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## **An Interpersonal Account of Heideggerian Ethics: An Analysis of Being and Time**

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An Interpersonal Account of Heideggerian Ethics: An Analysis of *Being and Time*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Philosophy

by

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Furman University  
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This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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## ABSTRACT

In what follows, I will present an interpersonal account of *Being and Time* that runs counter to most of the standard literature. There are a few moving parts to this paper that must be addressed before moving forward. Section II addresses both Heidegger's political affiliations as well as the connection to ethics. By presenting some of the more prominent interpretations in the literature, a picture of how one can read a political ideology into *Being and Time* becomes possible. This is followed by Section III, where I immediately address and eschew those concerns by presenting an account that does in fact read the fascist ideologies into *Being and Time* and, with some careful analysis, I show that interpretations following this nature fall short of the goal. In Section IV, I present some of the exegetical work that shows the impossibility of fascism in *Being and Time* while beginning to engage with some of the greater concerns from an ethical standpoint. Section IV aims to present the interpersonal account of ethics such that the essence of Being is necessarily directed towards the Other in the world. What begins to come to light is an interpretation of *Being and Time* that puts the Other first in a way that counters much of the literature concerning what ethics might look like from *Being and Time*.

*Keywords: Being and Time, Intersubjectivity, Authenticity, Dasein*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Section I – Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Section II – Heidegger’s Politics .....</b>	<b>5</b>
- Ethics and Politics	
- Heidegger’s Political Affiliations and the Inseparable nature of them to his Philosophies	
<b>Section III – Separating Politics from <i>Being and Time</i>.....</b>	<b>22</b>
- Separating Political Ideology from Being and Time	
- Some Passages Indicative of Political Ambiguity	
<b>Section IV – Grounds for Ethics in <i>Being and Time</i>.....</b>	<b>39</b>
- Being-with and Dasein-with	
- Das Man and Everydayness	
- Mitsein	
- Nancy and The Call of Conscience	
- Anticipatory Resoluteness	
- E. S. Nelson and the Ethics of Individuation	
<b>Section V – Concluding Remarks and Future Directions.....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Works Cited .....</b>	<b>69</b>

## **Section I – Introduction**

Martin Heidegger, the man, has been a source of much controversy in the philosophical world not only for his philosophical works, but also for his political affiliations. Much of the literature that assumes a connection between his philosophical works and his political affiliation with the Nazi party insinuate that his philosophical works are, at least in some respect, tainted by his abhorrent political views. That is to say, even before his commitment to the Nazi Party, his philosophical works already carried with them that sense of racial superiority, forceful authority over a certain populous, and the likes. Indeed, there is something to be said about his political affiliations. These are serious points that must be addressed in order to take seriously his wide array of philosophical works. Most important of all, there is a serious point in the literature concerning his magnum opus: *Being and Time*. That is, *Being and Time* either explicitly expresses an ideology of National Socialism or the National Socialist themes implicit within it are inherent to its philosophical ideas. If the latter is true, then any plausible analysis of the text must take those themes seriously.

There are a series of interpretations that take off using Heidegger's *Being and Time* as a spring-board. Indeed, his works have been both the subject of praise and criticism. Karl Löwith said it best when he said, "his *Sein und Zeit*, which appeared in 1927, is still one of the rare, truly important contemporary philosophical publications, and when, in an era such as ours, an author is able to develop a following and to increase his influence continually over the course of 25 years, he must certainly contain something of substance" (Löwith, 117). I find that this statement still holds today as publications concerning *Being and Time* still seem to be rife with combative interpretations. One of the more lively debates concerning *Being and Time* is centered around the notion of what ethics, if any, can be wrested from the text. Any

interpretation that would assume some kind of ethical prescription from the text itself is wildly misguided, and most of the interpretations within this debate readily acknowledge that point. But there is something to be said about the ethical tones that are present throughout the text itself.

This suggests that Heidegger thinks of his own philosophy as essentially historical, as making progress by engaging in dialogue with its inheritance – as if all genuine philosophy is history of philosophy; it further implies that every such dialogue is or should amount to a return to the origins of the subject, that every philosophical beginning can and should amount to a new beginning for philosophy; and it hints that the texts produced by the history of philosophy since Plato are at best no more capable of inviting and bearing up under questions that might truly engender a new beginning for the subject than are Plato's own – as if in order to make philosophical progress we must give up our assumption that any such progress has been made since Plato's time, or at least radically revise our conception of what such progress might look like and where it might be found. (Mulhall, 185-86)

Mulhall continues, “for Heidegger, the subject has lost its way from the outset, been unable to live up to its own beginnings, become disoriented; beginning to achieve reorientation means returning to our beginnings” (Mulhall, 186). From the outset of Heidegger's project, we can see that some serious stock needs to be placed into the import on history for Heidegger. For Heidegger, Dasein is essentially historical. However, the main idea for Heidegger is that everything that is situated from a historical perspective, especially philosophy, has been misguided. This of course stands with ethics as well. That is to say, Heidegger's goal in *Being and Time* is to reset the groundwork for philosophical inquiry and, though this goal is not explicitly stated, to set the groundwork for an ethics.

One of the important points that Heidegger notes at the outset of his project is the meaning of Being. He points out that Being is, “the most universal and emptiest of concepts” (MR-BT, 2). This echoes his larger point that Heidegger illustrates as the project unfolds, that is, the way we exist in the world has entirely lost its meaning. The import of such a claim is that it

extends to more than the standard self-help psychology book. That is, a criticism of our conception of Being does more than just indicate to the individual that there is a better way to live life. Rather, such a loaded statement indicates that quite literally everything that we have based ourselves on, including institutions such as academia, ethics, morals, religion, and the likes are based on an empty concept of Being. Heidegger is emphasizing that our understanding of ourselves has been so warped to a point where it has been lost, and because such an important concept has been lost to us, the foundations listed above fall short in much the same way. As such, there must be a revitalization of the meaning of Being and once said revitalization occurs we can engage in understanding the more abstract concepts of ethics. Thus, the project unfolds as a means of ontologically grounding those concepts that are listed above. Of course, the first step is to ground Being ontologically.

While this seems to be a rather perplexing task, the concept itself is simple. To figure out the ontological grounds upon which Being rests begins with a stripping away of the things that constitute Being in the first place. For the sake of brevity, each concept is important, but the most promising – as well as the most contentious – of concepts are Being-in-the-world, *mitsein*, *Dasein-with*, authenticity and inauthenticity, anxiety, the call of conscience, Being-guilty, death, and anticipatory resoluteness. Though such a list may seem exhaustive, it is hardly scratching the surface of the moving parts from *Being and Time*.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, a significant amount of the

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed, this list is not extensive, but it does capture the majority of the concepts that will take center stage for the purposes of this project. There are some other incredibly insightful pieces concerning some of the other points of contention in the literature. For example, William Bracken's *Is there a Puzzle about how Authentic Dasein Can Act: A Critique of Dreyfus and Rubin on Being and Time, Division II*, poses questions concerning the agency of authentic Dasein. Additionally, Denis McManus posits a conception of choice in *Being and Time in Anxiety, Choice and Responsibility in Heidegger's Account of Authenticity* that paints a rather novel interpretation surrounding the question of how authentic Dasein can act.

literature is enmeshed in the methodological complexities of Division I of *Being and Time*.<sup>2</sup>

However, there is no reason for the current project to dive into those aspects of the literature as they are merely tangential to the task at hand.

In what follows, I will present an interpersonal account of *Being and Time* that runs counter to most of the standard literature. There are a few moving parts to this paper that must be addressed before moving forward. Section II addresses the both Heidegger's political affiliations as well as the connection to ethics. By presenting some of the more prominent interpretations in the literature, a picture of how one can read a political ideology into *Being and Time* becomes possible. This is following by Section III, where I immediately address and eschew those concerns by presenting an account that does in fact read the fascist ideologies into *Being and Time* and, with some careful analysis, I show that interpretations following this nature fall short of the goal. In Section IV, I present some of the exegetical work that shows the impossibility of fascism in *Being and Time* while beginning to engage with some of the greater concerns from an ethical standpoint. Using the content from Section III as a spring-board to addressing the concerns of ethics in *Being and Time*. Section IV aims to present the interpersonal account of ethics such that the essence of Being is necessarily directed towards the Other in the world. What begins to come to light is an interpretation of *Being and Time* that puts the Other first in a way that counters much of the literature concerning what ethics might look like from *Being and Time*.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, K.M. Stroh in *Intersubjectivity of Dasein in Heidegger's Being and Time: How Authenticity is a Return to Community*, presents an interpretation of authentic Dasein as community rather than the standard interpretation of Dasein from the individual perspective. For a fascinating take on death and finitude in *Being and Time*, see Andrew Oberg's *Approaches to Finitude: Death, Self, Others* where the main focus of the article is making sense of Death and the finitude of life in Heidegger's framework from *Being and Time*.



## **Section II – Heidegger’s Politics**

### *Ethics and Politics*

One of the central points of this project is to solidify the notion that *Being and Time* can in fact serve as a ground to ethics. This is a rather contentious point in its own right especially given Heidegger’s deplorable ties to the Nazi party, rampant antisemitism, and rather abhorrent behavior with former students, just to name a few. But this is not an attempt to vindicate the man that Heidegger was. Rather, this is an attempt to situate *Being and Time* firmly in standing with other texts that can shed important light on ethics.

What is it about the phrase “Heideggerian Ethics” that makes most anyone who has familiarized themselves with Heidegger’s work scoff at the very existence of such an idea? Superficially, it seems to run contrary to how we understand ethics in the modern era. The list above does not do his lamentable actions and associations justice, but does start to paint a picture of why this notion is as contentious as it is. To suggest that there is a Heideggerian Ethics is to suggest not only that an existence of the Nazi party is permissible, but also to suggest that the actions of the Nazi party are in some way permissible as well. In many ways, there are those who would find such a suggestion to be wildly offensive, and this notion is one that is hard to deny. However, on the face of it, this does not seem to be enough to reject the groundbreaking philosophical propositions presented in *Being and Time*.

I propose, in conjunction with Frederick Olafson (1998) that, “it is quite unjustified to conclude that *Being and Time* or, for that matter, Heidegger’s other philosophical works must be tainted by the indefensible political stand its author took” (Olafson, 13). Furthermore, “[O]ne only has to ask, with respect to any of the leading concepts of that book, like being-in-the-world

or readiness-to-hand or temporality or historicity, what their political implications are to realize that there is no defensible answer to this question” (*ibid*, 13-4). While I endorse Olafson concerning the philosophical and ethical import of *Being and Time*, there are those who have attempted to draw firm connections between Heidegger’s philosophical work and his reprehensible political affiliations.<sup>3</sup>

In order to make the point that Heidegger’s *Being and Time* does indeed have major ethical import in modern times, it is first necessary to address the arguments from accounts such as those mentioned in the footnote below. It would be rather inappropriate as well as philosophically irresponsible to push such grave concerns to the side in order to present a narrative. As such, I will address concerns of this very nature.

#### *Heidegger’s Political Affiliations and the Inseparable nature of them to his Philosophies*

I feel as though I cannot stress the point enough, this project is *not* an attempt to salvage Martin Heidegger, the man, but rather to salvage his philosophies. It is undeniable, in fact impossible, to show that he was not a Nazi or Nazi sympathizer at any point of his life. Regardless of the length of his involvement with the Nazi party, most everyone notes, “Heidegger’s involvement was, at least for a few months, total and unconditional” (de Beistegui, 1999). Such an affiliation cannot be shamed and rejected more than has already been stated, but the question still remains: can we separate Heidegger’s political affiliations from his

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<sup>3</sup> Indeed there is no dearth of works concerning this very topic. Victor Farias in *Heidegger and Nazism* (1987) presents a cohesive approach to such a question. Farias explores the connection with Heidegger and the Nazi party directed at the question of whether or not his philosophies can be separated from the Nazi party and the fascist ideologies that formed the foundation of such a connect. He posits that there is a connection and that a careful reading allows for the teasing of such ties to present themselves. Additionally, a rather compelling account comes from Hugo Ott in *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life* (1993) in which he argues that the creator of the philosophies and his political affiliations cannot be separated in light of posthumous publications of letters and other works wherein he details a rampant and seemingly life-long commitment to antisemitism. Such accounts are not to be thrown to the side for later consideration.

philosophies? For some the answer to this question is an unflinchingly resolute no, and for others – myself included – the answer is yes. In this section I will address those who argue that the answer to this question is such a strong, resolute, unflinching yes and why those arguments truly fail to capture the political complexity of Heidegger’s philosophical works. However, it is imperative to note that for the sake of this project, I must stick firmly within the confines of *Being and Time* relative to Heidegger’s works. I posit that the arguments aiming to connect Heidegger’s political life and his philosophical works trace the lineage from post-appointment as Rector at the University of Freiberg in 1933 where, in a period of ten days, he announced his membership to the Nazi party. This tracing of political affiliation and projecting it onto a philosophical work that carries no such political foundation is not only philosophically irresponsible but disingenuous to the work itself. To make such a point clear I will be drawing from Habermas, Farias, Wolin, and Ott.<sup>4</sup>

I am not alone in thinking that it is possible to read Heidegger as well as show some degree of admiration for the ontological project that Heidegger undertakes in *Being and Time* without having to take a sympathetic attitude towards his political affiliations and ideologies. While this point is not without its detractors, none are more combative than Jürgen Habermas. Specifically pertaining to *Being and Time*, Habermas presents a view that places the text in a

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<sup>4</sup> Jürgen Habermas’s approach to the coalescence of Heidegger’s philosophy and political thought comes from a more personal perspective. Habermas addresses Heidegger’s political affiliation from a German perspective and suggests “that the endorsement of National Socialism in 1933 twists an individualism of *Being and Time* towards a fascist collectivism” (Hodge, 2001, p. 7). This is a point that I will return to later as Habermas rightly voices legitimate frustrations with Heidegger and posits an eschewal of Heidegger’s though in general due to the reprehensible political affiliations. More recently, Eliot R. Wolfson explored the dark themes that connect Heidegger and Nazism in *Heidegger, Nazism, and the Jewish Other: The Duplicity of Philosophy’s Shadow* (2018). Though I found Wolfson’s account fascinating, it takes an approach that far outreaches the scope of this paper by connecting all of Heidegger’s works with Nazism in some way or another. This is by no means to say that Wolfson propose a kind of looking down on Heidegger’s works, but rather to say that it is an exhaustive approach encapsulating all of Heidegger’s works and exploring the connections to Nazism without openly denouncing the works.

position contrary to my own interpretation of *Being and Time*. In contrast to my own view concerning the role of identity, *Dasein*, and temporality, Habermas supports the notion that, "... far from achieving moral neutrality, the analysis of identity in *Being and Time* requires an endorsement of authoritarian rule" (Hodge, 192). It goes without saying, but the authoritarian rule that Habermas believes Heidegger espouses in *Being and Time* is a nod to Nazism. Much of Habermas's support for the position comes from the rather ambiguous and seemingly incongruous §74, where Heidegger mentions the history of *Dasein* as well as the "destiny" of a people.

[I]f fateful *Dasein* essentially exists as being-in-the-world in being-with others, then its occurrence is an occurrence-with and is determined as *destiny* [*Geschick*]. With this term, we designate the occurrence of the community of a people. Destiny is not composed of individual fates, nor can being-with-one-another be conceived of as the mutual occurrence of several subjects. These fates are already guided beforehand in being-with-one-another in the same world and in the resoluteness for definite possibilities. In communication and in struggle the power of destiny first becomes free. The fateful destiny of *Dasein* in and with its 'generation' constitutes the complete, authentic occurrence of *Dasein*. (*BT*, 366, 384)

This section of *Being and Time* is where Heidegger proposes the novel concept and term of 'destiny.' Seeing as this is a novel term, one would expect Heidegger to have led up to the introduction to said term, but said introduction is lacking, which places this entire section in a rather speculative lens. Heidegger juxtaposes the fate of *Dasein*, which up to this point had been understood individually, with the destiny of a generation which, is understood as *Dasein* existing with others. As it stands, the above passage, while being almost alien to the work from Division I, does not support a rejection of the entirety of *Being and Time*. Additionally, there seems to be very little, if no support for the connection of Heidegger's work to his political affiliations. However, I would be doing a disservice to Habermas's position if I left out what comes later in Division II where Heidegger discusses the 'hero' of the generation.

“The authentic repetition of a possibility of existence that has been – the possibility that Dasein may choose its hero – is grounded existentially in anticipatory resoluteness; for in resoluteness the choice is first chosen that makes one free for the struggle over what is to follow and fidelity to what can be repeated” (*BT*, 367, 386). It is the introduction of the possibility of a generation choosing its hero where the authoritarian rule starts to show as a distinct possibility. Indeed, from a historical perspective it seems as though most of the German people, if not a large majority of the German people during WWII, had chosen Hitler as their hero. It is this point that Habermas’s critique uses as a spring-board. In *Work and Weltanschauung: The Heidegger Controversy from a German Perspective* (1989), Habermas does not favor an outright rejection of Heidegger’s work. Rather Habermas suggests an “illumination of the political conduct of Martin Heidegger cannot and should not serve the purpose of a global depreciation of his thought. As a personality of recent history, Heidegger comes, like every other personality, under the judgement of the historian” (Habermas, 433). From this it would suffice that Habermas is not outrightly rejecting Heidegger’s works. Rather, Habermas approaches Heidegger’s work through a critical lens and adds, “we must inform ourselves of what Heidegger, to his death, repressed, glossed over, and falsified” (436). He continues,

*On the other hand*, in Germany every tradition that served to make us blind to the Nazi regime needs a critical, indeed a distrustful, appropriation. That certainly holds for a philosophy that, even in its rhetorical means of expression, absorbed impulses from the ideologies of its epoch. One cannot bring the truth-content of a philosophy into discredit by associating it with something external to it; but no more can – or may – one make a complex tradition-shaping form of objective spirit into an object of conversation like a national park, immunizing it against the question of whether issues of substance have been confused with those of ideology. What was always acceptable in Germany with respect to Stalinism must also be acceptable with regard to fascism. (436-37)

This clearly indicates the speculative lens through which Habermas approaches Heidegger’s political affiliation and his philosophical works. It goes without saying that *prima facie* there are

good reasons to dismiss Heidegger's philosophies as espousing a kind of Nazism, but Habermas does not take this approach. Rather, Habermas looks at what happened after the fact to see whether a reading of Heidegger as espousing fascism is warranted.<sup>5</sup>

Much of his concern is warranted especially from the 1933 *Rektoratsrede* – Heidegger's speech after being appointed Rector at the University of Freiberg. In this speech, Heidegger endorses both the Nazi Party and Hitler and introduces the language used in *Being and Time* in this speech. As Hodges writes, "Scandalously, it is precisely here that six years later Heidegger inserts ... endorsing Hitler. He writes in *Being and Time* that a generation may choose its hero as a basis on which to respond to the openness of the future. It may even choose 'anybody' as its hero" (Hodge, 192).<sup>6</sup>

It is clear that the 'anybody' to which Heidegger refers is Hitler. Hitler, at least during the time of his speech, is the hero of the generation that Heidegger presents in *Being and Time* as the collective destiny of Dasein. Hitler serves as the choice that allows for Dasein to choose its own openness to its future. There are no doubts that this is a reprehensible and downright disgusting position to endorse, but the question remains: does the application of the language from *Being and Time* enforce a fascist reading of the text after the *Rektoratsrede*? Habermas

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<sup>5</sup> Much of Habermas's analysis of Heidegger and his political affiliations comes from his intuition that rather than seeing Heidegger as a Nazi and one who, after publishing *Being and Time*, endorsed fascism as well as Hitler, the French started to see Heidegger as a "resister." While his intuition on this is not entirely out of line, it is a bit of a stretch to say the French have positioned Heidegger as a "resister." For example, Emmanuel Levinas shunned such a label being placed on Heidegger in *Totality and Infinity* (1969). Levinas is one of, if not the single strongest detractor of Heidegger's work. Unfortunately, Levinas and his relation to Heidegger's work is beyond the scope of this paper. Moving forward, I would relish the opportunity to pursue such a project.

<sup>6</sup> While such an endorsement is one that I will openly denounce, there is a debate within the literature as to whether Heidegger truly understood what Hitler's intentions and motivations were. It is well known that Heidegger expressed anti-western sentiments concerning academia, and that he firmly believes that European philosophy was superior to all other means of pursuing truth. However, what is up for debate is Heidegger's understanding of the effects of such an oppressive regime in the future. There is such a reflection in the literature that Heidegger was more on the side of political ineptitude rather than displaying a full understanding of the ramifications of support for the Nazi party.

argues that the language used as well as the positions that Heidegger held indicate an impossibility pertaining to the possibility of separating Heidegger from his political affiliations. This is not to say that Heidegger wrote *Being and Time* with the idea that Hitler was always already the hero of the shared community that is Dasein. Rather, the main charge that Habermas levies is that Heidegger's *Being and Time* must be read in light of allowing the possibility of Hitler and the Nazi Party to be an authentic choice for Dasein. As such, it seems as though any attempt to wrest an ethics from *Being and Time* would have to cede the point that a fascist regime could be part of the authentic choice Dasein has at any given moment.

It goes without saying, but describing the choice as 'authentic' is unintuitive and in some respects can be offensive. Indeed, this is a problematic point and one that must be addressed. To situate the matter at hand within the Heideggerian framework and to use the language that Heidegger uses in *Being and Time*, for authentic Dasein to be able to choose something like Nazism as a means of fulfilling its destiny, and to say that authentic Dasein can choose Hitler as its hero as a means of allowing Dasein to even choose Nazism in the first place is wildly counterintuitive. This is Habermas's point in a nutshell. If *Being and Time* allows for the possibility of authentically choosing Nazism and Hitler as authentic ways of being-in-the-world, then surely any kind of ethics that could be wrested from *Being and Time* would have to acknowledge this as well. Such an acknowledgement would run counter to any ethical theory, and in fact would be detrimental to the entire project. As such, there is no ethics – at least in the sense that ethics is traditionally understood – that can be wrested from *Being and Time*. Indeed, Habermas is not alone in sharing this point. I would entirely agree, if it were the case that Heidegger was writing *Being and Time* as a prescriptive text rather than a descriptive text. I will

refer to this point later, but for now, I would like to push forward with those who levy a similar charge in analyzing *Heidegger and Nazism* by Victor Farias (1989).

Victor Farias approaches *Being and Time* from more of a historical perspective than Habermas did. By situating a discussion of Heidegger's seminal text firmly in his associate professorship at Marburg, Farias presents accounts of those who worked with Heidegger and this paints a well-rounded picture of Heidegger during this time. Heidegger's seminal text was described by the faculty at Marburg as, "nothing less than a new unraveling of the latest and deepest ontological questions presented in the form of a phenomenological synthesis detached for the first time from every mere subjectivism, but an analysis that makes use of the best of ancient, medieval, and modern metaphysics" (Farias, 60). From this it is obvious that Heidegger was thought of very highly by his peers at Marburg, and from this description it does not seem as though any of his peers read any more into what was written other than its coalescence of metaphysics of different ages. However, Farias tracks these very same impressions from the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927 and juxtaposes them with the wildly different impressions in 1933. In fact, Farias presents the following, "Hans Ebeling insists we can conclude that the concept of freedom in *Being and Time* has an affinity to that in National Socialism, for this concept of freedom sanctions the 'turn to the dominance of caprice'" (62). More radically,

The egocentric solipsism that recognizes only the inequality of peoples, not their equality, was entrenched in 1927 in as total a way as it was in 1933. There is in *Being and Time* a kinship with ruthless anarchy just as there is in Heidegger's Rector's Address a kinship with the totalitarian state. In both cases the power of acknowledging the other as the other, as essentially equal, is missing, and for that reason it only remains to oppress the other without any leniency. (*ibid*, 62)

This scathing critique of Heidegger's *Being and Time* as well as his *Rektoratsrede* indicate that there is a line of totalitarian through present within his works. This is a point that I could not



disagree more with, but I will return to this at a later time. Farias says of the previous that it, “claims only that there is a *possibility* that Heidegger adopted the National Socialist ideas without giving the reasons for making such a claim” (62). Indeed, the large quote above is rather baseless without the proper exposition, and as such, Farias tries to justify such a claim by expanding on the methodological approach taken by Ebeling. “In other words: we must ascertain the inner continuity of Heidegger’s thinking between 1927 and 1933 beginning with whatever elements of his philosophy then or later are pertinently valid and for which he provides an ‘objective’ justification within his own system” (62) Indeed, such a turn to Heidegger’s system is the most effective way of exploring the presence of this line of totalitarian thought. First and foremost, Farias rightly points out the role of community in Heidegger’s work, “the possibility of authentic existence becomes secure within the context of a communal life, from which the loss of personal identity is entirely excluded,” and that the, “historical-ontological connection between individual and collective existence” comes from Heidegger’s “tradition in which authentic existence finds its rightful home and which it takes over as its rightful heir” (*ibid*, 63).

Let us return to Heidegger himself in the following,

It is not necessary that in resoluteness one should *explicitly* know the origin of the possibilities upon which that resoluteness projects itself. It is rather in Dasein’s temporality, and there only, that there lies any possibility that the existential potentiality-for-Being upon which it projects itself can be gleaned *explicitly* from the way in which Dasein has been traditionally understood. The resoluteness that comes back to itself and hands itself down then becomes the *repetition* of a possibility of existence that has come down to us. *Repeating is handing down explicitly* – that is to say, going back into the possibilities of the Dasein that has-been-there. (*BT*, 385)

The stress on tradition is imperative for Farias. From this passage it seems rather simple to read in the National Socialist themes. For one, given the current temporal horizon of Dasein, it is

clear that the explicit origin of possibilities is not entirely present. That is, before becoming authentic, Dasein's possibilities have always already been limited by the they [*das Man*]. This would fall in line with an interpretation of *das Man* as something that needs to be overthrown, overpowered, or otherwise dealt with. In some passages, Heidegger even describes *das Man* in this way in section §27, “the they is everywhere, but in such a way that it has already *stolen away* when Dasein presses for a decision” and later, “the they, which supplies the answer to the who of everyday Dasein, is the *nobody* to whom every Dasein has always *surrendered itself*, in its being among one-another” (*BT*, 128, 129, emphasis added is my own). The stress I have put on the italicized phrases could situate *das Man* as something that needs to be overthrown or overpowered as it serves as a dictatorial force keeping Dasein from being authentic. In fact, some have described *das Man* as a kind of dangerous force.<sup>7</sup>

With phrases like dangerous and stolen away paired with the description of *das Man* as something that Dasein has always already surrendered itself to, an interpretation of *das Man* as this foreboding presence – one that needs to be overpowered or overcome – would make sense. In fact, it seems as though the language that Heidegger uses almost immediately lends itself to such an interpretation. If such an interpretation is warranted, then the reading in of fascist themes is definitely plausible.

A second reason Farias poses as an easy way of reading in National Socialist themes from *Being and Time* is interwoven within the block quote above pertaining to tradition and a community of people. He presents a compelling critique from Karl Löwith, “with the introduction of a (so-called) community of people, with its own tradition and heritage, Heidegger

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<sup>7</sup> Special thanks to Drew Dalton for pointing this particular use of language out to me.

comes close to the interpretations that circulated widely under National Socialism ... Heidegger himself marked the similarity after 1933 as a symbol of his own ultra-nationalism” (Farias, 64).<sup>8</sup> Tradition, for Heidegger, plays an important role especially in light of the above description of *das Man*. While the “tradition” as presented by Heidegger entirely governed by *das Man* does not seem to have anything to offer, there is something that is important offered by tradition, namely *heritage*. According to Farias’s interpretation of Heidegger, “collective existence, understood as actual community, can and should regulate its own ongoing activity, for tradition always incorporates it and its heritage extends it” (*ibid*, 63). Heritage is a key point that Farias draws on especially by comparing Heidegger’s conception of heritage to that of the National Socialist party’s conception of heritage. Moreover, “the double structure of authentic community and a people’s struggle in the face of the most extreme likelihood of death ... completes, even in a terminological sense, the philosophical political project that already in 1927 anticipates Heidegger’s later positions” (*ibid*, 65). Farias goes on to say, “Heidegger adopts the central romantic categories – categories like the We, struggle, destiny, the historical mandate of the people, community, and, above all, the exemplary leader, who in this situation is expected to point out the path that the people will follow” (*ibid*, 67). While this is true of Heidegger, the framing with which Farias operates firmly places Heidegger’s *Being and Time* within a National Socialist framework.

At this point it goes without saying, but I find situating Heidegger’s *Being and Time* within a National Socialist framework entirely disingenuous to the work itself, and I will show that point to be true later, but it is necessary at this point to flesh out more detractors of the

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<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Löwith’s critique is scathing in nature and brings with it serious challenges to the notion that Heidegger’s *Being and Time* can be used to come to any conclusion other than its radical nature and, when read in light of the historical period that was inter-war Germany, its call to revolution. This is a challenge that will be a focal point in the next section.

ethical import of *Being and Time*. At this point, I will turn to Richard Wolin and his *The Politics of Being: The Political Thought of Martin Heidegger* (1990).

Wolin opens up with a series of questions that get straight to the point, “did Heidegger’s partisanship for the National Socialist cause stand in an essential relation to his own ‘philosophy of existence’ as elaborated in *Being and Time* and other writings? If so, what is the nature of this relation? What were the historico-philosophical conclusions that Heidegger would ultimately draw – if any- concerning the failure of his own National Socialist involvement?” (Wolin, 1). These pointed questions are rather revealing of the project that Wolin embarks upon. From the outset Wolin paints a picture of Heidegger quite literally as Hitler himself, which casts a shadow over Heidegger and the ways in which Wolin discusses Heidegger for the remainder of Wolin’s work.

Indeed, the evidence as most by now are aware, gives no small cause for alarm. When it came to the *Gleichschaltung* (the Nazi euphemism for the elimination of political oppression) of the modern German university system, which could proudly trace its origins back to the philosophies of Wilhelm von Humboldt and the German idealists, Heidegger, in his capacity as Rector of Freiburg University, proved well nigh *plus royaliste que le roi* – the ‘roi’ in this case being Hitler himself. Or as we read in the personal telegram of May 20, 1933 that Heidegger sent to Hitler: ‘I faithfully request the postponement of the planned meeting of the executive committee of the German University League until a time when the especially necessary *Gleichschaltung* of the leadership of the League is completed.’ (Wolin, 2-3)

Wolin goes on to describe the similarity of Heidegger to Hitler in light of the May 1933 postcard sent to Hitler himself. This is a point that must be explicated a bit more, especially given the fact that such a ravenous entrance to a text perpetuates a disingenuous view of Heidegger’s works. If this is not a textbook poisoning of the well, then I am not quite sure what is. Wolin goes on to say, “[Heidegger] declared that the present generation of university professors was unfit; consequently, it was necessary for a new generation to replace them in ten years’ time, one that

would prove capable of meeting the demands and challenges of the ‘National Awakening’” (*ibid*, 3).

As I’ve previously mentioned, it was no secret that Heidegger was a bit of an elitist concerning the role of European academia, and even less of a secret that Heidegger had a deep-seeded hatred for the Anglo-American branch of philosophy. Moreover, his feelings towards Western society were not all too well hidden either, according to Wolin, “the rejection of capitalism as an economic ethos rapidly translated into a dismissal of Western political values *simpliciter*: liberalism, individualism, and democracy were all dismissed as alien to the German spirit” (*ibid*, 25). Indeed, Heidegger is the typical case, as he himself describes the state of Western culture and democracy as “tyrannical insofar as it requires that everybody be left to his own opinion. It promotes an ‘arbitrariness’ that is only ‘the slavery of contingency’” (*ibid*, 25). Returning again to Heidegger’s own discussion of the hero of a generation in *Being and Time*, it is easy to project what was previously mentioned to the language of *Being and Time*. As Wolin notes, in a 1933 speech by Heidegger, he stresses one of the key concepts we find in *Being and Time*, namely that of being decisive. “Thus, for example, ... Heidegger, basing himself on one of the central concepts of *Being and Time* – the category of resolve or decisiveness – will characterize the plebiscite called by Hitler on Germany’s withdrawal from the League of Nations as ‘the highest free decision [*Entscheidung*] of all: whether it – the entire Volk – wants its own existence [*Dasein*] or not” (*ibid*, 29).

It is clear from the above quote that Heidegger had chosen Hitler as the hero of the generation that would allow for *Dasein* to chose to be open to its authentic being-in-the-world. What is clearer is the radical nature of the text when placed within a political framework. Denying the political import of *Being and Time* is entirely irresponsible in a philosophical sense,

but what is more irresponsible is to taint the work of *Being and Time*, written in 1927, with Heidegger's political affiliations and other speeches after the fact – i.e. from 1933 onward. From a historical framework, it would seem as though reading *Being and Time* without looking at Heidegger's political affiliations as having a direct influence on his work would be rather inane. Most of this comes from the way Heidegger discusses his own work, in particular how he references his own seminal text in political speeches championing Hitler as the hero that allows for Dasein to choose its own openness to being authentic. I would agree that reading *Being and Time* without a historical perspective is something that one will have difficulties with in light of knowing his own political affiliations, but it is possible to read *Being and Time* without succumbing to the necessity of a dictatorship or the likes as a means to allowing Dasein to be open to its possibility of authentic being-in-the-world.

The final position I would like to shed light on as it concerns Heidegger's connection to the National Socialist party and its influence on interpretations of *Being and Time* comes from Hugo Ott's, *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*, which follows very closely in line with the previous three interpretations presented in this section. Of course, the question that we are asking is whether or not we can separate Heidegger's political affiliations and *Being and Time*. If we cannot separate the two, then it seems as though my project would end here, but of course, that is not the goal of the project at hand. Hugo Ott, paired with the other interpretations, argues that the political life, at least in some way or another is not something that we can separate out. Up to this point, the interpretations I have covered do not outright reject any other reading of *Being and Time* that does not take into account the historical context, but what is clear is that Habermas, Farias, and Wolin all read a political ideology into *Being and Time*. Of course, this is an easy thing to do especially when we look at Heidegger's own political speeches from 1933.

However, as I have maintained through this section, this does not entail that there was a political ideology written into *Being and Time*. Rather, it just explains the radical freedom Heidegger describes in *Being and Time*. Before taking on these previous accounts, I would like to introduce one last account from Hugo Ott.

In *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life* (1993), Ott describes Heidegger's religious life, a topic that has gone unmentioned in this paper.<sup>9</sup> In the middle and later part of his book, Ott describes mostly the relationship of Heidegger to the National Socialist party pertaining to his 1933 Rectorship at the University of Freiberg. He comes to the conclusion – much like Habermas, Farias, and Wolin – that Heidegger wanted nothing more than to see the German academia thrive. Additionally, his desire for the thriving of the university system seemed to rest on the shoulders of the chosen hero of the generation. As mentioned previously, Heidegger had chosen Hitler as the hero of the generation that would allow for Dasein to choose to allow its own destiny to authentically be-in-the-world. However, as with all the other interpretations previously mentioned, this does not mean that *Being and Time* was written *for the sake of* choosing someone like Hitler to rise to power and to be the hero of a generation. I use the term “hero” here with extreme caution, as history would dictate that Hitler was quite the opposite of a hero.

At this point, it is imperative to turn to the question at hand, that is, can Heidegger's seminal text *Being and Time* be separated from his vile and reprehensible political affiliations? If we are unable to read *Being and Time* without separating out the political affiliations, what are we to make of any ethics that would be wrested from the text? If we are able to separate out the

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<sup>9</sup> This is, no doubt, an important aspect of Heidegger's life as well as his works in general, but in order to maintain some semblance of uniformity within this paper, I will not be addressing the role religion played in Heidegger's political life nor the role religion played in his philosophical works.

political affiliations from the text, the same question still stands; that is, what kind of “ethics” can be wrested from the text? More importantly, to address a rather important question posed earlier in this section, does *Being and Time* necessitate an interpretation of authentic being-in-the-world that would only be possible through espousing a fascist ideology? That is to say, is authentic being-in-the-world, as presented in *Being and Time*, only possible through the likes of a leader – or “hero” as Heidegger himself would say – like Hitler? If authentic being-in-the-world is only possible through these means then any question pertaining to revealing or wresting an ethics from *Being and Time* would rightly cause some concern. That may be putting it too lightly for the task at hand. If someone like Hitler is the means to authentic being-in-the-world, then it seems as though *Being and Time* ought to be written off as a pro-fascist, pro-Nazi text; but, this is far from the truth.

If this section has done anything, it is to show that there is a mountain of evidence that supports Heidegger’s fascist beliefs. But these beliefs are no secret. In fact, the posthumous publications of *Schwarz Hefte* indicate a rampant antisemitism.<sup>10</sup> However, it is important to keep in mind that I am strictly looking at *Being and Time* and the themes present within it in order to wrest some kind of ethics from the text. The question still stands, though: can we separate Heidegger’s political affiliations from *Being and Time*, or are we stuck reading a fascist ideology into the text itself? This question is imperative for understanding what ethics, if any, can be wrested from the text. In the following section, I will address both of these questions. I argue that reading a political ideology into *Being and Time* is not only disingenuous to the text,

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<sup>10</sup> I have not made my way through the entirety of the *Schwarz Hefte* as that is a seemingly insurmountable task given the time left to finish this project, but Heidegger does mention some of his own feelings towards *Being and Time* and the multitude of interpretations that followed: “Therefore, it was a mistaken view that *Being and Time* could overcome ‘ontology’ *directly*. The appalling ‘result’ is indeed only that the prattle about ‘being’ has increased and has become *still* more groundless” (*SH*, Ponderings II – 14).



but is almost entirely circumstantial and has no grounds in the text whatsoever. Moving forward on this point, we come to the question of whether an ethics can be wrested from *Being and Time*. I argue that there is not a particular ethics to be taken from the text itself, but rather that *Being and Time* sets the groundwork for an ethics to reveal itself in light of the phenomenological method of the text.

### **Section III – Political Ambiguity in *Being and Time***

#### *Separating Political Ideology from *Being and Time**

Unlike the philosophers and historians from the previous section, I find that reading *Being and Time* in the political light from the previous section is not only disingenuous, but severely lacking in textual evidence. My aim of the previous section was to illustrate the many different approaches to reading Heidegger through a political lens. More specifically, my aim was to present a few interpretations that were rather neutral in terms of philosophical import, then to lead up to one that has some serious philosophical import, that of Jürgen Habermas. What I have shown thus far is that reading a fascist ideology into *Being and Time* is not all too difficult of a task to accomplish. In fact, given Heidegger's political affiliations, it seems like such a reading *prima facie* is warranted. Moreover, there are some passages in *Being and Time* that lend themselves to the kind of ambiguity that interlocutors of Heidegger – I'm thinking Farias specifically here – use as spring-boards to perpetuate a slanted reading of *Being and Time*. In this section, I will address some of those passages that can lend themselves to the kinds of interpretations that I aim to dismantle. Additionally, I will balance those ambiguous passages with their respective context, as well as some exegetical work from both Division I and II of *Being and Time*, in order to show that the text itself is politically ambiguous. Moreover, I argue that when read carefully and with the proper lens, *Being and Time* has no political position whatsoever, let alone a fascist ideology, but even if there were a political reading, the exegesis in Divisions I and II give support for the impossibility of fascism as an authentic community more than support its implementation.

#### *Some Passages Indicative of Political Ambiguity*

For the most part, there are a few key passages from *Being and Time* that detractors draw from that indicate a political ambiguity necessary for the loaded interpretations present in the pervious section. More specifically, resolve and decisiveness can serve as vehicles to a kind of political reading of *Being and Time*. As Wolin indicates, “the gateway to Heideggerianism as a political philosophy is the category of ‘resolve’ or ‘decisiveness.’ The ‘resolve’ that characterizes authentic Dasein is intended as a polemical counterpart to the irresolution of inauthentic existence, which Heidegger refers to as the ‘They’” (Wolin, 35). As previously mentioned, the They is a rather large part of Heidegger’s conception of authenticity. I will address the role of *das Man* more thoroughly later in the next section, but for now it will suffice to say that *das Man* plays a crucial role in *Being and Time*. Specifically, *das Man* conceals Dasein’s authentic mode of being-in-the-world from itself via a wide array of tactics. Heidegger presents the problem of *das Man* as follows:

The They has always kept Dasein from taking hold of [its] possibilities of Being. The They even hides the manner in which it has tacitly relieved Dasein of the burden of explicitly *choosing* these possibilities. It remains indefinite as to who has ‘really’ done the choosing. So Dasein makes no choices, gets carried along by the nobody, and thus ensnares itself in inauthenticity. This process can be reversed only if Dasein specifically brings itself back to itself from the lostness in the ‘They’ ... When Dasein thus brings itself back from the They, the They-self is modified *in an existentiell manner* so that it becomes authentic Being-one’s-Self. This must be accomplished by *making up for not choosing*. But ‘making up’ for not choosing signifies *choosing to make this choice* – deciding for a potentiality-for-Being and making this decision from one’s own choice. (BT, 257)

This passage has quite a few moving parts, but focusing attention specifically on the role of *das Man* reveals a seemingly nefarious role. *Das Man* plays the role of not only concealing the truth from Dasein, but also the role of “disburdening” or relieving Dasein of its ability to choose. What Dasein is choosing in the context of the passage above is not necessarily relevant, but this passage gives way to some of the more politically loaded interpretations. In fact, the above

passage is not the only one where Heidegger discusses *das Man* in such a way that could be indicative of its role as always forcing Dasein to live a kind of inauthentic life.

In an essay originally written in 1946 titled, *The Political Implications of Heidegger's Existentialism*, Karl Löwith – a former student of Heidegger – presents this very interpretation. From the outset Löwith addresses the very concerns presented above as he writes, “I am publishing [the original essay] in French translation, since I am convinced that the immediate political – i.e. National Socialist – implications of Heidegger’s concept of existence – though they seem outstripped by contemporary events – possess an historical significance which reaches well beyond the figure of Heidegger, as well as the German situation of the inter-war period” (117). Even further, Löwith expresses his discontent with the portrayal of Heidegger’s works amongst the French intellectuals as worthy of philosophical investigation. He describes the standard French study of Heidegger as follows:

His *Sein und Zeit*, which appeared in 1927, is still one of the rare, truly important contemporary philosophical publications, and when, in an era such as ours, an author is able to develop a following and to increase his influence continually over the course of 25 years, he must certainly contain something of substance. One should not forget either that this same man, whose thought was so relevant, also assimilated Greek philosophy and scholastic theology into his work. His knowledge, which is of the first hand variety, derives from the sources themselves. The following study treats the implications and historico-philosophical consequences of Heidegger’s philosophy almost exclusively in relation to his speeches and lectures, rather than in terms of his philosophical overture properly speaking. (118)

Löwith paints a picture of French intellectuals as seeing Heidegger through rose-colored glasses. The point being that the French have failed to take Heidegger’s political engagements seriously when interpreting his philosophical works. He goes on to mention that even if this caricature of French intellectuals at the time seems superficially unjust, the perceived injustice falls to the wayside when one realizes that *Being and Time* contains commitments similar to the National Socialist movement that served as the scourge of the time. Löwith goes on to say, “The reader of

this essay may choose to find a significant defense of Heidegger's philosophy or a condemnation of his political attitudes. In the author's eyes, however, these alternatives lack real meaning, insofar as the historical importance of Heideggerianism rests to a large extent on the fact that he took on political responsibilities and involvements in a manner consistent with the fundamental thesis of *Sein und Zeit*" (119).

On Löwith's interpretation, Heidegger's comments on death, nothingness, authenticity, and the likes, mirror the kind of inter-war struggle that plagued Germany during the time of publication. More specifically, he described the struggle for individual authenticity as being the genuine mirror to inter-war Germany. Löwith sees both Heidegger's personal life as well as his philosophical commitments as a "negation in principle of all that has existed" (*ibid*, 120). For Löwith, Heidegger's comments on the struggle for authenticity as well as his comments on resoluteness towards death call the individual to engage in a kind of rebellion. A rebellion where one sheds the shackles of the nihilistic values laden throughout Europe at the time. Shedding these commitments would, of course, bring the individual face-to-face with the nothingness that has been revealed. As such, the individual is now prepared for a "new beginning directed by one's will" (Dungey, 237). However, the nothingness that the individual is now face-to-face with must be replaced by something, and for Löwith that something is the National Socialist movement.

Additionally, the discussion of authenticity and resoluteness indicate an inflammatory call to political destruction, "One need only ... apply [the concept of] authentic 'existence' – 'always particular to each individual' – and the 'duty' which follows from it to 'specifically German existence' and its historical destiny in order to thereby introduce into the general course of German existence the energetic but empty movement of existential categories" (Löwith, 122).

The introduction of these existential categories – which he interestingly defines as “empty” – such as deciding for oneself, to take stock of oneself in the face of nothingness, wanting one’s ownmost destiny, and so on are a short jump to “proceed from there to ‘destruction’, now on the terrain of politics” (*ibid*, 122). What is left when the individual is face-to-face with nothingness is just a “bare facticity” that one exists (*ibid*, 123). Seeing as this bare existence now leaves the individual Dasein in a state of insecurity, it indicates that the values presented and inculcated through history and *das Man* are no longer substantive nor can they serve as truths. Löwith presents this raw facticity as a call to create a totalitarian political state, one in which the individual is free from common opinions and social norms such that they are now free for their own destiny.

This “ownmost” destiny is not as radically individualized as Heidegger makes it out to be, as he does mention the shared destiny of a generation. On Löwith’s interpretation, Heidegger does not care that this or that individual is free for their “ownmost” destiny, but rather, on a much larger scale, that the call for the creation of the totalitarian state, by shedding the values of the time, would allow for a free Germany. He goes on to describe Dasein, in this state as, “this sinister, active Dasein, stripped of all content, all beauty, all human kindness – is a mirror-image of the ‘heroic realism’ of those Nazi-bred, German faces that stared out at us” (*ibid*, 130). Importantly, Löwith contends that these themes are present within Heidegger’s *Being and Time* while simultaneously insisting that the historical lens cannot be removed from the inter-war Germany in which Heidegger was writing. “This principle – existence reduced to itself on itself alone in the face of nothingness – is by no means a gratuitous invention. It corresponds, on the contrary, to the radical character of the real historical situation with which Heideggerian existentialism, understood temporally and historically, explicitly identified” (*ibid*, 133).

What is important to make note of, and where Löwith differs from most criticisms of Heidegger, but does mirror a similar concern to Habermas, is in the fact that Heidegger's political affiliations, while reprehensible in all cases, cannot merely be the reason to pass judgement on the man. It is only in light of his philosophical positions that said judgement can be warranted. While most critiques of Heidegger at the time were based on his political affiliation, Löwith takes a kind of hybrid approach to his criticism. He contends that Heidegger's affiliation with the National Socialist party is mirrored in his philosophy. In particular, in the concepts that are present within *Being and Time*. While there is no mention of the National Socialist party within the text itself matters not, as the radical philosophy of *Being and Time* is mirrored in the radical historical era in which Löwith was writing. That is to say, Heidegger's philosophy is reflective of the disastrous state of inter-war Germany, and thus ought to carry such a radical interpretation with it. Another interesting note concerning Löwith's essay, is that his intentions are not to cast a shadow over Heidegger, nor is he exclaiming an avoidance of his philosophies. Rather, due to the radical nature of Heidegger's text, and the radical point of history in which Löwith was writing, he fancied a turn *towards* Heideggerian philosophy as a potential means of combating the fallout from Heideggerian philosophy. Löwith by no means proposed a furthering of German power, but rather that Heidegger's philosophy could be used as a means of dealing with the radical context during which he was writing.

It should be clear at this point that Löwith's interpretation of *Being and Time* is exactly the concern voiced by Habermas. If it is true that Heidegger's political actions are genuinely reflective of the main thesis of *Being and Time*, the main point of this project – that is, what *Being and Time* can deliver in terms of ethics – seems to be in jeopardy. If it is the case that Heidegger's political alignment, regardless of length, is accurately reflective of the thesis of

*Being and Time*, then it seems as though the fascist regime that is the National Socialist party is not only acceptable ethically, but additionally that such movements and regimes are more than a possibility – recall the fact that the mere possibility of fascism as authentic Dasein was the main concern for Habermas. On Löwith’s interpretation, the acceptance of Hitler on the part of Heidegger is necessarily reflective of the main thesis of *Being and Time*. As it pertains to reading a political ideology into *Being and Time*, I argue that there is no textual evidence to support the notion that the work espouses a fascist ideology. Rather, the text supports quite the opposite. For the remainder of this section, I will present that very point. After showing that the textual evidence used to support the notion that *Being and Time* ought to be read cautiously pertaining to ethics as any ethics wrested from the text has to deal with the charge that *Being and Time* necessarily allows for fascism as an authentic mode of being-in-the-world actually serve as greater support for the opposite point, I will argue that there is something to be gained from *Being and Time* by way of grounds for the ethical that does not individualize Dasein, but rather calls Dasein to the other via that fragility of life that is found in being-towards-death.

One of the more contentious sections of *Being and Time*, as presented in Section 2 is §74 of Division II. In order to understand why this section is as contentious as it is, I will present some context that will allow for a more well-rounded approach to one of the more damning passages from §74.

If Dasein, by anticipation, lets death become powerful in itself, then, as free for death, Dasein understands itself in its own *superior power*, the power of its finite freedom, so that in this freedom, which ‘is’ only in its having chosen to make such a choice, it can take over the *powerlessness* of abandonment of its having done so, and can thus come to have a clear vision for the accidents of the Situation that has been disclosed. But if fateful Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, exists essentially in Being-with-others, its historizing is a co-historizing and is determinative for it as *destiny*. This is how we designate the historizing of the community, of a people. Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another can be



conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects. Our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities. Only in communicating and struggling does the power of destiny become free. Dasein's fateful destiny in and with its generation goes to make up the full authentic historizing of Dasein. (Macquarie and Robinson, 436)

Let's start with the concept of anticipation. For Heidegger, anticipation is imperative with regards to what it discloses. What exactly is Dasein in anticipation of? Dasein's anticipation is of death, and in such anticipation, Dasein is disclosed to itself by itself in its having-been lost in the They – *das Man*. In such an anticipation, Dasein comes to an awareness of itself in such a way that it realizes that any concept of a self that Dasein has come to know, the 'I' in statements like 'I am something or other', has been entirely based on what *das Man* says a self can be. Thus, the self that Dasein has come to understand is only a self in the sense of a they-self. This penetrates the Being of Dasein all the way down to the core in such a way that the things that Dasein cares for are not actually authentically cared for *qua* authentic Dasein, but rather what Dasein cares for is what "they" care for. What is it that brings this to Dasein's attention? And if what Dasein has cared for up to this point has always been determined by *das Man*, what makes what is revealed by death any different?

The answers to these questions are, unfortunately, not the easiest to comprehend. For Heidegger, death is not something that just represents a possibility for Dasein's Being-in-the-world, rather it necessarily indicates the possibility of *not*-Being-in-the-world. This type of possibility is not the same kind of possibility of Being-in-the-world that has been presented by *das Man*. For example, the possibility of no longer Being-in-the-world is not the same as the possibility of going for a walk or going to a restaurant with friends for drinks, as most of us ponder the question of what to fill an empty day with. Rather, this possibility of no longer Being-in-the-world paints over every other possibility of Being-in-the-world such that it reveals

the literal meaninglessness of the possibilities for Being-in-the-world that we had pondered up to that very point. What has been concealed from Dasein is that it is and always has been Being-towards-death, but this has been concealed by *das Man* in such a way that death becomes a normal occurrence. “This evasive concealment in the face of death dominates everydayness so stubbornly that, in Being with one another, the ‘neighbors’ often still keep talking the ‘dying person’ into the belief that he will escape death and soon return to the tranquilized state of everydayness of the world of his concern” (*ibid*, 297). The neighbor does this as a means of calming down the dying person such that they do not have to deal with the anxiety that is present in coming to terms with death. *Das Man* conceals death from Dasein in such a way that “*the ‘They’ does not permit us the courage for anxiety in the face of death*” (*ibid*, 298).

Such concealment of death and the closing off of the anxiety in the face of death for Heidegger fully alienates Dasein from its ownmost potential, that is death. Heidegger mentions in multiple sections that in each case death is “my own.” That is to say, there is no Other that can be substituted for you in your death. It is yours alone, and this personal belonging is what is covered up in the “idle talk” of *das Man*. As such, undifferentiated Dasein – i.e. the self of Dasein as a they-self – is blind to its ownmost potentiality of Being. For Heidegger, how Dasein – that is, the self of Dasein as a they-self – understands death is misguided by *das Man* in the sense that talk of death does nothing more for Dasein than to reveal that “one dies.” The notion that “one dies” cannot be the same as “one eats spaghetti with a fork.” Rather, death reveals that the Being of Dasein has the possibility of no longer Being-in-the-world. This possibility is something that will eventually happen to everyone and, as such, Dasein is always already Being-towards-death. This Being-towards-death is what Heidegger classifies as anticipation. Moreover, “anticipation turns out to be the possibility of understanding one’s *ownmost* and

uttermost potentiality-for-Being – that is to say, the possibility of *authentic existence*” (*ibid*, 307). Anticipation of death – i.e. Being-towards-death – discloses to Dasein the possibility of authentic existence. At this point, there are two options for Dasein. The first is to *flee* from death by finding comfort in the ways “one” deals with death. That is to say, to fall back into the they-self. To try and assuage the anxiety by convincing yourself that “everyone dies” and that death is nothing special. The other option is to embrace the anxiety and what it discloses to Dasein.

There is a kind of power in coming to terms with the possibility of the *impossibility* of Being-in-the-world that, for Heidegger, has been covered up and concealed from Dasein. The importance of anticipation is best exemplified in the following:

The ownmost, non-relational possibility *is not to be outstripped*. Being towards this possibility enables Dasein to understand that giving itself up impends for it as the uttermost possibility of its existence. Anticipation, however, unlike inauthentic Being-towards-death, does not evade the fact that death is not to be outstripped; instead, anticipation frees itself *for* accepting this. When, by anticipation, one becomes free *for* one’s own death, one is liberated from one’s lostness in those possibilities which may have accidentally thrust themselves upon one; and one is liberated in such a way that for the first time one can authentically understand and choose among the factual possibilities lying ahead of that possibility which is not to be outstripped. (*ibid*, 308)

Anticipation is always anticipation of the possibility of Dasein’s *impossibility for* Being-in-the-world. In realizing this, Dasein essentially frees itself *for itself*. While this might sound esoteric and incomprehensible, it is a rather simple concept to understand. Anticipation of one’s death indicates that there is some finitude to life, it is this realization of the finitude of life that liberates Dasein. Liberation, in this case, is allowing Dasein to choose its own possibilities for itself rather than choosing the possibilities that have been set forth by *das Man*.

Having understood what anticipation is, what is the object of the anticipation, as well as the role it plays for Dasein, we can now move forward with the block quote from page 8. “as

free for death, Dasein understands itself in its own *superior power*, the power of its finite freedom, so that in this freedom, which 'is' only in its having chosen to make such a choice, it can take over the *powerlessness* of abandonment of its having done so, and can thus come to have a clear vision for the accidents of the Situation that has been disclosed" (*ibid*, 436). In freedom for death, Dasein regains a kind of agency over their life with a renewed vigor and critical eye in light of what has always already been presented to Dasein by *das Man*. This freedom is powerful in the sense that it is what allows Dasein to come to know the complacency with which Dasein has lived up to the point of being face to face with death and the anxiety associated with it. However, for death to be disclosed to Dasein is not enough on its own. Rather, Dasein must make the choice to be open to what death discloses to it. That is, the only thing that Dasein can truly own for itself in such a way that no Other can be substituted is its death. In all cases it is my own. It is this realization of finally owning something that causes Dasein to look back at its own situation in order to find what else is truly its own. In such a realization, Dasein is now, for the first time, equipped to deconstruct its reality in such a way that Dasein can come to know the "accidents of the situation", where the Situation is the point in time in which Dasein currently finds itself, and the accident would be anything that Dasein does not have genuine ownership over.

To continue with the larger quote, "but if fateful Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, exists essentially in Being-with-others, its historizing is a co-historizing and is determinative for it as *destiny*. This is how we designate the historizing of the community, of a people. Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another can be conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects" (*ibid*, 436). An essential part of Dasein's constitution is that it is always in-the-world. For Heidegger, it is impossible to separate

Being and the question of being from the larger world in which the answers to those questions would practically apply. Of course, one of the things that Heidegger pushes is that we are in the world with others. That our world is a *with-world* [*mitwelt*] simply means that Dasein is and always has been with others. Those others are other Dasein, equipment, and the likes. In Dasein's Being-with-others, as essentially historical – meaning that it always has been and will be – there is not just a history for the individual Dasein, but rather that there is a collective history of Dasein as well. One that is not composed of the smaller parts – i.e. one individual Dasein added to the historizing of another individual Dasein – but one that is deeply intertwined with the Other in such a way that the history is a shared one. If a community, as described above, has a shared history, then it will have a shared future as well. Dasein – from the communal perspective now – is both what it has been and what it will be, but what it will be is not something new. What Dasein is and will be, is something that has always been present for Dasein in the mode of not yet disclosed. This shared future – i.e. destiny – has been covered up by *das Man* for the community in much the same way that *das Man* covers up individual Dasein's potentiality for Being-in-the-world.

In finishing up with some of the preliminary work for engaging with the more contentious parts of §74, I must address the end of the block quote in question, “our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities. Only in communicating and struggling does the power of destiny become free. Dasein's fateful destiny in and with its generation goes to make up the full authentic historizing of Dasein” (*ibid*, 436). In piecing everything together, a picture of what authentic Dasein – again, from a community lens – becomes clear. There is some shared destiny, also referred to as fate, that unites Dasein together and when this destiny is disclosed to Dasein

as a definite possibility in the future, Dasein is thus thrown back to itself in such a way that authentic historizing becomes possible. This historizing is and always has been a historizing *with* in such a way that the other Dasein shares the same past and future.

Given the explication of some of the verbiage in *Being and Time*, the concerns voiced by both Habermas and Löwith reveal themselves as genuine concerns. To make this abundantly clear, let's turn now to the most cited portion of *Being and Time* as an indication of political leanings.

Only an entity which, in its Being, is essentially *futural* so that it is free for its death and can let itself be thrown back upon its factual 'there' by shattering itself against death – that is to say, only an entity which, as futural, is equiprimordially in the process of *having-been*, can, by handing down to itself the possibility that it has inherited, take over its own thrownness and be *in the moment of vision* for 'its time'. Only authentic temporality which is at the same time finite, makes possible something like fate – that is to say, authentic historicity. (*ibid*, 437)

The language of “shattering itself against death” is not a mistake. This language is necessarily reflective of Kierkegaard's influence over Heidegger's philosophical thought. However, rather than turning this “shattering” to be directed at faith, Heidegger's use of shattering here is meant to indicate a disclosure of the completely inauthentic mode of Being-in-the-world with which Dasein lives in the moment. I think the best way to explain this shattering is just the same as a kind of “aha-moment” that one comes to in solving a complex puzzle, finally figuring out how to teach a particular subject that gives students trouble, or the likes. Heidegger mentions that in this shattering, “it is free for death and can let itself be thrown back upon its factual there,” which can be a slightly confusing concept.

Dasein's “factual there” is the Situation in which Dasein finds itself. That is, its Being-in-the-world. Being here has two important points that need to be teased out a bit more. For one, Being is indicative of the actual spatial location as in the world. It is impossible for one to

separate one's self from the world in which it finds itself at any given moment. Doing so would be to start understanding Being from a flawed place of solipsism. The other, more important point, is the existential nature of Being, that is, *how* we are Being in the world. This is the part of Being-in-the-world that has been covered up by *das Man* in that Dasein's ways of Being-in-the-world do not stem from Dasein, but rather from *das Man*. What death discloses to Dasein is this very thing. That Dasein's *how* of Being-in-the-world has always been determined by what *they* or *one* cares about in the world. This is the shattering that Heidegger refers to in the previous passage. Death, as Dasein's ownmost, non-relational possibility for no longer Being-in-the-world – that is literally coming from the self – opens up, or clears the way for Dasein to be thrown *back to itself* armed with this ability to critically analyze its Being-in-the-world in the very moment. However, it is imperative that this revelation is not something that happens once and never again. Rather, one must remain committed to this openness. As such Heidegger touches on the concept of resoluteness.

The resoluteness which comes back to itself and hands itself down, then becomes the *repetition* of a possibility of existence that has come down to us. *Repeating its handing down explicitly* – that is to say, going back into the possibility of existence that has been – the possibility that Dasein may choose its hero – is grounded existentially in anticipatory resoluteness; for it is in resoluteness that one first chooses the choice which makes one free for the struggle of loyally following in the footsteps of that which can be repeated. (*ibid*, 437)

This passage thrusts some novel language upon the reader. This is the first passage of *Being and Time* where Heidegger introduces the concept of repetition. What he means by repetition is rather obscure, but has led to some more politically charged interpretations. For example, if we read *Being and Time* from the historical perspective – i.e. from Löwith's perspective – what starts to become clear is the radical nature of this text. What this contentious section seems to be is a call to Germany to realize its lostness in *das Man* – which, given the historical context, we

can say is the rest of the world – and to come together to reclaim the power that it once had. Now we come to the point where Dasein may “choose its hero,” as a means of remaining resolute in its struggle to reclaim the powerlessness with which Dasein has lived up to the point in time in which it comes face-to-face with its own death and the subsequent anxiety associated with it.

Through the historical lens, this section is nothing but a call for revolution in the sense that Heidegger’s goal seems to be to get Dasein – i.e. Germany – to realize its lostness. The dramatic shift from the dominant power in World War I, to the economic and social struggles of inter-war Germany in 1929, is an indication that Germany had been much more than it was during that inter-war period. But this having-been so much more than it was, was necessarily covered up by *das Man* in a way that calls for revolution.

The position of *Being and Time* as a call for revolution, or even as indicative of some kind of overthrowing or overpowering of the oppressors is one that – while having roots in the ambiguities found in §74 – has minimal ground to stand on. It only stands upon a superficial reading of *Being and Time*. For the most part, the interpretations that lead to this conclusion take §74 as their starting point due to the introduction of novel terminology in community, destiny, and repetition. The implementation of the novel terminology echoes the inter-war Germany during which *Being and Time* was written, and when paired with the political views that Heidegger had not shortly after the publication of his magnum opus, an interpretation of *Being and Time* as a call to revolution seems to be indisputable.

However, if there is another interpretation of the passages above that sheds light on their ambiguity, or if an interpretation – while using the same passages – serves to support an alternate position, we have reason to resist the interpretation that *Being and Time* can be read in a political



light as a call for revolution. Indeed, these are not the only means of taking down Löwith's interpretation, but they are the most effective for the task at hand. While Löwith's position echoes Farias's – that is, *Being and Time* must be read with a political lens and such a reading would indicate that there are fascist themes sprinkled throughout the text – it is disingenuous. A more cautious approach to the text using the same passages comes from Habermas, as mentioned in the previous section, that even if we grant that *Being and Time* does not explicitly mention call to fascism or the likes, it does not exclude fascism as a possibility for authentic Being-in-the-world. As such, any attempts to wrest an ethics from the text must deal first and foremost with this very challenge. Until one has shown the impossibility of fascism as a possibility for authentic Being-in-the-world, there can be no talk of ethics.

Having shown the presence of passages within *Being and Time* that lend themselves towards a politically charged interpretation, I will show that the very same passages can serve as evidence for quite the opposite, and in so doing, I will simultaneously take on Habermas's concern. For the remainder of this section, I will provide the context from both Divisions I and II indicating that those politically charged interpretations rest on a fundamental misunderstanding of Heidegger's concept of authenticity and inauthenticity. Moreover, in doing so, I will simultaneously show the ethical grounds in *Being and Time*. There are many moving parts in making such a claim, but the sections that will follow are broken down as such: first, I will address the inherently anti-Cartesian nature of *Being and Time*. While this may seem like a rather trivial point, it is imperative in understanding the Other oriented nature of the text that serves as the foundation for the argument that *Being and Time* illustrates the grounds for ethics. Following this, I will engage in a detailed analysis of the components that make up the grounds for ethics in authentic Being-in-the-world. Those concepts are: being-with and Dasein-with, *das*

*Man* and everydayness, *Mitsein*, authenticity and inauthenticity, the call of conscience and being-guilty, and care. Describing, in detail, the aforementioned concepts will eschew Löwith's interpretation and, in so doing, nullify Habermas's concern with wresting an ethics from *Being and Time*.

#### **Section IV – A Grounds for Ethics In *Being and Time***

Parts II and III showed that there is a concern that must be taken seriously with Heidegger and his affiliation with National Socialism, and that a reading backwards of Heidegger's texts would indicate that the social concepts present in *Being and Time* might not outright support a fascist ideology, but that there is nothing in the text that would outright reject membership in the Nazi party as an authentic mode of being-in-the-world. I will argue that this concern makes sense in an historical lens, but falters when attempting to encompass the entirety of the phenomenological undertaking present in *Being and Time*. Moreover, I will argue – in line with E.S. Nelson – that present within *Being and Time* is an ethics of facticity, or an ethics of individuation. That is, with a particular focus on the following concepts: conscience (and the call of), guilt, solicitude (concern for the other), and care; the individual Dasein comes to freedom and responsibility found in its being-there. This concept of being-there also shares the threefold structure of being-itself, being-with-others, and being-in-the-world. The freedom that individual Dasein comes to have is a response to its factual existence, which is revealed through the inescapability of one's death. Importantly, the ethics of facticity is not limited to the individual – as is the charge from Nancy, Löwith, Levinas, and the likes – but that in the moment of freedom, when Dasein takes up the responsibility of solicitude, the Other becomes what Dasein cares for. This caring for the Other is not prescriptive in that each Other is like the next and thus has some specific way in which Dasein acts towards them, but rather to care for the other is to allow for the other – who is in each case individualized Dasein as well – to realize themselves in their alterity. However, though Nelson implies that the means of taking care of the other is a matter of leaping-ahead rather than leaping-in, he still leaves open the possibility that Dasein could potentially remain authentic by leaping-in for the other, and to address this concern

I will add a detailed discussion on resoluteness. In the end, I aim to illustrate an ethics gleaned from *Being and Time* as an ethics of individuated facticity. As such I will show that the concerns of solipsism, domination, egocentrism, and ultimately the possibility of authentic Nazism are *not* in line with what is present in *Being and Time*.

### *Being-with and Dasein-with*

Having shown the anti-Cartesian sentiments Heidegger takes on in *Being and Time*, the task of making sense of the who of Dasein still remains. Heidegger approaches the question in §25 as follows:

Dasein is a being which I myself am, its being is in each case mine. This determination *indicates* an *ontological* constitution, but no more than that. At the same time, it contains an *ontic* indication, albeit an undifferentiated one, that an I is always this being, and not others. The who is answered in terms of the I itself ... the who is what maintains itself as an identity throughout changes in behavior and experiences, and in this way relates itself to this multiplicity. Ontologically, we understand it as what is always already and constantly present in a closed region and for that region, as that which lies at its basis in an eminent sense, as the *subjectum*. (*BT*, 112)

However, this does not satisfy Heidegger's question concerning the who of Dasein. It could be the case that everyday Dasein is "precisely *not* the I myself" (*Ibid*, 112).

The "I" must be understood only in the sense of a noncommittal *formal indication* of something which *perhaps reveals itself* in the actual phenomenal context of being as that being's "opposite." ... Thus, an isolated I without the others is in the end just as far from being given initially. But if "the others" *are* always already *there with us* in being-in-the-world, ascertaining this phenomenally, too, must not mislead us into thinking that the *ontological* structure of what is thus "given" is self-evident and not in need of an investigation. (*Ibid*, 113-14)

This is a rather crucial point when discussing the "who of Dasein." It is important to note here that this passage accomplishes two things. First, the 'I' is never truly isolated. One must understand the "I" in terms of something that can be disclosed to itself by the presence of another and that the "I" is only present in the context of the being opposite. As such, the "I" is never

separated from the Other as the Other is a necessary constituent of the “I.” Second – what I find to be the more influential finding – just because we have confirmed that the “I” is given in the context of the Other’s being the opposite of the “I” in question does not allow this notion of “I” to be passed over as a subject of ontological investigation. “*Initially* the who of Dasein is not only a problem *ontologically*, it also remains concealed *ontically*” (Ibid, 114). Not only is the who of Dasein something that remains hidden ontologically, it is *initially* concealed ontically as well.<sup>11</sup>

Presenting the who of Dasein as an ontological problem while simultaneously being concealed ontically seems to make sense given Heidegger’s take concerning the distinction between ontic and ontological. If something is hidden ontically, then we assume that it must also be hidden ontologically, which brings us to the question of the who of Dasein in its everydayness. Who is it that Dasein is initially and for the most part? According to Heidegger, “The answer to the question of the who of everyday Dasein is to be won through the analysis of *the* kind of being in which Dasein, initially and for the most part, maintains itself” (Ibid, 114). This seems to be rather obvious. In keeping with the anti-Cartesian framework, it would be rather inane to discuss the question of the who of Dasein in any way other than who Dasein is at any given moment. Moreover, this brings us to a rather crucial constituent of Dasein, namely that of *being-with*.

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<sup>11</sup> The Ontic – Ontological distinction is a rather important distinction to make and is well worth its own source of inquiry, but given the project at hand it is significantly more productive for our means to summarize the distinction as follows. For Heidegger, the distinction between the ontic and the ontological depends upon the observability of the phenomena in question. If we were to describe something as ontological, what we mean to say is that it is foundational. To describe something as ontic, we are already describing it as a modification upon the ontological such that the thing we describe as ontic is necessarily a modification of the ontological. It is something that is objectively observable such that it is or can be the subject of scientific inquiry.

At the outset of what I believe to be one of the most important sections of *Being and Time* – §26 – Heidegger presents a description of the world that focuses on existence as a means of approaching the who of the everyday Dasein. In his description, he presents the example of the work world while adding the presence of the other. In the work world, “... others are ‘also encountered’ for whom the ‘work’ is to be done” (115). Here we start to gain traction when thinking about the who of the everyday Dasein. One of the most important points to take away from this is the notion that there is *always* a reference to another. Always being-with another even maintains where there are no others! For Heidegger, Dasein’s only possibility for not being-with-one-another could only be by isolation, but even then it understands itself in the lack of a presence of an Other. “The world of Dasein thus frees being which are not only completely different from tools and things, but which themselves in accordance with their kind of being *as Dasein* are themselves ‘in’ the world as being-in-the-world in which they are at the same time encountered” (115). These beings that are completely different than tools are neither present-at-hand nor ready-to-hand, rather they are necessarily there with the world. As such, being is always already being-with. Specifically, when referring to others Heidegger says, “Others’ does not mean everybody else but me – those from whom the ‘I’ distinguishes itself. Others are, rather, those from whom one mostly does *not* distinguish oneself, those among whom one also is” (115).<sup>12</sup>

Dasein, then, is always already thrown into the world that is a with-world [*mitwelt*] such that Dasein is being-in-the-world-*with*. As mentioned above, being-with does not entail that the Other serves as an objectively present thing in the world whereby Dasein can then construct its

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<sup>12</sup> This quote is something I will be returning to later on as it stipulates a fundamental aspect of the argument that the other is always already present in the world, and as such we are always already thrown into a world whereby the other is present. This being-present is something that further delineates Heidegger from the subject-object that has been prevalent in determining the self in the world.

world using that objectively present other as a tool to construct its own reality. On the contrary, “even when we see the other ‘just standing around,’ he is never understood as a human-thing objectively present” (117) and further, “the being to which Dasein is related as being-with does not, however, have the kind of being of useful things at hand; it is itself Dasein. This being is not taken care of, but is a matter of *concern* [*Fürsorge*]” (118).

Thus far, there has yet to be a mention of what exactly Dasein is in the world with. For Heidegger, there are three things that Dasein is with in the world: equipment (present-at-hand), environmental context (ready-to-hand), and then there is the Other. There is a sense that the world in which we encounter things also carries with it a use for the things we encounter. This is where the famous passage of the hammer comes into the picture. You know the use of the hammer as it is the use that someone else has for it as well. Take the following example, “The boat anchored at the shore is assigned in its Being-in-itself to an acquaintance who undertakes voyages with it; but even if it is a ‘boat which is strange to us’, it is still indicative of Others” (MR-BT, 154). In every instance we encounter something in the world, there is an Other associated with it, that is the “essential assignment or reference to possible” consumer of the thing encountered (*ibid*, 153). It is this kind of encounter that tells us that the Other is not “encountered” in the same way that one would encounter a hammer, for instance. The Other is not a tool, nor is it equipment, but rather in the case of something that is ready-to-hand, there is someone for whom the object is ready to hand that is necessarily *not* a matter of belonging to the Dasein encountering the object ready-to-hand. This encounter has a dual purpose in that it both separates and joins Dasein from and with the Other. That is to say, in my encounter with the tool that is ready-to-hand, I am simultaneously “encountering” that there is someone other than myself that would use said tool in the same way that I would. In every instance there is someone

other than myself for whom the tool serves. If the hammer is the tool encountered in the world, I know that there is an Other for whom the use of the hammer would be a means for building a house. Moreover, as Mahon O'Brien (2014) so astutely points out, Heidegger goes "a step further and indicates something about the nature of the Other which is clearly related to the notion of leaping-ahead" (O'Brien, 2014, p. 4).<sup>13</sup> Now, the concept of the with-world comes into play in the following:

Thus Dasein's world frees entities which are not only quite distinct from equipment and Things, but which also – in accordance with their kind of Being *as* Dasein themselves – are 'in' the world in which they are at the same time encountered within-the-world, and are 'in' it by way of Being-in-the-world. These entities are neither present-at-hand nor ready-to-hand; on the contrary, they are *like* the very Dasein which frees them, in that *they are there too, and there with it*. So if one should want to identify the world in general with entities within-the-world, one would have to say that Dasein too is 'world.' (MR-BT, 154)

Heidegger is attempting to figure out the nature of the Other that is encountered – be it second handedly – in-the-world. However, does the way in which we initially encounter the other not rest on a presupposed separation of subject and object in much the same way previously touched on? How does an encounter of the Other in the world, from this singular perspective, come to tell us anything about the nature of the Other that is genuinely not tainted by the subject, object distinction?

The answers to these questions lie in how we conceive of the Other. "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" (MR-BT, 154). What Heidegger tells us here is that an encounter with something present-at-hand does not reveal a characteristic of the Other in the sense of something that "I" am not,

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<sup>13</sup> Keep this point of leaping-ahead in mind moving forward through the rest of this paper as it will come into play during the discussion of freedom and responsibility at the end of this section.



but that the Other is *there too*. “This Being-there-too 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 ... Being-in is *Being-with Others*” (MR-BT, 154-55). The concept of the Other Being-there-too allows for us to make sense of why we can never see the Other as an occurrent object, like a hammer, for instance. Rather, the Other is and has always been there too with us. According to Heidegger, the way in which we encounter the other is environmental.

This elemental worldly kind of encountering, which belongs to Dasein and is closest to it, goes so far the even one’s *own* Dasein becomes something that it can itself proximally ‘come across’ only when it *looks away* from ‘experiences’ and the ‘center of its actions’, or does not yet ‘see’ them at all. Dasein finds ‘itself’ proximally in *what* it does, uses, expects, avoids – in those things environmentally ready-to-hand with which it is proximally *concerned*. (MR-BT, 155)

The Other is like ‘us’ in the sense that the Other’s constitution is necessarily concerned Being-in-the-world. Perhaps a passage from O’Brien (2014) would shed more light on the Other.

“Heidegger would appear to be saying then that our experience of *ourselves*, most immediately, at least in terms of our everyday experience, takes place within our involved, project-oriented activities as part of the ‘group’, that is, we ‘find ourselves’ in the midst of some activity which relates us to others who we are ‘with’” (O’Brien, 5).

The role of the Other in such a constitution of Dasein is neither one of ready-to-hand, nor present-at-hand, so what is it? “‘The others,’ whom one designates as such in order to cover over one’s own essential belonging to them, are those who *are there* initially and for the most part in everyday being-with-one-another. The who is not this one and not that one, not oneself, not some, and not the sum of them all. The ‘who’ is the neuter, *the they*” (BT, 123).

*Das Man and Everydayness*

The they [*das Man*] is contentious topic amongst the literature, as it should be. Each interpretation of *das Man* carries with it an obligation to consistency in reading the remainder of the text in the respective tone. For example, if one carries the intuition that *Being and Time* serves as a normative text espousing some way of being in the world that would be better or worse than another might also read into Heidegger's presentation of *das Man* – particularly those passages that superficially paint *das Man* as more of a dictatorial force – that the entirety of passages pointed at authenticity must espouse some kind of claim that *das Man* is a negative force that must be overpowered or overcome. The they would serve as a dictator actively holding Dasein back from achieving its potential to be authentic. Indeed, there are interpretations that function off this very notion of the they.<sup>14</sup>

The they [das Man] is necessarily the who of Dasein in the initial mode of being-in-the-world. Things that Dasein cares for and gives meaning to are always already given meaning by the they. The they, accordingly, “has its own ways to be. The tendency of being-with which we called distantiality is based on the fact that being-with-one-another as such creates *averageness* ... The care of averageness reveals, in turn, an essential tendency of Dasein, which we call the *leveling down* of all possibilities of being” (123). The combination of distantiality, averageness, and leveling down create what Heidegger calls “publicness.” The language that Heidegger uses is critical to take note of, as it is fundamental in forming the interpretations that run counter to the one presented in this paper.

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<sup>14</sup> Olafson falls in this category, as well as Dreyfus (at times), Bret Davis (2006), Georg Gadamer (2003), Jurgen Habermas (1987), Taylor Carman (2003) to name a few. The issue with an assumption of this magnitude comes with a conflation of *das Man* and the Other.

No matter what Dasein brings to the table as a priority or a meaningful thing, the they squashes the individualistic nature of Dasein and propels it into a kind of stagnant state of being-in-the-world whereby Dasein will always be subject to the will of some evil dictator. “The *they*, which supplies the answer to the *who* of Dasein, is the *nobody* to whom every Dasein has always already surrendered itself, in its being-among-one-another” (124).

While there seems to be a rather cut and dry interpretation of the they as some dictatorial force that constantly keeps Dasein down, we can form another interpretation from this passage. One point to mention here is the description of the they up to this passage in §27, presents the they as an objective force that constantly diminishes the individuality of Dasein in favor of a kind of conformity. This passage, however, provides us with a little more insight on why that is not the case. First, it is clear that when Heidegger refers to the they as the *nobody*, he is referring to the they as a kind of construct that is always already there. Note that the construct is not something that physically exists, but rather one that serves as a metaphorical dictator. But even this seems to be rather unsatisfying when discussing the they. So, what is it that we refer to when we discuss *the they*? It seems rather clear to me that there is no objectively present *das Man* serving the role of the prison warden, but rather that *das Man* is a kind of thing that has always already existed, but on its own it has no power. It is not the thing that Dasein distances itself from, for in order to distance itself from *das Man* it would have to know that *das Man* as such exists. At the initial moment, the who of Dasein is revealed to be the they in its average everydayness. “Initially, factual Dasein is in the with-world, discovered in an average way. Initially, ‘I’ ‘am’ not in the sense of my own self, but I am the others in the mode of the they. In terms of the they, and as the they, I am initially ‘given’ to ‘myself.’ Initially, Dasein is the they and for the most part it remains so” (125).

However, to construe these observations as a means of phenomenological fact-finding is to miss the import of *Being and Time* all-together. Heidegger's work was not meant to simply portray Dasein as it is in its current state. As Tucker McKinney (2017) so astutely sums up, "authentic Dasein achieves self-ownership, but only by retroactively cancelling *das Man*'s authority, 'bringing itself back' from the *lostness* in *das Man*, and forming a resolution in confrontation with that possibility – death – that singles it out as distinct individual" (McKinney, 430). This notion of individuation is something that I have touched on previously, but even so, I did not make mention of an important question. That being: how does Heidegger's discussion of *das Man* do anything to genuinely eschew the Cartesian model Heidegger so desperately wants to flee from?<sup>15</sup> Moreover, there is a kind of prescriptive force in *das Man*, but what is the source of said prescriptive authority?

An attempt to answer the latter comes from Dreyfus (1991):

Norms and the averageness they sustain perform a crucial function. Without them the referential whole [of practical significance] could not exist. In the West *one* eats with a knife and fork; in the Far East *one* eats with chopsticks. The important thing is that in each culture there are equipmental norms and thus an average way to do things. There *must* be, for without such averageness there could be no equipmental whole ... If some ate with forks, and others with chopsticks, and still others used their right hands, the way food was cut up, and whether one got a washcloth with dinner, whether there was bread or rice, plates or bowls, etc. would be undecided, and the whole equipmental nexus involved in cooking and eating a meal could not exist. For eating equipment to work, how *one* eats, when *one* eats, where *one* eats, what *one* eats, and what *one* eats with must already be determined. (Dreyfus, p. 153-54)

Dreyfus here asserts that the way in which I do anything is, and further, *must* be determined in advance for there to be any "way" of doing something. However, such an interpretation just seems to be a matter of succumbing to the phenomenological fact-finding previously mentioned. This interpretation seems to put forth that the way Dasein is in its everyday Being-in-the-world,

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<sup>15</sup> For the sake of the argument, I will continue to function as if Heidegger has escaped Cartesian Dualism.

is such that it learns to act by simply observing the Other as an example of *das Man*. That is to say, the way in which Dreyfus portrays norm governed behavior prescribed by *das Man* furthers a relationship between Dasein and *das Man* that indicates more of a material necessity, where Dasein *cannot exist* without the authoritative prescription of *das Man*. Indeed, this would seem to imply that the authority we seek to understand is entirely based on a kind of fact that there just is *one* who does something some way. Moreover, it is only through the prescriptive norms that are passed on by *das Man* that Dasein can come to any kind of self-consciousness.<sup>16</sup>

As a means of making sense of the authority of *das Man*, as well as the issues that come with placing the role of *das Man* in light of attempting to remain steadfast to the anti-Cartesian nature of *Being and Time*, McKinney (2017) challenges the notion that the social-normative interpretations successfully make sense of the gravity of the dictatorial force of *das Man*. For McKinney, the social-normative interpretations may have an account of the authority that *das Man* has over individual Dasein, but they have not solidified this authority fully in social norms. McKinney's intention, then is to argue a more compelling notion of the authority and role of *das Man* as deriving "from a primitive aspiration to objectivity" (432). He goes on to say,

"The pressure to seek convergence in our intentional performance lies in the fact that intentional performances, whether our own or those of others, all possess and object – that being of entities – in common the source of *das Man*'s apparent authority thus arises not from any primitive pro-social impulse but from a more basic pretense to ontological knowledge, which urges us to relate to the objects in our midst just as *anyone* who genuinely grasps their being *would*" (McKinney, 431).

It goes without saying that McKinney's interpretation is a rather radical one as it pertains to the literature on *das Man*. His entire argument rests on the possibility that there is a more plausible explanation of the role of *das Man*, one that accurately depicts the authoritative role that *das*

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<sup>16</sup> Some compelling interpretations on the authority of *das Man* come from Dreyfus (1991), Dreyfus (1995), Carman (1994), Blattner (1999), Christensen (2012), Haugeland (2013), and Rouse (2014).

*Man* has over Dasein. According to McKinney, the block quote on p. 50 is not “enough to explain the attitude of conformism” (434). I am sympathetic to this point, as there is no reason why Dasein – having become aware of its lostness – would have to act in accordance to the social norms that are in place. To illustrate he uses the example of equipment usage that would “defy” the social norm. Imagine that the task at hand is to hammer a nail, but the only tool that you have at your disposal is a screwdriver. Rather than not accomplishing the task at hand, as conformity to social norms would necessitate, you use the screwdriver as a makeshift hammer. If social norms were in place as it pertains to the use of certain equipment, then there would have been no act of hammering as there was no hammer present, but the point McKinney wants to make is that it is *not* a matter of what one does in the sense of conformity to social norms, but rather that the “hammering” of the nail with the screwdriver indicates “*what makes sense to do*” (435).

However, even in the example above there is no cessation of the dictatorial force that is present from *das Man*. Rather, the directedness of one in the position of hammering without a hammer is directed at accomplishing the goal of hammering the nail although the hammer was not present. As such, the conformity to *das Man* is still there, but not in by means of social norms, but more so in terms of what *anyone in that situation would do*. It is not out of the ordinary to assume that anyone would have tried to hammer the nail with the screwdriver given that the screwdriver was the only tool present, but what is out of the ordinary is to assume that someone in this situation would do nothing due to the possibility of banishment for using a tool in a way that *one* does not use *that particular tool*. He goes on, “if that thought is right, it suggests that we ought to associate *das Man* not with socially regulated protocols but, instead, with claims to knowledge” (435). In many ways, McKinney’s argument serves to bolster the

arguments that came from the previous sections. When discussing the authority of *das Man* it is imperative to touch on the source of the authority, and if McKinney is correct that the authority stems from the notion of *what makes sense to do*, then the criticisms from Löwith, Habermas, Levinas, and the likes still have yet to be quelled. In fact, McKinney's reconstruction of the authority of *das Man* over Dasein makes the problem of authentic Nazism all the more pressing.

In a similar vein to McKinney, B. Scot Rouse (2013) places an emphasis on *das Man* and *Mitsein* to make sense of the Other in *Being and Time*. Rouse posits that Heidegger's conception of sociality is constitutive of Dasein both in inauthentic Dasein and authentic Dasein. He argues that sociality is one of the core features of human agency that "cannot obtain in an individual subject independently of social relation to others" (Rouse, 417). For Rouse, this is the 'strong conception' of sociality. One in which the relation to the Other is so deeply entrenched in the identity of an individual that there can be no conception of a self without the Other having a part in it. He contrasts the 'strong conception' of sociality with the weak one, that is one that, "assumes that social relations are in principle contingent or extrinsic and that core features of human agency are built into the mind of each individual subject" (417). It is clear from the passages that I have used from *Being and Time* that there is a social component to Heidegger's work, but what I have yet to show is that this social relation is of an ethical nature. For Rouse, this seems to be obvious as he states, "the Heideggerian notion of the Disclosedness of the world implies an account of individual answerability that links it to the social dimensions of identity" (418). An interpretation of the role of the individual is always Other oriented in the sense that I *am* always Being-in-the-world-*with*.

Take the following passage from *Being and Time*, "what expresses itself in the 'I' is that Self which, proximally and for the most part, I am *not* authentically. When one is absorbed in

the everyday multiplicity and the rapid succession of that with which one is concerned, the Self of the self-forgetful ‘I am concerned’ shows itself as something simple which is constantly selfsame but indefinite and empty” (MR-BT, 368). This everyday expression of the ‘I’ manifests itself in the kind of ‘weak conception’ of sociality whereby the social sphere is an amalgamation of individual coming together.<sup>17</sup> All that is to say is that the individual Dasein cannot be truly individual in the same way that Aristotle described the individual outside of the polis as an isolated checkers piece.

When the interpretations of *das Man* from Rouse and McKinney – which serve as a reflection of the current state of unrest within the Heidegger literature in addressing the major questions posed by Löwith, Habermas, and Levinas – the picture of authentic Nazism becomes clear. If McKinney is right in his accusation that the current literature has not done its due diligence pertaining to the authoritative role of *das Man*, and that a more accurate account would look like *what makes sense to do* given the current situation – recall the hammering with a screwdriver – then a historical reading of *Being and Time* as a reflection of interwar Germany and its struggles as a country could lead to the conclusion that Nazism is just *what made sense to do*. If that is the case then the question of authentic Nazism is not a possibility, but rather a necessity in that it could be said that at the time it is just what made sense to do. Having said that, the question of what “ethics” can be gleaned from *Being and Time* seems to be one of a

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<sup>17</sup> This of course, is in contrast to the ‘strong conception’ of sociality. In terms of the distinction, it might be helpful to provide a bit more of an understanding of the roots of the ‘strong conception’ of sociality. The ‘strong conception’, from a German perspective comes from Hegel, where he insists in his conception of the ethical life that the ethical life cannot be something that is composed merely of an amalgamation of individuals. (Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §155-56) Moreover, Hegel traces the lineage back to Aristotle’s discussion of the relationship of the individual to the polis. Aristotle describes the individual outside of the polis akin to a checkers piece, but in a rather limited way in the sense that a checkers piece can only be what it is in the sense of the game being played. As such, the ‘isolated checkers piece’ cannot exist at all. Thus there can be no individual amalgamation that would make up the polis.



radical voluntarism in that whatever one wills at the time, so long as it fits the mold of *what makes sense to do* could be understood as authentic or ethical. This concern that *Being and Time* imputes an “ethics” that glorifies authentic being-in-the-world in such a way that resembles a radical voluntarism. Authenticity then seems only to be grounded in the sheer power of will of the individuals. Importantly, the core of authenticity is resoluteness, and without limitations on maintaining this resoluteness, one must accept that Heidegger’s work leaves open the possibility of National Socialism. It goes without saying that these interpretations rely heavily on an individualistic reading of *Being and Time*. What must be addressed is the role of the Other, which have done little to quell the concerns presented in this section. For the remainder of this paper, I will approach the role of the Other as presented by Olafson – emphasizing *Mitsein* as the grounds for ethics, Jean-Luc Nancy (2000, 2008) – approaching the possibility of sociality in Heidegger’s work at all, and E.S. Nelson (2011) – posing ethics from *Being and Time* as an ethics of facticity, or an ethics of individuation. A discussion of these views will indicate that each has their flaws, but that Nelson’s view falls closest to outright answering the question of Heideggerian ethics, but as previously mentioned, falls short in eliminating the possibility of authentic Nazism.

### *Mitsein*

The notion of being-with or *Mitsein*, plays a large role in *Being and Time*. It is this crucial portion of Heidegger’s work that has spawned a series of interpretations specifically focusing on what ethics, if any, can be gleaned from the text. Specifically, interlocutors such as Karl Löwith and Jurgen Habermas – recall from the previous section – contend that due to the ambiguity in terms of the role of others, that *Mitsein* characterizes the other as equipment that is

ready-to-hand for the constitution of Dasein – either collectively or individually – in a way that the other is subject to the desires of Dasein.

The literature reflects a vast range of interpretations covering the role *Mitsein* plays in Heidegger's work.<sup>18</sup> One of the more influential accounts comes from Olafson's *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics* in which he takes *Mitsein* to be the fundamental grounds with which an ethics can be gleaned from *Being and Time*. To put it bluntly, Olafson's account of *Mitsein*, does not accomplish much more than state a truth that Dasein is always in-the-world-with. Specifically, Olafson argues that *Mitsein* reveals that truth is a partnership amongst people where the individual sees themselves as interchangeable with another Dasein. This realization is one that is meant to drive ethical and moral behavior towards the other because of this ontological sameness. However, there is more to what grounds ethics in *Being and Time*. Olafson's account, while aimed in the right direction, does nothing more than serve as a means of phenomenological fact finding, which severely limits the import of *Being and Time*. Seeing as we have covered the concept of Being-with rather in-depth above, let's turn to some of the more difficult concepts that are directly related to this Being-with, and those are: the call of conscience, Being-guilty, and resoluteness.

### *Nancy and the Call of Conscience*

An important "goal" to keep in mind for Heidegger is *authentic* Being-in-the-world. At present, we have covered the *who* of everyday Dasein, the implicit togetherness of Dasein's

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<sup>18</sup> While *Mitsein* is a loaded and rather contentious topic in the literature, I would be remiss if I did not mention the literature touching on the distinction between *Mitsein* and *Miteinandersein* or being-with-one-another that lacks serious engagement. For the most part, the literature takes *Mitsein* to be synonymous with *Miteinandersein*. While this distinction seems trivial, it is a point of contention. At present, I will assume that they are synonymous and will continue as such. A distinction of the two would require a paper of its own.

Being-in-the-world-with the Other that is necessarily Dasein *too*, as well as the lostness in *das Man* that Dasein is always *lost* in that is disclosed to Dasein by way of its being brought face-to-face with the anxiety associated with death and the possibility of the *impossibility* of Being-in-the-world. However, this has not done much to obviate the charge that any ethics that could be wrested from *Being and Time* would be directed at the self rather than the Other.<sup>19</sup> In order to eschew the solipsistic concerns an examination of what the call of conscience is, to whom the call is for, and what the call directs one towards is necessary.

For Heidegger, the call of conscience is essentially a form of discourse. That is, the call is something that can fit the linguistic mode in much the same way that idle talk is a mode of discourse.<sup>20</sup> Given that discourse has intentional content – a directedness *at* the content of discourse – we come to the question of what the content of the call actually is. Heidegger explains the content of the call as:

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 *understands itself*. The call reaches Dasein in this understanding of itself which it always has, and which is concernful in an everyday, average manner. The call reaches the *they-self of concernful Being with Others*. (MR-BT, 317).

This passage almost explains all the questions from the outset of this section. First and foremost, the content of the call is necessarily Dasein itself. That is to say, the direction towards which the

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<sup>19</sup> Indeed this is the charge presented by Emmanuel Levinas in *Totality and Infinity*.

<sup>20</sup> Discourse is something that has yet to be discussed, but given the trajectory of the paper, there is no reason to muddy the waters with an in-depth analysis of discourse. For now, take the following passage as a reflection on Discourse, “discourse which expresses itself is communication. Its tendency of Being is aimed at bringing the hearer to participate in disclosed Being towards what is talked about in the discourse” (MR-BT, 211-12). Discourse already has the structure of *call and response* such that there is an *aboutness* of the discourse itself that pulls the hearer into the contents of what the discourse is about. The reason I draw the connection between idle talk and discourse in general is not to say that the call of conscience and idle talk share the same kind of intentional content, but rather to draw similarities in terms of the structure of discourse more generally.

call directs the hearer is necessarily towards itself. But does such a directedness towards the self not just eschew the work previously done showing the anti-Cartesian sentiments of *Being and Time* itself? Assuredly not, as Heidegger goes on to say, “this interpretation of the conscience passes itself off as recognizing the call in the sense of a voice which is ‘universally’ binding, and which speaks in a way that is ‘not just subjective’” (MR-BT, 323). This call of conscience is not something that calls Dasein to its individual self as separate from the Other, but rather the call of conscience is always already directed at the Dasein-with [*mitdasein*] of Being-in-the-world.

If the call of conscience is directed at Dasein, then from whom does the call stem? For Heidegger, the call necessarily comes from Dasein itself. However, the call is something that appeals to the self of the *they-self*. That the call appeals to the they-self means that it appeals to the lostness of everyday Dasein. In this sense, at any given moment, the call is there, but it is not *heard* by Dasein. This is what Heidegger refers to as a passing-over.

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’ ... the call pushes it into insignificance. But the Self, which the appeal has been robbed of this lodgment and hiding-place, gets brought to itself by the call. When the they-self is appealed to, it gets called to the Self. But it does not get called to that Self which can become for itself and ‘object’ on which to pass judgement, nor to that Self which inertly dissects its ‘inner life’ with fussy curiosity, nor to that Self which one has in mind when one gazes ‘analytically’ at psychical conditions and what lies behind them. The appeal to the Self in the they-self does not force it inwards upon itself, so that it can close itself off from the ‘external world’. The call passes over everything like this and disperses it, so as to appeal solely to that Self, which, notwithstanding, is in no other way than Being-in-the-world. (MR-BT, 317-18)

The appeal from the call of conscience is thus not to the individual *qua* individual, or individual Dasein *qua* individual Dasein, but rather the appeal is to a form of agency that has been missing in Dasein’s lostness in *das Man*. As such, the call of conscience is a call to the very core of what Dasein is. What is Dasein at its core? What makes Dasein what it is? For Heidegger, the

essential structure of the Being of Dasein's Being-in-the-world is *care*. Dasein, at any given point finds itself immersed in a world whereby it *cares for and about things in the world in which it finds itself*. This care is not the kind of care that we associate with a caretaker, or a nurse, or the likes. It is not a sense of care that is loaded with the kind of ethical component that the normal use of care carries with it. Rather, it is necessarily about the projects, objects, and other things in the world that help constitute Dasein's Being-in-the-world. As we have previously covered, the Other in the world in which we find ourselves is *not* used in the same way that the hammer is. To use the Other as a tool or equipment is to treat the Other as something present-at-hand or ready-to-hand, but as Heidegger states, this is not what the Other is. What authentic Dasein, cares for is the Other in the world, but in such a way that the Other is not a tool or piece of equipment.

What, then are the ramifications of hearing the call of conscience? The effects of hearing the call of conscience is a disclosure to Dasein that it has not been aware of its own conscience. That is not to say that hearing the call of conscience is the same as a momentary creation of a conscience, but rather that Dasein's conscience has always been there, but closed off, in a sense, by its lostness in *das Man*. For Heidegger, the disclosure of this information to Dasein is then what creates a sense of guilt in Dasein. This sense of guilt is not the same that would come from someone having committed a crime. Rather this guilt is something that has always been there, yet covered up by *das Man*. Dasein is guilty of not wanting to have a conscience. Thus, Dasein is guilty of not wanting to be itself authentically. In this disclosure, Dasein realizes that it is guilty of not Being itself, that is, Being-in-the-world lost in *das Man* and being a they-self. To maintain authenticity, Dasein must be resolute and steadfast in its commitment to Being-itself.

Jean-Luc Nancy (2000, 2008) brings up the problem of sociality to pose the question of how *being-with* is even possible. The charge here is that Heidegger has accurately taken note of the ontological being-with, but fails to make sense of how the *with* has been concealed, lost, hidden, and the likes between *das Man* and the people [das Volk]. His attempt to make sense of the plurality of the singular subject as a means to eschew the charges of solipsism brought on by many of Heidegger's European critics comes off as rather circuitous and long-winded. How is it that *das Man* conceals Dasein's authentic self? Heidegger does mention that certain forms of discourse instigated by *das Man* may serve to perpetuate Dasein's fallen, inauthentic self, but does not make sense of how one falls in the first place, and from where they have fallen. In that regard, though this is Nancy's starting point, he does not ever come back to it in any meaningful way. Rather, Nancy just rambles about guilt, the middle voice, and inauthentic Dasein's passivity considering the call of conscience manifested as "Guilty!" What Nancy does illuminate for the careful reader of *Being and Time* is that there is no reason to believe that Dasein becomes/is freed to be authentic in a vacuum. To assume that this is the case would be to fall into the Cartesian Dualism in the sense that if authenticity occurs in a vacuum, then one who is authentic will differentiate themselves from those who are inauthentic, but in such a way that furthers the notion that authenticity is a radically individualized process. By leaving authenticity in a vacuum, Nancy fails to eschew the possibility of authentic Nazism as well. Though his account is exegetically dense, a critical reading of *Being Singular Plural* (2000) accomplishes the task of addressing the individual nature of authenticity, but without a detailed discussion of how one maintains this authenticity, we are still left in an obscure position relative to the role of the Other in any satisfying way, as well as an obscurity pertaining to how Dasein can remain resolute.

### *Anticipatory Resoluteness*

Dasein is always in anticipation of death, which is its ownmost, non-relational possibility in the sense that there is no Dasein that can fill in for the individual Dasein in performing their death. Rather, Dasein is individualized in the sense that each Dasein is their own, but not in the sense that the call to conscience further creates a solipsistic framework whereby Dasein can finally understand itself. Of course, such a disclosure is not just a “one and done” type of realization. Rather, it is necessarily a disclosure that one must actively pursue. This is the notion of *resoluteness* that Heidegger discusses.

As resolute, Dasein is already *taking action*. The term ‘take action’ is one which we are purposely avoiding. For in the first place this term must be taken so broadly that ‘activity’ will also embrace the passivity of resistance ... Care, however, as concerned solicitude, so primordially and wholly envelops Dasein’s Being that it must already be presupposed as a whole when we distinguish between theoretical and practical behavior; it cannot first be built up out of these faculties by a dialectic which, because it is existentially ungrounded, is necessarily quite baseless. Resoluteness, however, is only that authenticity which, in care, is the object of care, and which is possible as care – the authenticity of care itself ... Now that resoluteness has been worked out as Being-guilty, a self-projection in which one is reticent and ready for anxiety, our investigation has been put in a position for defining the ontological meaning of that potentiality which we have been seeking – Dasein’s *authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole*. (MR-BT, 347-48)

The notion of an authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole revealed through resoluteness matters as it pertains to the object of concern for Dasein. For the accounts listed above, the object of concern for Dasein seems to fall within the individual lens such that authenticity is something that matters for individual cases of Dasein such that *what makes sense to do* is just what makes sense for that individual. Though both Olafson and Nancy attempt to account for the communal aspect of authenticity and subsequently ethics, they fail in making sense of the communal aim that individual Dasein has that is laid out in Heidegger’s discussion of the being of Dasein as Care, and more importantly, *concern*. The question of what Dasein is concerned with, or concerned for on all the accounts mentioned above manifests itself as concern for the self, but

there are two important notes to make here: first, if Dasein is concerned with itself and its own authenticity then Heidegger's account does not separate itself from Cartesian Dualism in any meaningful way, which means that Heidegger's project rests on faulty grounds as a whole; second, if Dasein's concern is always for itself then the Other is nothing more than a tool present-at-hand or ready-to-hand, but this runs counter to Heidegger's own text in *Being and Time*. As such, neither account is successful in making sense of the role of the Other in any way that would eschew the possibility of authentic Nazism. I will now turn to an account that accomplishes one of the two, but falters in eliminating the possibility of authentic Nazism.

*E. S. Nelson and The Ethics of Individuation*

At this point it may be helpful to return to the drive of this paper in particular. The aim of this paper is not only to explore the accounts that address what ethics could look like when wrested from *Being and Time*. Further, I have approached this paper with Löwith's objection in mind, that is, even if an ethics can be wrested from the text one still cannot account for the possibility of authentic Nazism for one reason or another. What I have shown up to this point is that accounts aimed at Löwith's objection – i.e. Olafson, Nancy, - may be aimed in the right direction, they falter in one of two major ways. Either the account fails to maintain consistency with Heidegger's own work, specifically concerning the anti-Cartesian sentiments laden throughout the text, or the accounts leave open the possibility that Dasein can live authentically as a Nazi, and in some cases both.<sup>21</sup> On my interpretation of *Being and Time* authentic Nazism is impossible for a number of reasons, but none more important than §27 of *Being and Time* where Heidegger mentions, though rather sparingly, leaping-in and leaping-ahead. Moreover, most all

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<sup>21</sup> It goes without saying that these are not the only two interpretations concerning ethics, community, authenticity, etc. in the Heidegger literature, but these two accounts have received considerable attention in the literature and as such must be discussed when broaching the topic of ethics in *Being and Time*.



accounts that are present in the literature assume that leaping-in and leaping-ahead are actions in the same way that hammering is. As such, the question of *how* authentic Dasein can act comes to the surface. To answer this question one must look further at Heidegger's own text to see that so long as Dasein remains resolute in its openness to its ownmost Being as *being-towards-death*, one can see that Dasein can act in any way so long as that action is consistent with Care – which is the core of the being of Dasein's being-there, and when it comes to the Other Dasein must act in a way that the Other is an object of concern – *and* the action leaps-ahead for another Dasein rather than one that leaps-in for the Other.

Leaping-in and leaping-ahead have yet to be discussed in this paper, but what is clear from Heidegger's own text is that leaping-ahead is a matter of *giving back* the Care structure that is missing in the they-self that Dasein is in its everyday existence. Where the accounts mentioned previously falter is in the conflation of a more active action, such as hammering, with a more passive one such as *giving back* the care structure of Dasein to the Other, who also is in every instantiation its own Dasein. As such, the accounts mentioned here are unable to address the concern of the possibility of authentic Nazism in *Being and Time*. Without addressing this conflation the possibility of authentic Nazism could fit the mold of giving back Dasein's care structure, but as indicated in the *Call of Conscience* section the call is not something that comes from an outward force demanding a break in conformity – as is so clearly the case with the Nazi movement in interwar Germany – but rather comes from Dasein's ownmost being such that the call is a means of coming to terms with Dasein's own lostness. As such, being open to hearing the call is not something that can be forced upon individual cases of Dasein without being an instantiation of leaping-in for the Other rather than leaping-ahead.

What then, is the answer to the question of what ethics can be gleaned from *Being and Time*? E.S. Nelson provides an answer to this question by titling the ethics as an ethics of individuation. Superficially my support of this description may seem contradictory to the discussion concerning the communal aspects of *Being and Time*, but this could not be further from the truth. Importantly, an ethics of individuation is *not* synonymous with something like egoism.

The separation and solitude of individuation might be isolating but this does not by itself make it egoism or solipsism. In the relation of Dasein to its other, it can attempt to take this away from the other by leaping in, taking over ‘understanding better’ or it can promote the other’s individuation. Thus, Heidegger indicated a different kind of relation in which the other is to remain free. In solicitude or caring-for the other, as ownmost care, Dasein does not leap in for the other in order to take the other’s care away, but rather is affected by it in order to give it back to the other. (Nelson, 280)<sup>22</sup>

Here Nelson, rather poignantly, gets at the heart of what the ethics of Individuation is. In Dasein’s individualization – i.e. the process of hearing the call of conscience, wanting to have a conscience, and remaining resolute in anticipation of death – reveals a relationship with the Other in a significantly different light than the likes of Löwith and Habermas in that Nelson takes seriously the concepts of leaping-in and leaping-ahead, but with a particular emphasis hearing the call of conscience and remaining open to it as “passive quietism.” What’s more, this quietism also carries with it a duty to the Other essentially to not leap-in and take their care away from them, but rather to leap-ahead and allow for the Other to hear the call on their own. As such, any action concerning the Other must be a matter of concern-for the Other’s becoming authentic.

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<sup>22</sup> It should be noted that this passage introduces a new concept of solicitude. Rather than introducing this new concept, I have been alluding to it throughout. Solicitude [*fürsorge*] is also translated as concern, which I have used in previous sections. Solicitude for Heidegger, as pointed out by Nelson, is not a matter of separation from the world in which we live as such a task is impossible. Rather, solicitude is a mode of being-in-the-world-concerned-for something.

This interpretation breaks off from others in a significant way with the introduction of a responsibility to remaining open to hearing the call by situating this responsibility *to* the Other rather than to oneself. As such, *what makes sense to do is always* an action that leaps-ahead of the Other. It is imperative to note that any instantiation of leaping-in for the Other is never something that makes sense to do. If Dasein has a responsibility to the Other, the responsibility is to allow for the Other to hear the call in the same way that Dasein did originally. In so doing, the responsibility, simply put, is just not to leap-in for the Other. Importantly, once one has heard the call one has a responsibility not only to oneself, but to the Other as well. This responsibility is not so much to act in ways that leap-ahead of the Other, but simply *not* to leap-in for the Other.

While there may not be much behind the assertion that the responsibility of authentic Dasein is simply *not* to leap-in for the Other, it is indicative that not only are the ethical components within *Being and Time*, but moreover, there is at least one instance in which Dasein is not authentic, that is leaping-in for the Other. If leaping-in for the Other is an instance of inauthentic being-in-the-world then any instance that would match a leaping-in for the Other cannot be a mode of authentic being-in-the-world. What is clear is that the National Socialist movement from every perspective is the quintessential example of leaping-in for the Other. Following this logic authentic Nazism could not be considered an authentic mode of being-in-the-world. Thus, the criticisms from Löwith, Habermas, and the likes that *Being and Time* allows for Nazism as an authentic mode of being-in-the-world are now faced with the challenge of showing that Nazism could be understood as leaping-ahead, though this is no easy challenge.

## **Section V – Concluding Remarks**

There are quite a few moving parts to the project thus far. To sum things up, allow me to make clear those connections that served as the guidelines for this thesis. First and foremost is the connection of Martin Heidegger to the National Socialist movement.

There is an undeniable connection between Heidegger and the National Socialist movement and, as I've noted in the first section, there exists a plethora of research on the connection to a point that not mentioning it would seem as though the topic is purposefully obviated for the sake of making the greater point. Especially pertaining to ethics, it would seem philosophically irresponsible to avoid an exploration of the connection of Heidegger to the National Socialist movement. The purpose of exploring this connection was two-fold. The first was simply to display a substantial knowledge of the literature surrounding the connection of Heidegger to the Nazi Party. But the second – by far the more philosophically important point – was to explore the validity of the connection between Heidegger's philosophies and his political affiliations. There is always the question of whether one can read a National Socialist ideology within Heidegger's texts and the purpose of the first section was to explore this connection and see whether the charge holds. In particular, the question of whether one can read a fascist ideology into Heidegger's *Being and Time* is one that has been a point of contention for the literature. One of the major reasons for this comes from Heidegger himself. One of the easiest points to make for the connection of Heidegger's *Being and Time* to a fascist ideology comes from his *Rekterostrade* in 1933 where Heidegger used the language from *Being and Time* to connect the philosophical ideas of the text to the speech where he championed the National Socialist movement as well as Hitler as the hero of the generation for Dasein and the one that would lead Germany to its "destiny."

While the use of the language in his 1933 speech was a direct reference to his 1927 *Being and Time*, what is less clear is the answer to the question of whether the fascist ideology was always there in *Being and Time* or whether one can just read it into the text after the fact. The interlocutors that I mentioned in § II show the wide array of views pertaining to this very question. On the extreme end we have Victor Farias, who argued that, “the double structure of authentic community and a people’s struggle in the face of the most extreme likelihood of death ... completes, even in a terminological sense, the philosophical political project that already in 1927 anticipates Heidegger’s later positions” (*ibid*, 65). From this it is rather easy to see what Farias’s position is. That is, reading a political ideology into *Being and Time* is not all too difficult, especially in light of Heidegger’s speech in 1933. Moreover, this political ideology is not something that we can simply read into *Being and Time*, but rather the political ideology is already there.

While it is possible to read a political ideology into *Being and Time*, I made it clear that such a reading is entirely disingenuous to the text in the sense that many commenters have taken note of the anti-political sentiments of *Being and Time*. The text itself eschews any kind of political ideology in the sense that the overall goal of the text is an ontological one, that is to say, the goal of the text is to set the grounds for what politics, ethics, and the likes could look like. When specifically viewing the ethical content of the text, Farias aims to show that there is some kind of ethical view that is in place in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. More powerfully than that though, the ethical import of the text is something that we ought not to take seriously as the homage to the National Socialist party – and the subsequent actions that were considered permissible under the guise of the party – necessarily disallows an ethical view to exist from Heidegger. This of course is the most extreme view covered in the literature.

However, one of the more important things to take note of is an objection brought to light by Jurgen Habermas. That is – considering the severity of the position that Farias holds – *Being and Time* is a text that has garnered an extensive amount of attention and we must take that seriously. As such, we ought not to just throw the text away given the author’s political affiliations – regardless of the reprehensible nature of said affiliations – rather we ought to take seriously the import of the text itself. Even if we take the text seriously, there is something else that we have to take seriously as it pertains to said political affiliations. Even though there is no direct and objectively observable connection of *Being and Time* to the National Socialist movement, we have to take seriously – as it pertains to ethics – that *Being and Time* does allow for something like a fascist regime to be an authentic mode of Being-in-the-world.

In § III I examined this concern by directly bringing up Karl Löwith’s perspective. That is, Löwith directly presents a kind of interpretation that shows the connection between Heidegger’s work and the fascist ideology of the National Socialist party. Löwith presented his interpretation of *Being and Time* as a prescriptive and descriptive text that not only describes accurately the state of inter-war Germany and the struggle that was present during that time economically and politically, but also a prescription of *how* Germany might escape from this inter-war German conflict in the time in which Germans find themselves. Interestingly enough, Löwith proposed a turn to Heidegger as a means of escaping the Heideggerian situation that is present in the 1946 Germany in which Löwith was writing. By presenting some of the more contentious passages from §74 of Division II of *Being and Time* I illustrated the possibility of reading a political ideology into the text. However, such a reading is incredibly superficial and only is present when one reads the text without the larger context present. In order to make the point that there is a fascist ideology in *Being and Time* additional context is necessary, and while

taking seriously the ambiguity in the text – specifically within Division II of *Being and Time* – one must evaluate the validity of the claims that Division II indicates a kind of fascism, or is at least pointing towards a fascist ideology.

This brought us to §IV of the thesis where quite a bit of the exegetical work took place. By adding some of the context from Division I and II we began to see that both Habermas's and Löwith's concerns were alleviated. In fact, by shedding light on *das Man*, *Mitsein*, Being-towards-death, and anticipatory resoluteness, we come to see that the fascist ideology within *Being and Time* does not exist in the slightest. Moreover, by framing the concerns above within the framework, we come to see that fascism is in fact impossible in light of the framework initiated by Heidegger in *Being and Time*. In addition to eschewing those concerns, §IV aimed to show that the ethical grounds presented in the text are necessarily other oriented to a point that the Being of Dasein is always already oriented towards the other in such a way that those who present the critique of *Being and Time* as furthering a Cartesian Dualism, are satiated. Such a reading of *Being and Time* as an interpersonal text indicates that there is still much to be gleaned from the text as it pertains to ethics. It is important to note that there is no specific prescription of ethics from the text itself, but rather that the grounds for ethics necessarily are other oriented in a way that the critique of *Being and Time* as furthering a Cartesian Dualism fall short.

The project at hand was a rather ambitious one and I can't say with all certainty that I have accomplished the goal I set out to, which was establishing the grounds for ethics in *Being and Time* and to show that an ethics functioning on said groundwork would be an interpersonal ethics where authentic Being-in-the-world is necessarily Other oriented. Moreover, the Other oriented nature of said ethics would not be a matter of using the Other as one uses a tool – that is, the Other is not something that is present-at-hand or ready-to-hand – but rather that the Other

plays a large role in constituting the “self” of individual Dasein. The Other does so in a way that does not further the subject, object distinction that has been so prevalent in the history of philosophy – as Heidegger so readily points out – but the Other reveals that the essence of Dasein, on an individual level, is necessarily care *for* the Other.

It is this final portion of the project that requires a significant amount of exegesis in its own right, but given the work that has been done up to this point, an Other oriented ethics grounded in a Heideggerian framework is not entirely implausible. Indeed, there are those who would posit that Levinas does just this, but in more of a combative sense. I would posit that while those positions do in fact have some grounds to stand on, given the outright statements from Levinas expressing discontent with Heidegger’s philosophical and political positions, but falter in acknowledging that Heidegger and Levinas are functioning on much the same wavelength relative to the Other.



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