure to be

²⁵ Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 167.

²⁶ Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 167.

²⁷ Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 167.

²⁸ Charles B. Guignon, "On Saving Heidegger From Rorty," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 46 (1986): 404.

²⁹ Guignon, "On Saving Heidegger From Rorty," 404.

³⁰ Charles B. Guignon, "Philosophy and Authenticity: Heidegger’s Search for a Ground for Philosophizing," in *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus*, ed., Jeff Malpas & Mark Wrathall (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 85.

coherent or integrated” insofar as Dasein is deprived of its ontological propensity to face up to the inevitable truth of its finitude.³¹

While Crowe concedes that the narrative account of authenticity is right in questioning voluntarist existentialists’ interpretations of authenticity which negate the dynamic historical contexts of Dasein in its description of authenticity, he is eventually quite critical of this account, since the dynamic interplay between the notions of authenticity and inauthenticity is much “richer than Guignon’s account would indicate.”³² By placing “coherence” or “integration” at the centre of his account, Guignon overlooks other aspects of authenticity, such as vocational commitment and the need for a special kind of disclosive experience.³³ Further, even with its synonymous concepts such as ‘integrity,’ ‘cohesiveness’ and ‘focus,’ the characterisation of the “coherency” of authenticity is vague.³⁴ Crowe goes further still in suggesting that authenticity, understood in this sense, brings Heidegger’s account much too close to a “Kantian view about the moral value of rational consistency.”³⁵

3.1.3 : The Emancipatory Account of Authenticity

John Van Buren’s interpretation of authenticity in the early Heidegger is typical of what Crowe calls the “emancipatory reading.” This interpretation – which Crowe considers the most convincing – sees authentic self-responsibility as neither ‘subjectivism’ nor ‘relativism,’ but Dasein’s ability to hold itself free for responsibility over its ontological heritage. An authentic individual, according to the emancipatory reading, is one “who has broken out of the dictatorship of [*das Man*] and its various ideological manifestations and so no longer remains complicit in these.”³⁶

Crowe is correct in effectively suggesting that this emancipatory account retains the strengths of the other two interpretations, but without their attendant problems. First, the emancipatory account gives credence to both historicism and to groundlessness, and in this way does better justice to the *thrown* context in which Dasein has its Being. Second,

³¹ Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 167.

³² Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 167.

³³ Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 167.

³⁴ Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 168.

³⁵ Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 168.

³⁶ Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity*, 169.

it does better justice to the sense in which authenticity can only ever be “a modification” of Dasein’s average inauthentic way of relating to itself.³⁷ Third, as opposed to the alternative readings, the emancipatory account brings out more clearly the liberating aspect of *Fürsorge* according to which authenticity pertains not only to Dasein’s care for itself, but also gives rise (as seen in the previous chapter) to “a free community of individuals,” where one “becomes the conscience of Others” by “letting them be free for their own possibilities.”³⁸

What follows is a close textual interpretive investigation of authenticity in light of this emancipatory reading. In doing so, I will be working towards a broader aim of establishing how the key elements of this theme contribute toward the ontological ground of ethics that I have argued is integral to early Heideggerian thought. While focusing largely on Heidegger’s account in *Being and Time* (see section 3.3), the following section (3.2) will look to chart something of the trajectory to this account as can be gleaned from much earlier works.

3.2 COGNATES OF AUTHENTICITY IN THE EARLY HEIDEGGER

In what follows, several works of the young Heidegger will be examined in terms of the way in which they help prepare the ground for the category of *Eigentlichkeit* in *Being and Time*. These are, namely: Heidegger’s 1919 correspondences with Fr. Engelbert Krebs, Karl Löwith and Elizabeth Blochman; his lecture course in the winter semester of the same year on *The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview*, his 1919/21 essay, “Comments on Karl Jasper’s Psychology of Worldviews” (published in *Wegmarken*); his winter 1921–22 lecture course, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*; and finally his summer 1923 course, *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*. to the intention is to demonstrate the unifying thread that leads through Heidegger’s thought on authenticity which by far receives its most complete treatment in *Being and Time*. These works will be explored in terms of the way they develop a wide range of overlapping themes and vocabularies that can be profitably read as important stepping stones (even experiments) along the way

³⁷ See, SZ: 180/224.

³⁸ SZ: 122/158.

towards Heidegger's more fully developed notion in *Being and Time*. Further, like *Eigentlichkeit* itself, these themes and terms can and should be understood in terms of the abyssal ethical ground to which they contribute in Heidegger's early work as a whole.

3.2.1 : Published Correspondence from 1919

Perhaps the main initial development of the idea of authenticity in Heidegger's work can be traced to his 1919 correspondences with Fr Engelbert Krebs, Karl Löwith and Elizabeth Blochman. These three different letters mark the first moment in Heidegger's work where he refers to the necessity of returning to the basic moments of life in his criticism of western metaphysical tradition. The logic of his later notion of authenticity is present in these letters in his discussion of the way in which philosophy provides a pre-wordly or pre-theoretical frame, and his talk of "a life of inner truthfulness," "a concrete [life of] factual origin" and "graced moments of life" – experiences where "we feel ourselves belonging immediately to the direction in which we live."³⁹

In 1919, Heidegger was teaching Catholic philosophy at Freiburg University, having established a strong reputation in the field. However, in his letter of that year to Fr. Krebs, his colleague, he indicates that he was exorcising himself completely from the tractions of Catholic dogmatic teachings both in his academic philosophy and personal life. The young Heidegger does not announce that he has lost his religious faith or even abandoned the Catholic *Weltanschauung* for what it was. Rather, he announces his complete departure from the system of Catholicism because the "epistemological insights that pass over into the theory of historical knowledge have made the system of Catholicism problematic and unacceptable to [him]."⁴⁰

Heidegger calls into question Catholic dogmatic teachings, accusing it of adopting a theoretical approach as a way of restricting the freedom of its members, a measure that has made it hard for him to live as a true philosopher. Philosophy qua philosophy, in Heidegger's understanding, requires, "inner truthfulness towards oneself and those one is supposed to teach."⁴¹ Consequently, in seeking to deliver philosophy from the shackles of

³⁹ Joachim W. Storck, *Martin Heidegger, Elisabeth Blochmann: Briefwechsel, 1918-1969* (Deutsche Schillergesellschaft: Marbach am Neckar, 1989), 14.

⁴⁰ Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1988), 106.

⁴¹ Ott, *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie*, 107.

the dogmatic teachings of the church, he announced his intention to direct his research energy towards a retrieval of what lies latent in Catholicism and traditional metaphysics, which for him is “a call to the eternal vocation of the inner man.”⁴²

While Heidegger does not explicitly describe authenticity in this letter, an attentive look at his remarks suggests a substantive allusion to the basic contours of the concept as it is developed in *Being and Time*. Two elements are linked here: “inner truthfulness towards oneself” and “a call to the eternal vocation of the inner man.” Such a philosophical lifestyle is contrasted with the Catholic life-world with its dogmatic restrictions. The impression Heidegger gives here is that for one to be a true philosopher, one must be free to choose one’s own determinations in order to seize the possibility that belongs to oneself. This possibility, however, can only be attained through a strong stance in facing the true nature of one’s own finitude where we recognise that we are who and what we make of ourselves in the course of living out our active lives rather than a self-determination obtained from fixed boundaries like the method of dogmatic Catholicism.

In a letter in the same year to his student, Karl Löwith, Heidegger provides a clearer picture of his evolving notion of authenticity, this time framed via the ideal of staying true to one’s “genuine self.” Graduating from his second-year course with Heidegger, Löwith had asked Heidegger to explain the source of his philosophical questioning, and its connection to abstraction and logic. In his reply, Heidegger notes that “I work concretely and factically out of my ‘I am,’ out of my intellectual and wholly factic origin, milieu, life-contexts, and whatever is available to me from these as a vital experience in which I live.”⁴³ His philosophical curiosity, he explains, emanates from his constant grasping of his historical situation which makes him the starting point, initiator, and sustainer of action when it comes to pursuing his own possibilities. The anticipation of the developed category of *Eigentlichkeit* is also palpable here, a concept that (like *Gewissen*) was to be grounded upon his reading of the Aristotelian *φρόνησις*; as that which enables practical action. Thus, given that the key to *Eigentlichkeit* is taking action, Heidegger, as Steven Crowell claims, sees the legitimacy of his concrete factual experiences “not as something [he] represents to

⁴² Ott, *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie*, 107.

⁴³ January 1919 letter to Karl Löwith can be found in Kiesel, Denker, and Heinz, *Heidegger’s Way of Thought: Critical and Interpretative Signposts*, 13.

[himself], but as something [he] is in a sense able to do."⁴⁴ As Crowell further points out, in Heidegger's view, "possibility is an ability to-be (*Seinkönnen*) whose modal character derives from the fact that it "is" only [when something is] an issue for me ... that I can succeed or fail at being in trying to be it."⁴⁵

Heidegger's contemporaneous correspondence with Elizabeth Blochmann points in similar directions, even as it adopts a different vocabulary. Here, Heidegger writes of the need to embrace "graced moments of life," where "we feel ourselves belonging immediately to the direction in which we live."⁴⁶ Echoing his letters to Krebs and Löwith, Heidegger writes that we experience such "graced moments" only when we are attuned to our "individual unique inner truthfulness," by which there is an "inner adherence to the central I and its God-directed striving toward goals." He notes that like the strenuous occasions of musical compositions, graced moments of life requires us to be able to:

wait for the high-pitched intensities of meaningful life, and we must remain in continuity with such gifted moments, not so much to enjoy them as to work them into life, to take them with us in the onrush of life and to include them in the rhythms of all oncoming life. And in moments when we immediately feel ourselves and are attuned to the direction in which we vitally belong, we cannot merely establish and simply record what is clearly had, as if it stood over against us like an object. The understanding self-possession is authentic [*eigentlich*] only when it is lived, when it is at once a Being ... [The graced moments of life occur when we] become aware of [our] directedness, which is not theoretical but a total experience.⁴⁷

Although Heidegger does not provide us with the practical examples of how such "graced moments" can be lived, he indicates that it is an alertness which disrupts our normal everydayness. Clearly anticipated here is his later account of authenticity as an existentiell modification of Dasein, for such graced moments interrupt its Being-in-the-world, unveiling

⁴⁴ Steven Crowell, "Heidegger on Practical Reasoning, Morality and Agency," in *Normativity and Phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger*, ed., Steven Crowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 287.

⁴⁵ Crowell, "Heidegger on Practical Reasoning, Morality and Agency," 287.

⁴⁶ Storck, *Martin Heidegger, Elisabeth Blochmann: Briefwechsel, 1918-1969*, 14.

⁴⁷ Storck, *Martin Heidegger, Elisabeth Blochmann: Briefwechsel, 1918-1969*, 14.

authentic possibilities that are not defined by theoretical principles, but by new factual awareness.

Heidegger's responses to Krebs, Löwith and Blochmann are evidently significant in two respects. First, his emphasis on living a life that reflects one's "inner truthfulness," working "concretely and factually out of [one's] I am" and embracing one's "graced moments of life" confirms the intrinsic link between authenticity and wanting-to-have-a conscience, as discussed in the previous chapter. By maintaining that choosing out of our concrete and factual "I am" is the only path to "inner truthfulness" or "genuine" understanding of who we are, Heidegger exemplifies how the experience of conscience is possible only through a form of authentic action.

Second, these letters show Heidegger effectively insisting on the requirements for the possibility of ethics right from his early years in academic philosophy. However, by disparaging theoretical ethical frameworks and emphasising that he philosophises out of nothing but his own "concretely and factually 'I am,'" Heidegger here enacts the need to relaunch ethical inquiry from another dimension; that is, by dislodging the centrality of universal moral principles as the heart of ethics. Every ethical inquiry must proceed on the basis of, we might say, a phronetic living out of one's Being, which emanates from the immediacy of our lived world experience. In effect, as Dennis Schmidt has suggested, "to think of ethics," for Heidegger, is to think out of the sources of our being."⁴⁸ In his "Letter on Humanism", Heidegger himself puts it this way: "ethics [qua the thinking of] ἡθικός ... ponders the abode of the human being ... [and as] thinking which thinks the truth of being as the primordial element of the human being ... it is in itself originary ethics."⁴⁹ Thus, in suggesting a ground of ethics, Heidegger indicates that *πραξις* and deliberation on *πραξις* are to constitute a way of being in the world, and ethical theories are to be concerned more with the authenticity of *πραξις* rather than with its excellence in respect to its normative force.

⁴⁸ Schmidt claims that Heidegger's critique of the traditional understanding of ethics draws from its "original sense in Homer" which means "a place where animals live." According to him, Heidegger "draws on this sense of the word when he reads the Heraclitean fragment and enlists that to speak of the origins of ethical life for us." See Dennis J. Schmidt, ed. *Hermeneutics as Original Ethics*, The Difficulties of Ethical Life (Fordham: Fordham University Press, 2008), 40.

⁴⁹ LH: 271/356.

3.2.2 : Authenticity in the *Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview*

Heidegger also tacitly raised the theme of authenticity in an evocative way in his 1919 lecture course on *The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview*, a work Theodore Kisiel has referred to as his initial “hermeneutic breakthrough.”⁵⁰ Here, something like his later notion of authenticity is presented as the key to reforming the academic philosophy of his university and the ideology of his German nation in general.⁵¹

Amidst the social and political instability confronting the German nation and at the same time frustrated by the lack of attention academic philosophy pays to concrete individual life, Heidegger launched his first lecture course explaining why “returning to the [authentic] origins of the spirit”⁵² is the only conduit that can lead to the renewal of both German nation and the academic philosophy of his time. While advancing his case, Heidegger claims that for philosophy to address the vital living situation of individuals, it would have to avoid being contaminated by the western metaphysical tradition whose “concern is only the “practical provision of rules,” rather than advancing the course for the “primordially motivated personal Being whose practical experiences of real life is at the core of what it means to be authentically human.”⁵³

Heidegger utilises the opportunity of his first lecture course to radically reinterpret the phenomenological position of Edmund Husserl in light of his approach to the problem of philosophy. For the young Heidegger, Husserl’s phenomenology had given precedence to theory over lived experience; to the pure transcendental ego over what Heidegger describes as the “historical ego” and the “ego of the situation,”⁵⁴ which he would later term “Dasein” in *Being and Time*.⁵⁵ For Heidegger, the dominance of the theoretical in philosophy – a dominance that he sees enacted in Husserlian thought – amounts to a crisis in which philosophy stands at a “methodological crossroad which will decide on the very

⁵⁰ Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, 458.

⁵¹ Thomas Sheehan, “Reading a Life: Heidegger and Hard Times,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed., Charles B. Guignon (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 2006), 78.

⁵² GA 56/57: 4/5

⁵³ GA 56/57: 5/5.

⁵⁴ GA 56/57: 205–6/153–4.

⁵⁵ SZ: 12/32.

life or death of philosophy.”⁵⁶ Actually, in Heidegger’s view, it was this “primacy of the theoretical” – and not the threat of “naturalism as some have opined” that was the true crisis, for it had the effect of “deform[ing] the true problematic.”⁵⁷ Husserl’s theoretical orientation of the pure ego, “hold[s] stubbornly to a one-sided goal,”⁵⁸ deforming the richly textured *Umwelt*, the firsthand world of lived experience in which one primarily exists and carries out practical tasks.

Heidegger suggests that as an unmediated, direct personal experience, life “does not consist just of things, objects which are then conceived of meaning this or that.”⁵⁹ Instead, when I take life as an inherent, primordial mode of interpreting myself within my surrounding world, ethics then becomes first meaningful and primary. What this means, as Crowell suggests, is that, for the young Heidegger, it is only our “concrete practical identities” that can “provide the necessary ‘ends’”⁶⁰ Ethics is about human life. Thus, rather than being defined in terms of reason or law as the criterion for concrete realities, to be ethical is to acquire an identity that transcends universal good. This transcendence “is a constant upsurge into the future, a recurring process of becoming, delivering us over to the responsibility of continual self-invention and creative metamorphosis.”⁶¹ Otherwise put, because Dasein is always an issue for itself, Heidegger suggests Dasein’s practical existence and life experience as a clue to the origin and purpose, or rather the ontological structure, of ethics.

Towards the end of this lecture course, Heidegger elaborates on his claim concerning the primacy of factual life over theory by drawing a link between “authentic life experience” and “life intensification.” He contrasts these two ideals with what he calls “minimizing of life” or “superficial” experience of life, a remark that is certainly suggestive of the dynamic interplay between authenticity and inauthentic in *Being and Time*:

[T]here are authentic life-experiences, which grow out of a genuine life-world (artist, religious person) ... Depending upon the authentic motivational possibilities,

⁵⁶ GA 56/57: 51/63.

⁵⁷ GA 56/57: 68/87.

⁵⁸ GA 56/57: 68/87.

⁵⁹ GA 56/57: 58/72.

⁶⁰ Crowell, “Heidegger On Practical Reasoning, Morality, and Agency,” 303.

⁶¹ Daniel Berthold-Bond, “A Kierkegaardian critique of Heidegger’s concept of authenticity” *Man and World* 24 (1991): 122.

there arises the phenomenon of life intensification (in the opposite case, minimizing of life). This phenomenon is not determined by a feeling of experienced content. There are people who have experienced much in various worlds (artistically etc) and yet are? 'inwardly empty.' They have reached only a 'superficial' experience of life.⁶²

Although the exact implication of this comparison is not entirely clear, the example of someone who has "experienced much in various world of arts" suggests the idea of a significant knowledge of the world of arts alongside a lack in having an experience of genuine artistic prowess. Here, surely, is an anticipation of the account in *Being and Time*, of inauthenticity as a mode where Dasein losses itself because it exists in ways in which the world is publicly and "superficial[ly]" interpreted.

The implications for the possibility of ethics are clear here. By identifying "the primordial intention of authentic life"⁶³ as the proper place of emergence for every philosophical inquiry, Heidegger indicates that the normative force of ethical theories should always be grounded in a primary level of experience that is intensely personal. As such, it is "improper, untrue and nonessential [*uneigentlich*]" for theories to make absolute claims on us, because theories are "experience[s] without world," always encouraging me to "leave my lived experience behind."⁶⁴ Theoretical claims are binding on us only when we live our primordial life experience, and this is a seminal point in relation to the possibility of ethics. Jeff Malpas highlights this connection in arguing that it is consistent with Heidegger's approach to insist that every actual authentic ethical "engagement [should] come from working through concrete [phronetic] problems and situations", for we cannot "derive practical outcomes from prior theoretical commitments."⁶⁵

⁶² GA 56/57: 155/208.

⁶³ GA 56/57: 155/208.

⁶⁴ GA 56/57: 89/117.

⁶⁵ Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology : Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press, 2007), 41.

3.2.3 : Authenticity in the Jaspers Essay, and in *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*

The focus on authenticity qua genuine living or resolution in his 1919 letters and lecture course continues into Heidegger's works of the early 1920s, though increasingly these themes are articulated in a heightened way through the terminology of 'existence.'

In his *Comments on Karl Jaspers' Psychology of Worldviews*, Heidegger informs his readers that the concept of existence "is intended to refer and point to the phenomenon of the 'I am,' the sense of being which lies in the 'I am' as the starting point of a fundamental phenomenal context and the problematic belonging to it."⁶⁶ In his reading, the notion of existence as the 'I am' is not to be explained "in a theoretical manner," which as he suggests, defines Karl Jaspers' usage of the concept. Rather, Heidegger is explicit about his desire to trace it back to its Kierkegaardian origin for whom existence was closely related to "subjectivity", "inwardness" and thus to "truth."⁶⁷ In so doing, Heidegger indicates that he wishes to "renew" the term, returning it "to the genuine origins of the spirit" and "the vitality of genuine research."⁶⁸ According to Heidegger:

[E]xistence [takes the shape of] an "authentic dimension of life ... holding open of the concrete and trouble-laden horizon of expectation which every context of actualisation as such develops ... What turns out to be important here is accordingly the fact that I have myself that is, the basic experience in which I encounter myself as a self. Living in this kind of experience, and gearing myself to its very sense, I am able to question after the sense of my "I am." This having-myself is ambiguous in many different respects, and this diversity found in its meaning must be understood specifically with reference to historical contexts rather than with reference to

⁶⁶ *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers*: 9/10.

⁶⁷ Kierkegaard famously insisted that "that subjectivity, inwardness, is truth." Further (and the comparisons here with Heidegger's theological transformation in 1919 are pertinent), "existing subjectively with passion (and to exist objectively can be done only in distraction) is an absolute condition for being able to have any opinion at all on Christianity. Anyone unwilling to do so but nevertheless wanting to get to grips with Christianity, whoever he may be and however great in other respects, is in this matter essentially a fool." See Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Crumbs*, trans. Alastair Hannay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 234.

⁶⁸ GA 56/57: 4-5/5-6.

contexts of classification that have been elevated to the structure of regions within an autonomous system.⁶⁹

Heidegger's remarks about existence here epitomises the ideal of authenticity that he has endeavoured to communicate in his correspondence and lecture courses immediately prior to this work. As a model of authenticity, he presents 'existence' as the phenomenon which represents our historically conditioned environment where, as temporal beings, our potentiality-for-Being makes issue of its own Being a matter for itself. Harking back to the Aristotelian concept of *φρόνησις*, Heidegger claims that the phenomenological fact of existence is that human beings are already out there in the world, engaging with the tools and objects of their experience. Accordingly, Heidegger uses 'existence' to highlight this immediacy of human experience which is itself the 'site,' (the 'Da') where the disclosure of Being takes place. Heidegger brings this point home later in *Being and Time*, when he emphasises that "Dasein finds itself proximally in what it does, uses, expects, avoids ..." For him, "this elemental worldly kind of encountering which belongs to Dasein ... goes so that even one's own Dasein [is] something it can itself proximally 'come' across." And Dasein demonstrates this "only when it [does not] look away from 'experiences' and the 'centre of its action.'" ⁷⁰

Heidegger deepens his use of 'existence' in relation to authenticity in his winter 1921–22 lecture course of Aristotle and phenomenology. Still frustrated by the fact that the academic philosophy of his time was not doing adequate justice to the concrete individual life within its respective historical contexts, Heidegger refers his students to the challenge he made earlier in his winter 1919 course regarding the choice of "either [to] live, work, and do research relative to unexamined needs and artificially induced disposition ... or [to be] prepared to grasp concretely a radical idea and to gain [their] existence in it."⁷¹ Here he presents them with the options of being "richly gratified by dainty literary morsels and glossy magazines, and ... enervated by "religious" whining that [they] ... rate ... as evidence of superiority", or to rather explore the possibility of "letting oneself be diverted from facticity ... which, if defended, constitutes existence (which is precisely a radical *existentiell*

⁶⁹ *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers*: 25/29.

⁷⁰ SZ: 119/155/. Emphasis mine.

⁷¹ GA 61: 53/70-71.

worry).”⁷² What is crucial, Heidegger insists, is to “see philosophically the genuine situation, without recourse to prophetism and the allure of a prophetic leader.”⁷³

Heidegger here frames authenticity as a disruption, a wrestling or twisting free of our everydayness, a description that is consistent with Dasein’s authentic modification of the theyself in *Being and Time*. Accordingly, ‘distress’ or ‘worry’ is intrinsic to human existence, a claim that perhaps anticipates his later (equally Kierkegaardian) focus on the authenticity of the attunement of anxiety. In this state, one embraces “the nexus of life.”⁷⁴ Insofar as one continues to “work one’s way toward [this] situation,” the person will not only be conceived as having actualised this ideal of ‘existence,’ but he/she would be understood as having fully integrated it into his/her life.⁷⁵

Interestingly, while developing his idea of *Selbstwelt* as the most fundamental becoming of reality, Heidegger explicitly points to Christian life as the experience that highlights and properly apprehends the phenomenon of one’s own factual world. He cites the personality of Christ, and “The kingdom of God among us” (Lk 17, 21) that Christ preached, as a historical example of the rebirth of factual life experience. In Heidegger’s reading, the Christian life experience of the *Parousia* does not only open the access to the originality of life, it also occurs through distress and anxious worry, a movement he contrasts with complacency which is the prevailing mode of the inauthentic lifestyle as he will discuss it in *Being and Time*.⁷⁶

According to Heidegger, this life of complacency or normalcy must be subjected to a “refutation and radical overcoming [*Überwindung*]” so as to renew philosophy as “the science of absolute honesty”⁷⁷ dedicated to accessing the “genuineness of personal life as such.”⁷⁸ To accomplish this “refutation and radical overcoming,” Heidegger intensifies the

⁷² GA 61: 53/70-71

⁷³ GA 61:52/68-70.

⁷⁴ GA 61:57/75-76.

⁷⁵ GA 61:54/68/70.

⁷⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens* (GA 10) (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1995), pp. 112-116. Translated as Martin Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans., Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 80-82. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation GA 60 and the number as it appears in the English translation, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German texts. For example, GA 60: 80-82/112-116.

⁷⁷ GA 56/57: 165/220.

⁷⁸ GA 56/57: 165/220.

explicitly ethical import of his account by insisting that there has to be freedom or the necessity of choice:

This task of becoming free for this fact [*tatsache*] of the matter, existence, is accomplished in becoming free from handed down possibilities and traditional types of determining and classifying this being in general inquiry of philosophy. We have to make clear to ourselves that all previous research that is related to existence in any sense at all ... reveals a basic neglect: a neglect to inquire first of all into the actual constitution [*eigentliche Verfassung*] of the very entity that is treated ... It must be shown that all previous philosophy, on the basis of its origin, was not in a position to determine this entity more precisely as existing, though this entity was taken up as part of philosophy's pre-possession [*Vorhabe*].... Hence, the task of freeing up existence itself and acquiring explications of it is necessarily bound up with the task of shaking up present-day existence (that is ontologically obstructed) in its obstructiveness, of dismantling it in such a way that the basic categories of consciousness, person, are led back to their primordial sense.⁷⁹

While identifying freedom as a necessary component of 'existence,' Heidegger goes further to articulate other identifiable features in his reading of the concept that prefigures his later interpretation of the authenticity/inauthenticity distinction in *Being and Time*. One prime example is the anticipation of his later account of "falling" in his discussion of the "many ways" of failure evident in ordinary, everyday factual human living, symbolised by myriad forms of "excess" (the "hyperbolic") and defect (the "elliptical").⁸⁰ As opposed to a "complacent" (one might say, 'fallen') mode of life, genuine existence involves a life of "movedness," a mode of self-awareness, where one takes hold of oneself to make oneself accountable. Heidegger's description of what might be called the way of Being of phronetic beings of care, reaches strikingly close to the language he will adopt in *Being and Time*:

⁷⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Phänomenologische Forschung* (GA 17) (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1994), 110-112. Translated as Heidegger, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, pp. 81-2. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation GA 17 and the number as it appears in the English translation, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German texts. For example, GA 17: 81-2/110-112.

⁸⁰ GA 61: 81/108-9.

The movedness is such that as a movement of itself, it procures itself for itself. It is the movedness of factual life which makes this very life; indeed, factual life, as it lives in the world, does not itself properly produce the movement. Instead, factual life lives the world as the 'in which' and 'toward which' and 'for which' of life.⁸¹

Heidegger here recasts the language of authenticity in the connection he makes between factual life, which he refers to as “caring [*Sorgen*]” and the world within which we live, which he calls “fallenness”.⁸² The main attribute of factual life that Heidegger distinguishes is that it “is always in the broadest [sense], caring about one’s daily bread.”⁸³ Fallenness, however, – “taken in a very broad, formal indicative sense as privation”⁸⁴ – is a fundamental “poverty” that indicates “in one way or another that something is not always missing, but also indifferently accepted, rejected and taken and grasped in terms of some interest.”⁸⁵ It is, as Heidegger says, “a priori an enigma”⁸⁶ which is simply Dasein’s way of being, or rather the burden (*molestia*) of its factual thrown existence.

Crucially, Heidegger associates such fallenness with the inclination towards understanding “knowledge of principles,”⁸⁷ including those typically appealed to in disciplines such as ethics. Here is the very paradox that will be seen often in later Heideggerian thought (and which has already been discussed above), that the philosophical tradition of ethics fails precisely because it proceeds from a distorted ground. The true ground of ethics, such as it is, is to be sought not in theoretical formulations, but rather in the anarchic ‘innerness’ of factual life. Ethics should not be derived from the “inflexibility of traditional philosophy” that binds all philosophising.⁸⁸ Rather, its task is to ultimately foster a kind of phronetic guidance where every individual Dasein is led back to embrace and surrender to its pre-theoretical life from which its tasks and determinations emerge. Heidegger puts it this way in his Summer 1927 course:

⁸¹ GA 61: 97/130.

⁸² GA 61:68/90-91.

⁸³ GA 61:68/90-91.

⁸⁴ GA 61:68/90-91.

⁸⁵ GA 61: 115/154-155.

⁸⁶ SZ 4/23.

⁸⁷ GA 61:84/112-3.

⁸⁸ GA 61:84/112-3.

Philosophical research is: neither a view and systematization of propositions of knowledge and general principles of being ... nor a teaching in the sense of a provision of practical clauses and norms ... but rather a researching-understanding guiding into the life figures themselves, not with directives and rules, not in a historicist way as a historical understanding of the mere objectified past, but rather a guiding that, at decisive points and in general, surrenders the living understanding to itself and to the genuineness of its originary understanding, from which genuine motives accrue for the (tasks) determinations assigned to it, to its generation, and to humanity.⁸⁹

Heidegger suggests here that the most “specific way” of resolving the philosophical error created by fallenness of life is to return to the fact that the proofs of “knowledge of principles [like ethics]” do not need “to be sought far and wide but can be found within each person in the way one lives one's life.”⁹⁰ Accordingly, over against the complacency and distance from ourselves occasioned by our fallenness, one takes a stand that abides by one's genuine life experience. While calling for life and experience to bypass the vacuous allurements of ethical principles and theories, Heidegger's appeal is that life should be investigated as what James Reid calls “an evidence situation” paradigm, where experiences “are considered as expressions of a certain way of life embodying motives and tendencies open to phenomenological scrutiny in the light of a certain paradigm of genuine life.”⁹¹

Again, as with the other lecture courses, the broad outline of an ontological account of ‘authentic normativity’ is evident here. Recalling his account of *φρόνησις*, as that which unveils the essential possibilities of practical existence – Heidegger pictures factual life or existence as a ground of ethics in the sense of thrusting the individual into an anxiety-inducing movement that brings the “I am” to the fore in a radical and pure manner. This “I” of authentic experience is not lived as a universal exemplar but is marked rather by a radical sense of mineness (“*Jemeinigkeit*” as he terms it in *Being and Time*). This is the context of *ἡθικός*, and it is only within this context that authentic normativity can take root.

⁸⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (GA 58), ed. Hans-Helmuth Gander (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1992), 149.

⁹⁰ GA 61: 84/112-3.

⁹¹ James D. Reid, “Ethical Criticism in Heidegger's Early Freiburg Lectures,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 59, no. 1 (2005): 36.

To further accentuate the prefiguration of his account of authentic resoluteness in *Being and Time*, Heidegger goes as far in this earlier text as to make use of the language of anxiety and resoluteness. Accordingly, any “opportunity of seeing through one’s life” takes place because of one’s “anxious worry about not becoming lost”⁹² in one’s self-alienated absorption of everyday existence. For one to rediscover one’s Being and to be concerned about it, one must constantly engage in a struggle against the reality of everyday life and all the normative values that underpin it. As he notes:

[Anxious] [w]orry [*Bekiimmerung*] does not mean a mood with a worried mien, but rather the factual Being-decided [*Entschiedensein*], the apprehension of Existenz ... as the apprehension of that about which one is to be concerned. If one takes ‘caring’ as a *vox media* (which in itself, as a category of meaning, has its origin in the claiming of facticity), then worry is the care of Existenz.⁹³

In ‘anxious worry,’ we twist free of our inherited normative patterns in order to define ourselves within a range of options or possibilities. This anxious worry is neither an escape from the world, or a hibernation into the life of narcissism or self-centeredness, but nor is it any kind of guarantee of easy answers about which of one’s possibilities should be pursued. Here we come to a crucial aspect of Heidegger’s thinking of authenticity in its relation to ethics, for what authentic anxious existence provides is not an alternative route to absolute ethical norms, but only ever the ground for the possibility of normative ethics. Heidegger puts it this way:

Through worry about *Existenz*, nothing is changed in the factual position of life at any given time. What is changed is the How of the movement of life, which as such can never become a matter for the general public or for the ‘they’. The concern involved in the dealings is a concern which is worried about the self. For its own part, factual life’s worrying about its Existenz is not a brooding about oneself in egocentric reflection; it is what it is only as the counter-movement against life’s tendency towards falling, i.e. it takes place precisely in the concrete movement of dealings and of concern.⁹⁴

⁹² *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristotele*: 366/13.

⁹³ *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristotele*: 393/51 (notes 1).

⁹⁴ *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristotele*: 367/14.

Heidegger's point is clear: the traditional metaphysical model of ethics has to be put in question for reducing ethics to theories or principles without due attention to the radical finitude of Being. Our factual situation which requires displacing the centrality of any framework of principles within which choice could assume its Aristotelian sense of phronetic deliberation about means to predefined ends. As Lawrence Hatab puts it, Heidegger's sense of 'anxious worry' is a "pre-ethical" analysis which advocates for ethical propositions to be rediscovered at a place where Being reveals itself to human existence. Hatab writes that Heidegger's thinking on the anxious worry of existence substitutes ethical truth with a "pre-reflective ethical world" that uncovers the possibilities of ethics beyond the scope of theories. When this happens, Hatab suggests:

[E]thics [becomes no longer] a simple philosophical specialty, but a social project that keeps the existential claim of morality alive as an issue that people must continually engage ... We must attend to this prereflective ethical world to better understand how values function in our experience, to open up the ethical life, its conditions, demands, and difficulties.⁹⁵

3.2.4 : Authenticity in *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*

One final text – the pivotal 1923 lecture course, *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity* – will round out this survey of sources relating to the development of Heidegger's account of authenticity and its implications for ethics. In this early lecture course, the idea of authenticity is understood in relation to 'wakefulness' and here also Heidegger deploys terminologies like 'resolve,' 'decision,' and the taking hold of one's existence, all key terminological elements for his discussion of authenticity in *Being and Time*.

At the beginning of this lecture course, Heidegger indicates to his readers that "[o]ur own[ness] [*Eigenheit*]" is by all means "a 'how of being,' an indication which points to a possible path of being-wakeful."⁹⁶ This sense of "ownness" refers to our nonrelational

⁹⁵ Lawrence J Hatab, "Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contribution to Moral Philosophy," *International Philosophical Quarterly* XXXV, No 4, no. 140 (1995): 405.

⁹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Ontologie: Hermeneutik der Faktizität* (GA 63) (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1988), pp. 14-16. Translated as Martin Heidegger, *Ontology-The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, pp. 11-12. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation GA 63 and the number as it appears in the English translation, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German texts. Example: GA 63: 11-12/14-16.

irreducible individuality [*Eigentümlichkeit*], and according to him, we are ‘wakeful’ or ‘being awake’ to the reality of the allegiance we owe ourselves through our individual self-creation. Heidegger describes ‘wakefulness’ as “a possibility of [Dasein’s] becoming and being for itself in the manner of an understanding of itself.”⁹⁷ This framing of ‘wakefulness’ as a hermeneutic project that gives us immediate access to human life, is suggestive of the idea of transparency which he uses to describe understanding in §31 of *Being and Time*.

In discussing how this hermeneutic project of human facticity is carried out, Heidegger redeploys the same features he has been using to describe authenticity in his earlier writings. First, he calls attention to the fact that a temporal being like Dasein has a fore-structure in which is developed “a radical wakefulness for itself,” when it is “hermeneutically interrogated with respect to and on the basis of the character of its being.”⁹⁸ Second, he contends that hermeneutic interpretation “belongs to the being factual life itself,” and that it is a distinctive feature of “how the character of being facticity is.”⁹⁹ Third, he reintroduces his previous use of the language of existence to describe authenticity:

[This] being of factual life is distinctive in that it is in the how of the being possible. The ownmost [*Eigentlich*] possibility of being itself which Dasein (facticity) is, and indeed without this possibility being ‘there’ for it, may be designated as existence.”¹⁰⁰

Further, Heidegger summarises his thematic inquiry of the development of the concept of authenticity with the observation that the emerging notion of wakefulness he has been considering is indeed the possibility of “authentic be-ing itself.”¹⁰¹ Being a ‘hermeneutical engagement,’ authenticity “is not a ready-made possession but rather arises and develops out of a fundamental experience, and here this means a philosophical wakefulness, in which Dasein is encountering itself.”¹⁰² As opposed to being abandoned to become an “object of indifferent theoretical meaning,”¹⁰³ authenticity aids Dasein to “live and work in

⁹⁷ GA 63:11/14-15.

⁹⁸ GA 63:12/15-16.

⁹⁹ GA 63:12/15-16.

¹⁰⁰ GA 63:12/15-16.

¹⁰¹ GA 63:12/15-16.

¹⁰² GA 63:14/17-18.

¹⁰³ GA 63: 2/2-3.

a primordial self-interpretation” which makes it to be “ontologically and factico-temporally prior to all accomplishments in the sciences.”¹⁰⁴

What remains to be seen, though, is how authentic Dasein can perform this self-relationality in order to embrace its ownmost possibility. This is a question that is addressed a few years later in *Being and Time*, in which the power of a more fully-developed notion of authenticity to provide an account of the ontological ground of ethics is revealed.

3.3 AUTHENTICITY IN *BEING AND TIME*

The preceding survey of selected early Heideggerian texts have indicated something of the thematic development of the concept of authenticity in these works leading up to its full development in *Being and Time*, and in the context of its tacit but powerful ethical implications. While the terminology around existence and authenticity had evolved somewhat by the time of *Being and Time*, the focus on the unending ‘questionableness’ of existence remained fundamentally the same. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger undertakes a deepening of his account of authenticity, now in service to his primary objective: “to exhibit an attestation of Dasein’s ownmost potentiality-for-Being—an attestation which is in Dasein itself.”¹⁰⁵ Accordingly, on the basis of his account of how the call of conscience is “ordinarily interpreted,” in *Being and Time*, Heidegger goes to illuminate the emancipatory role of authenticity by demonstrating how Dasein can summon itself out from the ‘they’ and back to an authentic understanding of existential guilt. Heidegger’s task as Kasowski has noted, was to show “the attestation of this possibility ... in order to connect his existential analysis with existentiell experience.”¹⁰⁶

There are various elements that come together in Heidegger’s account of authenticity in *Being and Time* that help provide, as he puts it, “the existential condition for the possibility of ... morality in general and for the possible forms which this may take factually.”¹⁰⁷ In

¹⁰⁴ GA 63: 12/15-16.

¹⁰⁵ SZ: 295/341.

¹⁰⁶ Kasowski, “Conscience and Attestation: The Methodological Role of the “Call of Conscience” (Gewissensruf) in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*” 187.

¹⁰⁷ SZ: 286/332.

what follows in this section, these elements will be sketched as a way of bringing together the various threads of an emancipatory framing of Heideggerian *Eigentlichkeit*, noting the way in which they do indeed contribute to an overall account of the conditions for the possibility of ethics. In the discussion to follow, a key context for reading Heidegger's accounts of authenticity, of the falling of Dasein and the 'they-self', as well as his accounts of anxiety, Being-toward-death and resoluteness, will be the many parallels and analogies with Kierkegaardian thought. Kierkegaard, I will suggest, provides a telling hermeneutic lens for reading these themes in *Being and Time*, and for this reason, engagements with some relevant aspects of his writings will prove fruitful for the organising strategy in the argument to come. On this basis, I provide (in 3.3.1) an initial understanding of what is at stake in Heidegger's concept of *Eigentlichkeit*, noting the helpful parallels in Kierkegaard, and the implications for understanding the ethical resonances arising. This leads to an examination of Heidegger's account of inauthentic modes of being (3.3.2), of falling and the they-self, noting (again via Kierkegaardian thought) the implications for understanding the meaning and possibility of authenticity. There then follows a working through of the outcomes of this discussion for Heidegger's accounts of anxiety (3.3.3), Being-towards-death (3.3.4) and resoluteness (3.3.5), all of which are again illuminated through allusion to Kierkegaardian antecedents. Finally, I examine (in 3.3.6) the account of Dasein's authentic historicity – including fate, heritage, destiny and repetition – as it is set out in the later part of *Being and Time*, and which, I argue, is essential to establish a holistic understanding of Heidegger's account of authenticity in its ethical dimension.

3.3.1 Reading Heidegger's *Eigentlichkeit* in Kierkegaardian Context

The structural similarities between Heidegger's account of authenticity/inauthenticity in *Being and Time* and the thought of the great nineteenth century Danish figure Søren Kierkegaard, have been widely noted by scholars for some time.¹⁰⁸ However, beyond the

¹⁰⁸ For details on Kierkegaard's influence on Heidegger, please see Berthold-Bond, "A Kierkegaardian critique of Heidegger's concept of authenticity" pp. 119-42. Michael Theunissen, *The Other: Studies in the Social Ontology of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Buber*, trans. Christopher Macann (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), 193. Michael Zimmerman, *Eclipse of the Self: The Development of Heidegger's Concept of Authenticity* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1981), pp. 69, 77-9. Adam Buben, "Heidegger's Reception of Kierkegaard: The Existential Philosophy of Death," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 21, no. 5 (2013): pp. 967-88. Charles B. Guignon, ed. *Heidegger and Kierkegaard on Death: The Existentiell and the Existential*, Kierkegaard and Death (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011), pp. 184-203.

legacy of Kierkegaardian ideas on the early Heidegger's thinking more generally, the focus here is on the particular cluster of themes around Heideggerian *Eigentlichkeit* that will be explored within the larger context of analogous features in Kierkegaardian thought. Leaving to one side the knotty issue (that lies beyond the scope of this paper) concerning the extent to which Heidegger's account historically or biographically drew on a direct or indirect reading of Kierkegaard,¹⁰⁹ in what follows, I argue that the relationship between their accounts sheds significant light on a key sense in which Heideggerian 'authenticity' is heavily implicated in the nascent ethical trajectory of his thought.

At the heart of *Being and Time* is Heidegger's famous distinction between two modes of Dasein's existence: authenticity and inauthenticity [*uneigentlichkeit*]. Beyond simplistic existentialist accounts of psychological life choices exercised by a 'metaphysical' subject, Heidegger's account of the nature of this distinction is decidedly ontological in nature. Dasein is authentic when it appropriates and makes its own those possibilities through which it constitutes itself as the entity thrown into its particular "there."¹¹⁰ When Dasein fails in its understanding and pursuit of its authentic possibilities – when it "flees in the face of" its Being¹¹¹ –, then it is inauthentic. But what does this distinction mean, and how is it to be understood as relevant to any purported ground for the possibility of ethics in Heidegger?

While their terminology differs, and while Heidegger is exceptionally keen to avoid any sense of the interiority of the traditional metaphysical subject that he sees continued in Kierkegaardian thought,¹¹² Heidegger's account of *Eigentlichkeit* nonetheless shares with

¹⁰⁹ In his essay, *Heidegger and Kierkegaard on death*, Guignon claims that although Heidegger does not clearly admit Kierkegaard's influence in his Dasein analytic, there are no doubt numerous significant parallels with the work of Kierkegaard, if not a fully developed first-hand influence in *Being and Time*. On his part, Adam Buben argues that whilst Heidegger does not explicitly reference Kierkegaard in his entire work, he "believe[s] that Kierkegaard's influence goes right to the very heart of Heidegger's project; despite their differences, there is an over-arching sense in which Kierkegaard and Heidegger are working on the same philosophy of death." See Guignon, *Heidegger and Kierkegaard on Death: The Existentiell and the Existential*, pp. 184-203. Buben, "Heidegger's Reception of Kierkegaard: The Existential Philosophy of Death," 968.

¹¹⁰ SZ: 298/345.

¹¹¹ SZ: 44/69.

¹¹² Heidegger's famously scant mentions of Kierkegaard in *Being and Time* both acknowledge some level of debt to Kierkegaard's pioneering thought in this area, while also criticising him for failing to couch these insights within a properly ontological frame, by which Kierkegaard has allegedly failed to see the "problem of existence" as anything more than "an existentiell problem" (See footnote Vi at SZ:235/494; and footnote iii at SZ: 338/497). His comments on Kierkegaard's domination by Hegelian thought and the apparent

Kierkegaard's account of spirit and the self a clear focus on the theme of 'self-ownership'.¹¹³ For Heidegger, Dasein's authenticity is to be understood in the context of its 'own-ness' ('*Eigen-keit*', so to speak) and mine-ness (*Jemeinigkeit*). The question of authenticity/inauthenticity is thus essentially to do with ontological (as distinct from psychological) 'self-ownership'. Even as he insists on an understanding of Dasein as always already Being-in-the-world, and not as withdrawn into itself *apart from* the world, Heidegger is absolutely clear on this point: "[m]ineness belongs to any existent Dasein, and belongs to it as the condition which makes authenticity and inauthenticity possible." He also argues that "in each case, Dasein exists in one or two [of these modes], or else it is modally undifferentiated."¹¹⁴ As Dreyfus has noted, central to Heidegger's explanation here is the fact that "the possibility of existing in any of these three modes is what" it means to acquire mineness. In other words, "what makes my [possibility] my [possibility] is that I exhibit a particular stand on what it means to be. [And] [t]hat is what is most essential about me."¹¹⁵ Heidegger brings this point home elsewhere when he explains that:

[B]ecause Dasein is in each case essentially its own possibility [*eigene Möglichkeit*], it can, in its very Being, 'choose' itself and win itself; it can also lose itself and never win itself; or only 'seem' to do so. But only in so far as it is essentially something which can be authentic – that is, something of its own [*eigen*] – can it have lost itself

limitation of his attention on Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works to *The Concept of Anxiety* (and "the 'edifying' writings") perhaps betray a lack of insight into the extent to which Kierkegaardian thought had already explored areas central to Heidegger's own concerns in *Being and Time*. Richard Colledge suggests that despite paucity of scholarship "on the ontology of human being in Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works," Kierkegaard obviously "spurned the whole notion of the essential structure of this subject." While making the case for a Kierkegaardian ontology, Colledge contends that, like Heidegger, Kierkegaardian thought "does not amount to anti-essentialism per se" but it is rather an ontology "that is shot through with what [he describes] as "an implicit "subjective ontology": an ontology of the existing subject in which ontology is subjectivized." According to Colledge, "Kierkegaard's "subjective ontology" ... is not a speculative ontology or a theory of being in general." Instead, "it is an ontological perspective oriented purely toward illuminating the individual's task of existence, an ontology that has validity only when... [the individual is] given content, concretion, and meaning only through [its] struggling with its task of existence." See Richard J. Colledge, "Heidegger's Subjective Ontology: A Metaphysics of the Existing Individual," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 44, no. 173 (2004): pp. 7-8.

¹¹³ Colledge, "Heidegger's Subjective Ontology: A Metaphysics of the Existing Individual," 16.

¹¹⁴ SZ: 53/78.

¹¹⁵ See Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I*, 27. Note that in what follows I do not raise the whole question that is prompted by the sentence that immediately follows this one in which Heidegger raises the question of the possibility of a third mode by which Dasein "exists in one or the other of these two modes, or else it is modally undifferentiated." My reason for leaving out this mode of Dasein's being is that sometimes, Heidegger calls this 'undifferentiated mode' Dasein's normal everyday inauthentic mode which is neither inferior nor derivative of other modes. See SZ: 43/69.

and not yet won itself. As modes of Being, authenticity and inauthenticity (these expressions have been chosen terminologically in a strict sense) are both grounded in the fact that any Dasein whatsoever is characterized by mineness.¹¹⁶

This focus on the integrity of the individual in becoming its own self is also at the core of Kierkegaardian thought, even if it takes different form in the signed and pseudonymous works, and from one pseudonymous author to another. Beyond his famous accounts of the stages of existence that culminate in the self-transparency of the religious stage, one might point to Anticlimacus' famous lines about the self being "a relation which relates itself to its own self"¹¹⁷ as the place where the deep connection between Kierkegaard and Heidegger becomes apparent. For instance, while describing the 'self' (*Selv*) as "a relation which relates to itself" in *The Sickness Unto Death*, Anticlimacus remarks that as "a relation of two factors, a human being is not yet a self."¹¹⁸ For him, every human being is a "synthesis" that is constituted not only by the mingling of psyche and body, but by this relation's relating back upon itself. This conscious reflexivity is referred to as the dawning of 'spirit'.¹¹⁹ Thus, the human being only becomes a self when existence authorises it to relate to itself in a movement of reflection and self-awareness.¹²⁰

This Kierkegaardian notion that for one to be fully understood as an existing individual, one has to reflect upon one's own existence, involves an undeveloped but explicit ontology of human being. As Richard Colledge has noted, in his three stages framework of

¹¹⁶ SZ: 43-44/68.

¹¹⁷ Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Edification and Awakening by Anti-Climacus*, ed. Søren Kierkegaard, trans. Alastair Hannay (2004), 43.

¹¹⁸ Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Edification and Awakening by Anti-Climacus*, 43.

¹¹⁹ Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Edification and Awakening by Anti-Climacus*, 43. As Colledge puts it, the spirit, for the "Kierkegaardian pseudonymous authors," appears to function as an innate human "faculty" that operates by unsettling the individual through awakening it to its eternal telos." According to him, "[i]n itself, [the spirit] is neither a source of good nor evil; in being the foundation of consciousness, it is rather the condition of possibility for both." Kierkegaardian Spirit "is the gnawing voice within that breathes fire and intensity into human existence, driving it along the difficult road toward fulfillment of its potentiality. Thus, spirit is of the essence of human being." See Colledge, "Heidegger's Subjective Ontology: A Metaphysics of the Existing Individual," 10.¹²⁰ Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Edification and Awakening by Anti-Climacus*, 85.

¹²⁰ Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Edification and Awakening by Anti-Climacus*, 85.

understanding the individual, Kierkegaard presents us with a “subjective ontology of the self,” one that is “oriented purely toward illuminating the individual’s task of existence” and “has validity only when it is “read of from ... concrete lived experience[s].”¹²¹

Like Kierkegaard, Heidegger similarly insists that the self, if it is to be authentically itself, must relate to itself as its ownmost possibility. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger argues that “Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence – in terms of a possibility of itself: to be itself or not itself ... by taking hold or by neglecting.”¹²² The implications of this framing of authenticity, and with it the possibility for a grounding for ethics, flow into many other areas of early Heideggerian thought, including his famous reframing of the traditional conception of truth.¹²³

The significance for this vision of authenticity as self-ownership is profound in the context of Heidegger’s deeply Kierkegaardian conception of what might be called an authentic grounding for ethics. To the extent that, for Kierkegaard, traditional ethics is understood in the sense of commitment to an established set of customary moral norms and duties (typified by Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*, for example), and understood as universally binding, such a conception of the ethical is deeply inadequate. Famously, what is therefore required (in the words of pseudonym Johannes de Silencio), is a “teleological suspension of the ethical” in order that a higher-order sense of the ethical is able to emerge; one that is organically connected with (authentic) subjectivity in its relation to the eternal.¹²⁴ In a not dissimilar sense – prescinding, of course, from Kierkegaardian notions of a theological teleology for

¹²¹ Colledge, “Heidegger’s Subjective Ontology: A Metaphysics of the Existing Individual,” 8.

¹²² SZ: 13/33.

¹²³ Again, the Kierkegaardian precursors are significant here, at least once Kierkegaard’s language of inner/outer and subjective/objective is prescinded from his account. Accordingly, if, for Heidegger, traditional ‘correspondence’ conceptions of truth fail to see that “[t]here is’ truth only in so far as Dasein ‘is’ and so long as Dasein ‘is’” (SZ: 226/269), for Kierkegaard, objectivist accounts of truth fail to see that truth, in its most significant sense, is always a function of subjectivity and inwardness (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 300). One might further pursue important mutually illuminating connections between Kierkegaard’s category of “indirect communication”, that presupposes an active role for the hearer in experiencing (not simply ‘hearing’) that which is communicated, and Heidegger’s notion of “formal indication”. Unfortunately, such connections (while not unimportant for a fuller rendering of this argument), are beyond the scope of this thesis.

¹²⁴ In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard argues that Abraham is the knight of faith because he suspended the ethical in order to obey God’s command to kill his son, Isaac. Abraham truly represents the knight of faith for understanding God’s command and choosing to act accordingly rather than listening to the moral obligation of his conscience which would have debarred him from carrying out the divine command. See Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, trans. H. V. Hong and E. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 18-20, 35.

ethics, as well as his language of subjective interiority – Heidegger also rejects the adequacy of any notion of ethics as rooted in customary norms. Any authentic ground for ethics must – by definition – be rooted in mine-ness (*Jemeinigkeit*), characterised by an understanding of its ownmost possibilities, regardless of the earnest free advice of the ‘they.’

3.3.2 : Inauthentic Dasein

If Heidegger’s notion of authenticity shares Kierkegaard’s focus on self-ownership, so too there is a tight analogy between their understanding of *inauthenticity*, or as Kierkegaard puts it, the *failure* to become a self. Accordingly, for them both, there is something of an inverse proportionality between authenticity (Heidegger) /spirit (Kierkegaard) and what might be called, ease of living. Otherwise put, both see a deep connection between authenticity/spirit and anxiety. It is for this reason that Heidegger, following Kierkegaard, devotes special attention to the way that Dasein/ the individual is so often characterised by a failure of self-ownership; by a becoming *owned by* the ‘they’ (Heidegger) /the crowd (Kierkegaard) and in this way loses itself.

In his description of Dasein’s *inauthentic* everyday mode, Heidegger emphasises that Dasein is characterised by its “absor[ption] in the world of its concerns.”¹²⁵ This forgetfulness of itself, as Dasein lives in the thrall of “the ‘they’, echoes heavily the Kierkegaardian critique of the “public” (Heidegger’s *das Man*), “chatter” (Heidegger’s “idle talk”), “anonymity” (Heidegger’s “ambiguity”), “inquisitiveness” (Heidegger’s “curiosity”), and “levelling” (Heidegger’s “fallenness”) in his description of the ethical stage of life.¹²⁶ It is precisely the need for liberation or emancipation from this thrall that Crowe convincingly identified as perhaps the chief marker of Heidegger’s account of authenticity.¹²⁷ Heidegger’s *das Man* (like Kierkegaard’s “crowd”) functions as a general, undifferentiated or rather detached agency through which Dasein decides, desires and understands itself, as experienced in the form of public opinion, culture, or general upbringing where Dasein

¹²⁵ SZ: 125/163.

¹²⁶ See: Søren Kierkegaard, *The Two Ages*, trans. Howard and Edna Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 90,97,103-5.

¹²⁷ Indeed, a similar case might be made for the pivotal nature of this liberatory trajectory in Kierkegaard’s account of the self, though this is a matter that lies well beyond the scope of this thesis.

fails to live up to its potential for self-ownership (*eigentliches Selbestein, Eigentlichkeit*).¹²⁸ For the most part, he maintains, the 'they' pervades Dasein's understanding of its possibilities:

The Self of everyday Dasein is the *they-self*, which we distinguish from the *authentic Self* – that is, from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way [*eigens ergriffenen*]. As they-self, the particular Dasein has been *dispersed* into the 'they', and must first find itself. This dispersal characterizes the 'subject' of that kind of Being which we know as concerned absorption in the world we encounter as closest to us. If Dasein is familiar with itself as they-self, this means at the same time that the 'they' itself prescribes that way of interpreting the world and Being-in-the-world which lies closest. Dasein is for the sake of the 'they' in an everyday manner, and the 'they' itself articulates the referential context of significance.¹²⁹

Insofar as Dasein is, so to speak, 'lived by' the 'they', Dasein is not authentically itself (fails in its task of self-ownership), but now *is* the they-self, an ontologically impoverished version of itself. The possibilities by which Dasein qua they-self understands itself are no longer its "ownmost" but are instead possibilities that are familiar and accessible to everyone. As Derek O'Connell points out:

[It is not that the 'they'] knows each Dasein's particular possibilities and calibrates its claims accordingly, but ... [that] it completely ignores those particularities, instead prescribing the same universally applicable possibilities to everyone.¹³⁰

As such, Dasein submits to the manipulations of the 'they,' seamlessly folding into its understanding of its own possibilities and taking onboard as its own, the prescribed opinions and normative 'truisms' of the day. Inauthentic Dasein relinquishes its own resolve, and adopts the 'oughts' of the amorphous whole:

¹²⁸ SZ: 128/165; 175/219.

¹²⁹ SZ: 129/167.

¹³⁰ Derek Robert O'Connell, "Heidegger's Authenticity" (University of Illinois, 2015), 55.

We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise, we shrink back from the ‘great mass’ as they shrink back; we find ‘shocking’ what *they* find shocking.¹³¹

Such a condition of Being, in which the received imperatives of the ‘they’ hold sway over Dasein’s ownmost possibilities and understandings, is what Heidegger terms “falling” (*Verfallen*). However, crucially, in Heidegger’s reading, the fallenness of Dasein does not imply that Dasein falls into the world from some “purer and higher primal status.”¹³² In this, of course, his account of fallenness is to be sharply distinguished from theological ethical accounts, such as Augustine’s, that see falling as the result of temptation leading to sin, and as such to be understood in reference to the state of grace or some higher worthier state of being. While Heidegger does at one point refer to Dasein’s “constant temptation towards falling,”¹³³ he does not portray falling as an erroneous option; much less a failing of the will. On the contrary, falling is an essential aspect of Dasein’s existence insofar as Dasein is Being-in-the-world into which it has been thrown, and indeed (as will be explored later), Dasein-with others. As such, temptation is part and parcel with the basic character of factual life; and falling, far from being the debasement or corruption of human nature, is an ordinary feature of Dasein in its inauthentic everydayness. This sense of constitutionality, if not inevitability, is one of the more crucial aspects of Heidegger’s account of inauthenticity, and it will be one to which I will return shortly.

Just as the question of inauthenticity has little to do with the corruption of will or moral standing as such, nor is it connected – despite being a matter of great ontological significance for Heidegger’s account – to any sense of the ‘loss’ of Being. Inauthenticity is never for Heidegger (nor for Kierkegaard, I would suggest) a question of the gain or loss of its own Being as such. Heidegger is very clear on this point:

[T]he inauthenticity of Dasein does not signify any ‘less’ Being or any ‘lower’ degree of Being. Rather it is the case that even in its fullest concretion Dasein can be

¹³¹ SZ: 127/164.

¹³² SZ: 176/220.

¹³³ SZ: 177/221.

characterised by inauthenticity - when busy, when excited, when interested, when ready for enjoyment."¹³⁴

In Chapter 5B of *Being and Time*, Heidegger provides quite an extended phenomenological analysis of "the everyday Being of the 'there', and the falling of Dasein,"¹³⁵ in his discussions of idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity. Insofar as an "idle talk," is a discourse, it "serves not so much to keep Being-in-the-world open for us in an articulated understanding, as rather to close it off, and cover up the entities within-the-world."¹³⁶ In an account that strikingly recalls Kierkegaard's figure of the aesthete,¹³⁷ Heidegger's discussion of "curiosity" focuses on the untetheredness of Dasein's attention (the dilution of care) by which it "concerns itself with seeing, not in order to understand what is seen (that is, to come into a Being towards it) but just in order to ... [seek] novelty only in order to leap from it anew to another novelty."¹³⁸ The result is that falling becomes not only part of Dasein's everydayness, but essentially invisible. In this state of endemic "ambiguity [*Zweideutigkeit*]," "it soon becomes impossible to decide what is disclosed in a genuine understanding, and what is not". Further, this obscurity reaches all the way down, extending from Dasein's encounters with objects in the world, to its "Being-with-one-another as such, and even to Dasein's Being towards itself."¹³⁹

While for both Heidegger and Kierkegaard inauthenticity (or the failure to become a self) does not amount to a loss or diminishment of Being as such – Dasein/ the individual remains 'in being' so to speak – such a way of being does amount to a failure of 'existence,' in the technical sense of that term. For both Heidegger and Kierkegaard, existence requires 'self-ownership' (in the broad sense indicated above). For Kierkegaard, existence was the

¹³⁴ SZ: 44/68.

¹³⁵ SZ: 133/172.

¹³⁶ SZ: 169/213.

¹³⁷ In his *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard presents his reader with a contrast between the aesthetic life – "a stage of existence" that is mostly lived by an average human being, the ethical life which according to him is a superior form of self understanding, and the religious stage which trumps both. The word "aesthetic" here retains its etymological sense of aisthesis, "sense perception." In this way of existence, there is a "tendency towards "pure beholding" as in Heidegger's "curiosity": "a process of objectification by which Dasein "just looks on" at the reality which confronts it. See Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or, Vol 1 and 2*, trans. Howard and Edna Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 305. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), pp. 36-50. Berthold-Bond, "A Kierkegaardian critique of Heidegger's concept of authenticity " 132.

¹³⁸ SZ: 172/216.

¹³⁹ SZ: 173/217.

domain of innerness, subjectivity and spirit, and to live a life that is marked by the dictates of public opinion was to renege on the task of existence.¹⁴⁰ For Heidegger, falling is “existentially determinative for Being-in-the-world”, far from understanding its ownmost possibilities and projecting itself into them, in its falling Dasein “remains in the throw” of its thrownness, “and is sucked into the turbulence of the ‘they’s’ inauthenticity.”¹⁴¹ The key point here is that authenticity – for Heidegger as for Kierkegaard – is not a metaphysical ‘state’ of being that determines the status of that being. Rather, authentic existence is a *task*. As Merold Westphal says of Kierkegaardian thought, the notion of the self is a “task word and not ... [an] achievement word.”¹⁴² One might say the same of authentic Dasein. As such, existence is the *goal* rather than the foundation; it is a task defined by responsibility – an *ethical* task in the deepest sense – and not anything like a fixed ontological state.

However (to return to a point to which I alluded briefly above), it is the very *routineness* of inauthenticity that is perhaps the most striking aspect of Heidegger’s account. Accordingly, perhaps matching the extremity of Kierkegaard’s descriptions of the individual in its religious stage of existence,¹⁴³ Dasein’s inauthentic mode of Being that is presented not as the exception to the rule, but as the *usual* state of affairs by which Dasein exists. It is not that inauthenticity is a tendency or state into which some people fall quite often, and other

¹⁴⁰ While explaining what symbolises the character of the aesthetic self, a description that runs parallel to Heidegger’s inauthentic existence, Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous authors describe the aesthetic stage of life as a life lived from the outside, a life typified by “poets,” “observers” and “humorists” who are never “adherents” but instead write “experimentally,” “for [their] own diversion. In one of the striking passages of the aesthetic author of the “Diapsalmata,” we are told that this stage of life is marked by restlessness; a sphere of life “where everything finite and contingent is forgotten and erased.” As we highlighted earlier, Kierkegaard’s “Diapsalmata” refers to this stage of life as the “nothing which pervades reality.” And for the author, it really amounts to nothing when one “strive[s] to become what one already is,” that is, a self; “but for this very reason alone it is a very difficult task, the most difficult of all tasks in fact,” given that one cannot simply be a self, but must constantly become, which means that we are perpetually beyond ourselves. In *Sickness Unto Death*, Kierkegaard claims that despair is the seeming contradiction that happens when one is neither able to become a self nor to escape it. As he puts it, despair is the “disrelationship” of the self to itself, the “agonizing contradiction” that we can neither become nothing nor find the way “wholly to be oneself.” See Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 116. Søren Kierkegaard, *Sickness Unto Death*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 41, 148, 51, 43, 287.

¹⁴¹ SZ: 179/223.

¹⁴² Merold Westphal, *Becoming a Self: A Reading of Kierkegaard’s Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1996), ix.

¹⁴³ See Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling and Repetition*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 112, 36, 42, 46, 62, 70. Also see Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp. 266-67, 422.

people less so. Rather: “[a]uthentic Being-one's-Self takes the definite form of an existentiell modification of the ‘they.’”¹⁴⁴ In other words, it is the they-self which is normal, and authenticity is a derivation of the default inauthentic they-self: “proximally and for the most part Dasein is not itself but is lost in the theyself, which is an existentiell modification of the authentic Self.”¹⁴⁵ As an ‘existentiell modification’ only, no clean “detach[ment] from the ‘they’” is possible.¹⁴⁶ It is for this reason that Heidegger goes as far as to name the ‘they’ as “*an essential existentielle*” within the existential analytic.¹⁴⁷

All of this sheds a powerful light on the sense in which Heidegger’s account of authenticity contributes to his largely undeveloped but compelling account of the conditions of possibility for ethics. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the key element here is responsibility for the Self. To paraphrase Cem Zeytinoglu, Dasein’s ethical context is its “standing out there (in *ek-static* existence) in the opening where it is thrown.”¹⁴⁸ To *ek-sist* is to assume responsibility for one’s Being. Self-responsibility is at the heart of what it means for Dasein to be in-the-world. But if it is clear, as Heidegger maintains, that Dasein is summoned to assume its responsibility even as the “‘who’ of everyday Dasein is the ‘nobody’ to whom every Dasein has already surrendered,”¹⁴⁹ then Heidegger raises very specific questions about the theoretical possibility of ethics, or indeed of properly moral behaviour in practice. In what sense, then, can his account of authenticity ever contribute to any kind of ethical grounding?

First of all, it is important not to mistake Heidegger’s frequent use of apparently disapproving language and negative connotation to describe the practices associated with fallenness, for a developed position that offers a morally evaluative account of inauthenticity as such. It is clearly the case that such language is used by Heidegger in this chapter of *Being and Time*. Falling is referred to as a “downward plunge” that involves “temptation, tranquillizing, alienation and self-entangling.”¹⁵⁰ “Idle talk” (*Gerede*) is

¹⁴⁴ SZ: 267/312.

¹⁴⁵ SZ: 317/365.

¹⁴⁶ SZ 130/168

¹⁴⁷ SZ: 130/168 (Heidegger’s italics).

¹⁴⁸ Cem Zeytinoglu, “Appositional (Communication) Ethics: Listening to Heidegger and Lévinas in Chorus,” *Review of Communication* 11, no. 4 (2011): 277.

¹⁴⁹ SZ: 127-8/166-7.

¹⁵⁰ SZ: 178/223.

described in terms of “gossip” (*Nachreden*) and “passing the word along”; it is compared to “scribbling” rather than writing; it is described as a “perverting [of] the act of disclosing;” as something that “suppresses” and “discourages any new inquiry”; as a practice that “uproots” understanding, and (perhaps with a hint of sarcasm) “releases one from the task of genuinely understanding.”¹⁵¹

Heidegger’s account is clearly walking a fine line here. On one hand, it is clearly the case that he is contrasting such practices with those he would associate with understanding and interpretation (that he discusses in Part A of Chapter 5). Understanding, after all, is described as “the existential Being of Dasein’s own potentiality-for-Being ... [such that] this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of,”¹⁵² and practices associated with understanding (and interpretation and assertion) can likewise be shown to be positively inflected in Heidegger’s account. Understanding is clearly ‘on the side’ of Being, and there is thus a certain tragedy involved in Heidegger’s description of how it is “constantly torn away from authenticity and into the ‘they’ (though always with a sham of authenticity).”¹⁵³

However, on the other hand, it is crucial here – as everywhere else in *Being and Time* – to understand the terms of Heidegger’s account that looks to clearly distinguish (in ways abandoned by later Heideggerian thought) between existential structures and existentiell attestations. Seen in this light, one might assume that Heidegger would have no hesitation in affirming that it is ‘better’ to engage in the difficult work of looking to genuinely understand than it is to throw out half-baked opinions on the basis of common prejudice. However, such a distinction is at the level of practice rather than existential structure. Of the latter, it is important to note that while understanding is a fundamental existentielle within the existential analytic, so too (as noted earlier), is the ‘they’. Both authenticity and inauthenticity are hard wired, so to speak, into the ontological structure that is Dasein. Heidegger is quite explicit about this:

[E]ven in the mode of inauthenticity, the structure of existentiality lies a priori. And here too Dasein’s Being is an issue for it in a definite way; and Dasein comports

¹⁵¹ SZ: 167-70/211-14.

¹⁵² SZ: 144/184.

¹⁵³ SZ: 178/223.

itself towards it in the mode of average everydayness, even if this is only the mode of fleeing in the face of it and forgetfulness thereof.¹⁵⁴

It is on this basis that Heidegger can quite intelligibly indicate – in anticipation of the very critique of his account intimated above – that his analysis of falling should not be understood as a “moralizing critique of everyday Dasein” but rather an “interpretation [that] has a purely ontological” intention.¹⁵⁵ As to the question concerning the very *possibility* of authenticity – and with it, “the existential condition for the possibility of the ‘morally’ good and for that of the ‘morally’ evil ... that is, for morality in general and for the possible forms which this may take factually”¹⁵⁶ – here the discussion must turn to Heidegger’s account of anxiety and of anticipatory resoluteness. For it is here that the conditions of possibility of moral action are fleshed out in their existential dimensions.

3.3.3 : Anxiety and Authentic Dasein

Heidegger’s analysis of anxiety stands as one of *Being and Time*’s most influential accounts, and certainly one that is laden with important implications for how this text provides something like a ground for ethics. For it is in the attunement of anxiety that Dasein is “individualize[d],” and it is in this anxious individualisation that Dasein is brought “back from its falling,” to something like ‘self-ownership’, as “authenticity and inauthenticity are [made manifest as] possibilities of its Being.”¹⁵⁷ Here again also, the figure of Kierkegaard lurks suggestively in the background, as underlined by Heidegger’s brief but clear acknowledgement of the Dane as “[t]he man who has [hitherto] gone farthest in analysing the phenomenon of anxiety.”¹⁵⁸

Heidegger introduces anxiety as a fundamental attunement by which Dasein breaks from ineluctable tendency of blending into the anonymous ‘they’, through which it can come authentically into “disclosedness” and achieve a “transparent” or a “modified” understanding of itself in its involvement in the world. Further, anxiety discloses the

¹⁵⁴ SZ: 44/69.

¹⁵⁵ SZ: 167/211.

¹⁵⁶ SZ: 286/332

¹⁵⁷ SZ: 191/235.

¹⁵⁸ SZ: footnote iv, 235/190.

structural unity of Dasein as care; “simplif[ing]” the being of Dasein in a manner that makes manifest the “primordial totality” of “its structural whole.”¹⁵⁹

Yet, in keeping with his account of authenticity as but an “existentiell modification” of the they-self, Heidegger is quite frank about the rarity of genuine anxiety. As a rule – and here Heidegger is at one with Kierkegaard – Dasein avoids the crucible of anxiety. The “phenomenon [of anxiety],” Heidegger comments, is rare in that “Dasein ... for the most part remains concealed from itself in its authenticity because of the way in which things have been publicly interpreted by the ‘they.’” Nonetheless, he insists, “the factual rarity of anxiety as a phenomenon cannot deprive it of its fitness to take over a methodological function in principle for the existential analytic.”¹⁶⁰ Even if Dasein is generally inauthentic, the very possibility of anxious authenticity points tellingly toward the underlying truth of its Being. In the mode of inauthenticity, the world is disclosed in the mode of *θεωρία*, according to which beings are projected in their *Vorhandenheit*, and Dasein is concealed in the obviousness of habit and familiarity. However, in attuning Dasein to authenticity, anxiety opens Dasein up to the uncanniness of its alienation and lostness in the ‘they’; it stirs Dasein up to undergo a rupture that would interrupt its everydayness and disclose both world and its own self to it.

As a process of disclosure, anxiety reveals Dasein once again as *φρόνιμος*. As William Macomber long ago pointed out, in the anxiousness instigated by disclosure, the anxious Dasein sees itself as a being, whose “process of ... awareness arises out of its [own] activity.”¹⁶¹ But anxiety has a paralysing significance as well, since the object of anxiety is neither a particular definite possibility, nor an entity in the world, but instead their interruption:

That in the face of which one is anxious is completely indefinite. Not only does this indefiniteness leave factually undecided which entity within-the-world is threatening us, but it also tells us that entities within-the-world are not ‘relevant’

¹⁵⁹ SZ:182/226.

¹⁶⁰ SZ:190/235.

¹⁶¹ William B. Macomber, *The Anatomy of Disillusion: Martin Heidegger's Notion of Truth* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1967), 49.

at all. Nothing which is ready-to-hand or present-at-hand within the world functions as that in the face of which anxiety is anxious.¹⁶²

The experience of anxiety is thus in another sense the obliteration of the world, or at least the world in its everyday inauthenticity. As such, nothing is projected to disrupt or replace the non-relational character of our authentic self.¹⁶³ Anxiety does not emanate from *somewhere* or *something* in particular; it arises from *nowhere* and *nothing* in particular, indicating that it proceeds from the historical and social matrix of Dasein's Being, which presents itself not in any particular possibility but, through the presentation of the possibility of possibility itself.¹⁶⁴

Dasein's inauthentic everydayness is incapable of articulating the phronetic sense of Dasein's authentic possibilities.¹⁶⁵ In "being anxious about Being-in-the-world of itself,"¹⁶⁶ anxiety "takes away from Dasein the possibility of understanding itself, as it falls, in terms of the world and the way things have been publicly interpreted." As such, it "throws Dasein back upon that which it is anxious about – its authentic possibility-for-being-in-the-world."¹⁶⁷

The great importance of such an account for a ground for the possibility of ethics, is clear. The paradox of anxiety is that Dasein loses its world – it emancipates, disowns or strips itself of its everydayness – in order for it to come to possess an authentic world of its own possibilities. In Heidegger's view, Dasein's experience of authenticity is broadly speaking the anxiety that opens it up to nothingness. In this nothingness, authenticity 'frees us' for anxiety in a way that ruptures our everyday sense of self and opens the sway of our possibilities so that we respond to the way in which existence presents itself to us. It is only at this point that morality can gain anything like a genuine foothold, as distinct from a mere 'joining of the dots' as they are effectively presented to the they-self.

¹⁶² SZ: 186/231.

¹⁶³ SZ: 187/231.

¹⁶⁴ SZ: 187/231-232

¹⁶⁵ GA 19: 33/46-47.

¹⁶⁶ SZ: 187/232.

¹⁶⁷ SZ: 187/232.

Heidegger also links opening of the space of authentic possibility via anxiety directly to the opening of genuine freedom:

Anxiety individualises Dasein for its ownmost Being-in-the-world, which as something that understands, projects itself essentially upon possibilities ... [It] makes manifest in Dasein its *Being towards* its ownmost potentiality-for-Being – that is, its *Being-free* for the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself. Anxiety brings Dasein face-to-face with its *Being-free* (*propensio in*) ... the authenticity of its Being, and for this authenticity as a possibility which it always is.¹⁶⁸

If anxiety is the crucible of genuine freedom, it is also the birthplace – the authentic ground – of the possibility of ethics. But, as always, this ground is always an *Ab-grund*. In this way, there is a regress or reversal at work in the connection between Dasein and conventional normative ethics. While conventional accounts of ethics projects the individual – as that which is pre-given or determined in advance – as a condition of possibility for ethics, the authentic-anxious Dasein is not given in completeness. As Joanna Hodge puts it, ethical enquiry as “a continuing project of renegotiation between [the] definable forces [of ethics] ... and *πραξις*, a form of activity through which [Dasein] acquires an identity.”¹⁶⁹ Thus, Heidegger’s analysis of the authentic anxious Dasein suggests that ethics does not tell us what to do; instead, ethics is grounded in the openness of care. This does not amount to any sort of insurrection against normativity. Instead, as Vogel puts it, “the anxiety-provoking idea that ‘No-thing’ grounds our Being-in-the-world simply returns us to our care for our Being as the basis on which anything can matter to us.”¹⁷⁰

Anxiety is a ground for ethics to the extent that it opens in Dasein a “transparen[cy]” about “the truth of [its] existence.”¹⁷¹ This is the condition of possibility of any genuine normativity. Charles Scott elaborates on this insight as follows:

No history, no community, no subjectivity authorizes the individual’s life ... When Heidegger says that an individual ... takes over its most proper and true being in

¹⁶⁸ SZ: 187-8/232-233.

¹⁶⁹ Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, 15.

¹⁷⁰ Vogel, *The Fragile “We” Ethical Implications of Heidegger’s “Being and Time”*, 6.

¹⁷¹ SZ: 221/264.

possibility, he is saying that an individual's world and life are decentred and ruptured by the individual's resolve.¹⁷²

It cannot be denied, nonetheless, that Heidegger's account of anxious and individuated Dasein strikes various other scholars as incompatible with a robust ethical sense. Hubert Dreyfus, Michael Haar and David Carr, for example, have all questioned whether ethics is possible in a context in which Dasein's cultural heritage of pre-given norms of moral obligation – the voice of the ethical 'they' – have been entirely evacuated. According to Dreyfus, in such a situation, "all differentiations are revealed by anxiety to be totally indifferent, and so all equally meaningless."¹⁷³ This, he maintains, is not a ground for ethics, but rather a form of anti-morality. In a similar vein, Haar characterises the anxious emptiness of Dasein's state of mind as a "floating and melting of significations" that, in the face of the shattering of the familiarity of the everyday, remains entirely relative."¹⁷⁴ Some time ago, Carr underscored a similar charge of evaluative nihilism. Heidegger gives the impression, he suggested, that the nonrelational authentic individual is:

a solitary hero pitted over against an anonymous, inauthentic public as an iconoclastic rebel rejecting the conformist mass: a figure who is all erratic originality repudiating the humdrum conformity of average everydayness and asserting his own authority.¹⁷⁵

To this, one might add Fredrick Olafson's not dissimilar claim from several decades back that Heidegger and Sartre are allies in the scheme of revolutionary individualism and the liberal theory of personality. In Olafson's view at the time, Heidegger's existential analytic purges value-qualities from Being and substitutes it with the notion of projection (*Entwurf*), a move that bears a telling similarity to Sartre's approach in "Existentialism is a Humanism" (and in some ways also in *Being and Nothingness*). Both Heidegger and Sartre, he argued then, "emphatically deny that human beings can properly be said to know what is morally required of them in a way that is genuinely independent of their own individual choices,"

¹⁷² Scott, *The Question of Ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, pp. 102-3.

¹⁷³ Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I*.

¹⁷⁴ Michael Haar, *Heidegger and the Essence of Man*, trans. William McNeill (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 28.

¹⁷⁵ David Carr, *Time, Narrative and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 94.

and in this way, they both “repudiate in principle the use of the concepts of truth and falsity in moral contexts.”¹⁷⁶

Such critiques, as dated as some might be, put their finger on a point of great importance for Heidegger’s account, as well as for the argument that is being mounted here about its significance for ethics. However, their bite is felt only, I would suggest, when the full scope of Heidegger’s account is foreshortened, and his examination of the positive role of history and heritage is disregarded. There is, of course, a vital need to ensure that, as Derek O’Connell puts it, the apparent “tension between history, represented primarily by *das Man*, and the authentic, anxious individual” is bridged via “a genuine connection between authenticity and history.”¹⁷⁷ The challenge is to achieve such a holistic view of Heidegger’s text in this regard.

However, before addressing this issue, it is important to deepen the fray by examining Heidegger’s account of Being-towards death and resoluteness in the context of their own contributions to this complex tapestry of authenticity, freedom and the ground of ethics.

3.3.4 : Dasein’s Authentic Being-toward-Death

Any examination of Heidegger’s account of Dasein’s authentic possibility would be incomplete without touching upon the analysis of Dasein as Being-toward-death. Here again Heidegger’s emphasis – one that also bears traces of a Kierkegaardian heritage, if less obviously so than others¹⁷⁸ – is on the way in which the anticipation of death individualises Dasein, separating it out from the taken-for-granted platitudes of the ‘they.’ It is only in such a context in which its finitude is fully understood and incorporated into its projections of its ownmost possibilities, that ethics can emerge as a serious possibility.

¹⁷⁶ See Frederick A. Olafson, *Principles and Persons* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), pp. 107, 64-65. And his Frederick A. Olafson, *Ethics and Twentieth Century Thought* (Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp. 32-3.

¹⁷⁷ O’Connell, “Heidegger’s Authenticity,” 21.

¹⁷⁸ Buben claims that Kierkegaard and Heidegger share similar view on death, one that is rooted in the Platonic/Christian notion of dying to the world. Against the Epicurean understanding of death, Buben suggests that both Kierkegaard and Heidegger view death from a more concrete sense and employs the concept in their description of how one is “awakened from the complacent slumber of a thoughtless existence...that is not essentially and necessarily theirs.” See Buben, “Heidegger’s Reception of Kierkegaard: The Existential Philosophy of Death,” 982.

“Factically,” Heidegger suggests, “Dasein maintains itself proximally and for the most part in an inauthentic Being-towards-death.”¹⁷⁹ Against the popular conceptions of death as a future biological event experienced by everyone, in his analysis of the existential-ontological structure of death, Heidegger presents the genuine anticipation of death as “the possibility of understanding one’s *ownmost* and uttermost potentiality-for-Being – that is to say, the possibility of *authentic existence*.”¹⁸⁰ At one point Heidegger describes this as “*an impassioned freedom towards death – a freedom which has been released from the illusions of the ‘they’, and which is factual, certain of itself, and anxious.*”¹⁸¹

However, such authentic anticipation of death is – like anxiety itself (with which it is deeply connected¹⁸²) – a consumately individualising phenomenon:

Death is a possibility-of-being which Dasein itself has to take over in every case. With death, Dasein stands before itself in its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. This is the possibility in which the issue is nothing less than Dasein’s Being-in-the-world. Its death is the possibility of no-longer being-able-to-be-there. If Dasein stands before itself as this possibility, it has been fully assigned to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being.¹⁸³

In its everyday mode of existence, Heidegger argues, Dasein is constituted by “representability,”¹⁸⁴ according to which the ‘they’ presents Dasein with undifferentiated roles where anyone can serve in its place. However, in appealing to death as Dasein’s ownmost possibility, Heidegger highlights Dasein’s non-representable possibility in the context of its ownmost possibility or ownmost potentiality-of-Being.

The ethical potency of death as Dasein’s ownmost possibility is brought to the fore here in this focus on the open horizons of “pure possibility” of an utterly individual kind that are made possible by the authentic mode of Being-towards-death. Whereas the ‘they’ circumscribes Dasein by placing a limit on its potentiality for Being, and the mode in which it can comport itself towards death, authentic Dasein is in a strong sense, ‘on its own’ with

¹⁷⁹ SZ: 260/304.

¹⁸⁰ SZ: 263/307. Heidegger’s italicisation.

¹⁸¹ SZ: 266/311. Heidegger’s italicisation and bolding.

¹⁸² SZ: 265-66/310.

¹⁸³ SZ: 250/294.

¹⁸⁴ SZ: 239,283.

its ownmost possibilities before it. As such, Dasein understands itself as a “non-relational possibility,” according to which its relations with others are unravelled. Dasein’s authentic-Being-towards-death dissolves Dasein’s care for particular worldly beings, as it faces its own death alone, “primarily unsupported by concerned solicitude.”¹⁸⁵ “Dasein can be authentically itself”¹⁸⁶ only when it detaches itself from *das Man* and radically individuates itself. Or again:

Anticipation allows Dasein to understand that that potentiality-for-being in which its ownmost Being is an issue, must be taken over by Dasein alone. Death does not just ‘belong’ to one’s own Dasein in an undifferentiated way; death *lays claim* to it as an *individual* Dasein.¹⁸⁷

Such a radically individualised vision might be seen as cutting two ways ethically. On one hand, what is emphasised here is the ontological ground for an ethic of personal responsibility. However, as has been pointed out often enough (as surveyed in the previous section), are there not significant problems with such a radical and absolutist doctrine of radical ethical isolationism? Does Heidegger imply, as Sorial has argued, that “Dasein stands alone against the world, isolated and torn from others in its finitude?”¹⁸⁸ Or does he not here anticipate what Sartre declared to be “the first effect of existentialism”: that it “puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders”?¹⁸⁹

As indicated above, if this was the sum total of Heidegger’s presentation of the ontological context of the ethical situation, then such a critique of Heidegger’s account in *Being and Time* would be entirely justified. However, the discourse of radical (hyper?) individualism – perhaps even a *prima facie* ethical solipsism and value neutrality – needs always to be seen in the context of, and balanced against, the complementary emphasis in the text concerning the centrality of both historicity and Being-with. It is only when we grasp the significance of the dynamic interplay between individualised authenticity and the resolute

¹⁸⁵ SZ: 264/308.

¹⁸⁶ SZ: 263/308.

¹⁸⁷ SZ: 263/308.

¹⁸⁸ Sorial, “Heidegger and the Problem of Individuation: Mitsein (Being-with), Ethics and Responsibility,” 63.

¹⁸⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Eyre Methuen Ltd, 1978), 28.

Dasein attentive to the truth of its being-with-others, and in the midst of its historical world, that are we able to completely make sense of the ethical context and implications of Heidegger's account. The following section thus turns to consider authentic resoluteness in this light.

3.3.5 : Resoluteness: The Choice of Authenticity

Heidegger's account of resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) proceeds directly from his presentations of anxiety and Being-towards death, but it also gathers these together with various other ethically charged moments of the existential analytic, such as the analysis of *Gewissen* (examined earlier) and *Mitsein* and *Fürsorge* (examined in the following chapter). "In resoluteness," he suggests, "we have now arrived at that truth of Dasein which is most primordial because it is authentic."¹⁹⁰ Resoluteness names Dasein's capacity to make itself fully transparent to itself, through which it makes sense of the significance of what is disclosed to it according to the "for-the-sake-of-which" of its projects. Dasein comes to 'see' the world authentically, so to speak, through a modification of its Being-in-the-world and Being-with-Others:

[T]his authentic disclosedness modifies with equal primordially both the way in which the 'world' is discovered (and this is founded upon that disclosedness) and the way in which the Dasein-with of Others is disclosed ... [B]oth one's Being towards the ready-to-hand understandingly and concernfully, and one's solicitous Being-with Others, are now given a definite character in terms of their ownmost potentiality-for-Being-their-Selves.¹⁹¹

Heidegger is very clear that this modification amounts not to a "detachment" from the world, as if that was ever possible (Dasein becoming a worldless "free-floating 'I.'")¹⁹² Rather, as resolute, Dasein emerges from its lostness in the 'they'. In this sense, far from being a flight from the world, resoluteness "frees [Dasein] for its world."¹⁹³

Resolute Dasein, then, remains grounded in its factual 'there', and in its engagements within the world sees with the eyes of *φρόνησις*. Heidegger speaks of this mode of

¹⁹⁰ SZ: 297/343.

¹⁹¹ SZ: 298/344.

¹⁹² SZ: 298/344.

¹⁹³ SZ: 298/344.

inhabiting its “there” when it exists in the “authentic transparency” of resoluteness as the “Situation [*Situation*]:”¹⁹⁴ a “spatiality” where, as Kasowski puts it “Dasein finds itself when it hears the “call of conscience” and exists in a possibility it has chosen.”¹⁹⁵ Within this space, the ‘they’ – which otherwise still shapes the world – is silenced. When Dasein hermeneutically inhabits its Situation in this way, it is in the mode of *πρᾶξις*. Accordingly, Dasein is not called to some parallel universe or “some empty ideal of existence.” But rather to abide authentically in the concrete “current factual ... circumstances” of its existence.¹⁹⁶ With the Situation, Dasein acquires the capacity for self-debate (conscience) and resolution (decision), and in this way “modifies with equal primordially both the way in which the ‘world’ is discovered and the way in which one’s coexistence with others is disclosed.”¹⁹⁷

Once again, the ethical potency of authenticity comes to the fore, this time in the structural components of resoluteness. Dasein is individualised, but not in the sense of breaking free of its factual situatedness within the world and its others. There is no free-floating voluntarism here. There is no getting behind its thrown “nullity”, as Heidegger puts it elsewhere, to some pure perspective that is absolutely beyond the reach of the ‘they’. Heidegger is very clear on this point, and his subtle elaboration on this matter is worth careful attention:

‘Resoluteness’ signifies letting oneself be summoned out of one's lostness in the ‘they’. *The irresoluteness of the ‘they’ remains dominant notwithstanding*, but it cannot impugn resolute existence ... *Even resolutions remain dependent upon the ‘they’ and its world*. The understanding of this is one of the things that a resolution discloses, inasmuch as resoluteness is what first gives authentic transparency to Dasein. In resoluteness the issue for Dasein is its ownmost potentiality-for-Being, which, as something thrown, can project itself only upon definite factual possibilities. Resolution does not withdraw itself from ‘actuality’ but discovers first

¹⁹⁴ SZ: 299 / 346.

¹⁹⁵ Kasowski, “Conscience and Attestation: The Methodological Role of the “Call of Conscience” (Gewissensruf) in Heidegger’s Being and Time ” 191.

¹⁹⁶ SZ: 300/346.

¹⁹⁷ SZ: 297/344.

what is factually possible; and it does so by seizing upon it in whatever way is possible for it as its ownmost potentiality-for-Being in the 'they'.¹⁹⁸

What is at stake here is Dasein's capacity for an authenticity (an 'own-most-ness') that does not (nor cannot) obliterate the 'they', but which can interrupt and question the 'they's' assumption of certainty. Rather than living under the thrall of cultural normalcy, resolute Dasein exists as the *φρόνιμος* with the capacity to meaningfully deliberate (*προαιρεσις*) on the concrete possibilities within which it finds itself. Dasein is thus involved, as Charles Scott puts it, "in a reflective movement that puts in question its own certainty, its structure of expression, its perspectiv[al] reach, and its prescriptive possibility."¹⁹⁹ Resoluteness imbues Dasein with the capacity to make considered decisions. Dasein, qua *φρόνιμος*, enacts its capacity to face up to the fact that its cultural projections are but one of many ways of engaging with the world. In this way:

Resoluteness brings the Self right into its current concerned Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand and pushes it into solicitous Being with Others".²⁰⁰

Here indeed is an ontological ground for ethics par excellence: "the existential condition for the possibility of ... morality in general," as Heidegger puts it.

3.3.6 : Dasein's Authentic Historicality

Central to the argument of this chapter is a rejection of interpretations of Heidegger's notion of *Eigentlichkeit* that portray Dasein as the radically solitary author of its own destiny – Dasein as effectively '*causa sui*' – and thus of misguided ethical implications drawn from such an account. In turning to Heidegger's discussion of historicality (*Geschichtlichkeit*), the grounds of this rejection will be further elaborated. In Heidegger's presentation of fate, heritage, destiny and repetition, the depth and complexity of Heideggerian *Eigentlichkeit* is highlighted, along its key role within the existential analytic understood as providing a ground for the possibility of ethics.

Having maintained that authentic Dasein must project itself upon its ownmost possibilities, in the seminal §74 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger notes that: "we must ask

¹⁹⁸ SZ: 299/345-46. Emphasis added.

¹⁹⁹ Scott, *The Question of Ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, 103.

²⁰⁰ SZ: 298/344.

whence, in general, Dasein can draw those possibilities upon which it factually projects itself.”²⁰¹ What, in other words, is the origin of Dasein’s possibilities? This is a question that goes to the heart of the meaning of authenticity itself. If Dasein is the radically autonomous (literally self-made) individual of existentialist fame, then this is an entirely rhetorical question: it is Dasein that must be the author of its ownmost possibilities. Yet here we find Heidegger providing a very different response that instead underlines Dasein’s irretrievably factual character: Dasein is an entity whose wholeness lies in its “coming back to its factual ‘there.’”²⁰² Dasein’s ‘own-most-ness, therefore, is always only ever the own-most-ness of its factual thrownness; and “as thrown, it has been submitted to a ‘world’, and exists factually with Others.”²⁰³ This is an insistence that is not new to §74, for it was driven home unequivocally and with great force already in §58, in the account of conscience and Dasein’s ontological guilt, as was surveyed earlier. Accordingly, Dasein is “released from its basis ... to itself” through its historicity. This is a basis that it can never “get into its power; and yet, as existing, it must take [it] over.”²⁰⁴

In Heidegger’s account of *Geschichtlichkeit*, he gathers together his analyses of conscience, Being-toward-death and resoluteness, but then adds to this a diachronic and quasi ‘social ontology’ sense that deepens the ethical context of the whole. Accordingly, resoluteness, which is defined as “a projecting of oneself upon one’s own Being-guilty” in reticence and anxiety, is said to “gain ... its authenticity as anticipatory resoluteness.”²⁰⁵ Of course, Dasein’s facticity is a given, regardless of its mode of Being, and so Heidegger reminds his reader that “proximally and for the most part the Self is lost in the ‘they’.”²⁰⁶ However, what marks authentic existence off from everydayness is Dasein’s emancipatory *resoluteness*: its having made its factual basis its *own* by taking it over. It is the “grasp[ing]” of the finitude of its existence that “snatches [Dasein] back” from the dissolution of everydayness, and it is in this way that Dasein is able to be brought “into the simplicity of its *fate* [*Schicksals*].” Heidegger calls this “Dasein’s primordial historicizing, which lies in authentic resoluteness.”

²⁰¹ SZ: 383/434.

²⁰² SZ: 383/434.

²⁰³ SZ: 383/435.

²⁰⁴ SZ: 284-85/330. Heidegger’s italicisation.

²⁰⁵ SZ: 382/434.

²⁰⁶ SZ: 383/435.

In this way, “Dasein hands itself down to itself, free for death, in a possibility which it has inherited and yet has chosen.”²⁰⁷

Here the usual sense of ‘fate’ – of the individual as powerless to own or shape its future – is turned upside down. In Heidegger’s account, fate is precisely in its being received and taken over *by* Dasein: “[o]nly if death, guilt, conscience, freedom, and finitude reside together equiprimordially in the Being of an entity as they do in care, can that entity exist in the mode of fate”.²⁰⁸ Dasein can be “futural” only insofar as it has authentically taken on its past which has come down to it. Anything less is simply a matter of remaining “in the throw,”²⁰⁹ in which it allows itself, and its future, to unfold according to the dictates of the ‘they’. Here we have an account of Dasein *not* as a detached autonomous individual making decisions in a context of absolute arbitrary ‘freedom,’ but of a factual individual living in the midst of a continuous whole with others, from which Dasein’s own possibilities emerge. Authenticity is a matter of Dasein’s relationship to the possibilities within which it has always already found itself. Will it simply “remain in the throw” of the inertia of the they-self, or will it “take over” its thrown basis *as* its own?

What is already palpable here is the deeper sense of historicity that Heidegger is building into his account. Accordingly, Dasein’s factual basis is presented in diachronic relief, as a bestowal from a past that far exceeds it. Dasein’s Being-in-the-world is presented as textured and structured by its own deep history:

The resoluteness in which Dasein comes back to itself, discloses current factual possibilities of authentic existing, and discloses them *in terms of the heritage* which that resoluteness, as thrown, *takes over*. In one’s coming back resolutely to one’s thrownness, there is hidden a *handing down* to oneself of the possibilities that have come down to one.²¹⁰

In a sense, in this analysis of authentic historicity, Heidegger recognises the overall factual life of Dasein as a moment of inculturation. Dasein comes into its world as a gift of its deep past. Dasein *is*, in a sense, its *heritage*, for this heritage provides Dasein with the

²⁰⁷ SZ: 384/435.

²⁰⁸ SZ: 385/437.

²⁰⁹ SZ: 179/223.

²¹⁰ SZ: 383/435. Heidegger’s italicisations.

authentic possibilities upon which it can project itself. Authentic resolute Dasein does not create its own possibilities. Instead, its possibilities are rooted in a particular historical context that is “handed down” to it, and which are available for it to appropriate: it make its own.²¹¹

At this point in the text, ‘*Sein*’ and ‘*Zeit*’ indeed come powerfully together. Dasein’s authentic historicizing presupposes a condition of authentic temporalizing according to which it is open to and holds together the past and future in the interlaced present. Dasein’s past (its heritage) is brought alive in its present “moment of vision”²¹² as a set of opportunities for its future. Heidegger refers to this structural phenomenon as “*Wiederholung*,” which Macquarrie and Robinson translate as *repetition*, though equally important is the sense it carries of *retrieval*. Authenticity requires the retrieval of possibilities from the past (heritage) by creatively resolving upon the possibilities that have been made available, as well as the constant repetition of its choices in loyalty to its resolve, even as it struggles with the dictates of the they-self.

Heidegger is very clear in distinguishing this notion of retrieval-repetition from any sense of Dasein’s enslavement to its past. The idea is not that Dasein simply ‘relives’ its heritage; nor that Dasein’s involvements level down all possibilities and restricts “the possible options of choice to what lies within the range of the familiar, the attainable, the respectable – that which is fitting and proper.”²¹³ Rather, in retrieval-repetition, Dasein stands in the present, fully open to its state of *receptivity* to its heritage, and fully committed to the task of taking on the weight of that heritage, by freely making it its own; entering into it as its chosen fate. Freedom, and hence the possibility of ethics, is thus underpinned (in part) by authentic resoluteness in which the finitude of one’s existence is grasped, and the promise of one’s heritage is primordially appropriated.

Heidegger describes this process of retrieval-repetition as a kind of conversation, or “reciprocative rejoinder,”²¹⁴ in which Dasein takes on board its heritage, treasuring the opportunities it presents and the restrictions it obligates. According to Charles Scott, this

²¹¹ The anticipatory echoes of *Er-eignis* (often translated as ‘appropriation’) are palpable here.

²¹² SZ: 385/436.

²¹³ SZ: 195/239.

²¹⁴ SZ: 386/438.

reciprocative rejoinder is a process where one ‘turns again’ to one’s tradition and then ‘turns over’ “or recoils in that turn to a new horizon and thought.”²¹⁵ Dasein seeks not to jettison or ‘move beyond’ its past, but rather, absorbed in its history, it understands itself in terms of its history and takes over the possibilities made accessible by it, acting in the present in order to accomplish something for the future. Dasein thus critically engages with its past so that it can retrieve and rethink what is possible for its future. As he puts it around five years later in his lecture course on truth in Plato:

To engage oneself with the disclosiveness of beings is not to lose oneself in them; rather, such engagement withdraws in the face of beings in order that they may reveal themselves with respect to what and how they are and in order that presentative correspondence might take its standard from them.²¹⁶

At this point, anticipatory resoluteness is shown to blend directly into the themes that will be explored in the final chapter which follows. Heidegger points out that this *primordial historizing* or *fate* is not just structurally constitutive of individual authentic Dasein, but also of the *community* of which Dasein is a part. This notion of “*destiny*” [*Geschick*] points to “Dasein’s historizing in Being-with Others.”²¹⁷ Heritage, in other words, is never just “mine” in a vacuum, but is always a shared destiny of a people, with whom Dasein has its Being. Dasein’s authentic (*own-most*) possibilities are thus to be retrieved from a larger matrix, within which they always remain embedded.

Of course, this coming together of *Geschichtlichkeit* with the notion of a “shared destiny of a people” raises the spectre of Heidegger’s later enlistment of this idea to justify the National Socialist vision of German destiny. This is a matter to which I will return in the thesis conclusion. Suffice at this stage to simply point out that such an application amounts to an insidious distortion of Heidegger’s own account, since it implies that all German ‘Daseins’ should project an understand their heritage in the same way, and put it to the same ends. Such a view amounts to the evacuation of the keynote hermeneutic and

²¹⁵ Scott, *The Question of Ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, 122.

²¹⁶ Martin Heidegger’s *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* is published in *Wegmarken* (pg 188) and translated in *Pathmarks* by John Sallis as *On the Essence of Truth*. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited as *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit im Wegmarken* with the corresponding number as it appears in the English translation and followed by the number in the original German text. For example: *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit im Wegmarken*: 144/188.

²¹⁷ SZ 384/435.

phronetic sense that is integral to Heidegger's account in the 1920s. Gone is any sense of the *tension* between shared heritage on one hand, and the radical individualising detachment of authentic Dasein from *das Man* (including all homogenising nationalistic propaganda) on the other.

Finally, the entire thrust of Heidegger's analysis of authentic historicity has Dasein resolutely situated towards its to-be, its future possibility. This is a possibility that is granted by, and is in deep conversation with its past, but which is also freely appropriated for its future. Accordingly, as a ground for the possibility of ethics, Heidegger as Schmidt puts it, suggests that "all talk of ethics is premature and must begin with a critique of the preset historical moment."²¹⁸ Ethics does not begin "as an experience of values and duties." Rather, "a reawakening of historical consciousness is the first step in recovering the possibility of an originary ethics."²¹⁹

3.4 CONCLUSION

Throughout his early work, Heidegger uses a series of strategies and diverse terminologies to develop his account of authentic existence. This chapter has charted some of his early formulations between 1919-23 in which key aspects were emerging of what was to become *Eigentlichkeit* in *Being and Time*. In siding essentially with what Benjamin Crowe described as an 'emancipatory account' of Heidegger's *Eigentlichkeit*, this chapter has emphasised Heidegger's focus on the meaning and possibility of Dasein's shedding the domination of the they-self in embracing its authentic possibilities, even as it has also acknowledged aspects of Heidegger's account that map onto aspects of the two rival readings identified by Crowe (i.e., the ontological and the narrative readings).

While Heidegger's account of authenticity contains no specific claims about ethics or moral normativity in general, nor particular claims about moral norms in particular, it is nonetheless clear, I have argued, that it is one of those means through which he largely implicitly provides what he calls, at one stage, "the existential condition for the possibility

²¹⁸ Schmidt, *Hermeneutics as Original Ethics*, 42.

²¹⁹ Schmidt, *Hermeneutics as Original Ethics*, 43.

of ... morality in general.”²²⁰ After all, what Heidegger’s account of authenticity provides is a highly textured account of human freedom, and it is precisely such an account that is indispensable for any developed subsequent ontic account of moral psychology and of the character and reach of moral normativity.

At its fullest extent – as anticipatory resoluteness set in the context of historicity – Heideggerian *Eigentlichkeit* is an account, par excellence, of Dasein as residing within the $\tilde{\eta}\theta\omicron\varsigma$: the factual world within which it finds itself, and which provides it with its most fundamental network of meaning. The $\tilde{\eta}\theta\omicron\varsigma$ is the saturated manifold of meaning, structured by heritage, within which Dasein lives and moves and has its Being, without which no authentic possibilities are *possible*. So, in his insistence on Dasein’s irreducible facticity, Heidegger is simultaneously insisting on the ethico-ontological context within which morality – the grasping of moral and immoral possibilities – are possible in the first place. Of course, Heidegger remains silent on the whole matter of how it is possible to discern the moral value of actions, for this is already to point in the direction of metaethical accounts of the good, and even the beginnings of normative accounts that would separate good and bad actions. Nonetheless, what he does provide is a basic ontological account of the condition of possibility of ethics in this more developed sense; an account that provides a framework within which ethics can get a foothold on the basis of a highly developed conception of the kind of being it is that is the dative of normative obligation.

Nonetheless, no account of the full implications of early Heideggerian thought in its relevance for ethics would be complete without a more thorough engagement with Heidegger’s account of Being-with-Others. Here his accounts of conscience and authenticity are both integrated and deepened in a highly consequential account of the belonging-together of Dasein with others in the human community. Does the appropriation of my heritage subject the Other to the dominion of my projects, or does it also create room for the Other to be free for their possibilities? In the following chapter, I maintain that Heidegger’s account very clearly shows that the latter is the case. Indeed, if Dasein’s authenticity is best read in an ‘emancipatory’ light, as I have maintained here,

²²⁰ SZ: 286/332.

then Heidegger's account of "liberating solicitude [*Fürsorge*]"²²¹ is central to his account of *Mitsein*; and indeed, for his implicit account of the ontological ground of ethics in general.

²²¹ SZ: 298/344-345.

Chapter 4

MITSEIN

If there is one thing that can be agreed upon even by those who understand the nature of ethics very differently, it is that ethics necessarily assumes relations between and among individuals; within and among communities of individuals. To that extent, any ontological ground for ethics must – by definition – understand people as being intrinsically *in relation*. Any fundamental ontology of the human that does not have *relation* at its core is therefore doomed to begin with abstraction and misrepresentation.

The previous chapters have shown how early Heideggerian thought does in fact develop just this inter-communal sense that is required for ethics. In the first chapter of this thesis, I explored how Heidegger's discourse on conscience, authenticity and Being-with stems from his close reading of the different features of Aristotelian *φρόνησις* that provides a rich phenomenological foundation for the understanding of ethics as an enactment of Being-in-the-world; of Dasein as a being of *πρᾶξις* who properly dwell in the truth of its being.¹ In many senses, the last two chapters have focused on dimensions of early Heideggerian thought that, *prima facie*, lack an obvious engagement with Dasein's relationality, though I have shown that this conclusion is not borne out by the texts. These chapters outlined how Dasein's call of conscience and its authentic resoluteness lay out an existential background for the possibility of ethics. Together, they provide the basis of ethical obligation insofar as Dasein's call to attest to an "authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole" in anticipatory resoluteness² functions as a primary self-obligation that is constitutive of Dasein.

Nonetheless, a focus on these two existentialia is insufficient for the demonstration of a robust ethical ground at the heart of the existential analytic. As Lawrence Vogel puts it, they are inadequate, in themselves, to show holistically how fundamental ontology is also simultaneously a fundamental ethics;³ for how the meaning of Being can ontologically make sense of, or relate to, Dasein's fundamental character of *social* existence. Even given

¹ GA 19: 22-25/16-17.

² SZ: 301/348.

³ Vogel, *The Fragile "We" Ethical Implications of Heidegger's "Being and Time"*, 66-7.

what has been said above concerning *Eigentlichkeit*, in what sense can Dasein openly encounter others who are also to be understood in *their Eigentlichkeit*; in their 'own-mostness'?

It is with the notion of *Mitsein* that Heideggerian thought opens out fully and explicitly to the irreducible ontological relationality of Dasein. My core claim in this chapter is that despite the relatively limited space accorded to *Mitsein* (and *Mit-dasein*, *Miteinandersein*) in *Being and Time* (an account that is developed in its main lines almost entirely within §26 of that work), it is a crucial leaven within the existential analytic that underpins the intrinsically 'inter-Daseinic' nature of the early Heideggerian account. Accordingly, Dasein is specifically constituted not as an autonomous self, but as one whose radical (ecstatic) phronetic openness to Being also predisposes it to be in relation to others. On the basis of this observation, I suggest that like conscience and authenticity, Heidegger intends to capture in *Mitsein* an Aristotelian sense of Dasein as a *ζωον πολιτικόν*—a being whose Being-possibility can only be understood in a *πόλις*, in a *κοινωνία*, or community.⁴ *Mitsein* underpins the relationality of Dasein. As *Mitsein*, Dasein's self-understanding intersects with the other. While it entails no particular normative framework for action, as basic to Dasein's Being, *Mitsein* makes possible an understanding of ethical relations that is based on freedom/responsibility and empathy.

The chapter will proceed as follows. In the first part, I set the scene for the textual analysis to come by engaging with Jean-Luc Nancy's reading of Heideggerian *Mitsein* as the paradoxical logic of singular plural, by which it serves as a ground for "a co-existential" analytic.⁵ On this basis, I then examine early Heideggerian texts in terms of the way in which *Mitsein* is fundamentally located at the heart of the analysis of Dasein as Being-in-the-world. After exploring the equiprimordiality of Being-in and Being-with in Heidegger's early thought, *Mitsein* will be explored in terms of its particular relations with *Rede*, *Fürsorge* and *ἡθός* itself. I then examine the way in which Heidegger's *Mitsein* offers us an ontological ground of ethics that is based on the notion of responsibility/freedom and empathy. In successively discussing these implicit ethical moments of *Mitsein*, I will show how they all cohere to provide an over-arching structure that points to Heidegger's

⁴ *Politica*: 1253a10/1129.

⁵ Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," *Cont Philos Rev* 41, no. 1 (2008): 4.

fundamental ontology as an abyssal ground of ethics. In the final section, I turn to some of the 'classical' criticisms of Heidegger's *Mitsein* levelled by Martin Buber, Jean-Paul Sartre and Emmanuel Levinas, taking each in turn. What the respective critiques of these thinkers share is the general contention that one looks in vain for a depth analysis of ethical relations with the other in *Mitsein* insofar as Heidegger prioritises Dasein's being at the expense of the other. Against this view, I argue that Heideggerian *Mitsein* points specifically toward an ethical relation with the authentic other that is an intrinsic and not a contingent dimension of human sociality. Thus, *Mitsein* is neither a mere abstraction, nor a description of relations between ontologically independent egos or subjects. On the contrary, *Mitsein* captures an aspect of Dasein's ontological structure that exists even before any coherent distinction between the I and the other is made. Therefore, insofar as Dasein exists as Being-in-the-world, and as *Mitsein*, to be obligated to itself is at the same time to be obligated to others with whom it is in a relationship of caring-for or solicitude (*Fürsorge*).

Like the call of conscience and authenticity, *Mitsein* informs ethical relations not by subjecting Dasein and the other to a standard of behaviour. Rather, it involves a phronetic attunement to the particularity of others, giving the other a space to live as a being of Being-possible in their shared world.

4.1 NANCY ON MITSEIN: DASEIN AS SINGULAR-PLURAL

In his *Etre singulier pluriel* (*Being Singular Plural*), Jean Luc Nancy provides a rich insight into the way Heidegger's *Mitsein* presents Dasein not as a singular being, but rather a being whose meaning lies in its necessary "co-existential" nature or relations; in which the 'I' of Dasein is equiprimordial (or "co-original" to use Nancy's language) with the 'we.'⁶ Nancy's reading of *Mitsein* is especially illuminating for the analysis to come. The aim here is not to "investigate to what extent the Heideggerian project motivates Nancy's writing" in order to reveal "the creative frictions between the two thinkers" as Daniele Rugo has set out to do in his recent work.⁷ Rather, my short discussion of Nancy's reading is geared towards

⁶ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 13.

⁷ Daniele Rugo, *Jean-Luc Nancy and the Thinking of Otherness: Philosophy and Powers of Existence* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2013), 1.

inspiring and orienting an interpretation of *Mitsein* that Heidegger himself suggests even while leaving it somewhat mired in tensions and ambiguities. Recognising Heidegger's lack of development of the notion of Dasein's relational self, Nancy describes *Mitsein* as a "paradoxical logic of singular-plural," and what he has to say in this regard opens up a re-examination of what still remains unthought about the concept. This insistence on what remains *unthought* is crucial, for Nancy is not uncritical of the lack of thorough integration by Heidegger of his own insights in this respect. Specifically, he points out the precarity of Heidegger's insistence that Dasein is both 'Being-there' and 'Being-with' in an equally constitutive and primordial sense.⁸ Further, he sees the lack of recognition of the importance of 'the with' in *Being and Time* to be "not accidental." For him, this oversight "stems from [the] text itself":

Despite the presence of the terms *Mitsein* and *Mitdasein* in the text, no lengthy or rigorous analyses of the concepts are provided as in the case of the main concepts ["'care,' 'anxiety,' 'world,' 'Being-towards-death,' etc"] – far from it. Yet, *Mitsein* and *Mitdasein* are posited as co-essential to Dasein's essence, that is, to its property as an existent for which Being is not its ontological foundation but rather the bringing into play of its own sense of Being as well as of the sense of Being itself. Therefore, Being-with, and more precisely Being-there-with, constitutes an essential condition for Dasein's essence. How? It is not easy to answer this question due to the limited analysis presented in the text (and one must add that Heidegger's later works do not supplement this analysis in any substantial way, even though they do not completely abandon the motive in question).⁹

For Nancy, this "resistance and relative obscurity" of Heidegger's text by which it fails to "offer access to one of its essential dimensions in any explicit and detailed way" is a significant point in itself.¹⁰ Even as Heidegger brings forth a crucial insight into the constitutional 'with' of Being-in-the-world (to be explored in what follows), this very insight risks being "hidden, lost or suppressed" between *das Man* and historicity or destiny.¹¹ In failing to sketch out his account of *Mitsein* properly, Nancy complains, Heidegger leaves his

⁸ Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," 4.

⁹ Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," 2.

¹⁰ Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," 2.

¹¹ Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," 5.

reader unclear about how *Mitdasein* is even possible. “[H]ow should one picture it?”,¹² he asks. Nancy’s working out of this question – to be traced below – provides a compelling set of insights that will be enlisted in my reading of Heidegger’s own texts in what is to come in this chapter. In short, this is a reading that makes possible a further sense in which Heidegger’s fundamental ontology can be seen to be simultaneously a fundamental ethics.

Crucial to this reconstructive interpretation of *Mitsein* is Nancy’s claim that Dasein’s Being-in-the-world implies an ability to make sense, but this making sense must involve the existence of another Dasein. Being-with is therefore always already a sharing of Being with another, and therefore “Being cannot *be* anything but being-with-one-another, circulating in the *with* and as the *with* of this singularly plural coexistence.”¹³ There is a vigorous active sense of what I will call ‘co-responsibility’ at work here, according to which Dasein appropriates meaning which can only be derived from its Being-in-the-world-with-others. Nancy’s use of Hannah Arendt language, “human plurality” and his later translation of Dasein “with” as “sharing” [*partager*]¹⁴ points not toward a sense of ‘partnership’ between two separate autonomous beings, but of Dasein as existing in a plural world of shared meaning, involving a ‘partaking’ of Being without assuming ownership of it.¹⁵

Nancy applauds Heidegger’s championing of the cause of an ontology of the “with” that steers a course that has been so overlooked by the western tradition that tends only to lurch “between two subjects, the first being ‘the person’ and the second ‘the community,’ thereby leaving no place left for the ‘with.’”¹⁶ For Nancy, Heidegger’s break-through addresses the strange vagueness that has always surrounded the notion of relationality. The conventional perspective on sociality has always been to see human relations as merely a relation of exteriority that overlooks ‘the with’ as such, a relatedness that *fundamentally* constitutes each ‘I.’ This conventional notion of the terms of relationality is often presupposed by the concept of society or community, which as a result neglects the ‘with’ in favour of what Olli Pyyhtinen describes as “a pure interiority, achieved in the

¹² Nancy, “The Being-with of Being-there,” 4.

¹³ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 3.

¹⁴ As it noted by Nancy’s translator, *partager* does mean “to share,” but it also means “to divide” or “share out.” See, Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 194.

¹⁵ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 3.

¹⁶ Nancy, “The Being-with of Being-there,” 5.

hyper-existence of society or in a harmonious community which unites individuals who are assumed to share a common substance.”¹⁷ For Nancy, given that Heidegger’s merit consists in precisely grasping the “‘generic being’ of humanity as ‘essentially social’: a co-ontology,”¹⁸ a reformulation of the concept is therefore needed in order to address the question of the political fate of fundamental ontology that is often shrouded in what Simon Critchley calls “the autarkic telos and tragic-heroic pathos of the thematic of authenticity, where ,... *Mitsein* is determined in terms of ‘the people’ and its ‘destiny.’”¹⁹

Interestingly, Critchley’s interpretation of *Mitsein* pointedly reflects Nancy’s conclusion. In his view, what Heidegger seeks to establish in *Mitsein* is the inversion of Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am” to “we are and only therefore we think.”²⁰ *Mitsein* thus stipulates that the world is part of who I am, and to extricate myself from the world, as Descartes suggested, is to miss the point that at the core of our being is the fact that as human beings, we are inextricably bound together in the complex web of social practices that make up our world. On Critchley’s reading, therefore, even though Heidegger disparages this common plurality of *Mitsein* as inauthentic, what seems to be “the authentic, communal mode of *Mitsein* that masters the inauthenticity of *das Man* is *das Volk* [the people].”²¹ Critchley’s perspective is that the only way one can make sense of how the authentic Dasein can be with others is to see it through Dasein’s struggle to identify with the world that surrounds it and in which it is completely immersed for the most part.

In Nancy’s reading, the effect of Heidegger’s account of *Mitsein* is profound. Indeed, when the whole of the Existential analytic is viewed through this prism, Heidegger’s famous *Seinsfrage* is essentially transformed into the *Mitseinsfrage*.²² In other words, “the

¹⁷ Olli Pyyhtinen, “Simmel and ‘the Social’,” in *Conclusion: Simmel and Contemporary Social Theory* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 163.

¹⁸ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 42.

¹⁹ Simon Critchley, *Ethics, Politics, Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas and Contemporary French Thought* (London: Verso, 1999), 240.

²⁰ Simon Critchley, “Being and Time, part 3: Being-in-the-world: How Heidegger turned Descartes upside down, so that we are, and only therefore think” *The Guardian* Monday June 22, 2009.

²¹ Simon Critchley, “Originary Inauthenticity: On Heidegger’s Sein und Zeit,” in *Between Levinas and Heidegger: SUNY Press Contemporary Continental Philosophy*, ed., John E. Drabinski and Eric S. Nelson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 118.

²² Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 78. Ignaas Devisch has argued that when Nancy writes that “[the question of being (*Seinsfrage*) is therefore the question of being-with (*Mitseinsfrage*),” what he implies is that “being-with is a tautology.” And it is actually “to break through this stubborn tautology, a tautology as old as philosophy itself” that Nancy sets out to do in his reading of Heidegger’s *Mitsein* as being-singular-plural.

question of what we still see as a 'question of social being' should in fact constitute *the* ontological question;"²³ or as he says elsewhere, "the singular-plural constitutes the essence of Being, a constitution that undoes or dislocates every single, substantial essence of Being itself."²⁴ Nancy is clear what such a seismic reconstruction of Heidegger's account as a "paradoxical logic of singular plural" entails, and in this he looks to do justice to *both* aspects of the doublet of singular-plural. In terms of Dasein as 'singular,' Nancy writes:

Dasein is characterized by the bringing into play of its own Being in its Being itself, or rather, to be, for Dasein, means to bring its Being into play, exposing it to having to-be (and not to becoming) what it is, since it 'is' its 'to-be' or its 'ex-Being,' its Being-outside-of-itself. Dasein does not have to become [*devenir*] but to come to itself [*advenir*] in the act of taking responsibility for an essential non-essence whose sense is a Being-ahead-of-itself or a Being-exposed or brought into play.²⁵

As such, being the 'there' reinforces how Dasein discloses itself. The 'there' of Dasein opens it to the world. Second, Dasein is singular in its anticipation of its own death, in which its utter singularity is accentuated. But further, and perhaps most tangibly of all, Nancy insists on a basic notion of common individualisation as a force for the irreducible singularity of Dasein:

... from faces to voices, gestures, attitudes, dress and conduct, whatever the 'typical' traits are, everyone distinguishes himself by a sort of sudden and headlong precipitation where the strangeness of a singularity is concentrated. Without this precipitation there would be, quite simply, no 'someone.' And there would be no more interest or hospitality, desire or disgust, no matter who or what it might be for.²⁶

However, in Nancy's view, the other side of the singular-plural nature of Dasein has not been as appreciated (even in Heidegger's own text). For Dasein is also "a primordial

See, Ignaas Devisch, "A trembling voice in the desert: Jean-Luc Nancy's rethinking of the space of the political," *Cultural Values* 4, no. 2 (2000): 245.

²³ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 57.

²⁴ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, pp. 28-29.

²⁵ Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," pp. 2-3.

²⁶ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 8.

plurality which co-appears" by the virtue of its Being-with.²⁷ But, if Dasein is primordially a plural being, if it is intrinsically a Being-with-others, what exactly would this 'there' of many Dasein look like? Nancy lists three possible ways of interpreting Dasein's Being-with in order to make sense of how "many Dasein's can be the 'there' together."²⁸ For him:

First of all, ... as the Being-with of several Dasein, where each opens its own *da* for itself? Or as the ... Being- the-there-with, which would require that the openings intersect each other in some way, that they cross, mix or let their properties interfere with one another, but without merging into a unique Dasein. Or else –, in third way—as a common relation to a there that would be beyond the singulars?²⁹

For Nancy, what we see in these three possible senses of interpreting Dasein's Being-with is "in reality three possible modes of the 'common': the "banal Being alongside each other" of essentially separate beings (sense 1); , "the common as ownmost structure in itself, and thus as communal or collective."³⁰ (sense 3); or finally, the common as the "sharing of properties (relations, intersections, mixtures)." In his assessment, senses one and three respectively represent an *a priori* pure interiority and pure exteriority.³¹ Accordingly, the first, "seems to fall back into the simple contiguity of things," something that clearly misrepresents Heidegger's ontological concept of *Mitsein*, since this sense of *Mit-dasein* does not constitute Dasein's essence. On the other hand, the third sense "seems to suppose a single communal Dasein beyond the singulars," and in this way it loses sight of Dasein's genuine essential singularity or 'ownness', while also threatening to collapse into a tacitly Fascist "communautaristic" vision "in which the individual has no weight at all."³² What intrigues Nancy and inspires his account is therefore what a fuller account of the *second* sense might look like in more fleshed out form. Such an account would steer a course between the horns of individualistic sovereignty on one hand, and a totalising sense of *das Volk* on the other. That such an account of this second mode - the 'Being- the-there-with' of Dasein – is largely unexplored in *Being and Time* ("and will remain so in the rest of

²⁷ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, pp. 89-90.

²⁸ Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," 4.

²⁹ Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," 4.

³⁰ Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," 4.

³¹ Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," 4.

³² Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," 5.

Heidegger's work"³³) is a deeply problematic aspect of Heidegger's work, and one that amounts to an unfortunate legacy of its own. While Heidegger does intend the side-by-side sense of *Mit-dasein* (as described in the first mode), this effectively emerges from his text nonetheless. Further, something closer to the third sense emerges in his later texts from the 1930s and beyond in which "the affirmation of the essentiality of the with is insidiously neglected in favour of another category, community, which appropriates the with into a destinal unity."³⁴ .

Understood in this light, Nancy's diagnosis of both the problems and the promise of Heidegger's ontology of Dasein as Being-with unfolds as a general interpretation of the impoverished state of the ontology underlying ethics and political philosophy more generally. Accordingly, much political philosophy tends to pivot between this same dual tendency seen in Heidegger, likewise failing to do justice to a genuine ontology of 'the we' that might be forged between these two extremes. Elsewhere, for example, Nancy argues that the liberal individualism of Western democratic theory plays out on the basis of the first sense identified above, according to which the individual is intrinsically voluntaristic: its sense of being-with is understood as a fundamental ontic action in which the other is recognised through his/her difference to myself.³⁵ On the other hand, the ontological logic of the third sense makes possible the Communist and Socialist agendas in which the 'we' becomes a political response to the alienation of modernism by locating the condition of existence in co-existence.³⁶ Although Nancy recognises freedom of choice as a potentially helpful way to redress the impact of totalitarianism, individualism also brings about a "decomposition" of the sense of community, of the 'we'.³⁷ The notion of community has to be reconstructed and relaunched as the question of what actually constitutes 'us' today as social beings.

For Nancy, what is required is a fundamental shift in the way we ontologically understand the co-originary nature of the 'with'. Accordingly, 'we' as a basic requirement of Being is neither "a project of fusion, or in some general way a productive or operative project – nor

³³ Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," 4.

³⁴ Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," 13.

³⁵ Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 3.

³⁶ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 62.

³⁷ Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, 3.

is it a project at all.”³⁸ It is rather antecedent to every social relation as the “co-essence” of Being. The ‘with’ constitutes being and this is not “simply an addition but what evidences being as such.”³⁹ Being can never be understood in isolation or even as external to the being-with of entities. Rather, there must already be a being for another being to be for “Being cannot be anything but being-with-one-another, circulating in the with and as the ‘with’ of this singularly plural coexistence.”⁴⁰ In Nancy’s vision of the primordial togetherness of Being and the ‘with’, while amorphous collectivity is out of the question, so too is any in-principle individualism that would separate the ontological questions of the ‘I’ and the ‘we’:

[I]t is not the case that the ‘with’ is an addition to some prior Being; instead, the with’ is at the heart of Being. In this respect, it is absolutely necessary to reverse the order of philosophical exposition, for which it has been a matter of course that the ‘with’—and the other that goes along with it—always comes second, even though this succession is contradicted by the underlying [*profonde*] logic in question here.⁴¹

The mention here of the ontological status of the ‘other’ is crucial for Nancy’s understanding of the chasm between his own reconstructed account of Heideggerian *Mitsein*, and a Levinasian account (of which, more later). For now, suffice to point out that when Nancy’s Heidegger writes of the singular-plural nature of Being, he is a long way from the Levinasian account of alterity that has an ‘I’ entering into a relation with an ‘other that is separated from it in infinite exteriority.’ For Nancy, there is neither “the other, nor the others, but a singular-plural,” a primordial ‘we.’⁴²

Nancy’s logic of singular-plural sees *Mitsein* as constituting “the essence of Being, a constitution that undoes or dislocates every single, substantial essence of Being itself.”⁴³ It is, as Sarah Sorial contends, a logic that “stipulates that each of us is a singular and unique being but that this singularity can only be expressed and exposed in the context of Being-

³⁸ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 30.

³⁹ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 30.

⁴⁰ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 3.

⁴¹ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 30.

⁴² Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 67.

⁴³ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, pp. 28-9.

with-others or community.”⁴⁴ As such, *Mitsein* transforms the sense of Dasein’s ownmost structure into a “a double potentiality” of “pure exteriority and pure interiority.”⁴⁵ Accordingly, Dasein’s singular uniqueness is only ever expressed in its comportment towards the world that finds expression only in the ‘we.’ To be a self, for Nancy, is to assume a constituent unit of Being where the element of I, you, and we, take place. It is to assume a self that locates itself (*sich befinden*) there in the world, in the event of the world. As Sorial understands it, Dasein’s “singularity does not isolate the subject in [his/] her difference because the singular being is ecstatic insofar as it only arises as exposed, open and vulnerable to the other, always affected and invaded by the other.”⁴⁶ Or as Nancy puts it with great clarity:

We can never simply be ‘the we,’ understood as a unique subject, or understood as an indistinct ‘we’ that is like a diffuse generality. ‘We’ always expresses a plurality, expresses ‘our’ being divided and entangled: ‘one’ is not ‘with’ in some general sort of way, but each time according to determined modes that are themselves multiple and simultaneous (people, culture, language, lineage, network...). What is presented in this way, each time, is a stage on which several [people] can say ‘I,’ each on his own account, each in turn. But a ‘we’ is not the adding together or juxtaposition of these ‘I’s.’ A ‘we,’ even one that is not articulated, is the condition for the possibility of each ‘I.’⁴⁷

My suggestion is that in Nancy’s ontology of Being-with as singular-plural lies a broad interpretation of Heidegger’s account of *Mitsein*, one that sees our social world as utterly pervading our entire self. As opposed to the Levinasian actual alterity of the other, Nancy’s logic of singular-plural portrays Heidegger’s Dasein as a co-essential being whose Being-with opens the door for the question of the other in its life. As co-essential – and not simply as one possible *ontic* way of being – *Mitsein* defines Dasein *all the way down*. As *intrinsically* Being-with, Dasein’s degree of ontic gregariousness is entirely irrelevant to the question of its ontological constitution. William Blattner articulates Nancy’s central insight here when he notes that even “[b]eing a recluse” is just “an anti-social way of understanding oneself

⁴⁴ Sorial, "Heidegger and the Problem of Individuation: Mitsein (Being-with), Ethics and Responsibility," 87.

⁴⁵ Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," 4.

⁴⁶ Sorial, "Heidegger and the Problem of Individuation: Mitsein (Being-with), Ethics and Responsibility," 89.

⁴⁷ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 65.

and one's relations to others." This is "because [b]eing anti-social is a 'privative' way of being social; it is a stance on the significance of what others pursue."⁴⁸ In Nancy's reading, singularity and sociality co-appear in the very meaning of Dasein. Further, there is an openness in the 'Da' of Dasein that fits it for an authentic relation with the other. As opposed to the traditional metaphysical sense of the 'I', in Heidegger's understanding, the 'who' of Dasein is non-isolable, and this is because Being-with is an existential characteristic that "lets the Dasein of others be encountered in its world."⁴⁹ Charles Taylor couldn't put this point any better when he observes that, in Being-with, "[o]ne is a self only among other selves. A self can never be described without reference to those who surround it."⁵⁰

Much more could be said concerning Nancy's rich and detailed interpretation of *Mitsein* that allows something like the full implications of Heidegger's account to emerge with a radicality not evident in Heidegger's own texts. However, enough has been sketched to enable the argument to come to build upon its central insights. Interestingly, however, Nancy is quite reserved in his preparedness to consider ways in which his analysis of *Mitsein* makes possible an interpretation of Heidegger as providing an ontological ground for ethics. On one hand, his scattered comments on this theme speak of the way in which Heidegger's ontology of Dasein as singular-plural is already intrinsically ethical: "no ethics," he says, "would be independent from an ontology", for "[o]nly ontology, in fact, may be ethical in a consistent manner."⁵¹ Or again: "[t]here is no difference between the ethical and the ontological: the 'ethical' exposes what the 'ontological' disposes."⁵² Yet on the other hand, even having made such striking comments, Nancy holds back from developing this claim explicitly in terms of *Being and Time* itself or other early texts, which (he seems to imply) fail to recognise the radicality of what was already at work there. His approach is

⁴⁸ William D. Blatter, *Heidegger's Being and Time: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Continuum Press, 2006), 67.

⁴⁹ SZ: 121/157.

⁵⁰ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 35. Vogel has argued that for Taylor, Heidegger's concept of Dasein-with suggests that "far from justifying a self-centred life in which associations are seen as, at best, instrumental to the ego's interests." Rather, as a being of authentic resoluteness, intrinsic in Dasein's being is the "demands of social existence." In Vogel's view, "the ideal of authenticity itself—of an inwardly derived, original identity—must be negotiated in dialogue with others, [or] one's self-identity can fail to win recognition in both the social and intimate spheres." See, Lawrence Vogel, *Metaphysics after "the End of Metaphysics": Recovering "the Good" from Heidegger*, (Lexington Press, 2012), accessed, 88.

⁵¹ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 21.

⁵² Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 99.

rather to work backwards to interpret the ethical implications of the early Heidegger from the point of view of what is opened by his later thought. In this way, Nancy concludes:

Êthos needs to be thought of as 'abode' ... The abode is the 'there' in that it is the open ... It is already in this sense that the thinking of *Being and Time* 'designated itself as a fundamental ontology' (BW 258), so it becomes clear not only that the thinking of Being involves and ethics, but, much more radically ... '[o]riginal ethics' is the appropriate name for 'fundamental ontology'. Ethics properly is what is fundamental in fundamental ontology.⁵³

In saying that "Êthos needs to be thought of as 'abode'," Nancy suggests alongside Heidegger that ethics is in no way understood as something that gives either norms or values. Rather, it is that which makes sense of the truth of Dasein's being-in-the-world. In a sense, for Nancy, the being of Dasein is not to be characterised and determined. Dasein must be perceived not with any reference to foundation or ground but as a 'thrown-being-in-the world. Dasein's self is irredeemably 'with' others in a world where it cannot be captured but always withdraws. In his work, *Abandoned Being*, Nancy understands this movement of withdrawal as a form of "abandonment."⁵⁴ As such, he remarks that Dasein's failure of foundation or absence of an absolute ground shows that its fundamental disclosure is in reference to nothingness — the *abyss* which leaves Dasein with "nothing to keep hold of" but rather banishes it from all metaphysical determinations and unitariness.⁵⁵ It is this sense of *abandonment* to the *abyss* that inspires Nancy's rereading of Heidegger's ontology of being-with. For him, 'to be' is to be abandoned; it is to be without reference to any foundation; it is to be thrown into the world, outside its self-enclosure in order to be exposed to the ethics of Being-with, the ethics of an inoperative relation to others.

I will return to this theme later. Suffice to say, however, that I am much more optimistic about the prospects for developing this theme quite explicitly right out of the heart of the early Heideggerian texts themselves. In this I stand opposed to Critchley's assessment

⁵³ Nancy, "Heidegger's 'Original Ethics'," pp. 78-79.

⁵⁴ Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, trans. Brian Holmes (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 39.

⁵⁵ Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, 39.

(directed against Nancy) that challenges the possibility of developing an ontological ground of ethics in *Mitsein* on the grounds that Heidegger's "work is [solely] devoted to the question of the singular plurality of being."⁵⁶ Critchley argues that notwithstanding how ground-breaking Heidegger's work is, its "prioritization of the ontological over the ontic, however subtly this ontological difference is nuanced, subordinates the relation to the other to the relation to Being."⁵⁷ For him, "although Heidegger acknowledges that Dasein is *Mitsein*, this question is only a moment of an existential analytic whose ambition is the elaboration of the question of the meaning of Being" and as such has little or nothing to do with a genuine ontological ground for ethics.⁵⁸

Of course, Critchley is far from alone in making such a claim. As will be discussed later, similar assessments were made long ago by such prominent thinkers such as Martin Buber, Jean-Paul Sartre and Emmanuel Levinas. According to these thinkers, despite Heidegger's explicit rejection of the Cartesian view of the self, there is basically no evidence to suggest an interpersonal relation between Dasein and others in Heidegger's fundamental ontology. In their view, the closest Heidegger's analytic of Dasein could demonstrate, is the portrayal of Dasein as a being, who in Levinas words, "tends to identify with the other, by swallowing it up in a collective representation, or a common ideal."⁵⁹ For these scholars, the ontological framework of Dasein is carved in such a way that its purpose is to reduce the other to Dasein's self, a move Georg Lukac refers to as the "gnosiological solipsism of subjective idealism"⁶⁰ and Levinas calls the "domination of an ontological imperialism."⁶¹

Such interpretations will be countered later in this chapter. First, though, it is necessary to turn more explicitly to Heidegger's own texts, in the light that has been shed by Nancy's reading, to see how Heidegger's account of *Mitsein* is elaborated.

⁵⁶ Critchley, *Ethics, Politics, Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas and Contemporary French Thought*, 65.

⁵⁷ Critchley, *Ethics, Politics, Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas and Contemporary French Thought*, 65.

⁵⁸ Critchley, *Ethics, Politics, Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas and Contemporary French Thought*, 65.

⁵⁹ Slight alteration mine. See Levinas, *Time and the Other*, 93.

⁶⁰ Georg Lukac, "Existentialism or Marxism?," in *Existentialism versus Marxism*, ed., G. Novack (New York: Dell, 1966), 139.

⁶¹ Levinas, *Time and the Other*, 44.

4.2 THE CENTRALITY OF *MITSEIN* IN EARLY HEIDEGGERIAN THOUGHT

This section will examine in detail the notion of *Mitsein* as Heidegger thematizes it in *Being and Time* and other early works, in the light of Nancy's appropriation of *Mitsein* as a singular-plural. To the end of ultimately exploring *Mitsein's* very significant ethical resonances, the aim of the first part (4.2.1) is to examine how Heidegger reveals *Mitsein* as a fundamental phenomenon, which not only represents the primary 'source' of all possible relations but also a phenomenon that conveys Dasein's experience of encountering the world that arises out of its authentic disclosedness. In this context, Heidegger's retrieval of the Aristotelian sense of 'Being-in-the *πόλις*' will be explored, highlighting *Mitsein* as an attendant mode of Being-in-the-world through which Dasein has a natural familiarity with others through its non-objectifying, everyday concerns. In this sense, Dasein has the possibility of understanding others as one of its existential characteristics. This will lead into an analysis of the relationship between *Mitsein* and *Rede* (4.2.2), for 'discourse' has a strong place within the account Heidegger gives of the intrinsic connection between Dasein and others; and then between *Mitsein* and *Fürsorge* (4.2.3), for 'solicitude' (to use the Macquarrie and Robinson translation of this key term) is presented by Heidegger as the specific modality of care appropriate to Dasein's relations with other Dasein. Finally, I will make some brief remarks about the connections between Heidegger's discussion of these matters and this comments about *ἡθoς* itself (4.2.4), thus paving the way for much of the application to come.

4.2.1 : The Equiprimordiality of *Mitsein* and Being-in-the-World

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger writes that the analysis of *Mitsein* and *Mitdasein* enables us "to provide an answer to the question of the 'who' of Dasein."⁶² Thus, before examining more explicitly the ethical implications of Heidegger's account of the way in which Dasein is constituted by *Mitsein*, it will be helpful first to put the phenomenon of *Mitsein* in proper perspective by briefly discussing its connection to this 'whoness' question, and specifically to the question of the worldhood of Dasein. This is critical for two reasons. First, it will examine how Being-with and Being-in-the-world are deeply intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Second, it will show how the existential environment of Dasein (Being-in-the-

⁶² SZ: 114/149.

world) provides a 'pre-ethical' analysis that will orientate the discussion to come on *Mitsein* as contributing to Heidegger's implicit existential ground of ethics

An absolutely key aspect of Heidegger's account of *Mitsein* is that it must be understood as an ontological claim at the heart of the existential analytic (a term with 'existential-ontological meaning'), and not an ontic claim that may or may not apply to a particular being at any particular time. Others are not a potential 'add on' to an already egoistically constituted Dasein-self. Rather, Dasein is to be understood as *with* others *in its Being*. Heidegger is absolutely clear on this point: "So far as Dasein is at all, it has Being-with-one-another as its kind of Being;"⁶³ or elsewhere, "Dasein is essentially Being-with".⁶⁴ Consequently, it is irrelevant whether or not Dasein is currently with others or alone, and indeed this sense Being-with-others is entirely consistent with Dasein's ontic isolation. Again, Heidegger is quite explicit on this: "Being-with is an existential characteristic of Dasein even when factually no other is present-at-hand or perceived. Even Dasein's Being-alone is Being-with in the world."⁶⁵ Thus, as Dan Zahavi suggests, for Heidegger, "one can ultimately only speak of others as lacking, precisely because Dasein is fundamentally characterised by its being-with."⁶⁶

As noted in chapter two, above, Dasein's reticent hearing of the call of conscience is methodologically inadequate to fully capture the authentic truth it discloses. This is because the analysis of conscience *alone* prescind from a fuller account of the context of Dasein's Being-in-the-world which must include a recognition that Dasein's everyday world is a shared world. As such, worldliness and *Mitsein* are "equiprimordial,"⁶⁷ or (to use Nancy's turn of phrase), "co-originary." This cuts both ways. On one hand, world, for

⁶³ SZ: 125/163.

⁶⁴ SZ: 120/156.

⁶⁵ SZ: 120/156.

⁶⁶ Tellingly, Zahavi also suggests that Heidegger's notion of Being-with neutralises the traditional metaphysical problem of the "other-mind." According to him, "...the problem of the other minds – how can one isolated subject encounter and understand another isolated subject – [has] turned out to be an illusory problem." Quoting Binswanger, Zahavi argues that Heidegger's analysis of *Mitsein* "has banished entire libraries on the problem of empathy, the problem of perceiving the foreign as such, the problem of the constitution of the foreign 'I,' and so on, to the realm of history, for what the later want to furnish proof of and explain is always already presupposed in the proof and the explanation; the presupposition itself can neither be explained nor proven, but rather only ontologically-phenomenologically 'disclosed.'" See, Dan Zahavi, "Beyond Empathy: Phenomenological Approaches to Intersubjectivity," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8, no. 5-7 (2001): 154.

⁶⁷ SZ: 114/149.

Heidegger, is the very milieu within which Dasein's relations with the other are possible. But on the other hand, *Mitsein* is at the heart of the manner of this Being-in-the-world: the existential "form" of the factual possibility upon which Dasein projects itself in disclosing its shared world.⁶⁸ Heidegger is absolutely clear on this intrinsic togetherness of *Mitsein* with *In-der-Welt-Sein*:

[I]n characterizing the encountering of *Others*, one is again still oriented by that Dasein which is in each case one's *own*. But even in this characterization does one not start by marking out and isolating the 'I' so that one must then seek some way of getting over to the Others from this isolated subject? To avoid this misunderstanding, we must notice in what sense we are talking about 'the Others'. By 'Others' we do not mean everyone else but me – those over against whom the 'I' stands out. They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself – those among whom one is too. This Being-there-too [*Auch-dasein*] with them does not have the ontological character of a Being-present-at-hand-along-'with' them within a world. This 'with' is something of the character of Dasein; the 'too' means a sameness of Being as circumspectively concerned Being-in-the-world. 'With' and 'too' are to be understood *existentially*, not categorially. By reason of this *with-like* [*mithaften*] Being-in-the-world, the world is always the one that I share with Others. The world of Dasein is a with-world [*Mitwelt*]. Being- in is *Being-with* Others. Their Being-in-themselves within-the-world is *Dasein-with* [*Mitdasein*].⁶⁹

If, as Heidegger puts it here, Being-in is *Being-with* others, and if Dasein's world is a "with-world," then *Mitsein* – far from being a philosophical oddity or 'after thought' within the existential analytic – is at the very centre of its concerns. Here is the very balance that Nancy is so concerned to preserve (and develop) in Heidegger's account: Dasein is singular (in the sense of Heidegger's "*Jemeinigkeit*"), even in the very act of being plural (*Mitdasein* in a radical sense).⁷⁰ Accordingly, Dasein is understood to be in an intrinsically ontological relation involving not a face-to-face encounter with isolated entities over and against an

⁶⁸ SZ: 298/345.

⁶⁹ SZ: 118/154-55.

⁷⁰ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, pp 9-11.

isolated self, but rather an encounter in which Dasein is always already *with others* in the way that it has its everyday Being. Or as Heidegger puts it: “Dasein itself—and this means also its Being-in-the-world—gets its ontological understanding of itself in the first instance from those entities which it itself is not but which it encounters ‘within’ its world, and from the Being which they possess.”⁷¹ Dasein is a being that has a special relation to entities by virtue of being always already situated within a contextual world of relations.

This always already “situatedness” or attunedness (*Befindlichkeit*) within a world imbued with contextual relations underscores its thrown-being-in-the-world. Further, its path to its self-understanding must be primarily grasped through its relation or openness to other Daseins, as well as the nonhuman entities it encounters in its Being-in-the-world. Consequently, “Being-in” and “Being-with” are two constitutive ways of signifying Dasein’s preoccupation with its world; in short, of its being as care.⁷²

The intermeshed nature of Being-in and Being-with is also seen in the way in which Heidegger’s account of Being-in underscores the sense of Being-with as an always situated and attuned with-ness, and not a with-ness that contingently applies to two or more independent entities. Since the world, for Heidegger, is not simply “the sum total of extant entities,”⁷³ others are always encountered in their “withness” within a thrown context. The ‘who’ of the other Dasein is not encountered in an empty space. Instead, finding the other “even in the most everyday of activities, passing by and avoiding one another on the street, already involves this environmental encounter, based on this street common to us.”⁷⁴ Further, when we encounter others with whom we co-exist and share our world, “this being of the others is not that of the ‘subject’ of the ‘person’ in the sense in which this is taken conceptually in philosophy.” Others are not encountered as an afterthought. Rather, “I meet the other in the field, at work, on the street while on the way to work or strolling along with nothing to do.”⁷⁵ In this encounter, as Heidegger says, Dasein presents itself as a being of “concernful solicitude,” where “what it resolves upon in resoluteness” is

⁷¹ SZ: 85/117.

⁷² For Heidegger, “Being-in-the-world is essentially care.” “Care, as a primordial structural totality, lies ‘before’ [‘vor’] every factical ‘attitude and ‘situation’ of Dasein, and it does so existentially a priori...” SZ: 193-4/237-8.

⁷³ GA 24: 166-167/236-237.

⁷⁴ GA 20: 240/330-331.

⁷⁵ GA 20: 240/330-331.

presented to it as existential form of “disclosive projection and determination of what is factually possible at the time.”⁷⁶

If *Mitsein* is the primordial way of Being of Dasein, then this means that it is only when we understand ourselves as beings who are encountered environmentally in the world that we can consider ourselves as isolatable autonomous beings whose care is for our own sake. Xiaoling Sun observes that “Being-with-others characterizes Dasein’s factual ‘that it is,’ which is constantly disclosed to Dasein through its *Befindlichkeit*.”⁷⁷ In a primordial sense, Dasein is affectively open to the reality of others, and so can never be indifferent to them.⁷⁸ *Mitsein* is thus a key locus of the possibility of the authentic self. It is also the horizon upon the silent call of conscience, as a concrete movement of *φρόνησις*, proceeds, for the call cuts through the clutter of the idle-chatter and calls Dasein in its *own*-most self to *be-with*. It is ‘I,’ as a responsible (response-able) individual Dasein, that is called to *be-with*. This ‘I myself,’ the ‘who’ of everyday Dasein, as Heidegger says, is not ‘I myself.’ Rather, it is a self that is immersed in a “referential totality of significance”⁷⁹ which gives it the a priori capacity to always already find itself situated with others in a world.

4.2.2 : *Mitsein* and *Rede*

One of the key ways in which the dimensions of *Mitsein* are traced in Heidegger’s early thinking, concerns his analysis of discourse (*Rede*), for discourse between Dasein and its others is a primordial consequence of its essential Being-with these others. As always, the Aristotelian context is never far from his thinking. In his summer 1924 lecture course on Aristotle, Heidegger argues that, following Aristotle, our way of Being-in-the-world is also fundamentally marked by speech (*λογος*). Accordingly, he seeks to demonstrate how the belonging-together-of-Dasein-in-the-world is not an abstract or theoretical venture but a concrete – indeed *phronētic*– mode of dwelling in which Dasein and others speak about the world. Thus, retrieving an Aristotelian understanding of definition (*ορισμός*) as “the basic possibility of the speaking of human beings,”⁸⁰ Heidegger indicates that speaking

⁷⁶ SZ: 298/345.

⁷⁷ Xiaoling Sun, “Authenticity and Social Responsibility: The Question of Ethics in Heidegger’s Being and Time” (Loyola University 2004), 61.

⁷⁸ Sun, “Authenticity and Social Responsibility: The Question of Ethics in Heidegger’s Being and Time,” 61.

⁷⁹ SZ: 123/160.

⁸⁰ GA 18: 11/12-13. Here, Heidegger refers to Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 4.8.1017b22 and 7.1.1042a17

reveals Being-in-the-world as the “thing-giving basic experience,” the ground or the nexus which determines Dasein’s being itself. Because Dasein is a being in a speaking relationship with others, what is at issue with the speaking Dasein is how to become “intimately acquainted with a being in its Being.”⁸¹ The distinctiveness of speaking lies in the fact that concrete speaking with others about the world constitutes the condition for the possibility of any investigation into the question of Being-in-the-world. Heidegger articulates this point strikingly when he writes that:

*The Being-in-the-world of the human being is basically determined through speaking. To speak with the world, about it, from it is the fundamental way of life of the human being in his world. Thus, the human being is determined precisely through λόγος, and so you see, if definition is a λόγος, this matter of definition has its ground.*⁸²

However, in something of an anticipation of the distinction he would make in *Being and Time* between authentic speech and idle talk (*Gerede*), Heidegger notes that λόγος is not to be understood “in the sense of uttering a sound but speaking about something in a way that exhibits the about-which of speaking by showing that which is spoken about.”⁸³ This is distinguished from a mode of speaking as “a given common intelligibility of the world,” one that does not have “the character of belonging to an individual” but rather involves “a peculiar character of averageness” because it is “worn out” and “used up.”⁸⁴ Yet even here, the very possibility of inauthentic modes of speech – idle chatter – is itself only possible on the basis of the primordial ‘singular-plural’ nature of Dasein, as co-originarily both ‘mine’ and ‘with’. In this sense, the primordially of *Mitsein* makes it essentially antecedent to the authenticity-inauthenticity axis. Dasein engages in authentic or inauthentic modes of speech only on the basis that it is always already *Mitdasein*. Nonetheless, in *Being and Time*, this sense of λόγος becomes “*Rede*,” an “equiprimordial element of disclosedness” that articulates intelligibility.⁸⁵ Speaking with others (discourse) is thus the mode in which Dasein expresses its authentic understanding of Being-in-the-

⁸¹ GA 18:15/18-20.

⁸² GA 18:14/16-15.

⁸³ GA 18: 15-16/18-21.

⁸⁴ GA 18: 16/20-21.

⁸⁵ SZ: 160/203.

world, an understanding that is not so much epistemic as ontological, in that it is contingent upon all the different *existentialia* that comprise the existential analytic. Thus, in Dasein “lies the basic possibility of Being-in-the-*πόλις*”⁸⁶ wherein many live together. The *πόλις* itself is based on the possibility of reciprocal hearing and speaking, be it idle chatter or the authentic articulation of understanding.

Heidegger reaffirms this position in *Being and Time* when he writes that the everydayness of Dasein locates the temporality of Dasein’s being in a world which keeps Dasein open to the meaningfulness of its world and to others with whom it shares its worldly everydayness. Thus, “as something factual, Dasein’s projection of itself understandingly is in each case already alongside a world that has been discovered. From this world it takes its possibilities, and it does so first in accordance with the way things have been interpreted by the “they.”⁸⁷ Heidegger makes this point even more compellingly in his Aristotle lectures of 1924 when he tells his students that the world is:

... the genuine how of everydayness of average, concrete being-with-one-another, and the genuine bearer of this world is language ... The [world] maintains itself, has its genuine domination in language. With a more precise apprehension of the [world], you can see that it is at the same time the possibility from which a genuine being-with-another in determinate modes arises ... The basic determination of the being of human beings ...[concerns] looking out, *θεωρεῖν*, on the world ... as one customarily sees it.⁸⁸

Heidegger’s portrayal of Dasein’s Being-in-the-world through language is critical for any understanding of an ontological ground of ethics arising from his early work. From his analysis of Dasein’s meaningful openness to the world, Heidegger presents Dasein as a being of worldly involvement who, in Lawrence Hatab’s words, is “first introduced to values by way of training, habits, and institutional influences, i.e., by way of a tradition already in place that gives [it] ethical orientation in a pre-reflective immersion and transmission.”⁸⁹ Dasein’s Being-in-the-world is what Bradley Warfield refers to as the foundation upon

⁸⁶ GA 18: 33/45-47.

⁸⁷ SZ: 195/239.

⁸⁸ GA 18: 45/63-64.

⁸⁹ Hatab, “Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contribution to Moral Philosophy,” 406.

“which the intelligibility of our social relations, values, beliefs, goals, possibilities, etc. rests;”⁹⁰ a place where, as François Raffoul observes, the question “will not be an issue of ethics as an applied discipline or even as normative, but rather as an originary phenomenon.”⁹¹ In other words, while ethical exigencies obtrude upon Dasein and its others as they live in the world, a workable sociality is contingent upon the ability of human beings to live together-in-the-world in order to deliberate on possible outcomes. Hatab drives home this point when he observes:

Everything from mutual dependence to child rearing to education to the phenomenon of recognition lends support to the idea that we become individuals only in and out of social relations. This is the sense in which Heidegger describes *Mitsein* as a world-phenomenon, as something in which we find our being.⁹²

Heidegger’s discussion of discourse in the context of Being-in-the-world exemplifies how human beings dwell in a conversational community where the identity of each member is formed only by the virtue of common practices, values and articulations of social interchange or reciprocation. This is a world that William Blattner pithily refers to as a form of “*ontological communitarianism*,”⁹³ a notion that sits rather well with Charles Taylor’s account of the kind of shared community that provides the individual with a “common reference point and meaning.”⁹⁴ Given that Dasein and others live in a *πόλις* that is full of speech deceptions, the truth of their Being would depend on their ability to uncover those deceptions through a sharing in what Taylor calls a “web of interlocution”⁹⁵ that leads to a deliberative discernment. In this social interchange, the world constitutes a context of involvement that “lets our enactment of our “*existentiell*” possibilities have the meaning they do,” as Warfield puts it.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ Bradley Warfield, “Dialogical Dasein: Heidegger on “Being-with,” “Discourse,” and “Solicitude” ” *Janus Head* 15, no. 1 (2016): 68.

⁹¹ François Raffoul, *The Origins of Responsibility* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 220.

⁹² Hatab, “Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contribution to Moral Philosophy,” 413.

⁹³ William Blattner, *Heidegger’s Being and Time: A Reader’s Guide* (New York: Continuum Press, 2006), 68.

⁹⁴ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: : Harvard University Press, 1989), 35. Taylor’s account is not an interpretation of Heideggerian thought as such, though his approach follows in a similar trajectory and provides some helpful elucidating ideas for the reading of Heidegger being developed here.

⁹⁵ Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, 36.

⁹⁶ Warfield, “Dialogical Dasein: Heidegger on “Being-with,” “Discourse,” and “Solicitude” , 68.

4.2.3 : *Mitsein* and *Fürsorge*

Another key element of Heidegger's account of *Mitsein*, and one which again has very significant characteristics that make it well suited as a preparatory ground for ethics, is his development of the theme of solicitude (*Fürsorge*). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger is careful to distinguish the kind of care (*Sorge*) that relates to *zuhanden* equipment (*Besorgen*, translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as 'concern') from the care that relates to other *Dasein* (*Fürsorge*, translated as 'solicitude'). Clearly, it is the latter that brings with it the substantial ontological context for thinking seriously about human relationships.

Of course, these two forms of care (*Besorgen* and *Fürsorge*) are hardly water-tight categories, since there is often a strong element of solicitous Being-with at play in *Dasein*'s discovery of worldly entities. Heidegger writes, for example of how "the work-world of the craftsman," like an article of clothing, requires "an essential assignment or reference to possible wearers;" or the "decently kept up" field that belongs "to such-and-such a person;" or the book that was "bought at so-and-so's shop and given by such-and-such a person."⁹⁷ So "along with the equipment to be found when one is at work, those others for whom the 'work' is destined are 'encountered too,'"⁹⁸ for all such equipment is "indicative of Others."⁹⁹ *Dasein* shares the world in advance with other things and other *Daseins*, and in this sense *Mitsein* is the *a priori* condition for *Dasein* to encounter others who are also beings whose ontological constitution is Being-in-the-world.

Heidegger articulates what he calls "two extreme possibilities"¹⁰⁰ of *Fürsorge*. The first is an inauthentic form where *Dasein* "leaps in [*für ihn einspringen*]" to usurp the other's "position in concern." He claims that in this "dominating" mode of solicitude, *Dasein* restrainedly "takes over [*übernimmt*]" for the other that with which he is to concern himself."¹⁰¹ This kind of inauthentic solicitude "takes away 'care' [and] is to a large extent determinative for Being with one another and pertains for the most part to our concern with the ready-to-hand."¹⁰² Leaping in, Heidegger says, does not only "dominate" the other

⁹⁷ SZ: 119/153.

⁹⁸ SZ: 119/153.

⁹⁹ SZ: 117/153.

¹⁰⁰ SZ: 118/154.

¹⁰¹ SZ: 122/158.

¹⁰² SZ: 122/158.

but takes away its care so that the other will be “dependent” on it. Here, others are understood as ready-to-hand entities or rather a means to an end – a description that reflects the domineering influence of the ‘they’ on the individual Dasein when “it absolves Dasein” so much so that it loses its potentiality for owning itself.¹⁰³ This inauthentic mode of solicitude is the usual mode of operation for Dasein:

Dasein maintains itself proximally and for the most part in the deficient modes of solicitude. Being for, against, or without one another, passing one another by, not ‘mattering’ to one another – these are possible ways of solicitude. And it is precisely these last-named deficient and Indifferent modes that characterize every day, average Being-with-one-another. These modes of Being show again the characteristics of inconspicuousness and obviousness which belong just as much to the everyday Dasein-with of Others within-the-world as to the readiness-to-hand of the equipment with which one is daily concerned.¹⁰⁴

Of course, it is such an account of the common and deficient mode of solicitude that leads directly into Heidegger’s account of *das Man*. As a general rule, the ‘Who’ of Dasein is not the authentic self that is capable of authentic forms of solicitude (about which more to come), but rather this “Theyself” which is ‘lived by’ the dictates of others, and which – in its “absor[ption] in the world of its concern”¹⁰⁵ – treats others more like *zuhanden* equipment than like fellow Dasein.

Interestingly, Heidegger’s account of deficient modes of solicitude comes with a reference to deficient modes of self-knowing. Of course, while psychologically sagacious, Heidegger intends this as an existential-ontological claim: that the other Dasein cannot be known and encountered with any fullness if one’s own Dasein is known only obscurely. In effect, the transparency of the other requires a self-transparency:

But because solicitude dwells proximally and for the most part in the deficient or at least the Indifferent modes (in the indifference of passing one another by), the kind of knowing-oneself which is essential and closest, demands that one become

¹⁰³ SZ:126/163.

¹⁰⁴ SZ:121/158.

¹⁰⁵ SZ:125/163.

acquainted with oneself. And when, indeed, one's knowing-onself gets lost in such ways as aloofness, hiding oneself away, or putting on a disguise, Being-with-one-another must follow special routes of its own in order to come close to Others, or even to 'see through them.'¹⁰⁶

At the other extreme, however, is the kind of *Fürsorge* that involves a 'caring-for;' that 'leaps ahead' of the other in its existentiell potentiality-for-being, and which discloses the authentic possibilities of the other and enables "the other to become transparent to himself in his care and to become free for it."¹⁰⁷ As an "extreme" mode of authentic solicitude, "leaping ahead" is possible because Dasein through its authentic resoluteness "experiences" the full transparency of its ownmost potentiality-for-Being and grasps itself fundamentally as Being-with. Given that authentic solicitude is only made possible when Dasein is resolute, it is the silent call of conscience in authentic resoluteness (examined above) that makes possible the "sharing" of its transparency.¹⁰⁸ Heidegger compellingly claims that as a sort of care that comes from the existence of one being 'allowing' the existence of another, "leaping ahead" "pertains essentially to authentic care – that is, to the existence of the other, not to a "what" with which he is concerned; it helps the other to become transparent to himself in his care and to become free for it."¹⁰⁹

Heidegger's account of such authentic solicitude – *Fürsorge* taken literally as *Für-sorge*, to 'care for' the other – is as brief as it is striking. "Just as circumspection belongs to concern as a way of discovering what is ready-to-hand," Heidegger writes, "solicitude is guided by considerateness [*Rücksicht*] and forbearance [*Nachsicht*]."¹¹⁰ This is an extraordinary observation. The suffix of both terms [-sicht] speaks of a way of *seeing* the other. To 'see' in the way of *Rücksicht* is to be attuned (*Befindlichkeit*) to the other in a thoughtful way, with consideration and due regard, even respect. To see with the 'eyes' of *Nachsicht* is to go even further: to indulge the other, to show leniency, to see the best in the other. It goes without saying that these are not just ethically loaded, but ethically rich terms. If there is not yet any sense of genuine moral normativity implied here, there is at least a compelling

¹⁰⁶ SZ: 124/161.

¹⁰⁷ SZ: 122/158-9.

¹⁰⁸ SZ: 122/158-159.

¹⁰⁹ SZ: 122/159.

¹¹⁰ SZ: 123/159.

vision being offered of the difference between two very different ways of seeing the other: the ordinary expedient mode of viewing the other as a means to an end, and the much rarer mode of seeing the other as another self whose Being-in-the-world *with* me calls me into a relationship marked by *Rücksicht* and *Nachsicht*. Of course, there is no neat binary pairing being suggested here, but rather a spectrum of considerateness and forbearance that “can range through their respective deficient and Indifferent modes up to the point of inconsiderateness or the perfunctoriness for which indifference leads the way.”¹¹¹

However, Heidegger goes on to make the extraordinary claim that “as Being-with, Dasein ‘is’ essentially for the sake of Others,” and he is absolutely clear that “[t]his must be understood as an existential statement as to its essence.”¹¹² This is extraordinary not just for the apparently lofty ethical tone (one might even inappropriately suggest a frankly normative sense of ‘supererogatory obligation’ here), but more particularly for the way that it sharply rebalances the tacitly Dasein self-centred discourse of *Eigentlichkeit* that dominates *Being and Time* and its cognate works. Of course, as seen earlier, subjectivist or solipsistic readings of *Being and Time* fail the test of close reading, but Heidegger’s focus here on Dasein’s Being as “for the sake of Others” requires a careful reading that pushes back from something like the opposite extreme. Yet Heidegger is adamant about the outward-looking nature of Dasein’s nature, not as an existentiell possibility, but as a fundamental existential feature of Dasein:

Even if the particular factual Dasein does not turn to Others and supposes that it has no need of them or manages to get along without them, it is in the way of Being-with. In Being-with, as the existential ‘for the-sake-of’ of Others, these have already been disclosed in their Dasein.¹¹³

Clearly, these two “extreme possibilities” of *Fürsorge* contain the seeds for much further development concerning the ontological grounds for ethics in terms of both ordinary forms of human interaction, marked by a functionalist and perfunctory sense, and more authentic forms of interaction that resist the tendency to effectively collapse the thing-person distinction. Again, such a development is well beyond the scope of Heideggerian thought,

¹¹¹ SZ: 123/159.

¹¹² SZ: 123/160.

¹¹³ SZ: 123/160.

but (as I have argued throughout this essay, and will return to later), such developments may be fruitfully made on the basis of the ontological ground Heidegger provides. At one point in *Being and Time*, Heidegger seems to gesture in the direction of the detailed application that this section of the existential analytic invites but does not in itself contain. He says:

Everyday Being-with-one-another maintains itself between the two extremes of positive solicitude – that which leaps in and dominates, and that which leaps forth and liberates [*der einspringend-beherrschenden und der vorspringend-befreienden*]. It brings numerous mixed forms to maturity; to describe these and classify them would take us beyond the limits of this investigation.¹¹⁴

In terms of the case for the extreme of “leaping ahead” – the authentic ‘positive mode’ of solicitude – there is a clear case for further elaboration concerning its links with two phenomena that are generally taken as at the heart of any ethical scheme: i.e., freedom and responsibility, and also empathy. It is to this application that I turn in the following section, after a brief interlude in which I tie the current discussion back to Heidegger’s thinking of *ἥθος*.

4.2.4 : *Mitsein* and *ἥθος*

It is upon the basis of the forgoing account of the equiprimordiality of Being-in and Being-with that it is possible now to return more explicitly to the matter of Heidegger’s implicit ground of ethics per se. For there is a clear sense in which the ethical must be seen to emerge as the ontic unfolding of *Mitdasein*. In this light, it might be suggested that the ethical relates to a kind of posture (*Haltung*); to *know how* to carry oneself in the world, how to be with others. Indeed, in his 1924 Aristotle lectures, Heidegger suggests that *ἥθος* means the “comportment of human beings, how the human being is there, how he offers himself as a human being, how he appears in being-with-another.”¹¹⁵ For example, the ethical is seen in the words of an orator not in the way he/she “superficially holds him/herself to [certain universal] words,”¹¹⁶ but in the “way that the orator speaks,” by

¹¹⁴ SZ: 122/159.

¹¹⁵ GA 18: 73/105-107.

¹¹⁶ GA 18: 73/105-107.

which he means the “comportment in the way he[/she] stands with respect to the matters about which he[/she] speaks.”¹¹⁷

Scott Campbell has called this manner or comportment of speaking which Heidegger says is determinative of the world, an “authentic speaking with others.” According to him, it is a speech that modifies “how the ‘they’ live together in average everydayness and involve[s] attentive listening as well as an insight into the particularity of life, its here and now ... in order to draw ontological conclusions about the good of the human being.”¹¹⁸ For Campbell, in Heidegger’s view, authentic speaking with others modifies and develops the inauthentic way of Being-with others by speaking in the way of *taking care of* that which is *there* in the world. Heidegger himself says that in taking care, Being-in-the-world listens to “hear” (*ακρόαση*), for hearing “is the fundamental mode of ‘perceiving,’ the genuine possibility of *αισθησις*.” He adds: “In hearing, I am in communication with other human beings in so far as being human means speaking.”¹¹⁹ Through speaking with one another, we announce “what is pleasing and ... what is distressing ... what supports and upsets being-there.”¹²⁰ When we consider how Heidegger speaks of Being-in-the world as determinative of language, “everything becomes a question of listening,” as Jean-François Courtine once argued.¹²¹ By implication, as Heidegger puts it in his summer 1920 lectures on intuition and expression, no authentic understanding is possible without the “speech” that “announces” or “lets out” Dasein’s ownmost potentiality-for-Being, the “silence call” that reveals Dasein and the other as beings who collectively “achieve, create and experience life—life as manifoldness of lived experience.”¹²²

If, accordingly, *ἦθος* is approached in terms of the comportment of human beings, this early Heideggerian insight is not so far from his insistence in his famous 1946 letter to Jean

¹¹⁷ GA 18: 73/105-107.

¹¹⁸ Scott M. Campbell, *The Early Heidegger's Philosophy of Life: Facticity, Being, and Language*, ed. John D. Caputo, Perspectives in Continental Philosophy (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 164.

¹¹⁹ GA 18:32/44-45.

¹²⁰ GA 18:33/45-47.

¹²¹ Courtine, “Voice of conscience and call of being,” 106.

¹²² Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks (GA 59)* (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1993), 88. Translated as Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression: Theory of Philosophical Concept Formation*, trans. Tracy Colony (London & New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 70. Hereafter, all references to this work will be cited with the abbreviation GA 59 and the number as it appears in the English translation, followed by the number/s as it appears in the original German texts. Example: GA 59: 70/88.

Beaufret that the possibility of every ethics should be directed to the truth of Being, which relates to *how* a historical people *dwell* (*Wohnen*) and are at home in their *there*— the configuration of arts, science and political provisions by the virtue of which they live out their everyday lives. Heidegger's explicit claim is that ethics cannot adequately articulate practical directives unless it is grounded in the concrete situation of dwelling. As he puts it:

Only so far as man, ek-sisting into the truth of Being, belongs to Being can there come from Being itself the assignment of those directions that must become law and rule for man. . . . Νόμος is not only law but more originally the assignment contained in the dispensation of Being. Only the assignment is capable of dispatching man into Being. Only such dispatching is capable of supporting and obligating. Otherwise all law remains merely something fabricated by human reason. More essential than instituting rules is that man find the way to his abode in the truth of Being ... The truth of Being offers a hold for all conduct.¹²³

The implications are clear: 'ethics' is only ever possible insofar as it reflects this primal *ἦθος*. Its concern should be with our dwelling and how we comport ourselves as human beings. Ethics does not tell people what to do; rather it is about what Hatab calls "an engaged responsive openness" where we are "at home in the finitude of [our] Being, in [the] mixture of presence and absence, especially in terms of [our] mortality and the limit conditions of unconcealment."¹²⁴ But crucially, as he points out, any sense of ethics that emerges from such an ungrounded ground must also be an abyssal one that "presents a deep challenge in that we must exist in a world without foundations, guarantees, or ultimate resolution of existential difficulties."¹²⁵

Nonetheless, the theme of comportment provides a compelling insight into the notion of living well which perhaps again emerges most clearly in the context of Heidegger's reading of Aristotle. Accordingly, being ethical lies in "learning the *know-how* about the Being of human being in his authenticity."¹²⁶ As such, the ethical is fulfilled when the *φρόνιμος* understands the *ἔργον* and *ἀρετή* of human beings, through which it heeds the call which

¹²³ LH: 274/360-361.

¹²⁴ Hatab, "Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contribution to Moral Philosophy," 411.

¹²⁵ Hatab, "Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contribution to Moral Philosophy," 411.

¹²⁶ GA 18: 48/67-69. Alterations mine.

summons it ('conscience' like) to live with excellence in the *πόλις*: to "take up that knowing-the-way-around that is appropriate to the being of human beings ... [that which] makes this being-with-one-another explicit as this concrete way of being in its *πόλις*."¹²⁷ Heidegger affirms this when he writes that, "[t]his standing-out of the human being, this "comporting-oneself" in the world, this "comportment," is [indeed] *το ἥθος*."¹²⁸

Of course, given what we have said so far, it is easy to conclude that if the ground of ethics in Heidegger is equated with Dasein's dwelling-self-'comportment' in the world, then what this "know how" represents could either be interpreted as "seizing the moment" as Theodore Kisiel has suggested¹²⁹ or having a sense of "deconstructive repetition" as John van Buren has observed.¹³⁰ However, the argument well might be made that this is not yet sufficient for a sense of practical morality; that what Heidegger has thus far provided is only sufficient for the most formal sense of the possibility of action in general, devoid of any directionality of moral tenor. What is to say whether the "moment" that Dasein seizes (to use Kisiel's phrase), or that which is repeated (to use van Buren's), should have any particular 'ought' structure? In what way can anything like moral normativity ever get something like a foothold on the basis of such an approach? This is a question to which I will turn later in the chapter via a consideration of a series of classic critiques of Heidegger on this score. However, for now, I turn to consider a series of terms that can help to partly fill out some of these concerns before the objections are considered in more detail.

4.3: LEAPING AHEAD [VORAUSSPRINGT] AS ETHICAL GROUND

When Heidegger introduces the positive sense of *Fürsorge* in *Being and Time*, he says that it "pertains essentially to authentic care – that is, to the existence of the Other, not to a 'what' with which he is concerned."¹³¹ *Fürsorge*, then, involves Dasein interacting with other people *as* Dasein with whom it shares a world, and not as something *zuhanden* or *vorhanden* within its world. In this section, I will examine some ways in which Heidegger's

¹²⁷ GA 18:48/67-69.

¹²⁸ GA 18:48/67-69.

¹²⁹ Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, 315.

¹³⁰ Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King*, 37.

¹³¹ SZ: 122/159.

analysis of *Fürsorge* as authentic “leaping ahead” suggests that Dasein’s authentic resoluteness directs it towards a respect for its own existence and equally toward others’ freedom for their own possibilities, and how the notion of empathy continues to play a part in Heidegger’s account of the same even if its straight-forwardly psychological versions are rejected. As such, it will focus not on the ordinary mode of “leaping in” that characterises the way Dasein generally relates to others, in the process disfiguring the promise of the *ἥθος*, but rather the potential for authentic relations and discourse by which Dasein exists as a properly singular-plural being. It is in this way that the primordial existential-ontological unity of *In-Sein* and *Mit-Sein* can be attested in existentiell terms.

What emerges here is an embryonic account of ethical relations with the other that specifically forecloses upon acts of subjugation or violence, and induces instead a sense of *care*: not just for one’s *own* Dasein, but also for others. For if Being-in is at the same time Being-with, this with-Being carries with it a sense of empathetic responsibility that is surplus to any neutral dwelling-alongside the other, and which is essentially inconsistent with domination of this other.

4.3.1 : Leaping Ahead: Attesting to the Ethics of Freedom and Responsibility

In previous chapters of this thesis, I have examined the early Heideggerian focus on a phronētic sense of authenticity and conscience, and in this section, I close the circle by demonstrating the continuity of this trajectory with the positive sense of *Fürsorge*, as discussed in the present chapter.

Central to the notion of *Fürsorge* as “authentic care” – which includes both “Being towards the world of its concern, and ... authentic Being towards itself” – is the claim that such a relation “helps the Other to become transparent to himself in his care and to become free for it.”¹³² This theme of freedom is central to Heidegger’s account of authentic *Fürsorge*. In a strikingly concrete description of what might be called ‘mutually solicitous collaboration’, Heidegger describes a situation in which two individuals “devote themselves to the same affair in common,” in which “their doing so is determined by the manner in which their Dasein, each in its own way, has been taken hold of.” In such a situation, they thus “become

¹³² SZ: 122/159.

authentically bound together, and this makes possible the right kind of objectivity [*Sachlichkeit*], which frees the Other in his freedom for himself.”¹³³

Yet such an account of positive authentic ‘inter-subjectivity’ needs to be read alongside other prominent threads in Heidegger’s early work that seem to take a far more individualistic approach to the task of becoming ‘*eigentlich*’ (own-most.) For example, the notion of positive solicitude just considered needs to be juxtaposed with Heidegger’s account of conscience later in *Being and Time*, according to which “understanding the call of conscience, Dasein lets the ownmost Self take action in itself out of the chosen capacity-to-be.”¹³⁴ In what sense, then, can “leaping ahead,” as Dasein’s ability to share “transparency” and “freedom” with the other, be reconciled with such a conception? One might, with Nancy, lament Heidegger’s comparative lack of elaboration on this theme. However, a close analysis of Heidegger’s account of conscience and resoluteness (as carried out in previous chapters), can show how these seemingly disparate pieces can be understood to fit together in a quite compelling whole.

First, Heidegger is clear when giving his account of the call of conscience that the call is to be understood in the context of Dasein as “concernful Being-in-the-world and Being with others.”¹³⁵ While “leaping in” constitutes the inauthentic “who” of the “theyself,” “leaping ahead” is rather associated with conscience and resoluteness. Heidegger suggests that in resoluteness, Dasein is revealed as a being that is free for its ownmost possibility of Being, but whose silent call frees it also for the possibility of letting others “listen” and “hear” their own call of conscience in like manner:

Resoluteness brings the Self right into its current concernful Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand and pushes it into solicitous Being with others. In the light of the ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ of one’s self-chosen potentiality for-Being, resolute Dasein frees itself for its world. 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. [*Das*

¹³³ SZ: 122/159.

¹³⁴ SZ: 334/288.

¹³⁵ SZ: 280/325.

erschlossene Dasein kann zum Gewissen der Anderen werden [Only by authentically Being their-selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another [*eigentliche Miteinander*]]—not by ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraternizing in the “they” and in what “they” want to undertake.¹³⁶

In the above remarks, Heidegger supplies us with insight into the question as to how authentic solicitude “helps the other to become transparent and free in his care.” *Gewissen* and *Mitsein* are inseparable; the voice of conscience is not fully understood unless the solicitous power of leaping ahead is integrated into the account. Heidegger thus insists that in order to resolutely come into one’s “ownmost potentiality-for-Being,” Dasein must adopt the “primary and authentic way” of Being-with that involves “hearing” which requires the reciprocal “calling” of conscience: the calling of “the voice of the friend whom every Dasein carries with it.”¹³⁷ What this implies is that when Dasein assumes itself in its authenticity, what is discovered is not solely a being with an appropriate ability to be itself, but the primordial ‘truth’ that there is always another with it, speaking to it. In other words, *authentic solicitude is possible if and only if Dasein is resolute*. In this dynamic interplay, Dasein’s call to authentic resoluteness is what makes possible for the “sharing” of its transparency by solicitously “[leaping] ahead of [the other] in his existentiell 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.”¹³⁸

Accordingly, when Dasein authentically understands itself in resoluteness, it takes up the issue of how it will “summon itself to its ownmost Self to its potentiality-for-Being,”¹³⁹ in the world, and at the same time takes up the issue of how it will care for others with whom it shares the world. As Donovan Miyasaki appositely puts it, here, “[t]here is no question of whether Dasein will or will not, ought or ought not, care for others and be concerned about its world.”¹⁴⁰ Also, here, Heidegger does not explicitly say that this responsibility is by a stringent premise a call for others to see themselves as ends in themselves. In its stead,

¹³⁶ SZ: 298/344-5.

¹³⁷ SZ: 163/206.

¹³⁸ SZ: 122/158-159.

¹³⁹ SZ: 280/325.

¹⁴⁰ Donovan Miyasaki, “A Ground for Ethics in Heidegger’s Being and Time,” *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 38, no. 3 (2007): 269.

what he insinuates is that when the call of conscience summons Dasein to “return” to caring for its ownmost potentiality-for-Being, this *caring for* is by extension, a *ground* to “help others” recognise how they can acknowledge their own being as care. But how exactly does leaping ahead attest to the ethics of freedom?

As previously discussed, when the call of conscience summons Dasein to return to where it becomes “transparent to itself,” this authentic “experience” of resoluteness testifies that the only “certainty” Dasein has is the anticipation of itself as its own end. The mere fact that conscience calls it to care about its “comportment” in the world demands that it be *free* to cultivate its Dasein according to its projective understandings in the world. Dasein’s understanding and openness points to the *freedom* that is integral to its Being. It is on the basis of its call to authentic care, that Dasein understands how it can make possible what Heidegger calls “authentic care for others.” To say that Dasein “cares for or is the conscience of another,” simply means that the world of Dasein is no less mine because it is also yours. Dasein and the other remain always irreducible. Yet their respective authentic self-understanding enables them to be *free* for their respective ownmost Being-guilty; it “pushes [them] into solicitous Being with [each] other.”¹⁴¹ Frederick Olafson speaks to this Heideggerian sense of responsibility/freedom for self and other as follows:

[A] fully authentic choice ... will unavoidably express the interests, however construed, of the human being who makes it. These interests, in turn, will stand in some relation to the interest of others; and any meaningful form of responsibility will have to take those into account. This means that a responsible person must offer some reason to himself and these same others for the priority that has been assigned to his own interests over theirs, if that is what his choice involves. My being responsible thus means that my choice must be such that it can be presented as being at least compatible with some wider form of life in which there is a place for others that is arguably consistent with their interests. But at the same time, each of us must understand that the people to whom this justification is offered are

¹⁴¹ SZ: 123/159.

in principle capable of determining whether the claim it makes – namely, that their interest is served by the action in question – is true or not.¹⁴²

Lawrence Vogel offers a complementary reading of Heidegger's text. For him, "[w]hat reveals itself in conscience is the character of oneself as care."¹⁴³ Further:

When I play the role of conscience for another, this must mean that I call the other to face his own anxious self-responsibility – I do not, in fact I steadfastly refuse, to take over for the other and thereby rob-him of his task of choosing who he is to be without recourse to a neutral standard. As his conscience, I must help to heighten his awareness that his possibilities are ultimately for him to resolve upon alone.¹⁴⁴

In this way authentic *Fürsorge* amounts to a ground of reciprocal freedom. Just as Dasein recognises its Being as one that modifies the possibilities provided by the 'they,' at the same time it acknowledges that the other also possesses existentiell possibilities-for-Being that are by no means identical to its own possibilities or capable of being reduced to the inauthentic interpretations of the 'they.' As a ground for reciprocal freedom, leaping ahead requires Dasein's care for the other to be an appropriate care-for *qua* Being-ahead-of-itself. In other words, given that Dasein's call of conscience recognises Dasein's propriety regarding itself, the call also requires the other to have a conscience and be willing to open itself up to its ownmost possibilities too. Miyasaki observes that generally speaking, Dasein's care for other constitutes a ground of reciprocal freedom] in two ways:

First, we are obligated to maintain our authentic understanding of Dasein (our own and the other's) *qua* potentiality-for-Being-its-self—i.e., to continue wanting to have a conscience. Second, we are obligated to care for the other in a way appropriate to this understanding—i.e., to care for the other *qua* its-Self, *qua* its own potentiality-for-Being rather than caring for the other *qua* identical to ourselves (*qua* 'human') or *qua* identical to the 'they' (*qua* 'one,' or the average

¹⁴² Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein*, 53.

¹⁴³ Vogel, *The Fragile "We" Ethical Implications of Heidegger's "Being and Time"*, 77.

¹⁴⁴ Vogel, *The Fragile "We" Ethical Implications of Heidegger's "Being and Time"*, 75.

human). So, the ground of ethical responsibility for the other is, in effect, to care for the other qua other, or in its otherness.¹⁴⁵

There is here a very clear ontological ground for the possibility of moral normativity, without any such normative content being framed as such. Of course, the freedom that is being sketched here is not a neutral form of *liberum arbitrium*. Rather, authentic Dasein is responsible, taking on its own basis, in its “forward running resolve.” **But Dasein does not take on this basis as an isolated individual.** Rather, it is in its transparent understanding of itself as Being-with-towards-death that Dasein “become[s] the ‘conscience’ of Others” and “co-disclose[s] this potentiality in the solicitude which leaps forth and liberates.”¹⁴⁶ Because Dasein’s chooses out of its “most far-reaching and most primordial possibilities of disclosure” as a Being-with,¹⁴⁷ freedom becomes a *sine qua non* for ethics, where, as Hatab remarks, “the latter can exert its authority only through the former’s historical emergence in Dasein.”¹⁴⁸ When Dasein and the other participate in the respective retrieval of their inherited past, their authentic freedom for their groundless fate becomes a shared struggle, one that enables them to foster an open-ended heritage defined by a broad culture and multiplicity of voices.

Further, as a ground for reciprocal freedom, “leaping ahead” as a call for the other to become “transparent to himself in his care,” also implies a self-respecting independence between Dasein and the other. Leaping ahead is thus not so much the “imposing way of the propagandist”¹⁴⁹ (as Martin Buber put it) as much as the “unfolding” way of the therapist that uncovers potential. Insofar as others are beings whose Being is shared with Dasein, a person who leaps ahead cares for the other’s becoming. When Dasein ‘meets’ the other in its own conscience, it unfolds a particularised concreteness, in the sense that while listening to the other’s call of conscience, it expresses the willingness to approach the other, to accept her, to confirm her for who she is, and ultimately, who she is called to become. Lawrence Vogel elaborates on this feature of leaping ahead using examples of a relation between a good teacher and a student, and a therapist and patient:

¹⁴⁵ Miyasaki, "A Ground for Ethics in Heidegger's Being and Time," 271.

¹⁴⁶ SZ: 298/34.

¹⁴⁷ SZ: 182/226.

¹⁴⁸ Hatab, "Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contribution to Moral Philosophy," 148.

¹⁴⁹ Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (New York: Collier Books, 1965), 170.

The teacher's success lies not only in transmitting a certain subject matter but also in encouraging the student to think and question for himself and to disagree with the teacher if disagreement seems warranted. These traits will allow the student to eventually become a teacher in his own right. A mark of a good teacher is that he wants his students to be not obsequious disciples but independent partners in the search for truth. But the student might never develop his curiosity were it not for the provocations of the teacher whose own curiosity sets an example that his students admire. Or we think of the relationship between therapist and patient. ... [The] success of therapy lies not so much in whether the patient's problems are solved – as if they are puzzles – but in whether the patient is able to work through the problems life inevitably creates on his own or with significant others in his life rather than with a paid professional. Still were it not for the therapeutic relationship, the patient may never have been able to develop the self-respecting independence that is the mark of mental health.¹⁵⁰

If Vogel's example of Heidegger's analysis of leaping ahead is anything to go by, such an experience is a profound one. It is only when Dasein sees others realistically through authentic resolve, that it can affirm them in their integrity. Of note though is Martin Buber's warning (of which more below) that "an empty claim for confirmation [of the other], without devotion for [their] being and becoming, again and again [will] mar the truth of the life of the other."¹⁵¹ To mitigate this possibility, Vogel proposes that because leaping ahead allows the other to "think for himself," it is imperative that "[t]he one who leaps ahead must refuse to leap in." Vogel's interpretation of what is involved here is salient:

[This is not] because, though he knows what is best for the other, it is up to the other to find and pursue this for himself, but rather because nothing is *objectively* best for the other and so it is up to the other to face this and resolve upon his life for himself. The authentic individual does not possess a third-person, neutral knowledge of what is best for the other but is able to pay attention to the other in

¹⁵⁰ Vogel, *The Fragile "We" Ethical Implications of Heidegger's "Being and Time"*, pp. 75-6.

¹⁵¹ Maurice S. Friedman, *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue*, Fourth ed. (London & New York: Routledge, 1955), 94.

his 'otherness': that is, in his singular responsibility for taking hold of his possibilities.¹⁵²

In this way, Dasein's authentic freedom orchestrated by its silent call of conscience possesses, for Heidegger, an inherent 'emancipatory' character which frees the other as other. Authentic Dasein does not impose itself on others in any kind of ethical paternalism, for as Frank Schalow notes, any such approach "can never appreciate the reverence towards the other as disclosed in solicitude."¹⁵³ This is because, in Schalow's words, leaping ahead, as "emancipatory solicitude or care giving, restores to the other the power to choose, and promotes a loyalty to existence."¹⁵⁴ In this way, Dasein and other "co-historicize as participants in the decision-making process,"¹⁵⁵ by questioning and reflecting together upon the facets of meanings and axiomatic powers that shape their lives together in the world.

In authentic solicitude, Dasein appropriates the care with which it is endowed and entrusted. Because it is predicated on freedom and authentic dialogue, such solicitude moves beyond the orbit of the 'they,' honouring differences between and among people. Beyond the taken-for-granted or "closed off" opinions espoused in the idle talk of the day, authentic solicitude involves a commitment to responsibility, following the discourse of conscience, in order to cultivate an alternative vision of what is good.

Of course, such an account of Dasein's authentic solicitous leaping ahead is not oriented towards any determinate ethical course of action to be realised. It does not suggest the provision of specific universal solutions or outcomes concerning right conduct. In fact, Dasein is bereft of any such determination. After all, as a thrown being defined by its temporality, whose essence lies in its 'to-be,' who is "not itself the basis of its Being,"¹⁵⁶ Dasein is itself an *Ab-grund*. As such, any ground of ethics that emerges from such a way of Being must itself be a *groundless ground*. Leaping ahead can thus only ever open up the

¹⁵² Vogel, *The Fragile "We" Ethical Implications of Heidegger's "Being and Time"*, 77.

¹⁵³ Frank Schalow, "Language and the Social Roots of Conscience: Heidegger's Less Travelled Path," *Human Studies* 21, no. 2 (1998): 149.

¹⁵⁴ Schalow, "Language and the Social Roots of Conscience: Heidegger's Less Travelled Path," 149.

¹⁵⁵ Schalow, "Language and the Social Roots of Conscience: Heidegger's Less Travelled Path," 152.

¹⁵⁶ SZ: 285/330.

possibility of several ways forward based on the assumption that Being itself is an ongoing process of presencing.

As a proto-ethics of care, leaping ahead involves a responsibility for the other that is not at variance with Dasein's own self-obligation. Rather, it is the fundamental form of obligation Dasein owes others, for it springs from its own call to care for its own potentiality-for-Being. In this context, Donovan Miyasaki has helpfully observed that a double movement is needed for leaping ahead to fulfil the role of grounding an open-ended but reciprocal freedom. It is first necessary to see "the space for receiving [the Other Dasein] as an indeterminate interpretive space for the 'ahead' of being-ahead-of-itself."¹⁵⁷ In Miyasaki's reading, given that "the Other qua Other is as yet unknown," it makes no sense to predetermine the interpretive space of the other. Rather, leaping ahead will be solicitously authentic when it views "our referential-totality, our 'world,' as open-ended, as permanently possessing the possibility for transformation."¹⁵⁸ But second, given that "the Other qua Other is unknown," Miyasaki insists that "[w]hen and how we must change our understanding of ourselves and our world must be determined entirely by the [meaningful potentialities of the] Other."¹⁵⁹ Thus, it is not enough to "passively let Others be in their own potentiality for Being, [insofar as] ... the Other can be itself only if we transform our understanding of ourselves as well." For "if the Other's possibilities and self-interpretation determine our ethical obligations, then ... whatever the Other says goes."¹⁶⁰ Consequently, what is needed is a genuinely open dialogue that both remains faithful to my own projective understandings, while also resisting the imperialism of enforcing them on others. It is through such authentic solicitation that Dasein and the other learn how to ask questions together in order to be alert to the hidden or forgotten aspects of their history and also to spawn new meanings that might have been drowned out by the idle talk of the day.

In an attempt to broadly articulate this shared project of open and 'respectful' freedom, Heidegger, in *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* (penned just a few years after the publication of

¹⁵⁷ Miyasaki, "A Ground for Ethics in Heidegger's Being and Time," 274.

¹⁵⁸ Miyasaki, "A Ground for Ethics in Heidegger's Being and Time," 274.

¹⁵⁹ Miyasaki, "A Ground for Ethics in Heidegger's Being and Time," 275.

¹⁶⁰ Miyasaki, "A Ground for Ethics in Heidegger's Being and Time," 275.

Being and Time) calls this a “*Seinlassen*” (letting-be). Such a sense of freedom is one that “lets beings be the beings they are”. Heidegger explains:

Ordinarily, we speak of letting be ...in the negative sense of leaving something alone, of renouncing it, of indifference and even neglect ... However, the phrase required now – to let beings be – does not refer to neglect and indifference but rather the opposite. To let be is to engage oneself with beings [*Sein-lassen ist das Sicheinlassen auf das Seiende*]. On the other hand, to be sure, this is not to be understood only as the mere management, preservation, tending, and planning of the beings in each case encountered or sought out. To let be ... means to engage oneself with the Open and its openness into which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself.¹⁶¹

Paul Ricoeur makes a strikingly similar point in a way that illuminates key issues at stake in Heidegger’s presentation of this open and authentic sense of *Fürsorge*:

The recognition of another freedom, the position of the Other as having as much value as I have, are primitive acts which can be derived from nothing ... To have a value and not a price, that is to have dignity, according to Kant ... Ethical freedom is not a claim which proceeds from me and is opposed to any control; it is rather a demand which is addressed to me and proceeds from the other: allow me to exist in front of you as your equal. Dignity is the demand of freedom at the second person level. There would be no question of treating the person in myself as an end in itself, if I did not meet this requirement with reference to the Other. In that sense, I am my own neighbour, because I am the neighbour of my neighbours. Therefore, freedom is no longer an extension of my attempt to escape control or avoid constraint. It is an extension of my recognition of the equal right of the Other to exist.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit im Wegmarken*: 144/188.

¹⁶² Paul Ricoeur, “A Critique of B. F. Skinner’s Beyond Freedom and Dignity,” in *Social and Political Essays* (Athens: Ohio University of Chicago, 1974), pp. 63-4.

This open space of solicitous Being-with others is further accentuated in *Being and Time* in the account of discourse. Here Heidegger is examining the place of listening as an authentic expression of *Mitsein* in action:

Listening to . . . is Dasein's existential way of Being-open as Being-with for Others. Indeed, hearing constitutes the primary and authentic way in which Dasein is open for its ownmost potentiality-for-Being – as in hearing the voice of the friend whom every Dasein carries with it. Dasein hears, because it understands. As a Being-in-the-world with Others, a Being which understands, Dasein is 'in thrall' to Dasein-with and to itself; and in this thralldom it 'belongs' to these. Being-with develops in listening to one another.¹⁶³

Here all the key themes of authentic *Fürsorge* come together in a vision of open dialogue in freedom and resoluteness that is the very condition of possibility for an ethical encounter between and among individuals. As Being-in-the-world, Dasein "belongs" to *Mitsein*, and is "in thrall to" Dasein-with. What remains is to account for the *affective* dimension of this relation more fully via Heidegger's qualified openness to a properly existential sense of empathy.

4.3.2 : Leaping Ahead: Attesting to the Ethics of Empathy

Heidegger's engagement with the notion of empathy (*Einfühlung*) in *Being and Time* is somewhat complicated. On one hand, there is a clear critique of what might be called the metaphysical psychology of empathy as a phenomenon of 'feeling the feelings of others.' Yet when this disavowal is fully taken on board, Heidegger nonetheless offers a qualified openness to the concept taken within an ontological-existential frame of reference. Seen in this light, empathy names a key aspect of authentic *Fürsorge*.

Heidegger's critique of the idea might best be situated in terms of its Husserlian heritage, that involves the notion of the inner life of other beings becoming elements of my being, or the self of other people. In his theory of intersubjective relations, Husserl had argued that there is a sense of an emphatic transference that constitutes every relationality that is spoken of in terms of empathy. He writes: "In the communicative society, each member

¹⁶³ SZ: 163/206.

sees what I see and hears what I hear or at least, he can do so. We experience the same things and events, we experience the animal and people there facing us, and we see in them the same inner life etc.”¹⁶⁴ Heidegger was keen to sharply distinguish *Mitsein* from any connection with such an approach.

Heidegger’s opposition to Husserlian ‘empathy’ (or other kindred approaches, presumably including Edith Stein’s) is conducted not on the level of empirical evidence, but rather in terms of the implicit metaphysical assumptions that it involves. Such a theory of intersubjectivity, he suggests, presumes that Dasein is a companionless solitary and self-contained being whose understanding of others is only possible when the putatively asocial subject requires something to fill the void created by the absence of the other. In this way, Heidegger is keen to insist that the analysis of *Mitsein* has nothing to do with what he calls “the theoretical problematic of understanding the ‘psychical life of Others’ [*fremden Seelenlebens*].” He explains: “This phenomenon, which is none too happily designated as ‘empathy’ [*Einfühlung*], is ... supposed, as it were, to provide the first ontological bridge from one’s own subject, which is given proximally as alone, to the other subject, which is proximally quite closed off.” The reason why this is so unacceptable for him is that “Being towards Others is ontologically different from Being towards Things which are present-at-hand [*vorhanden*].”¹⁶⁵ So Heidegger’s challenge to a Husserlian approach to empathy (and intersubjectivity more generally), is that it fails to elucidate the ontological dimension of relationality.

The key issue here is that the relation of Dasein to the Other (empathetic or otherwise), is not something that has to be ‘achieved’ through any kind of psychological connection. Being-with-others, is rather a primordial feature of Dasein’s way of Being that is entirely antecedent to the existentiell possibility of any connection with others. Heidegger emphasises this point in *Being and Time*: “Not only is Being towards Others an

¹⁶⁴ Husserl’s account continues as follows: “Yet each [member] has appearances which are exclusively his own, and each has lived experiences which are exclusively his own. Only he experiences these in their very flesh, utterly and originally. In a certain way, I also experience (and there is a self-givenness here) the other lived experiences; that is, to the extent that the empathy (*comprehensio*) accomplished as one with the originary experience of the Body is indeed a kind of presentification, one that nevertheless serves to ground the character of co-existence in the flesh.” See Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. Rojcewicz and Andre Richard, Schuwer (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), 208.

¹⁶⁵ SZ: 124/161-62.

autonomous, irreducible relationship of Being: this relationship, as Being-with, is one which, with Dasein's Being, already is."¹⁶⁶ He is just as insistent on this in his summer 1925 lectures on the "History of the Concept Time" where he suggests that "[i]f the constitution of what is Dasein is instead regarded without presuppositions as in-being and being-with in the pre-suppositionless immediacy of everydayness, it then becomes clear that the problem of empathy is just as absurd as the question of the reality of the existential world."¹⁶⁷

A second problem with this idea for Heidegger is the way that it "problematically presupposes," as Lauren Freeman has noted, that "the relation with the other is a kind of doubling of the self in the other, which renders one's relation with another to be just one's relation to oneself."¹⁶⁸ As Heidegger puts it, "[t]he relationship-of Being which one has towards Others would then become a Projection [*Projektion*] of one's own Being-towards-onself 'into something else'. The Other would be a duplicate of the Self."¹⁶⁹ But if *Mitsein* requires an understanding of Dasein as singular-plural, to use Nancy's expression, this mysterious psychological notion of Dasein's doubling of the self in the other would (as Christopher Fynsk has independently observed) certainly imply the loss of Dasein's singularity.¹⁷⁰ But further still, to this one must also add the very significant associated *ethical* problems that would arise from any notion of the self being effectively 'doubled' in the other. Any such notion would not only vindicate a Levinasian critique (and indeed many other kindred critiques) of the colonisation of the irreducible alterity of the Other (about which more to come later), but it would surely trigger all many of very ordinary psychological (and psychodynamic) concerns about illegitimate presumption about the self's ability to fully understand others. Heidegger's use of the usual psychological term, "*Projektion*" (as distinct from his more usual "*Entwurf*") perhaps indicates his awareness of this as an issue in/for psychology.

¹⁶⁶ SZ: 125/162.

¹⁶⁷ GA 20: 243/334-336.

¹⁶⁸ Freeman, "Ethical Dimensions In Martin Heidegger's Early Thinking," 198.

¹⁶⁹ SZ: 124/162.

¹⁷⁰ Christopher Fynsk, "The Self and Its Witness; On Heidegger's Being and Time," *Boundary 2* 10, no. 3 (1982): 190.

These significant caveats aside, it is nonetheless clear that an important basis for a more helpful ontological account of empathy as something that is made possible by the existentials *Mitsein* is evident in *Being and Time*, one that can be understood as fitting legitimately within the frame of authentic *Fürsorge*. Heidegger does not suggest that Dasein lacks the capacity for empathy; he does not reject the “problem of [our] shared feelings,” as Hatab puts it.¹⁷¹ Rather, his basic claim is that empathy understood as a thematic encounter with a concrete other must be understood as something that can only occur on the basis of Dasein’s ontological constitution as Being-with.

If authentic Dasein leaps ahead, sharing its world with others and letting others *be* or be *free* to dwell in the openness of their own possibilities, inauthentic Dasein, by contrast, can simply ‘pass by’ the other, apathetically missing the other’s presence in the world. Heidegger writes of such a deficient mode of freedom as follows:

Being for, against, or without one another, passing one another by, not "mattering" to one another-these are possible ways of solicitude. And it is precisely these last-named deficient and Indifferent modes that characterize everyday, average Being-with-one-another. These modes of Being show again the characteristics of inconspicuousness and obviousness which belong just as much to the everyday Dasein-with of Others within-the-world as to the readiness-to-hand of the equipment with which one is daily concerned.¹⁷²

But further, as indicated earlier, *Fürsorge* can also be expressed as a “leaping in” Dasein can interrupt or silence the other’s freedom. In such a situation, the other remains utterly foreign to Dasein, beyond any possibility of authentic solicitous engagement. In the case of either indifference or leaping in, authentic expressions of freedom that affirms the other in his/her freedom – i.e., the letting be (*Seinlassen*) Heidegger refers to in *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* – are foregone. In leaping in, for example, Dasein is focused only on an affirmation of its own freedom over and above (or against) that of others. When this happens, ‘my’ existence is prioritised over the Other.

¹⁷¹ Lawrence J Hatab, "The Ecstatic Nature of Empathy: A Heideggerian Opening for Ethics," *Journal of Philosophical Research* XXVI (2001): 370.

¹⁷² SZ: 121/158.

It is in the context of such a possibility that the promise of a carefully understood Heideggerian sense of empathy can be helpful. Such careful understanding is required in order to take due note of the ‘founded’ nature of empathy: i.e., not as something primordial (effectively an *existentiale* of its own), but as something that “becomes possible” “only on the basis of Being-with.”¹⁷³ Tellingly, however, Heidegger says very little in *Being and Time* about empathy as such – or about what he describes as “[t]he special hermeneutic of empathy” – as distinct from how it can *fail* to flourish insofar as it is “led astray and obstructed.”¹⁷⁴ Nonetheless, despite their extreme brevity, his comments on this possibility are intriguing in what they suggest:

But the fact that empathy is not a primordial existential phenomenon, any more than is knowing in general does not mean that there is nothing problematic about it. The special hermeneutic of empathy will have to show how being-with-one-another [*Miteinandersein*] and Dasein’s knowing of itself are led astray and obstructed by the various possibilities of being which human being himself possesses, so that a genuine “understanding” gets suppressed, and human being takes refuge in substitutes; the possibility of understanding the stranger correctly presupposes such a hermeneutic as its positive existential condition.¹⁷⁵

Following this remark, Heidegger turns to consider inauthentic modes of comportment towards others – the everyday ‘who’ of Dasein - via his analysis of the ‘They.’ However, rather than rushing on with him on such a trajectory, it will be helpful to linger a while on what he may have had in mind by this “genuine ‘understanding’” that can be so easily suppressed when Dasein “takes refuge in substitutes,” and just what this authentic “possibility of understanding the stranger correctly” might look like. If both of these “presuppose” a “special hermeneutic of empathy ... as its positive existential condition,” how should such a hermeneutic be constituted, or even construed? My suggestion is that – building on Jean-luc Nancy’s existing work on Dasein as singular-plural (as surveyed above) – Heidegger’s substantial account of Being-in-the-world with others already

¹⁷³ SZ: 125/162.

¹⁷⁴ SZ: 125/163.

¹⁷⁵ SZ: 125/163.

provides us with many clues, especially by way of his account of *Befindlichkeit* ('affectedness').¹⁷⁶

Central to Heidegger's account of *Befindlichkeit* is the idea that Dasein finds itself always already in the midst of an existing affective attunement, or 'affectedness,' to the world. "Dasein, in so far as it is, has always submitted itself already to a 'world' which shows up for it, and this submission belongs essentially to its Being."¹⁷⁷ For Heidegger, far from being mere psychological states, moods constitute our fundamental mode of existence which discloses the mode or way in which one finds oneself [*sich befinden*] in the world. As Eugene Gendlin helpfully notes, *Befindlichkeit* conveys the three overlapping senses: of "the reflexivity of finding oneself; feeling and being situated, [and] denoting how we sense ourselves in situations."¹⁷⁸ In other words, affectedness is a state of attunement in which, as Freeman writes, "Dasein is attuned to itself, to others, and to the world."¹⁷⁹ As a basic mode of Being-with, affectedness mitigates a subjectivist ontology in which Dasein understands itself as self-sufficient, by serving as a lens through which the other *as* other is made present affectively to us. Dreyfus reminds us that the sense *Befindlichkeit* conveys, as expressed in Dasein's moods, "cannot be properly described as fleeting private feeling projected upon the world but must be understood as specifications of a dimension of existence, i.e. of affectedness as a way of being in the world."¹⁸⁰ This is, of course, central to Heidegger's own account:

Moods are not accompanying phenomena; rather, they are the sort of thing that determines being-with-one-another in advance. It seems as if, so to speak, a mood is in each case already there, like an atmosphere, in which we are steeped and by which we are thoroughly determined. It not only seems as if this were so, it is so;

¹⁷⁶ Here I prefer Dreyfus' translation of the term, 'affectedness' (in his Commentary on Division 1) or alternatively the idea of 'attunement', to Macquarrie and Robinson's 'state-of-mind'.

¹⁷⁷ SZ: 88/121.

¹⁷⁸ Eugene T. Gendlin, "Befindlichkeit: Heidegger and the Philosophy of Psychology," *Review of Existential Psychology & Psychiatry: Heidegger and Psychology* 16, no. 1-3 (1978-9):44.

¹⁷⁹ Lauren Freeman, "Toward A Phenomenology of Mood," *The Southern Journal Of Philosophy* 52, no. 4 (2014): 449.

¹⁸⁰ Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I*, 172.

and in light of these facts, it is necessary to dispense with the psychology of feelings and experiences and consciousness.¹⁸¹

Heidegger's point here is also nicely summed up by Lauren Freeman when she notes that for Heidegger, "our affective state [is] not the end product ... of a causal relationship that holds between Dasein and [the other]; rather, the very fact that [I] can be affected by the [other] is indicative of our ontological constitution and our prior embeddedness in [the world of the other]."¹⁸²

It is in this context that I wish to suggest that empathy should be seen – in a way that is completely consistent with, if not explicitly expressed as such in Heidegger's own texts – as constituting the formal way of realising the authentic possibility of *Fürsorge*, and hence of Being-with-one another more generally. In line with a suggestion made some time ago by Werner Marx, I maintain that as an act of affectedness, empathy is what facilitates an individual becoming open and receptive to the situational life of the other, their sensations and passions, pleasures and pains, and moods.¹⁸³ Through empathy, Dasein shares the fate of others because an empathetic experience entails an openness to what is occurring, letting the other 'be' in his/her own integrity as other. The experience of empathy does not project a definitive way of living because as Freeman writes, "how we exist or are faring in the world is not first revealed to us by an inference or judgment."¹⁸⁴ Instead, empathy is a precondition that informs our ethical relation with the other. When empathy occurs as an openness to the mortal temporality of the other, it helps the other to exist with the awareness that s/he is not isolated in his/her Being-in, but are always an open Being-in-with-others. Further, it might be ventured (to build on Marx's thesis) that Dasein's resolute Being-towards-death provides an impetus for the transformation of Dasein's basic attunement to the world as a whole, and its Being-with-others in particular, from indifference to authentic solicitude.

¹⁸¹ Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik. Welt-Endlichkeit-Einsamkeit* (GA 29/30) (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1992), 100. Translated as Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 67.

¹⁸² Freeman, "Toward A Phenomenology of Mood," 452.

¹⁸³ Werner Marx, *Towards a Phenomenological Ethics: Ethos and the Life-World* (Albany: State University of New York, 1992), 40.

¹⁸⁴ Freeman, "Toward A Phenomenology of Mood," 450.

Another scholar who has written helpfully on this theme is John D. Caputo. Caputo has argued that to the extent that Dasein's authentic resoluteness provides grounds for reciprocal freedom, where Dasein "keeps as many options as possible" because of the limit conditions that come with its finitude," authentic solicitude as leaping ahead can also provoke empathy for others who are "siblings of the same flux, brothers and sisters in the same dark night."¹⁸⁵ If "authenticity means owning up to our short comings" and believing that none of us has access to any absolute foundations," he suggests, then this admission will "deflect pretension" and make possible the insight that we all share same "midnight of fears," a common fate that "we are a community of mortals."¹⁸⁶ In Caputo's reading, empathy "arises precisely from the sense of a common fate, from suffering (*passio*) a common (*com*) comfortlessness." It is a "sense of togetherness which mortals share [when they] understand the finitude of the cut they make into things."¹⁸⁷

It is on the basis of such a reconstruction of Heidegger's texts that gestures in such a direction without really showing us the way, that empathy can be seen, very legitimately, as an authentic fulfilment of what is most deeply at stake in the primordial ontological condition of *Mitsein*. Empathy, properly understood, is a fulfilment of the promise of Dasein's Being-in-as Being-with. As Hatab has suggested, empathy thus plays the role of an existential condition of ethics when it provides us with a "basic ethical disposition (*Befindlichkeit*) or mood (*Stimmung*) that attunes us to the moral life in a way that mere knowledge, theories, or rules cannot."¹⁸⁸ Being an ethical disposition, empathy attunes us not to axioms of behaviour as such, but for attention to our shared finitude. It is in this sense that a Heideggerian reading of empathy might even be able to embrace the suggestion of Edith Stein that empathy allows the self to live in the other's experience on the grounds that the experience is analogous or correlational to my own.¹⁸⁹ Ultimately,

¹⁸⁵ John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 259.

¹⁸⁶ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project*, 258.

¹⁸⁷ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project*, 259.

¹⁸⁸ Hatab, "Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contribution to Moral Philosophy," 415.

¹⁸⁹ Stein argues that empathy simply implies that while "I am living in the other's joy [or sorrows], I do not feel primordial joy. It does not issue live from my "I." Neither does it have the character of once having lived like remembered joy [or sorrow]. But still much less is it merely fantasized without actual life. This other subject is primordial although I do not experience it as primordial. In my non-primordial experience I feel, as it were, led by a primordial one not experienced by me but still there, manifesting itself in my non-primordial experience." Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, trans. Waltraut Stein, Third Revised ed. (Washington, D. C.: ICS Publications, 1964), pp. 10-11.

when my own experiences become the basis for the understanding of other's frailties and limit conditions, one acknowledges, in line with Caputo that the way forward is to be cautious and empathetic.¹⁹⁰ In other words, central to the spirit of empathy is the recognition that we all belong to the same "mortal community" with "different narrative fluxes." When we recognise and affirm this authentic truth of our Being, then as Caputo says:

Our own concern [will be] to keep the conversation moving, mobile, and to trust the dynamics of the *agora*. We do everything we can to see to it that the debate is fair, that no one's voice is excluded or demeaned, and that the vested interests of the powerful who usually end up having their way are restrained as much as possible.¹⁹¹

As an existential condition for the possibility of ethics, empathy mitigates the indifference of the Theyself, and the subjective egoism of 'leaping in' that betrays Dasein's intrinsic Being-with-others. As a mood, it unveils or discloses a mutual sensitivity, where conscious of my frailties and limit conditions, "I appreciate others not only for their sovereignty but also for the fragility of their efforts to make something of their own lives."¹⁹² Empathy grounds ethics not by providing a moral code for action, but by creating the conditions whereby Dasein is *attuned to the ἦθος*, that is completely of a piece with the ontological condition of Being-in-the-world-with-others. Despite the pull of 'the They,' by which Dasein looks to escape its Being-with-the-other, authentic resoluteness involves facing the other with (to borrow Heidegger's characterisation of the result of anticipatory resoluteness), "sober understanding."¹⁹³ It is only when Dasein is attuned through empathy, that it can become truly in an existentiell sense, what it always already is: *Mitdasein in-der-Welt*.

¹⁹⁰ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project*, 259.

¹⁹¹ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project*, 261.

¹⁹² Vogel, *The Fragile "We" Ethical Implications of Heidegger's "Being and Time"*, 99.

¹⁹³ SZ: 360/411.

4.4: MITSEIN AND ITS CRITICS

It is on the basis of the preceding exploration and interpretation of Heidegger's notion of *Mitsein* and its rich layers of possibility for further development, that I turn now to consider three prominent early critiques of Heidegger. Focusing the discussion on the critical readings of Martin Buber, Jean-Paul Sartre and Emmanuel Levinas in particular will allow a substantial coming to terms with the ubiquitous textually-based claim that Heideggerian thought can only distort the possibility of ethics because it involves an absolutisation of Dasein's authentic existence over the other, thus producing what Jacques Taminiaux calls "a circle [always] leading back to it itself."¹⁹⁴ It will also thereby be able to address the similarly widely attested claim that Heideggerian *Mitsein* is a heavy-handed ontological principle unable to do justice to the elemental intimacy of concrete human relationships. While it is clear that such critiques are not without a degree of basis in Heidegger's early writings, in my assessment, they fail to do justice to the full scope of Heidegger's thinking on this theme. In very brief terms, the following will outline the basic thrust of these two claims made by these three important scholars, while also showing how the foregoing discussion has highlighted dimensions of Heidegger's work that substantially addresses their concerns.

4.4.1 : Martin Buber

The Buber-Heidegger relationship is a rich and fascinating one on so many levels,¹⁹⁵ but in this brief consideration the focus must remain narrowly on Buber's critique of Heideggerian *Mitsein* and *Fürsorge*, and a potential Heideggerian response. In Buber's view, Heidegger's fundamental ontology is completely unsuited to the task of dealing seriously with concrete human experiences, especially interpersonal relations. There are, of course, some crucially important ethico-theological reasons why he thinks that this must be the case, though I place these to one side since they amount to a clearly irreducible difference in their basic starting points that cannot be addressed here.¹⁹⁶ However, his

¹⁹⁴ Jacques Taminiaux, *Heidegger and the project of fundamental ontology* (Albany: Sunny, 1991), xxi.

¹⁹⁵ On this, see Paul Mendes-Flohr, "Martin Buber and Martin Heidegger in Dialogue," *The Journal of Religion* 94, no. 1 (2014): pp. 2-25.

¹⁹⁶ Briefly: For Buber, Heidegger's failure to account for the ontic encounter between Dasein and the other is not unrelated to his utter rejection of God who is the absolute Other. For him, Heidegger's adoption of the Nietzschean position concerning the death of God means that "apparently nothing more remains now

critique can also be approached on more phenomenological grounds. Accordingly, whilst Buber acknowledges *Mitsein* as Heidegger's attempt at staging an account of interpersonal relations in his work, he sees this as inherently bereft of any means to seriously engage the I-Thou relationship in its primordially.

For Buber, the entire focus for Heidegger's account of Dasein understands it in relation not to the other, but in relation to itself. In Buber's view, what Heidegger understands as *Mitsein* is nothing but the position of a subjectivity that emerges from the impersonal "there is," a position that would ultimately be overcome by the interruption of the other. In David Novak's words, Buber's Heidegger characterises *Mitsein* as a "*Beistand*, literally 'standing next to one', that is, each individual is on a finite journey culminating in the non-relational event, death." Accordingly, "[t]he journey is conducted alongside other Daseins, but their horizontal presence is secondary to the vertical end/terminus which each one faces alone."¹⁹⁷ Heidegger's *Mitsein* is thus an impediment to any serious understanding of human existence which is rather outward facing in relationship to others as its principle characteristic. In order for us to understand our respective human existence, Buber argued, "we are not to isolate a part of life where the existence is related to itself and to its own being, but by becoming aware of the whole life without reduction."¹⁹⁸ For Buber, it is only in the concrete person to person relationship that we are able to make sense of what it really means 'to be,' because human relations are pivotal to our understanding of human existence.

Further, for Buber, Heidegger's account of *Fürsorge* fails to help in this regard since as a component mode of *Mitsein*, it "cannot as such be an essential relation, since it does not set a man's life in direct relation with the life of another."¹⁹⁹ *Fürsorge* "can share in

to the solitary man but to seek an intimate communication with himself," and this is "the basic situation from which Heidegger's philosophy arises." See, Buber, *Between Man and Man*, 167. If the relations with the Absolute Other (Divine unconditioned [*Unbedingten*] being) is the condition for the possibility of human relations, and if that relation is severed in Heidegger's philosophy, then it follows that this philosophy can have no genuine sense of the transcendence beyond the self's own being. Therefore, in Buber's view, Heidegger has no way of addressing the "relation in which man experiences another than himself in the unconditioned, and so experiences the unconditioned." The result is that Heidegger's Dasein is monological. Also see, Buber, *Between Man and Man*, 168.

¹⁹⁷ David Novak, "Buber's Critique of Heidegger," *Modern Judaism* 5, no. 2 (1985): 129.

¹⁹⁸ Buber, *Between Man and Man*, 166.

¹⁹⁹ Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (London: Lund-Humphries, 1954), 169.

essential life only when it derives its significance from being the effect of a relation which is essential in itself.”²⁰⁰ The mere fact of existing with others insufficiently addresses the primal nature of the I-Thou relationship as a defining feature of human existence.. Buber writes:

In its essence solicitude (*Fürsorge*) does not come from mere co-existence (*Mitsein*) with others, as Heidegger thinks, but from essential (*wesent- lichen*), direct, whole relations (*Beziehungen*) between man and man (*Mensch zu Mensch*) In mere solicitude man remains essentially with himself, even if he is moved with extreme pity; in action and help he inclines towards the other, but the barriers of his own being are not thereby breached.²⁰¹

For Buber, a philosophy of the face-to-face relation must do justice not only to the mineness (*Jemeinigkeit*) of the ‘I’, but also to the ‘you-ness’ of the ‘Thou,’ and in an equiprimordial sense. But he claims Heidegger’s *Daseinanalysis* insists on the former to the considerable detriment of the latter.

Needless to say, I would suggest that Buber’s account of the early Heidegger’s approach to these matters involves a vast under-estimation of the significance of Heideggerian *Mitsein*. As discussed earlier in terms of Nancy’s interpretation of Dasein as singular-plural, Heidegger’s account of *Mitdasein* goes ‘all the way down’ in the sense that the very idea of Dasein makes no sense outside the context of its relations with others. Far from being an index of its superficiality, Heidegger’s insistence that *Mitsein* applies even in cases where Dasein’s is in an ontic state of solitude speaks rather to the ontologically *primordial* nature of Dasein’s relation to human otherness. Further, as seen in the previous section, there is nothing ‘*merely* solicitous’ about authentic modes of *Fürsorge*, for they involve the very “essential ... direct, whole relations” between Dasein and the other upon which Buber rightly insists. In this context, it is not surprising to read Haim Gordon’s rather damning assessment of the quality of Buber’s Heidegger interpretation in his detailed book-length analysis of their relationship:

²⁰⁰ Buber, *Between Man and Man*, 170.

²⁰¹ Buber, *Between Man and Man*, 170.

Buber's presentation of certain ideas from *Being and Time* and his one-track critique of these ideas is quite often wrong. I find it sad, but true, to state that Buber comprehended and accepted very few of Heidegger's valuable insights and thoughtful ideas.²⁰²

It should be mentioned in passing, however, that if Buber's reading of Heidegger on *Mitsein* leaves much to be desired, Heidegger's own reading of Buber's account of the I-Thou relationship is at least as poorly considered, and in this there seems to be a thoroughly mutual misunderstanding between the two concerning their respective accounts of the ontology of human relationships. One just needs to consider Heidegger's dismissive allusion to Buber's work in *in Grundprobleme*, composed just shortly after *Being and Time*:

Self and world are not two beings, like subject and object, or like I and thou, but self and world are the basic determination of the Dasein itself in the unity of the structure of being-in-the-world. Only because the "subject" is determined by being-in-the-world can it become as this self a thou for another.²⁰³

Heidegger's presentation here of 'I' and 'Thou' as being functionally equivalent to the two sides of a subject-object relationship is, of course, an equally appalling misreading of Buber's texts. In this way, each seems to be reading the other as conceiving of the relationship between two human individuals as being incidental and contingent rather than ontological and primordial. Suffice to say that there is a tellingly missed opportunity here for mutual enrichment between these two towering figures in twentieth century German thought.

4.4.2 : Jean-Paul Sartre

Sartre's critique of Heidegger's *Mitsein* is strikingly similar to Buber's in its essentials. According to Sartre, although Heidegger acknowledges that "my relation to the other is

²⁰² Hayim Gordon, *The Heidegger-Buber controversy the status of the I-Thou*, ed. Hayim Gordon (Westport, Conn.: Westport, Conn. : Greenwood Press, 2001), 157.

²⁰³ GA: 24: 297/421-422.

first and fundamentally a relation of being to being, not of knowledge to knowledge,”²⁰⁴ the major problem with Heidegger’s work is its inability to articulate our natural basic and fundamental association with others. Sartre takes issue with *Mitsein* as an essential, intrinsic, and a priori determination of Dasein since, in the words of Abraham Mansbach, “the need to explain how the individual can be aware or certain of the existence of other individuals vanishes, because being with others is prior to knowing them.”²⁰⁵

While Sartre agrees with Heidegger that Dasein’s comportment to *zuhanden* equipment can itself engender Dasein-to-Dasein encounter in the world, he argues that it is impossible for me to distinguish between an already finished artefact and a product of natural process except on the condition that I have had a previous familiarisation of others in my world. Further, he notes that “since human reality is act, it can be conceived only as being at its core a rupture with the given. It is the being which causes there to be a given by breaking with it and illuminating it in the light of the not-yet-existing.”²⁰⁶

Like Buber, Sartre’s contention is that it is only through my mutual interchange with others that I can acquire the skills to manipulate tools that have already been produced in the manner that the tools have been designed. Consequently, for Sartre, equipment or tools embody a derived reference to the other. Meanwhile, as Buber similarly suggested, *Mitsein* takes for granted the concrete vital and authentic interrelations with the other,²⁰⁷ and in this way it misses its radical alterity. The result is therefore the very solipsism that Heidegger had sought to overcome. ““The original relation of the Other and my consciousness is not the you and me; it is the ‘we’,” Sartre complains. So “Heidegger’s being-with is not the clear and distinct position of an individual confronting another individual; it is not knowledge. It is ... mute existence.”²⁰⁸

Simply put, the key to Buber and Sartre’s understanding of essential human relation, is the primal mutuality between persons that is played out in a concrete encounter between real

²⁰⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1957), pp. 278 & 44.

²⁰⁵ Abraham Mansbach, *Beyond Subjectivism: Heidegger on Language and the Human Being* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 47.

²⁰⁶ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, 478.

²⁰⁷ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, 479.

²⁰⁸ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, pp. 245-47.

individuals. For both scholars, Heidegger's Being-with limits social relations to a purely a priori stipulation that obscures any real and radical otherness. Thus, *Mitsein* is not a matter of genuine inter-relation, but rather of a self-relation in which "the necessary presupposition of a real duality is lacking."²⁰⁹ Sartre asks:

Why did Heidegger believe that he was authorised to pass from this empirical and ontic establishment of being-with to a position claiming co-existence as the ontological structure of my "being-in-the-world?" And what type of being does this co-existence have? To what extent is the negation which makes the other an other and which constitutes him as non-essential maintained? If we suppress it entirely, are we not going to fall into monism? And if we are to preserve it as an essential structure of the relation to the other, then what modification must it undergo in order to lose the character as a connection which creates solidarity, and which is the very structure of being-with? And how shall we be able to pass from there to the concrete experience of the other in the world, as when from my window I see a man walking in the street?²¹⁰

The main lines of a response to Sartre's critique follows a similar line to that offered to Buber. On one hand, Heidegger's *Mitsein* is criticised for being too formal a structure, lacking the visceral immediacy of the person-to-person encounter. But that very formality is precisely a function of Heidegger's insistence on the ontological primordially of the relation: that Dasein is *essentially* (or better: existentially) Being-with, and not simply the kind of being who might happen to relate to others as inevitably happens in reality. This, then, is the specific answer to Sartre's question about why Heidegger "believe[d] that he was authorised to pass from [an] empirical and ontic establishment of being-with to a position claiming co-existence as the ontological structure of my 'being-in-the-world'"

But on the other hand, nor can Heidegger's account be rejected on the ground that it lacks any robust sense of what this formal ontological relation looks like in more textured terms. For this is precisely what Heidegger's account of authentic *Fürsorge* provides, as brief and admittedly under-developed as it is, as indicated earlier. It is *Fürsorge* that in turn directly

²⁰⁹ Buber, *Between Man and Man*, pp. 178-80.

²¹⁰ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, 247.

answers Sartre's other question noted above about "how [we] shall ... be able to pass from there ["the very structure of being-with"] to the concrete experience of the other in the world, as when from my window I see a man walking in the street." This is precisely the passage that is negotiated in the movement from *Mitsein* to *Fürsorge*, perhaps taking in also the hint Heidegger throws out (as also explored earlier) concerning the need for a "hermeneutic of empathy". Of course, Heidegger's account will not provide a psychology or aesthetics of the relation between others – for it is presented as an existential analytic of Dasein – but this does not in any way preclude the development of such approaches specifically on the basis it provides. (It is just that "to describe these and classify them would take us beyond the limits of [his] investigation"²¹¹). Indeed, such is the central argument of this thesis concerning the possibility for an ethics to be developed on the ground provided by Heidegger's ontological analytic of Dasein.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that in some ways Sartre's own thought resembles the very problematic features he claims to identify in Heidegger's work. For if *Mitsein* is understood as being a self-relation rather than one genuinely open to the other in a situation of true mutuality, might that not also be seen as a danger in the case of Sartre's *l'être-pour-autrui* (even if Sartre expends much more space in the latter parts of *Being and Nothingness* exploring the complexities of the self-other encounter than Heidegger expends on *Mitsein* in *Being and Time*)? After all, any examination of what it is to be for-the-other is eventually an examination of the self *as that being*. The phenomenology of the 'look' of the other, to take one famous example, ends with shame that involves a recoil back into the self. As David Jopling has put it,

one of the problems with Sartre's description of the phenomenology of the self-Other relation is that ... it never leaves the first-person perspective of the self or subject. By thinking about the Other from the self outward, the self-Other relation begins and ends with the self.²¹²

In this sense, Heidegger's *Mitdasein*, which is a being whose own Being is at issue for it, but which is also always already Being-with-others, is hardly any more nascently solipsistic than

²¹¹ SZ: 122/159.

²¹² David Jopling, "Levinas, Sartre, and Understanding the other," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 24, no. 3 (2014): 226.

Sartre's *l'être-pour-soi-pour-autrui*. Admittedly, one might take Jopling's point and make an analogous critique of Heidegger. For example, even when Heidegger states that "as *Mitsein*, Dasein 'is' essentially for the sake of Others,"²¹³ such a claim is in a sense ultimately a claim *about Dasein*. However, the ultimate issue here would appear to be something that transcends both of their approaches, for it goes to the phenomenological method itself which regards the standpoint of genuine exteriority to be extraordinarily difficult to manage in principle. For how is it possible to speak not just *about* the other but *as* the other, without thereby colonising the other with the same? At this point, we have come to the threshold of Levinas' work.

4.4.3 : Emmanuel Levinas

Emmanuel Levinas' response to Heideggerian thought is one of the most virulent and profound, and also one of the most prominent, of the early critiques. It is also one of special relevance here given the way Levinas relentlessly focuses in on the question of the ethical implications of Heidegger's existential analytic and its consequences for the issue of alterity as such.

Famously, Levinas pays close attention to the absolutisation of ontology in Heideggerian thought, from which no alterity is permitted to escape. This, of course, he sees as symptomatic of western philosophy which seeks to conquer, master and dominate alterity.²¹⁴ Levinas applauds Heidegger for foreclosing introspection as a way of the knowledge of Being. However, he effectively suggests that Heidegger implicates himself in the same ideology of western metaphysical tradition by reducing the individual to the *Da* of *Sein*. In this way, Heidegger, in the worst tradition of western metaphysics,

... grasps the individual, which alone exists, not in its singularity which does not count, but in its generality, of which alone there is science.... The surrender of exterior things to human freedom through their generality does not only mean, in all innocence, their comprehension, but also their being taken in hand, their

²¹³ SZ: 123/160.

²¹⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 48.

domestication, their possession ... Reason, which reduces the other, is appropriation and power.²¹⁵

However, Levinas goes further. Not only does Heidegger sum up the philosophy of western metaphysical tradition, the pre-eminence he gives to Being over beings raises the stakes. The Other becomes that which should be *comprehended* and thus mastered, and in this movement shaken out of its genuine alterity in order that it be brought within the economy of the same. In his view:

[C]omprehension, as construed by Heidegger, re-joins the great tradition of Western philosophy wherein to comprehend the particular being is already to place oneself beyond the particular. It is to relate to the particular, which alone exists, by knowledge which is always knowledge of the universals.²¹⁶

For Levinas, it is the authority of the Other in the immediacy of the face to face relation that fractures the solitary existence of the self and reveals the ethical relation of responsibility. There is a rupturing of the self's sovereignty here that exceeds anything proposed in Heidegger's *Mitsein*. As Rosalyn Diprose suggests,

[T]he Other's alterity ... disturbs me, that difference in proximity generated by his or her own separation, his or her own sensibility. This alterity implies not only that the other cannot be possessed, but that her or his presence contests my possession (not just my possession of things and ideas but my self-possession). The other's strangeness, the feeling that he or she cannot be known, puts my autonomy into question.²¹⁷

According to Levinas, the face of the Other also offers ethical resistance to my freedom to possess, not engaging me with its own counter-force, but rather exposing me with its vulnerability. As Levinas put it: "The expression the face introduces into the world does not defy the feebleness of my powers, but my ability for power [*Mon pouvoir de pouvoir*]"²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers* (Dordrecht/Boston/Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 50.

²¹⁶ Levinas, "Is Ontology Fundamental?," 124.

²¹⁷ Rosalyn Diprose, *Corporeal Generosity on Giving with Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, and Levinas*. *SUNY Series in Gender Theory*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 136.

²¹⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 198.

Or again: “The being that expresses itself imposes itself, but does so precisely by appealing to me with its destitution and nudity—its hunger without my being able to be deaf to that appeal.”²¹⁹ The power of the face is “a power that is stronger than murder, [it] is the primordial expression [epitomised in the injunction] ‘you shall not commit murder.’”²²⁰ In this relation, there is an absolute ethical demand where the strange Other calls into question the spontaneity of the ‘I.’ It appeals to the self, to “kneel before the Other, sacrificing its own liberty to the primordial call of the Other” and helping it to “accept that [its] freedom is anteceded by an obligation to the Other.”²²¹ The Other’s appeal “appears through its miserable nakedness as a demand and not as a physical or moral coercion.”²²²

According to Levinas, given that the ethical relation is fundamentally prior to any ontological relation,²²³ “Heideggerian ontology, which subordinates the relationship with the Other to the relation with Being in general, remains under obedience to the anonymous, and leads inevitably to another power, to imperialist domination, to tyranny.”²²⁴ It is the inevitability of this power dynamic which is the target of Levinas’ harsh critique of Heideggerian thought. Thus, while developing many of the same themes as Buber’s and Sartre’s critiques, Levinas’ angle of attack is perhaps differentiated by his powerful insistence on the deconstruction of the self in the face of the radical ethical appeal of the Other. It is to a response to this critique that I now turn.

²¹⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 200.

²²⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 199.

²²¹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philip Nemo*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), 88.

²²² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 173.

²²³ Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philip Nemo*, 57.

²²⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 47. John Caputo has expanded Levinas’ critique, arguing that Heidegger’s Dasein does not only reduce ethical relations to its own being, but that the ontological features of Dasein resists ontic plurality and multiplicity. Like Levinas, Caputo denies the need for an ontological horizon in ethics; however, he offers a deconstructionist attempt at understanding ethics, one that reads it through the lens of feeling. While he agrees with Heidegger that every value theory is singular and disclosive, Caputo recognises a pervading logic of essentialism which “turns Heidegger more and more towards the search for the Essential Being. For him, “the law of essentialization is the logic of Heidegger’s mythologizing thinking, the logic of the mythologic of Being, providing it with a kind of epitemic or meta-epistemic authority.” Caputo remarks that because Heidegger’s metaphysics does not think the difference Being and beings, “it avoids bearing the traces of some ontico-historical settings.” Like Levinas, Caputo suggests that Heidegger’s ontology makes Dasein’s factic life inconspicuous by not allowing it to be contaminated and entitative. Therefore, for seeing ontology as a pure beginning, Caputo indicates that Heidegger forecloses ethical relation with the other, a move that relegates his philosophy to the level of “pure epoche for which Heidegger criticised Husserl.” See, John D. Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger*, Indiana series in the philosophy of religion (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 121.

First of all, the claim that Heidegger fails to do justice to the irreducible alterity of the Other is directly addressed by Heidegger himself in the very heart of his discussion of *Mitsein* in his critique of a psychological sense of empathy. Here he says:

The presupposition which this argument demands – that Dasein's Being towards an Other is its Being towards itself – fails to hold ... Not only is Being towards Others an autonomous, irreducible relationship of Being: this relationship, as Being-with, is one which, with Dasein's Being, already is. Of course, it is indisputable that a lively mutual acquaintanceship on the basis of Being-with, often depends upon how far one's own Dasein has understood itself at the time; but this means that it depends only upon how far one's essential Being with Others has made itself transparent and has not disguised itself. And that is possible only if Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, already is with Others.²²⁵

Thus, for Heidegger, the ethical relation is only possible in the first place, if it is grounded in care. It is only when Dasein is properly understood in its Being – including in its primordial Being-with – that Dasein and the Other can be understood as “authentically bound together”. Importantly, says Heidegger, this “makes possible the right kind of objectivity [*die rechte Sachlichkeit*], which frees the Other in his freedom for himself.”²²⁶ This point can be elaborated somewhat with regard to two senses in which this is the case.

First, Dasein's obligation to the Other comes into view when it resolutely recognizes that its “authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole” as Being-towards-death²²⁷ is an existential characteristic that it shares with all possible others. Accordingly, Dasein's understanding of its own indebtedness – that it is not its own basis in any absolute sense – serves as the condition for the possibility of its understanding of its indebtedness to others. When Dasein is called by its conscience to be responsible for its being, this summoning enables it to be morally obligated to the Other, with whom it shares its world. Dasein's recognition of the Other in its own being is not a reflective experience; rather, it is an ontological relation of solicitude in which Dasein leaps ahead “to help the other become transparent to himself

²²⁵ SZ: 125/162.

²²⁶ SZ: 122/159.

²²⁷ SZ: 301/348.

in his care and to become *free* for it.”²²⁸ In other words, for Dasein to be able to appropriately care for the other, it must endeavour to understand the other in its Being including its potentiality-for-Being. And in doing so, Dasein lets others be [*Seinlassen*] in their own unique way; it lets the other *dwell* in the openness provided by its shared world without dominating. As Sorial observes, “[w]hile this doesn’t give the other quite the same privileged status that Levinas envisages, nevertheless it does save Heidegger’s ontology from the charge of perpetuating violence against the other.”²²⁹

Second, Levinas’ refrain concerning the Other’s naked appeal to the self is anticipated to a degree by those passages (reviewed earlier) in which Heidegger discusses authentic *Fürsorge* in the context of affective attunement, and in this way leaves a way open to a properly ontological sense of empathy. While Heidegger is wary of this notion in its problematic psychological sense, he provides a hint of another dimension of empathy in the sense of an ontological bridge between Dasein and the other on the basis of each other’s fragile finitude. In resolute openness to its ineluctable facticity, Dasein is awoken from the slumber of its indifference towards the other, who is now more intensely present to it in its mutual dwelling in-the-world. In this way, it is not that the Self, in its domination of the other, must be undermined by the infinite exteriority of the other’s appeal, as Levinas would have it. Rather, in Heidegger’s view, what can open a genuine space of mutuality is nothing other than anticipatory resoluteness itself, by which Dasein and other are placed into a relationship of mutual letting-be toward each other. At a certain point, the gap between these two alternative visions of care for the other seems far less much less profound than it once did.

However, such a defence of Heideggerian *Mitsein* is made all the clearer, I would suggest, through the lens provided by Jean-Luc Nancy (with which this chapter began). If Dasein is understood via Nancy’s conception of the singular plural, then (contra Levinas), the self – Dasein in its *Jemeinigkeit* – need not be obliterated in order to make room for exteriority. What is needed, rather, is an even-handed insistence on the equiprimordiality of Being-in and Being-with. What this equiprimordiality shows is the co-originary of Dasein and other.

²²⁸ SZ: 122/159.

²²⁹ Sorial, "Heidegger and the Problem of Individuation: Mitsein (Being-with), Ethics and Responsibility," 144.

For the other's existence is always *already* at the heart of the self; exterior and interior are *already co-mingled*. Being is always Being-with; existence is essentially co-existence. Nancy's clarity on this point casts Heidegger's approach in stark relief: namely,

*A single being is a contradiction in terms. Such a being, which would be its own foundation, origin, and intimacy, would be incapable of Being.*²³⁰

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has tackled the problem of *Mitsein* in Heidegger's early thought through several lenses. It opened with Nancy's account of Dasein as singular plural, and it then surveyed Heidegger's own texts in order to trace the equiprimordiality of Being-in and Being-with that is so compellingly discussed by Nancy. It considered *Mitsein* in the context of *Rede* and *Fürsorge*, and how this then maps onto an active sense of $\tilde{\eta}\theta o\varsigma$. It then further investigated *Fürsorge* in the context of both its inauthentic (leaping in) and authentic (leaping ahead) modes, and with respect to the latter it traced Heidegger's texts on the subject of leaping ahead as freedom and responsibility, and as empathy. Finally, these approaches were tested against three important early critiques of the alleged poverty of Heidegger's inter-relational account, and responses were offered on the basis of the argument presented in this chapter.

As Heidegger asserts in *Grundprobleme*, it is simply a misreading of his account to see Dasein as "assert[ing] ontically that the factual purpose of the factual Dasein is to care exclusively and primarily for itself and to use others as instruments [*Werkzeug*] toward this end."²³¹ In fact, as an authentic Being-in-the-world, Dasein is "the ontological presupposition for the selflessness in which every Dasein comports itself toward the other in the existent I-thou relationships."²³² For Heidegger, Dasein's authentic Being-in is only possible on the basis of solicitous care for others. And in its Being-with others, Dasein's

²³⁰ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 12.

²³¹ GA 24: 296/419-421.

²³² GA 24: 298/422-424.

primary aim is not to overcome them, but to let them be in their own freedom for their own authenticity.

Heidegger's idea that Dasein dwells with and in others opens up a ground for ethical relations in his work, built around freedom/responsibility and empathy. As a ground for ethical freedom, Heidegger's *Mitsein* suggests that just as Dasein is summoned by the call of conscience to take responsibility for its own Being, this anxiety in the face of its groundless existence also summons it to take responsibility for the Being of the other, to let others be according to their fundamental freedom for their own possibilities. *Mitsein* also opens us to the fact that the being of Dasein can never be pinned down to an obligation or responsibility for the other because of its mortal limit conditions. Hence, what Dasein requires above all is a *phronētic* sensibility that calls for an empathic relation with the other. As the ground of ethical relation, the notions of freedom/responsibility and empathy are not abstract principles, but fundamental modes of existence that are disclosive of the way Dasein and the other *are* – each as singular plural beings – in their shared world.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Having now completed the main argument of this thesis, these concluding remarks will proceed in three stages. First, I provide a review of the major lines of argument negotiated in the presentation above, and in this way provide an overview of the argument as a whole. Second, I return to the vast and controversial backdrop that any contemporary work dealing with the question of Heidegger and ethics needs to acknowledge and take seriously, and here I refer to the controversy concerning Heidegger's formal links with National Socialism, and his anti-Semitism more generally. Finally, and on the basis of both of these matters, I turn to consider some of the implications of the foregoing analyses for the field of ethics more generally.

In this thesis, I have analysed the interconnected concepts of *Gewissen* and *Schuld*, *Eigentlichkeit* and *Entschlossenheit*, and *Mitsein* and *Fürsorge* to show how they evoke Heidegger's take on Aristotelian *φρόνησις* to provide a framework for ethics in early Heideggerian thought. I have argued that although references to ethics in Heidegger are rare, something that is perplexing in itself given his relationship to anti-Semitism and Nazism, it is nevertheless the case that these concepts in the early Heidegger provide us with a nascent account of an ontological ground of ethics that is the condition of possibility for something like a moral philosophy per se. Of course, I have also insisted that any such 'ontological ground' needs to be carefully understood as *abyssal* in nature, since the ground that Heidegger develops in his early thought is nothing other than *Dasein* itself, a being that, as thrown, "*never* [has] ... power over [its] its ownmost Being from the ground up," but at the same time, is the (ungrounded) ground of its dwelling (*ἡθός*) in the world. Consequently, any 'ethics' that is 'grounded upon' Heidegger's early work will need to reflect the key insights of the existential analytic.

The first chapter sought to orient the subsequent examination of *Gewissen* (chapter two), *Eigentlichkeit* (chapter three) and *Mitsein* (chapter four) by establishing the great importance of Heidegger's '*Wiederholung*' of Aristotelian ethics, and *φρόνησις* in particular, for understanding the overall context and unity of these concepts. Accordingly, Heidegger's *Daseinanalytik* builds on his reading of Aristotelian *φρόνησις* which (in contradistinction to *σοφία* and *τέχνη*) involves not intellectual or technical knowledge, but the practical skill of discerning the best way of acting on the basis of varied possibilities

that are factually available. In this way, the figure of Dasein can be understood as a reconfigured version of the Aristotle's *φρόνιμος*. This phronetic Dasein's deliberative action is tailored to a desired end (*τέλος*); that for the sake of which (*οὐ ἕνεκα*) it acts. Consequently, the *Daseinanalytik* is (to use Heidegger's later language) an "originary ethics" that forecloses on ethics as a 'science' (as *επιστήμη*, or as *τέχνη*) which *determines* how we should behave, to once again place the thinking of *ἥθος* within a properly phronetic context. Heidegger's phenomenological analyses of *Gewissen*, *Eigentlichkeit*, and *Mitsein* are inherently phronetic. In other words, the abyssal ground of ethics he develops is hermeneutical through and through because it reveals Dasein as a situated being who dwells in a finite world of historical meaning and significance. Ethics is not as a phenomenon that "places action in the service of an ideal that stands outside of time and history,"¹ as Dennis Schmidt has put it, but rather one that is intrinsically factual and temporal. It is only when this is fully appreciated that anything like moral normativity can be thought within a Heideggerian context. The focus in the succeeding chapters was to ascertain in detail how, as an ontologisation of the Aristotelian *φρόνησις*, *Gewissen*, *Eigentlichkeit*, and *Mitsein* each, in their own way, provide a vital piece of what Heidegger refers to as "the existential conditions for the possibility of ... morality in general and for the possible forms which this may take factually."²

In the second chapter, I examined the way in which *φρόνησις* is transformed by Heidegger into the movement of conscience that spawns Dasein's actions and activity in general, by which Dasein may become transparent to itself. To illustrate how phronetic insights developed into the framework of conscience in Heidegger's early work, I examined the passing references or allusions to conscience in some of his early lecture courses, which in a perfunctory and embryonic way point to a progression in his appreciation of the importance of conscience as providing what in *Being and Time* he calls "the ontological foundations of ... the ordinary way of interpreting conscience."³ In these early works, Heidegger replaces the traditional understanding of *conscientia* with "the phenomenon of willing to have a conscience" perceived as fundamental to Dasein's "choosing itself" and

¹ Schmidt, *Hermeneutics as Original Ethics*, 39.

² SZ: 286/332.

³ SZ: 269/314.

coming into “absolute resoluteness” in “running forward toward its death,”⁴ though it was only in *Being and Time* that he announced the focal methodological character of conscience in “attesting” to Dasein’s possibility of authentic resoluteness in terms of hearing a “call.” Crucially, however, Heidegger is very keen to sharply distinguish his existential account of conscience from any ontic account of the same, and thus (building on Rebecca Kukla’s account of “transcendental conscience”⁵), I suggest that herein lies Heidegger’s distinction between the (abyssal) ontological condition of possibility of conscience, and its existentiell actualisation in the experience of moral normativity in individual ‘pangs’ of conscience. In terms of the existential analytic, conscience is not a call of duty to an absolute norm, but a call to Dasein to shed its identity as “they-self [*Man-selbst*]” and experience the “existentiell modification of the ‘they’” that allows for the possibility of “authentic Being-one’s-self.”⁶ Such a call is both an act of *φρόνησις*, and the condition of possibility for concrete *πρᾶξις*.

In chapter three, I extended the analysis to focus on the ethical implications of *Eigentlichkeit* in early Heideggerian thought. In doing so, it is important to counter the *prima facie* impression that authentic Dasein involves, for Heidegger, a turning inward in the sense of becoming one’s “ownmost” (*eigentlich*) self in a way that cuts it off from responsibility for and to others. After all, any such cutting off would involve the movement of individualism, egoism, voluntarism, Dasein as the “solitary hero” set over against the amorphous mass of *das Man* (of which Heidegger’s account has at times been accused). Any such account, far from amounting to an ontological ground for moral normativity, would make it all but redundant. In addressing this issue, I surveyed some of the dominant metaphors and vocabularies of authenticity Heidegger utilised in his very early work, to show something of the longer history of this line of thinking prior to *Being and Time* which, far from reinforcing individualistic (including Cartesian) accounts of the authentic self, rather stands opposed to them. Further, in exploring the scholarly debates that have attended interpretations of Heidegger’s *Eigentlichkeit*, I focused on how, when it is grasped as emancipatory resoluteness (as opposed to what Benjamin Crowe helpfully discussed as ‘ontological’ and ‘narrativist’ readings), there is a sharper evocation of the

⁴ GA 20: 319/440-441.

⁵ Kukla, “The ontology and temporality of conscience,” pp. 1-34.

⁶ SZ: 267/312.

element of authentic Dasein as *φρόνιμος*. Finally, I argued that when the fuller scope of Heidegger's treatment of *Eigentlichkeit* is taken into account, authentic Dasein is presented as a deeply engaged Being-in-the-world-with-others. As resolute, Dasein emerges from its lostness in the 'They,' not in the sense of fleeing from the world of others, but in the sense of being "free[d] for its world."⁷ Heidegger's account of authentic historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) further deepens the sense in which *Eigentlichkeit* is always already a matter of Dasein's recognition of its thrownness into a heritage and thus a destiny [*Geschick*] not of its own making, but in which it shares.

In the final chapter, I turned to consider directly the theme of Dasein's Being-with others. To that effect, I argued against the view that Heidegger's prioritisation of the ontological forecloses on the ethical relation with the Other. I suggested that through the existentials of *Mitsein*, Heidegger effectively presents perceives Dasein as analogous to Aristotle's *ζῶον πολιτικόν*: a being whose Being-possibility can only be understood in a *πόλις*, in a *κοινότητα*, a community. As such, Dasein's care structure involves not only a responsibility for its own Being, but also an obligation to care for others who share the same world with Dasein. In order to address the perceived ambiguity around understanding Dasein as both individuated and Being-with (an ambiguity exacerbated by Heidegger's own failure to flesh out in equal measure the nature of this equiprimordiality), I employed Jean Luc-Nancy's reading of *Mitsein* via the paradoxical logic of the singular plural. Since, as Nancy puts it, "Being is singularly plural and plurally singular,"⁸ this requires that we understand Dasein's Being-in and its Being-with as "co-equal" features of Dasein. Accordingly, *Eigentlichkeit* involves individuated resolve, but this does not make it a worldless ego cut off and isolated. To the contrary, it is precisely when Dasein is individuated through its anxious Being-towards-death that it is most Being-with-others-in-the-world. Rather than obliterating ethical relations with the Other, Dasein's call to authentic resoluteness opens a space for ethics, where the question of ethics becomes a matter of *how* one carries or comports oneself in its relations with others. In this way, a posture that enables a solidarity with others is thereby made ontically possible.

⁷ SZ: 298/344. My emphasis.

⁸ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 28.

It was on this basis that, in the second part of this final chapter, I examined Heidegger's account of authentic *Fürsorge* as a "leaping ahead" (*vorausspringen*), with its twin implications of freedom/responsibility and a reconfigured understanding of empathy. Insofar as *Fürsorge* implies freedom and responsibility, Dasein becomes not only its own conscience but "the conscience of another" and helps "the other become transparent to himself *in* his care and to become *free for* it."⁹ When Dasein assumes the role of conscience for another, it acknowledges that the Other possesses existentiell possibilities-for-Being that are by no means identical to its own possibilities or the inauthentic interpretations of the 'They.' As a ground of reciprocal freedom, "leaping ahead" does not mean that Dasein takes over the ownmost possibilities of the Other, but rather that it frees the Other's awareness of its ownmost possibilities which it must resolve upon in its own Dasein. Further, the logic of Heidegger's account seems to be that this ability to be "the conscience of another" is born out of an ontological sense of empathy (not of duty, right or obligation). I argued that although Heidegger explicitly rejects the reduction of *Mitsein* to empathy because of its cognitive overreach, empathy can be reconfigured (somewhat like the ontological reconfiguration of conscience) to provide a key insight into the way Dasein and the Other can relate to each other through affective attunement (*Befindlichkeit*). Thus, to "become the conscience of another" does not only imply assisting the Other to become "transparent and to be *free* for its own care," it also means a call to be connected to the Other's fragility and limit conditions. It indicates an openness towards the mortal temporality of the Other, an openness that is born out of Dasein's awareness of its own limit conditions.

All of these various threads, I argue, come together to amount to a distinctive – if unfortunately, largely only implicit – account of a *ground of ethics* that is quite different to metaphysical notions of *ἦθος* as traditionally conceived by the western metaphysical tradition. Through his analysis, Heidegger indicates that the question of ethics arises not from any assumption of human subjectivity or agency. Rather, it is a question that

⁹ SZ: 122/159.

delineates a more primordial ground ("ethics of source"),¹⁰ which lays down the "the existential conditions for the possibility of any morality whatsoever."¹¹

If this is not the place to launch into any substantial engagement with the vast whirlwind of "the Heidegger Controversy" (to use Richard Wolin's concise characterisation) – especially in light of the most recent iteration of this controversy that has accompanied the publication of Heidegger's *Schwarze Hefte* (*Überlegungen*: GA 94-96) from 1931-41 – it is nonetheless important to offer a few targeted remarks about the relationship between the interpretive account provided here and the *philosophical* significance of Heidegger's words and actions (especially) in the 1930s.

First, it is clear that the weight of evidence concerning Heidegger's activities and attitudes (both from Heidegger's own hand and via historical research) needs to be taken fully into account. There is a need to acknowledge the full force of Heidegger's formal involvement with Nazism in the early to mid-1930s, which was not simply a "mistake" (to quote Arendt's famous declaration), but also a catastrophic failure of moral judgement that had very real consequences. However, as Jeff Malpas recently put it in an essay published in a collection dealing with the *Black Notebooks*:

That Heidegger was a Nazi and that he also held anti-Semitic views are simple facts ... The real question concerns the significance to be attached to these facts¹²

Any such interpretation concerning this significance will require hermeneutic sensitivity to a series of associated matters. It would be necessary, for example, to consider the idiosyncratic nature both of Heidegger's commitment to National Socialism, and his reasons for stepping back from it while never repudiating it. One would further need to consider the ways in which Heidegger's version of anti-Semitism both echoes, and differs from, widespread 19-20th century forms of anti-Semitism that involve deeply ingrained

¹⁰ Schmidt, *Hermeneutics as Original Ethics*, 41.

¹¹ SZ: 286/332.

¹² Jeff Malpas, "On the Philosophical Reading of Heidegger: Situating the Black Notebooks," in *Reading Heidegger's Black Notebooks 1931–1941* ed., Ingo Farin and Jeff Malpas (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2018), 16.

cultural prejudice (as distinct from biologically-rooted theories of racial determinism). Of similar importance is the need to think about both the deep corruptibility of early Heideggerian thought (in which Heidegger himself participated) whilst also acknowledging that it was a fecund inspiration for so much 20th (and 21st) century philosophy, including the many Jewish thinkers for whom Heidegger has served as a compelling interlocutor.

The bottom line here is that there is a pressing need to move well beyond selective proof texts and biographical facts if it is Heidegger's *philosophy* that is to be assessed, and not simply his personal historical culpability. This is a much more difficult task, one that requires careful and sustained attention to the texts themselves. This is precisely what this thesis has attempted to provide, at least in terms of Heidegger's texts of the 1920s. I have argued there is a compelling set of trajectories knitted through these texts that point toward an ethically fecund framework for thinking helpfully about the ground of ethics. This, I have suggested, is the case even if the full promise of those trajectories remained conspicuously unrealised in those very texts; remaining (at best) in the background of his thought in the years to come; and (at worst) showed themselves to be open to gross corruption and misuse.

Having said that, this is not to deny that scholars of significant standing have discerned in these early texts elements that anticipate sympathies that were to come to fruition in Heidegger's thinking and activities in the 1930s. No less a scholar of Heidegger's work than Richard Polt, for example, has written that, "[t]here are indeed elements of *Being and Time* that not only allow for a pro-Nazi decision but appear to point in that direction," and indeed that no one "one can avoid a shudder upon encountering the words *Volk* and *Kampf* (people and struggle) in Heidegger's discussion of authentic historicity."¹³ While I would acknowledge that it is possible to discern such threads of continuity, I would maintain that it is important not to read the texts of the 1920s *simply* in the light of what was to come, as though there is a dark teleology afoot in those texts that led directly to future calamity. Such readings fail to do sufficient justice to the senses in which Heidegger's actions and the directions of his thought in the 1930s can be read as much as a *betrayal* of his work of the 1920s as its fulfilment. An obvious example of this concerns the delicate balance (explored

¹³ Richard Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 162.

in chapter four above) between the 'I' and the 'we' that is built into Heidegger's account of Being-in and Being-with, and the implications that imbalance in either direction can have: be it toward, on one hand, forms of voluntaristic individualism in which a sense of the 'we' is subsumed under the weight of an overwhelming self-insistence, or on the other hand, a corporatistic (e.g., nationalistic) sense in which the I is subordinated to a normative vision of collective destiny. It is true that *Geschichtlichkeit* can be read into Heidegger's later ideology of *Volk* and *Kampf*, but there is nothing inevitable about such a slanting, and indeed I would suggest that it may only be accomplished by doing a violence to Heidegger's own earlier texts.

Of course, in maintaining as much, I am not suggesting that such a reading of the continuity between the Heidegger's thinking in the 1920s and his Nazi sympathies in the 1930s is simply a figment of scholarly misreading, for it is clearly a trajectory that Heidegger seemed to have drawn himself. If Karl Löwith's recollected conversation with Heidegger does not settle that matter,¹⁴ the text of Heidegger's Winter 1933-34 seminar on "*Natur, Geschichte und Staat*" (first published in 2009) appears to confirm it. In these extraordinary pages, Heidegger leaves little doubt concerning his support for the idea of a *Führer-state*, and in so doing makes a case for the continuity between it and the aforementioned category of *Geschichtlichkeit* in *Being and Time*.¹⁵ However while, as Polt and Fried suggest, Heidegger's sketch here of the National Socialist ideology is "consistent with his views on the historicity of Dasein" while also "support[ing] Hitlerian dictatorship and suggest[ing] justifications for German expansionism and persecution of the Jews,"¹⁶ it is another thing entirely to claim that *Geschichtlichkeit* just *is* a disguised account of such an ideology. To the contrary, it is, I have maintained, a terrible distortion of the category in the earlier

¹⁴ Richard Wolin, "My Last Meeting With Heidegger in Rome," in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed., Richard Wolin (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), pp. 140-44.

¹⁵ In a remarkable section, where Heidegger seems to be speaking directly to his students, he writes that although it is important to have a political leader who directs the affairs of the state, what is no less important is to have a people that have the need of "a tradition that is carried on by a political leader." In distinguishing his view from that of Rousseau (who argues that every government should be constituted by individual persons who enter into a social contract with the state,) Heidegger maintains that an ideal state cannot be truly constituted by the free will of the people. See, Martin Heidegger, "Über Wesen und Begriff von Natur, Geschichte und Staat," in *Heidegger-Jahrbuch 4 – Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus I*, ed., Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski (Freiburg: Verlag Karl Alber, 2009), pp.53-88. Translated as Martin Heidegger, *Nature, History, State 1933-1944*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 52.

¹⁶ Heidegger, *Nature, History, State 1933-1944*, 1.

work, for it takes one possible ontic application and develops this to the exclusion of other equally or more viable modes of development. As such, Heidegger's later use of this and other themes from his earlier work amounts to a significant betrayal of its nascent promise as an 'originary ethics'.

The point, then, is not to defend Heidegger, but to appreciate the ways in which his early work, when read on its own terms, *undermines* rather than underpins his directions after 1930, for the fascism that Heidegger comes to defend with apparently normative intent has more in common with the politics of *das Man* than with authentic *Fürsorge* as it was sketched above. But further, beyond all the sound and fury of the 'Heidegger Controversy,' it is important to bend this issue back upon *our own* Dasein. In this context it is important to recognise that, as Charles Scott rightly observes, "[t]he question for us ... is how to raise the question of ethics without reinscribing, as Heidegger does, ... the totalizing thought the question suspends."¹⁷

Scott's question presents a fine segue into the final set of remarks in this conclusion, for it is important to offer some sense of the acute relevance of the considerations provided in this study for the field of ethics more generally. If Heidegger does indeed provide something like an abyssal ground of ethics, an "originary ethics", what might be seen as the implications for the contemporary field of normative ethics? How does what would otherwise be seen as an 'in house' interpretive debate among scholars of the works of Martin Heidegger relate to wider debates concerning philosophical ethics in general? What happens when early Heideggerian 'ontology' shifts gear into 'ontic' talk about what authentic resolute Being-in-the-world-with-others looks like in concrete terms?

Before ending with a concise consideration of this question, it is important to acknowledge that some have doubted Heidegger's account provides sufficient resources for such a task. John Caputo, for example, has offered a firm caution against such an endeavour. For him, Heidegger's "originary ethos" is understood more through later Heideggerian thinking that

¹⁷ Scott, *The Question of ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, 3.

“looks ahead to a new dawn, which is to be an eschatological repetition and renewal of what began in the early Greek city state [the πόλις], before metaphysics and all metaphysical ethics.”¹⁸ Caputo rejects Heidegger’s tendency to locate *primordial ethos* in the Greek city state on the grounds that the Athenian πόλις was full of cruel exclusionary rules that silenced the voices of slaves, women and other non-Greeks that inhabited the city state.¹⁹ Further, he draws a straight line between Heidegger’s early account of Dasein’s comportment in the world and the way that Heidegger ‘comported’ himself during the Nazis regime and how he interpreted the destiny of the German people. According to Mariana Ortega, for all its promise, Heidegger’s account is “not sufficient to guarantee morality, to yield the moral truth that so many aspire to, or to accomplish the more modest claim of showing our capability of acknowledging a common truth.”²⁰ Ultimately, as human beings, “we are a project that we ourselves carry out as we exist”²¹ Thus, to the extent that we live in a world that is always full of inhuman and “countless unmentionable acts,”²² any ethics that is contingent upon our inclination to the repetition of these antisocial acts would seem not only shocking but fundamentally contradictory.²³

Needless to say, I am far less pessimistic about the possibilities presented by Heidegger’s account for developing a practical ethics. If Heidegger’s fundamental ontology carries no prescriptive or normative intent on its own account, it is also the case that it is suffused

¹⁸ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project*, 237.

¹⁹ Here, Caputo’s view is not that Heidegger’s truth of Being has no ethical import, but that Heidegger’s *primordial ethos* is “eschatological, and it is eschatology which causes all the trouble.” According to him, “the question of post-metaphysical ethics must be approached in connection with the delimitation of [Heidegger’s] eschatological metaphysics.” What this delimitation exposes, for Caputo, is the “dissemination of the manifold sense of Being.” In Caputo’s “deconstructive rereading” of Heidegger, his most uncircumventable thought lies in the *Ereignis*, which is not the truth of Being ... but that which gives Being, gives the manifold meanings or truth of Being. The truth of Being is that there are many truths of Being. And, if the truth of Being means the *primordial ethos*, then in the end there is no *primordial ethos* but only the manifold senses of *ethos*, the array of historical differences.” See, Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project*, 238. My sense is that Caputo’s critique of Heidegger’s *primordial ethos* seems like a superficial charge. Heidegger already alluded to what Caputo calls “manifold senses of ethos” in his description of Being-with as leaping-ahead, where he suggests that the manner to which different Daseins are “authentically bound together” is “determined by the manner in which their Dasein, each in its own way, has been taken hold of.” SZ: 123/159.

²⁰ Ortega, “When conscience calls, will Dasein answer? Heideggerian authenticity and the possibility of ethical life,” 28.

²¹ Ortega, “When conscience calls, will Dasein answer? Heideggerian authenticity and the possibility of ethical life,” 28.

²² Ortega, “When conscience calls, will Dasein answer? Heideggerian authenticity and the possibility of ethical life,” 28.

²³ Ortega, “When conscience calls, will Dasein answer? Heideggerian authenticity and the possibility of ethical life,” pp. 28-29.

with ethical language and trajectories that point toward an ancient pedigree, especially in its evocation of Aristotelian ethics, albeit in importantly transformed senses. From start to finish, Heidegger eschews any idea that the philosopher should be in the business of offering rules or tips on how to live ethically, or accounts of binding values to which we should adhere. Yet, his analysis of Dasein's ontological structure as thrown Being-in-the-world, does provide a substantial account of the very existential context within which ethical dwelling in the world is possible. The ungrounded or "null" ground of Dasein's Being-in-the-world is thus the fundamental context of all moral norms. All forms of ethical force depend on it. Lawrence Hatab rightly puts it as follows:

If we attend in a Heideggerian manner to th[is] existential environment (being-in-the-world) in which and out of which the ethical life arises, such a 'pre-ethical' analysis should give us clues for a more adequate ethics [that] can be [grasped] as a finite, existential, ungrounded world dynamic, a configuration that ... can significantly improve upon traditional models in moral philosophy.²⁴

If Heidegger conceives the ground of ethics in terms of Dasein's Being-in-the-world, or later as human dwelling, his claim is that any ethics must therefore be highly hermeneutically attuned. From my reading of Heidegger, such an ethics is one that, as Dennis Schmidt put it, "starts from an invitation to our mortality" and not from "the assumption of our human subjectivity."²⁵ Such an invitation must play out on the basis of an understanding of human Being as primordially a Being-with-others, and not on the basis of imposed obligation on an autonomous subject. That, I contend, changes things greatly. When ethics attends to our Being-in-the-world, as Hatab notes, it gives us a better insight into "how values function in our experience to open up the ethical life, its conditions, demands, and difficulties."²⁶ What, in general, makes for the good in the context of the shared sociality that Heidegger's ground of ethics provides? It is crucial that we first attend to the grounded context for moral normativity, the *ἥθoς* in a broad sense, before we get carried away with assertions about this or that particular moral obligation. Among other things, Charles Taylor expresses this point beautifully when he observes:

²⁴ Hatab, "Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contribution to Moral Philosophy," 405.

²⁵ Schmidt, *Hermeneutics as Original Ethics*, 42.

²⁶ Hatab, "Ethics and Finitude: Heideggerian Contribution to Moral Philosophy," 405.

[Contemporary] moral philosophy has tended to focus on what it is right to do rather than on what it is good to be, on defining the content of obligation rather than the nature of the good life.²⁷

How, then, might such a (null) grounding for ethics point forward in a practical way to a revisioned approach to moral normativity? How is it possible to move from the 'is' of the ethical *Abgrund* to the 'ought' of a practical ethics, and indeed, what is the nature of what I would see as the necessarily organic relationship between ground and norm? Frederick Olafson's extraordinary *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein* was a concerted attempt to address just this question. In ways that point well beyond the scope of this thesis, Olafson looked to "build on" and "amplify" Heidegger's account in order to suggest perspectives through which Heidegger's undeveloped ethical ground might be unpacked in a practical sense, and to that end, his book moves through and well beyond Heidegger's own texts.²⁸ The account presented here stays essentially within those texts rather than reaching beyond them, and it does so in order to provide *first* a robust account of Heidegger's own ground of ethics. Nevertheless, it is clear that such an account then needs to be fleshed out, and Olafson's work provides one model for how this might be achieved. In the space remaining, I wish to make a few remarks of my own as to what I see as flowing most clearly from Heidegger's own account.

One of the benefits of Heidegger's approach to the ethical, I would suggest, is that it enables us to see fairly quickly how various dominant forms of normative ethics that look to provide clean-cut schemes for moral decision-making fall well short. Obviously, any notion of ethical egoism is ruled out by Heidegger's withering attack on the very notion of autonomous subjectivity, even before his account of *Mitsein* is brought into view. But other more mainstream frameworks fare little better. Given Heidegger's emphasis on the phronetic and thus hermeneutic context for human action in his early thought (as surveyed above), I would suggest that this makes deontological approaches to ethics difficult to square with a Heideggerian ethical ground, insofar as they bear little heed to the *context* of human action. The Kantian notion of a categorical imperative, for example, would appear to place abstract universal law above and independent of the factual situation of

²⁷ Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, 3.

²⁸ Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein*, 6.

the ethical subject. Indeed, one might even go as far as to say that in the eclipse of the ‘Da’ of Dasein, Being itself is forgotten in such a scheme. Similar claims might be made about metaphysically-rooted theological accounts of normative ethics. However, equally, I would suggest that Heidegger’s originary ethics stands also opposed to consequentialist (especially utilitarian) approaches to ethics that in their narrow calculative sense of the ethical situation similarly (if differently) loses sight of the hermeneutic nuances of the situations into which factual Dasein is thrown. Indeed, a case could be made that the very focus on utility is itself a form of calculative understanding of the human that is marked by “enframing [*Ge-stell*],” through which human beings are effectively rendered as “standing reserve” for utilitarian calculation.²⁹

If such approaches would seem to be clearly incompatible with the primordial ground of ethics as Heidegger has sketched it, other approaches retain a level of viability. Clearly – and unsurprisingly so, given Heidegger’s embrace of the Aristotelian category of *φρονησις* – a virtues-based approach to ethics would retain some level of appeal, if more for its understanding of human action than for its focus on human virtues as such. However, more contemporary approaches might also be taken into account that would appear to chime in well with the theme of *Fürsorge*: e.g., “care” focused approaches such as those advocated by Carol Gilligan,³⁰ Annette Baier,³¹ and Nel Noddings³², or even the “situation ethics” of Joseph Fletcher.³³ There are significant differences, strengths and weaknesses among all such approaches. However, what they generally share is a focus on, and an insistence on the need for, a highly nuanced appreciation of the multiple sources of value that any ethical situation involves. In this way, ethics is unavoidably a matter for the careful weighing of priorities that are rooted in the intimacy of the ethical situation, or in short: practical wisdom, prudence, *φρονησις*.

²⁹ See, Martin Heidegger’s *Die Technik und die Kehre, Holzwege, and Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Translated as Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Garland Publishers, 1977).

³⁰ See, Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982/1993).

³¹ See, Annette Baier, *Reflections on How We Live* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

³² See, Nel Noddings, *Caring, A Feminist Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

³³ See, Joseph F. Fletcher, *Situation ethics : the new morality* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia : Westminster Press, 1966).

Beyond such approaches, however, it might also be wondered whether Heidegger's opposition to dogmatic theological approaches to ethics would rule out non-metaphysical *exhortative* approaches that make direct appeal to the individual on the basis of revealed truth. After all, if (as noted earlier) his claim is that issues of ethics are "matters better left to the preacher,"³⁴ perhaps a case might be made that a Heideggerian ethics would be rooted not in moral reasoning at all, but in moral exhortation. While much more needs to be considered on this issue (a task that lies far beyond this thesis), suffice to say that I find such a claim far from convincing. After all, the context in which this comment is made concerns the legitimacy of philosophical thinking making *absolute claims* concerning values. Seen in this light, it is more a matter of such *absolute* claims belonging to the domain of preaching. Meanwhile, Heidegger's intellectually demanding account of the ontological ground of ethics can hardly be understood as a call away from thought towards exhortation pure and simple; it is rather a call toward a heightened level of attentiveness to the whole context of the ethical situation.

Perhaps the most basic demand on any sense of moral normativity that can be seen as flowing from Heidegger's entire account of Dasein as Being-in-the-world-with-others – i.e., from his "originary ethics" – is its coherence with the care structure as a whole. Dasein dwells authentically in the $\tilde{\eta}\vartheta\omicron\varsigma$ insofar as it recognises itself as a thrown projection that is called toward authentic understanding in the midst of the levelled off counter-call of the 'They.' The call back to authentic Being-with others is thus not a call to transcend one's facticity (an impossible and ludicrous requirement of course), but to properly enter into it. Only when this is done can a sense of moral normativity begin to emerge from the abyssal ground of Dasein's factual existence. Only then is genuine attunement to the needs of others, and care for them, possible. Only then can a philosophy of the ground of ethics generate something like a practical account of the good life.

³⁴ GA 61: 124-25/164-166.

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