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The In/Authentic Subject: Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Selfhood

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THE IN/AUTHENTIC SUBJECT: KIERKEGAARD, HEIDEGGER, AND SELFHOOD

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By

Joseph Alfred Tighe IV

May 2020

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ABSTRACT

THE IN/AUTHENTIC SUBJECT: KIERKEGAARD, HEIDEGGER, AND SELFHOOD

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Dissertation supervised by Dr. Frederick Evans

This dissertation represents an attempt to understand the self, what it is, what it means, and how it provides subjective identity. These concerns are situated within a personal narrative that describes the loss of self and its rediscovery subsequent to that loss. In critically examining the work of both Soren Kierkegaard and Martin Heidegger on the concept of authenticity, I have attempted to come to terms with my experience of the loss of selfhood as well as the conditions of possibility for its return. I argue that Kierkegaard's construction of the self, while problematically religious, convincingly describes the experience of authentic selfhood but does not escape the problems of representationalism, leaving us with an elegant but impractical notion of subjectivity. As a remedy, I argue Heidegger's concept of authenticity escapes this problem and offers a rigorous theory of socially embedded authentic selfhood. Taking both Kierkegaard

and Heidegger together, I propose, allows us to understand what the self is, what it means, and how it makes us who we are.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this to Liz and Elora, and Mom and Dad. Without you, I would have been lost.

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I would like to acknowledge the untiring dedication of Dr. Fred Evans, Dr. Jim Swindal, and Dr. Jay Lampert. Thank you for your insight and critical comments. This project would have been impossible without your ongoing encouragement and expertise. I also thank the Duquesne Philosophy Department. This dissertation represents the outcome of a long and somewhat unconventional tenure as a graduate student, and I am grateful for the flexibility and compassion granted to me. I would also like to acknowledge the Mt. Lebanon School District, especially my students. It is a pleasure to work with you, and you constantly remind me to laugh and not take myself too seriously. Finally, my acknowledgements and heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Sidney White, sage counselor and friend. Thank you for helping me find myself.

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Chapter One

A Grounding

I should probably begin with my own story. After all, this is a paper about authenticity. I suppose I should start by explaining why I'm interested in this confusing and often misused notion. I've always been attracted to "trials." I've always wanted to discover what I'm made of, so to speak. I've always been curious just what my limits are, how far I can push myself physically, mentally, emotionally, psychologically, intellectually. Authenticity is a kind of trail at the limit of the self. I have found and lost myself many times. I have crucified, resurrected, murdered, buried, lost, and found selves. I am tired of the toil of the self, but I doubt it will ever end.

As a child, I was keenly aware of masks. I wore a collection of masks. One for school, one for church, one for home, one for friends. They were grotesque disfigurations, smiles painted to serenely cover my terror and fear of my father's unpredictable and often violent alcoholism. To survive, I invested my power in summoning masks that convinced others my circumstances were not what I knew them to be, that if I lied well enough, the lie and the truth became indistinguishable. The self was a story to be told, a pose to adopt, and a mask to wear, so I built myself on lies. The masks became permanent, and soon there was nothing under the masks but more masks. But I was no longer afraid, for there was security in the inexhaustibility of masks. This is how I lived. I lied that things were better so that things could be better. After years, it worked. My father stopped drinking. My family stayed together. And I learned the power of masks – that the self is a lie you tell until it becomes true. This idea that the self is chosen as a lie is chosen, that is, as a premise from which the given is interpreted, or re-

interpreted, in the case of a lie, to reflect a state of affairs that is not actually given, was dangerous knowledge. To lie to myself that my existence was tolerable was to make my existence tolerable. By telling myself I could, I could survive anything. To survive was more than to eke out an existence. It was to thrive, for what is the surest sign of survival than when the animal is so obviously thriving? I learned this from stories of heroes who thrived in the face of terrors of all types; what I learned was that if one does something, one should do it as best one can under the conditions at hand. I was not possessed of any particular talent other than perhaps my insight into masks. I knew that what one does is a mask, but prior to the moment when masks reveal only further masks, beneath the first mask is what the mask masks: in this case, the terror of existence itself. I adopted my masks so as to "face" existence. I did this well. So I chose to be that animal that thrived on terror. Is there any other animal besides man for which this is a possibility?

What did this mean? Am I saying that I sought out terror? Partly, yes. When I was younger, I chose terror so as to ensure myself that I could defeat it. Fearlessness was founded only in terror. I learned to thrive in terror and fear by throwing myself headlong into it when my father's drinking challenged me, a challenge I read in almost every seemingly imperceptible sign, from the volume and timbre of the voices arguing in the kitchen to the amplitude of footsteps in the hallway. I knew the blows were coming by the precursive percussions they made well before the actual strike. Instead of running, I headed toward them and ushered them home. They were ineluctable visitations, and they required a site for their arrival. If not me, then who? My younger brothers? My mother? I gave myself as their locus, a territory for their attentions, and so this territory was shaped by heavy fists. By surviving, I proved myself capable. I became the lie I told myself I was: fearless. I understood myself through conflict,

through the lie that there was no conflict I could not withstand, which was true insofar as I had withstood all conflicts in the simple act of surviving them. I didn't die, and this was to live. But then the conflict ended. As I said, my father stopped drinking. Permanently. Today, as I write these words, we are very close and share a deep and mutual respect and love. But all this happened. And in a way, I am glad it did. If the relationship I have with my father today were contingent on the eternal return of our shared past, I would embrace it smilingly.

When my father stopped drinking, the unpredictability of his behavior stopped as well. But I couldn't have known this then. It took many years for me to understand that he would likely never drink again, but during that time I lived in keen anticipation of his fall from the wagon. It never came. Instead, my father became a steady lodestar, constant and true. Certainly, there were cloudy days, but when he reappeared it was always in the same place. There was no more terror. What use was my fearless mask now? Externally, I had been deprived of the environment in which I thrived, so I internalized conflict and carried it with me into the external world where it was lacking. I invented new conflicts with my parents, my brothers, my teachers, my friends. I adopted the mask of the "troubled teen." I fashioned myself as angry, unpredictable, dangerous now that the world was no longer so. As if dialectically, the fearless mask I had crafted in opposition to an obvious, real, external terror subsumed terror itself and became something higher – fearlessness's terror in having nothing to fear. To solve this, I became a source of fear, generating it through an almost obsessive exercise of bad choices in friends, drugs, and reckless behaviors. There was a method here, though a disguised one. A bad choice required one to hypothetically confront the consequences of an act, a "bad" act, consequences among which death, imprisonment, shame, hatred, violence, disgust and countless others were enumerated. A bad choice required a "commitment." It required one to have the

courage to see the bad act through. How close can one get to death without finding it? How close to hatred? To violence? Worse, to violent hatred? The "method" was in "getting close." Each bad choice gave me an opportunity to get one step closer to a commitment that would absolutely determine me and render further steps impossible. Death, imprisonment, addiction, I flirted with these limits only so far, breaking away when they entailed commitments one step farther than I discovered was willing to go, and so I came to know some of the cracks of my mask. Through these cracks, another mask was slowly being revealed; its first evidence was in the few "good" choices I made in adolescence, my few "accomplishments" that told the story of someone who deserved the wages of a different kind of commitment. Eventually and barely, I graduated high school.

I went to college in rural central Pennsylvania, four hours and a world away from the Philadelphia suburbs where I grew up. Here, no one knew me or my past. I found myself freed from my previous commitments. Here, I could reinvent myself. My knowledge of masks was useful. Whereas prior to college both adults and peers had good reason to fear me, I now fashioned myself as deserving of their respect and admiration. This was a very different mask indeed. At first, I drank and partied in one mask and attended classes in another. After some time, I found that I could not sustain them both. Here was more knowledge of the limits of my mask as well as a new crack and revelation of a yet another mask beneath this. I cut out much of the drinking and partying, focusing instead on my classes. A first-generation college student, I studied English with an eye toward becoming an English teacher. Since childhood, literature carried me away and revealed possibilities transcending my existence. In reading, I could leave one world and enter another. And remember, much of my tutelage in masks came from these stories. Now in college, I became enthralled with literature and fashioned myself as a poet or

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aesthete of the John Muir phenotype. I excelled in my classes and earned the respect of my professors. I embraced solitude, reading or attending classes and then heading for the woods in central Pennsylvania to spend the night alone in a tent in the dark or the afternoon in a hammock slung between two trees reading some more. I took to being alone. I came to believe there was meaning in living a particular way, in contemplation and solitude, and especially in contemplation of solitude.   In being alone and in thinking about being alone, I came to confront myself, to think about what I was or at least "who" I was. Naively, I thought I understood this. I thought it was the commitment that mattered. I thought that if I just "committed" to a mask, I would become it; that the self was a choice one makes and then fulfills in commitment. As a child, the mask appeared out of and as a way to cope with the externality of my circumstances, circumstances completely beyond my control. To wear the mask was to adopt a different externality, to make this externality true precisely because it is worn. The externality of the mask gives way to the wearing itself, and the mask is internalized. This internalization sees that it necessarily externalizes, and so externality appears as externalized interiority. I=I. And here is where I was trapped. I believed that it was possible to think into being the reality I chose to be true. I do not mean simple relativism here. Instead, I mean to say that I saw the world as a kind of project, a sort of "list" even. Fashion myself as an intellectual? Check. Win the respect of my professors? Check. Go to graduate school? Check. Marry? Check. Find a teaching job? Check. Buy a house? Check. And there it was. I created a life, a self. Through the projection of a hypothetical self into concrete actual existence, I brought myself into being as if by sheer will. I was twenty four years old.

This idea of the "self" was troublesome. On the one hand, it was the contemplative faculty – interiority, the self that thinks about the self from seemingly "outside" the self; on the

other, it was the concrete ground from which the contemplative self contemplates, what we might call the "material" or embodied self – externality. It seemed to me that since I could not think about "my" existence without a notion of what "I" was, this **"I"** preceded existence. However, when I thought about what the I might be, I could not conceive of it without also conceiving of it as intentional and therefore directed towards something. The I was that which thought existence, and so I wrongly concluded that the I was itself existent. It was "out there" and had only to be embodied in concrete acts – in projects and commitments. I had come to the conclusion that though existence itself preceded the arrival of the I – it being the necessary condition for the I's arrival as such – since upon its arrival the I ordered or otherwise attended to existence, the I's task was to order and attend to the necessary conditions for the I's return as an identical or selfsame I. Life was an order to be achieved, a task to be accomplished. One had only to set a task before oneself and then concretely act to put it in motion. A life of these acts would attest to what "I" was. I saw myself as a creator sees his creation. I created myself through one act and then another in a kind of mechanical calculation toward what I called my "thirty year plan." This was not a plan that would play out over thirty years; rather, it was a list of all the things I expected to have accomplished by the time I was thirty. I saw the creation of myself as a work of art, but mine was a Frankensteinian ambition. My acts were sewn together crudely, pieced together from incompossible projects.

And so, despite all my careful planning, when I was thirty years old, during my wife's pregnancy and through the birth and the first six months of my daughter's life, I lost myself. It shouldn't have happened. My life was going "according to plan." At thirty, I had been happily married for six years. My wife was pregnant and healthy with our only child, a daughter. I had two master's degrees and a successful career teaching English at a top-rated Pennsylvania high

school. I was respected among my colleagues. At the same time, I was finished with the coursework and ready to take the comprehensive exams for a PhD in philosophy at Duquesne University. For five years, while teaching high school full-time, I had taken two classes a semester with occasional independent studies in the summers. I had taught myself languages and published and presented at conferences domestic and abroad. Between my marriage, my impending fatherhood, my career, and my academic engagements, I was by any measure a fulfilled and happy man. At least, that's what my plan dictated. Nonetheless, quite without warning, in the spring of 2008, I became troubled by a vague apprehension. I felt that some choice was demanded of me, that the masks of husband, father, teacher, scholar were somehow incompatible or contradicted one another. Certainly, these masks were true for me. I was all these things, but the kind of choice that was asked was whether these were true for *me*. Did *I* want to be a father? A husband? Less importantly, a teacher or scholar? Who was this I? I thought I knew what "I" was. I thought I was a project to be fulfilled in the scope of time. I was profoundly wrong.

I dismissed the first symptoms of this apprehension. For the rest of the spring and the first part of the summer, 2008, I threw myself into teaching, studying, and marriage. I felt as if possessed by great inspiration. I planned fantastical dissertation proposals. I read and wrote and painted. I was driven. By July, I was awake at 6:00 am after having gone to bed as late as 2:00 am. Sometimes I napped. Sometimes I didn't go to bed at all. I drank to cope with what had become a frothing anxiety. My wife's belly grew with the frequency of the question about what "I" wanted. Did "I" want to stay married, to become a father, to return to teaching in the fall, to finish the PhD, or did "I" want something else – some other life and, therefore, some other I? I was exhausted, physically from sleep deprivation, emotionally from the anxiety.

Philosophically, I was haunted. I couldn't get behind the I that asked what *I* wanted. I was

empty and tired, but rest was abolished. I could not sit still. I repeated loops of actions.

Reading became difficult, writing impossible. I spent most of the day walking my neighborhood

or pacing in my home, constantly checking the mailbox, cleaning, organizing, and trying to hold

together an increasingly precarious world. Not loading the dishwasher correctly was a crisis,

misplaced keys, world-shattering. I could not see that my behavior was erratic and unreasonable.

For me, every action was part of a careful calculation to at least perpetuate things "as they were."

I had come to think that there was nothing beneath the masks I was wearing as a husband,

teacher, scholar, and soon-to-be father, that I was empty "inside." There was no interiority, not

even as internalized externality. Here all masks slipped away. Having seen the masks as masks,

I nullified their value through the critical consideration of their various commitments. I came to

see the choice of mask as secondary to the choice itself. What mattered was the choosing, not

the choice. One could always choose since even not choosing is itself a choice. Thus, I came to

see all choices as equivalent. Earlier, I thought commitments mattered insofar as they gave an

order to existence, that, in a way, existence required an order only I could bring to it. Now,

however, I came to see that no commitment or order held any more value than any other. To be

a husband did not matter. To be a teacher and scholar did not matter. To be a father did not

matter. These choices were behind me, and there were no more commitments to make. My

commitments had ironically brought me to a place where no further commitment was possible. I

had gotten too close and now I was trapped. The order I had imposed on my existence was so

secure I was rendered a prisoner inside of it. The projects I had sought for myself I had

achieved, and in achieving them, I had fashioned my own shackles. I had the existence I wanted,

and all I could think to do was to throw it away. The great narratives of my life fell apart and left

me surrounded by ruins. Like a ghost, I wandered here, repeating in a loop the same routine for days on end, eventually without interruption even from sleep. Ultimately, even beyond whether *I* wanted to be a father, employed, married, a scholar, I asked whether I wanted *anything*, whether in fact nothing would be preferable. Did I want any of this, that is, of existence itself? The answer, it seemed, was no. If I could have chosen not to breathe, I would not have summoned the effort to inhale. To kill myself would have been too much work. All activity was meaningless.

I returned to work in August, 2008. My wife finally confronted me about my drinking and bizarre behavior. We sought counseling. She was seven months pregnant with our daughter. I should have been a good husband. I should have embraced fatherhood. I should have been up to it. But mine was a meaningless expression, a kind of bare grammar. I returned to work but found teaching empty, uninteresting, for *I* was empty and uninterested. I punched a clock and was inexcusably disengaged. Sleep overcame me. It was not a comfort. Sleep was oppressive, like the weight of atmospheres when diving, deep and constant. I laid myself on the couch as soon as I got home from work at 4:00pm, usually falling asleep there until I went upstairs to bed. I would rise at 7:00 am, now sleeping sometimes for 14 hours a day. I barely made it to work on time, sometimes only by skipping showers. I passed out worksheets and neglected my responsibilities as a teacher. I fell asleep at my desk. Neither could I be a husband at home. I began to alienate my wife, asking her why we should bother to stay married, telling her that she and the baby would be better without me. And so by late September, 2008, the month before my daughter was born, I was calling out sick from work and lying on my couch all day, usually having been there from the day before. This continued until I was calling out three times a week, then four times, then a full week. Every day on the couch. My wife was distraught. She is also

my colleague in the English department at the high school where I teach. Our supervisor was furious but powerless; I was allowed to call out sick if I had the days. I was ruining my reputation. I was ruining my marriage. Arguments to this effect could not persuade me to do otherwise. That any commitment was worth the same as any other, my actions no longer served a meaningful future. Deprived of a future, the present itself began to take on the hue of meaninglessness. I saw my circumstances as pure facticity. Why bother with this life? Why not have some other? Why *not* throw my career away if this is still a life? What was the worth of doing anything at all? Why act? Why get out of bed? Why breathe? With support from a psychotherapist, my wife convinced me to sign myself into a mental health clinic. I stayed for two weeks. I was diagnosed bipolar type 2 and began a regimen of mood stabilizers, anti-depressants, and anxiolytics. I went back to work. I white-knuckled two weeks before again calling out sick once, twice, three times a week again.

My daughter was born October 25th, 2008. I should have been happy. But most days, I lay on the couch with my eyes fixed at some point beyond the ceiling, staring, falling asleep, staring again, and again falling asleep. I stayed on the couch for weeks but for trips to bathroom or to eat a slice of bread. This was my life, and it is darkness. I have very little memory of this period. I recall it like a shade being drawn, as if through an almost impermeable veil. There is the suggestion of a room, of voices, of a brief face, but it is more like the opening and closing of a somnambulist's eyes. I felt nothing. Finally, I could say nothing. Words stopped signifying. Speech became impossible. Soon, it was too much effort to do anything more than inhale and exhale. I could hear my heartbeat, feel the blood moving throughout my body and this too I would have stopped if it had depended on me. Not because I wanted to die. It's just that living was so much *work*. One word was as good as any other, so why even speak? Why summon the

energy it takes to burp sound into your throat? I could stare. I could sleep. My daughter was almost a month old before I was finally involuntarily committed.

That night I remember. I wanted to feel, you see. I didn't want to die, and this is true. What I wanted more than anything was to not *want*. The question kept asking me what *I* wanted, and I wanted to be relieved of this burden of having to want. I couldn't answer whether I wanted to open my eyes or keep them closed, and for weeks I battled this out on the couch. To decide whether I wanted to live or die assumed I could get up to go hang myself, and that involved hands, and legs, and rope, and so on; this was so much work. The enormity of the effort of my own suicide would overwhelm me well before I could carry it through. I needed something that would carry me away, sweep me up in its motion and leave the decisions aside. Something that would *define* me. I was off the couch this night. I was arguing about wanting to be back on the couch. My wife was worried about me, rightfully so, and she insisted I talk to her. Talking was work, and I was begrudging of my energy, for I had barely enough to stay on the couch. Now that I was off of it, I was calm, dispassionate, cold, affectless, and absolutely certain. I had decided not to die but to disappear. I explained to my wife that I could not continue like this, that if she cared for our daughter, she would let me leave them both and never return. This was an argument made through reason, not passion. When she begged me to stay, I coldly faced her and despised her. She didn't deserve that. I told her that I was walking away from everything. I left the house and told her that I could "no longer be responsible" for my actions. I could feel nothing. By all objective measures, I should have felt great joy – my wife, my career, academics, a child! I should have been beaming, but instead there was nothing. Nothing at all; not sadness, not anger, not even anxiety anymore. Just a weight. And even the weight was nothing, because it was *nothing*, like a dark hole in the ground that called me into its palpable

absence. I felt nothing. And so I was going to see where nothing led me. I walked up to the local taproom and commenced drinking, which was contraindicated for the medications I was now taking. My wife, distraught by our conversation, called my parents and told them what was happening, just as she would have called them had I had a heart attack. To her, something was wrong. To me, I was absolutely clear that this was the end of all responsibility. I would throw myself into an indelible act and let the chips fall where they may, living whatever remained of my life as the necessary consequence. At least I would be relieved of responsibility, of commitments. My parents knew I was unwell, just not how unwell. Rightly, my wife was scared that I would do something desperate, and so my father called the local police department and alerted them to her fear. Armed with the knowledge of my state and whereabouts, three officers showed up at the bar wanting to talk. I took their intervention poorly and made a scene. I ended up being taken to a hospital for a psychiatric evaluation. My psychiatrist ordered a 21 day stay, and so I stayed. I required restraints and heavy tranquilizers. I do not recall the first five days of my commitment, but then I woke up.

For five days, I was pumped full of powerful drugs, and my amnesia here is probably more a symptom of heavy sedation than of some kind of psychiatric break. I've consulted my medical records to reconstruct this lost time. It seems that for days I lay in bed or shuffled the hallways in a fog of medication administered first intravenously and then as pills. I suppose that it took five days to become tolerant of the drugs, but on the sixth day, I surfaced. This, I remember. When I say that "I" surfaced, this I was not the same I from the week before, the I who decided to abjure responsibility altogether by throwing himself into the void. Instead, this surfacing I was the I I was before I ever had an apprehension of some rumbling I beneath the I. It was as if this I had been anesthetized for almost eight months and then returned to awareness.

It was early in the morning, 5:30 maybe. I opened my eyes and saw the room, the bed, the bathroom, the doorless entry and the hallway outside. I threw back the sheets and looked at the gown I was wearing, the band-aids from injections, the raw wrists from the restraints. I heard people talking, a television, and I recollected my screams of protest when I was first admitted, the thrashing, psychotic, insane behavior. I knew where I was immediately and with absolute clarity. My first thought was of my wife and new daughter. As immediately as I recognized where I was, I recalled the last year of my life objectively as if it had happened to someone else, as if someone else had taken control of my body and, worse, mind. I sobbed. I was wracked with grief at what had happened. My wife! My daughter! What had I done?! It was like someone else had stolen my face and desecrated what I loved the most. But this thief was none other than I! How did this happen? There was no cause; rather, I had been overcome by something – more correctly, I had been overcome by nothing. On the morning of the sixth day of my involuntary commitment, I came out of a fog of medication, immediately recalled the last difficult year of my life, was crushed with remorse for my wife and daughter, and knew that my ordeal had ended. Remorse was *something*. I could feel it. It was not nothing. This morning was distinct from the prior morning. It marked the end of one event and the beginning of another. I was full of possibilities where before the only possibility was nothing. Sadness and regret were possibilities I could live out. I could summon the energy to breathe again in the name of these possibilities. I asked a nurse for permission to call my wife. When she answered, I sobbed into the phone and begged her to visit me that evening. She agreed. She describes seeing me that night as if "light had returned" to my eyes, that they had been dark for a long time, but that, suddenly, I was "back."

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Coming back wasn't easy though. I spent 21 days inpatient and was released to outpatient with the stipulation that I see both a psychiatrist and psychotherapist twice a week. When I was discharged in early December, 2008, I took an extended, unpaid, medical leave from my teaching job. The details of commitment were a kind of hushed public knowledge. No one sends sympathy cards to crazy people; more often, acquaintances became accusers. My friends and family abandoned me. Alone but for my wife and newborn daughter, I began the task of rebuilding my life. It was fragile work. I had a strict schedule and a medication regimen. No naps. No alcohol ever again. Crisis plans. Emergency phone numbers. "Trigger awareness." I had to exercise, eat right, sleep well. The medication had serious side effects that would eventually destroy my thyroid, liver, GI tract, and cause me to gain almost one hundred pounds. I embraced all of this. I attended fastidiously to every task, every appointment, every pill. I saw this as a chance to rebuild my marriage, which included fatherhood. My relationship with my wife and daughter became the horizon of everything I did, the only reason for anything I did. I woke up for them, breathed for them, literally threw away the couch for them. They alone were enough. I embraced marriage and fatherhood, but I was not sure if I could ever return to teaching and scholarship. The medications clouded my intellect. I resigned to this as a necessary compromise in the name of wellness in other domains. I felt dull, unable to form articulate thoughts. I tried to read, but I couldn't hold the ideas. How could I teach or write a dissertation? No matter. For a while, I reckoned I would have to quit my teaching job and take up construction work, which I had done in college. My wife and I considered selling our home and moving into an apartment to cut expenses. We would make it somehow. I would stay home and care for our daughter while my wife had a career. All that mattered was staying with Liz and the baby we had together, Elora. This was meaningful, and this was enough. It still is both.

Precariously, I started teaching again in the fall of 2009 to see if I could manage this career before switching to labor as a fail-safe. As I said, mine had been a pretty public illness. All of my colleagues knew that "something" had happened to me, but no one knew the details. Rumors abounded. I avoided them, staying in my classroom. Within a few weeks, I was back in the swing of things. My enthusiasm and energy for teaching returned. I was engaged in my classes and excited about teaching. I woke each day excited to get to school. Some days, however, the medication I was taking made teaching difficult. As anyone who has taught knows, teaching is challenging work. It requires one to be "on." The medication I was taking mostly turned me off. Among the medications, one in particular, an antipsychotic called Zyprexa, had a powerful sedative effect. On some days, I was like a zombie. I did the best I could on those days, which was mostly pretty well. Soon it was June and I had successfully managed a year back at work. So, in addition to being a husband and father, I found that I was able to be a teacher again, that this again had meaning for me. I threw myself into the roles of husband, father, and teacher. From 2009 to 2014, I concentrated on my wellness, my marriage, my fatherhood, and my job. I went to therapy once or twice a week, visited a psychiatrist twice a month, and took the medications daily. I was compliant, and for the most part the medications kept me level. I was happy again. My life was full again. Psychologically, I was well again, but physically, it was another story. By 2013, the medications' side-effects figured large. I had gained close to 100 pounds and weighed almost 300. On top of that, the pills were eating away at my stomach. My GI system was in turmoil, and I was often tormented by bouts of dry-heaving violent enough to burst blood vessels in my eyes. To make matters worse, my thyroid and liver were failing. Eventually, my psychiatrist informed me that I would have to choose between my mental health and my physical health. The prevailing thinking said that I had a

mental illness: bipolar 2 disorder. If left untreated, this same thinking said that it was only a matter of time before the symptoms returned. If the medications were the lone guardians between a meaningful life and a meaningless one, I was terrified that without them I would find myself once again face to face with nothing. But if I continued to take the medications, I would seriously endanger my health. Living a meaningful life, it seemed, came at the cost of living a short one. But what if my wellness were not dependent on the medications? Wasn't there a third way between the madness of nothingness or death by wellness? Was it not possible to be well without the medications? Was bipolar 2 really some externality into which I would inevitably fall or which would inevitably befall me?

The prevailing thinking, it seemed to me, was as unfounded in its privileging of externality as I had been of internality. Psychiatry stated that my psychic state was determined by an empirically real neurochemical state. This did away with the freedom of the I, rendering freedom itself no more than a neurochemical response. "Psychological wellness" was the name of the neurochemical state I wished to preserve. This was possible only insofar as material processes effectuated me as "well." So, wellness was a particular arrangement of matter absolutely external to the I, outside of its control, external to the I's internality. Fine. But might I not "learn" this externality? If I could not, then perhaps freedom was an illusion. But perhaps it was not. It was worth a try at least. I wondered whether it was possible to approach the problem of the self from a different angle, not from a transcendent I who sees the self as a project to be accomplished over equally transcendent space-time, but as a kind of immanent empiricism of the self. Could I seize onto an empirically given self and experiment in maintaining this self not by undertaking some grand project but by holding onto a delicate and fragile thread – my awareness of my own psychological state – and following it slowly, blindly through hallways of

minotaurs. Would it really be that bad? I had been well for five years. I might have learned something during this time. I was willing to discover this. I would try to sustain without medications. If I couldn't, I could go back on them. In that case, I might not be free, but I would be happy, and I would die young. But if I could do it, if I could be psychologically well without the medications, then I would know that the self is neither externality nor internality but something else, and this would be a discovery.

Recall that earlier I had been convinced that externality was externalized interiority, that the world was my project and that I=I. Psychiatry asked me to conceive of interiority as externalized externality. That "I" was a byproduct of external causes. This I could not accept. No doubt, external causes are real, but is this all there is? Was the I no more than an illusion? The solution, it seemed, was a revision to what I thought the I was. I had once understood the I as a transcendent unity of the subject, an interiority standing against externality as such. But this led me to the priority of the subject and the problem of the I=I, absolute interiority. The world was "my" project. Absolute exteriority led only to determinism: "I" was a product of the world that had no hand in the production itself. But what about revision? In short, to see the self as immanently constituted within externality itself, as an expression of this externality? If I could know the expression I was and the externality that I expressed, I might be able to maintain this expression; indefinitely, perhaps. It was a compromise: neither absolute interiority nor absolute exteriority. I would be determined, but I could choose to do so and fight like hell not to be determined in ways that I might not avoid anyway. I could be a husband, father, and teacher even without the medications. I could negotiate the strange boundary between interiority and exteriority. I could learn. I discussed it with my wife. We agreed to forgo the medications. I

was both relieved and terrified – relieved that my physical ailments might abate; terrified that I might relapse into another depressive or manic episode.

It never happened. There were certainly bumps along the way, mostly short periods of either "depression" or "mania" lasting no more than three days. I put these descriptions in quotes to qualify them, to note that these were never full-blown episodes; rather, they were days of a marked but not concerning change in attitude or behavior. When I stopped taking the medications, I had to pay careful attention to my bearing. The guardians had left the gate, or so I was told, when I finished the last pill. Between the life I was living as an engaged husband, father, and teacher, and nothing, there was only me. I would have to scrutinize my every act and thought to ensure the integrity of the self I had lost and then regained only after so many difficulties. Like being two people at once, I had to ask whether my acts and thoughts were mine or whether they belonged to a usurper none other than I who once saw no more than bare facticity in his child's face. This externality was "out there" waiting for me. I would have to be wary. Before, I had only to ask which project I was pursuing: meaning, or nothing? Face to face with the projects, I had to pursue one of them, a question that once upended me but which I felt I had now resolved: mine was no longer a "project" of being a husband, father, and teacher. Instead, I understood myself as the expression that these and various other intersections produced, the expression of an externality mostly beyond my control. What I could control was merely the awareness of the expression, like the awareness of a sound that has been sounding for some time and will sound for at least some time more; for how long, though, one cannot know. I was no longer an internal order or a unity I brought into the external, nor was I overcome by pure chaotic externality as psychiatry had promised. I was a sensitivity. I sensed myself as a self as opposed to knew myself as a self. I came to understand the self as a region. Externality

provided the field for this region, and the self moved over it in migrations and dispersals like a swarm that is at once in the sky, necessarily constituted by it, and yet is also not the sky itself but effected on it. That I had been well for several years gave me a kind of self-awareness that I lacked before. Whereas ten years ago I might have found myself overcome by an all-encompassing mania that would run me ragged for a month or a horrifying, soporific depression that would render me as lifeless as the furniture from which I might never rise, I now sensed these threats as soon as their first rumblings appeared. The flare-ups got shorter and shorter. There were precursors to an episode's arrival, for instance, the number of hours and how restfully I slept, and as I became more and more attuned to these, I learned to sense episodes well before they ever had a chance to arrive. Now, I barely sense them, not because I am inured to them but because they have almost stopped arriving altogether, as if in resignation to my sensitivity.

In 2015, I was able to return to philosophy. Now that I was medication-free, I could think again. My orientation toward the discipline was changed, however. Philosophy was far more personal for me now; before, I treated it like a game. Philosophy's questions were always challenging and its answers exciting, but its stakes were never life and death before. They were now. I had come full-circle. Ten years ago, I lost myself as a husband, father, teacher, and philosopher. This I that I was I thought was irrevocably broken. But here I am, the same yet different. I no longer live in fear of relapse. I am at ease in my roles. My projects no longer seem undermined by nothing because they are not projects at all. They are the singularities that expresses this self that I am. I am happy, healthy, and competent as a husband/father/teacher/scholar. These are externalities that I want insofar as they express the self that I am. This I that I am is what I want. I have been able to sustain myself. I have no

anxiety as to the surety of this self. But I am left with questions, and I look to philosophy for answers. What happened to me? How did it happen? What "happened"? How did I "get better"? Who was I "then," and who am I "now"? I feel that my life depends on these questions. So in returning to philosophy, I have found myself completely once again. Again a husband, father, teacher, and scholar, I have somehow reassembled, or have been reassembled from, these once incompossible pieces. How? There are no scars. I am no Frankensteinian monster. Interiority and exteriority are not dashed together haphazardly now. I am put together with nuance and care. I must understand this. I have to believe that what happened to me meant something. My questions concern my existence, that is, what kind of life is possible for me as this self that I have become. What does it mean to be the kind of being that "I" am, the kind of being for which any of the above can be true? I turn to philosophy for answers. Philosophy is the name for a practice of describing the practicable world as well as the conditions of possibility for the practical as such. In providing this description, philosophy confronts us with the question whether description entails agency, whether through the description of it, existence might not only be understood but also directed. In its theorizing about the world, philosophy intimates the potential for a certain mastery over the world.

It is this vision of philosophy as a kind of mastery over circumstances that first informed my thinking about what happened to me and what I was. The self was that which ordered – and therefore mastered – existence. Existence reflected the order I gave it. Existence was "my" project. In "having" a self, the self is understood as a self-sustaining unity that orders existence in such a way that existence appears to the self as a projection of the self. The self orders existence, giving it meaning and value in the form of projects that the self constructs from the existent itself. The unity of the self gives unity to the existent. Existence is "ordered" by virtue

of the projects the self undertakes within the existent. Thus, to be a "father" is to order the existent in such a way that it reflects a "fatherly" project. When we talk about "the self" in this way, what we are really describing is an ontological relation between the being of the self and the being of that in which the self is always already engaged. This relation is an explicit concern of existentialist philosophy and is called authenticity. In the literature on authenticity, specifically with Kierkegaard and Heidegger, we see authenticity posited as an ontological ideal that describes a certain relation of the self to the self wherein we find a coincidence between the "ontological" transcendental self of possibilities and decision-making and the "empirical" active self. In other words, when my acting self coincides with the self which directs its activity – that *is* the activity of directivity, we have authenticity. I "become" what I intended to become. For both of these thinkers, though, authenticity – ontological coincidence – does not describe a fixed and stable entity, some new being to be enumerated among beings, but rather a kind of openness where all possibilities are possible by virtue of their absolute suspension. The "being" of the self is not a being. Instead, it is the abyss. Whether in faith or Dasein, Kierkegaard and Heidegger locate authenticity as the choice *of* these sites because each is the ground of the site itself. Authenticity is residing in the choice of ground by virtue of being the ground from which the choice of ground is grounded. We cannot *but* choose the ground, and living in the recognition of this choice, it seems, is authenticity. Is this what "I" am? Did I have only to choose a ground and then remain "true" to it? That I "lost" myself, was this because I *chose* to? That I found myself again, was this because I "authentically" took up again the "projects" of being a husband, a father, a teacher, a scholar and then acted in such a way that rendered them manifest? How could "authenticity" shed any light on my situation at all? Could I "master" existence this way? Was existence masterable?

To master existence in the name of some "project" seems to me the highest kind of hubris. If I learned anything at all from my experience it was that the self is not neatly circumscribed by projects. The self is fluid and multiple, a great cacophony of voices calling to us from infinite directions. Certainly, one's project is one of these voices. Perhaps this is the clearest voice. Perhaps this is why we give it such priority. I am a "father," and this voice dominates, drowning out the others. But other voices call to me always. If I listen carefully, I hear them. They call me in countless directions. Some of these voices run parallel to the voice of the father, and so I can pursue fatherhood, marriage, a career, and scholarship without contradicting these other voices. But far more voices deviate from the line of the father than run neatly beside it. I can ignore these voices as much as I like, but they still comprise me. When one listens to waves crashing against the shore, one hears not only the sound of water meeting sand and rock but also the sound of rock resisting water and sand eroding away. There are undercurrents and countercurrents always. The self is plural. I am a father, a husband, a teacher, and a scholar, but I am more than this plurality even. How I can be any one of these things and yet also be something more? So far, in every attempt to discover what "I" am, there has been another, deeper I that asks me whether I have found it yet. The terrain of the self is uncertain and shifting, but there is a terrain nonetheless. What follows is an attempt to map this terrain or, at the very least, by critically examining the work of Kierkegaard and Heidegger, to discover whether it is possible.

Chapter Two

Kierkegaard and the Foundations of Modern Authenticity

Materiality, Ideality, and Their Unity in the Subject

With respect to a theory of the subject, philosophy must fulfill two tasks: an account of the "transcendent subject," and an account of the "concrete subject." We may understand the transcendent subject to be the purely formal subject – the undetermined form of any subject whatsoever. By the concrete subject, we mean the subject of determined content, the actively engaged subject who, through its actual practice, manipulates and changes the world. This distinction became clear to me as I sought to understand the "I" that asked me what "I" wanted. On the one hand, this I was a concrete, material person – a husband, a teacher, a father, a scholar, and so on. I was what I did, what I attended to, what I performed or practiced materially as a subject – hence my fixation earlier on maintaining certain routines so that my "world" would not fall apart. On the other hand, I was also *other* than what I did. I was the ground for any performance whatsoever, a pure subjective form that could be manifested only in concrete acts, for sure, but which was not reducible to any one of them. It was this transcendent form that rendered all meaning meaningless for me, for, at this level, one act was as good as another, for no matter the act, it would always be the act of a subject, in this case, me. To love or to not love my wife and child were the *same*, for, at the level of the act, they were both equally valid. I would still *be* a subject regardless of the choices I made. I would still be "me." From the infinite array of subjective possibilities that lay before me, from the transcendent field of an indeterminate self, from all of the selves I *could be* but *was not,* the difficulty was in negotiating the concrete in a way that did not violate this indeterminateness but was not under*mined* by it

either. The philosophical problem of subjectivity lay in discovering the relationship between these two poles of the subject – the transcendent and the concrete – and finding where they meet, a place where form harmonizes with content, producing a continuity identifiable as "I." My life depended on this. I found it in "authenticity."

Despite its reputation for theory, philosophy is always engaged with the practical. This is explicitly the case when it comes to fields like ethics or politics, where philosophy is overtly a thinking about what we should actually do. But it is less obvious when it comes to fields like metaphysics or ontology, typically thought to be concerned with matters of "pure" thought. Yet even here, thinking is itself an activity and a practice; namely, it is the activity and practice of posing problems of ontology and metaphysics and seeing these problems through in a particular way, i.e. *actually* thinking these problems. Insofar as it is thinking, philosophy can be said to describe existence. Ideas have as much reality as physical objects. We are subjected to the forces of both. Thinking is affective. It "moves" us. The world of ideas is not affectively impoverished by the fact that some ideas have no physical correlate (a unicorn, for example). Indeed, that we can think things that are not "real" only points to the rich and complex subject we are. Philosophy is an attempt to understand this subject. In its description of existence, philosophy may even come to describe the "describability" of existence as such – the "rules" of the determination of any description whatsoever and the discovery of the structures that govern them. Transcendental philosophy, certainly, and phenomenology can be characterized this way. Concerned with "pure thought" or essences, phenomenology cannot be thought apart from its concrete determination in *actual* thought. Existence is actual. It is concrete. It is lived in determinate time and place. The times and places of one's philosophical thoughts may vary, but that these thoughts *are in time and space* does not. Even if we persist in purely formal thoughts

like the cogito or mathematics, we acknowledge that these thoughts occur to some situated

subject, a subject who has these thoughts from within time and space. Descartes discovers the

cogito, the purely formal subject, by distinguishing the mind from the body – the intellect from

extension – but he does this sitting at his fire, watching wax melt, in other words, while

thoroughly embedded in concrete reality. Philosophy must reckon with two distinct but

inseparable structures: the formal and the concrete. If philosophy *can* provide a description of

existence, this is only because existence adheres to a formal structure that philosophy *can*

concretely describe. Philosophy offers a description of the structured, the determinable, i.e. the

concretely realizable, temporal, practical world, which it *can* do only because this description is

given in accord with ideal, transcendent, yet always concretely embedded laws. Philosophy

vacillates between the determinable and the indeterminate, the finite and the infinite, the

materially concrete determinate reality that gives philosophy *content*, and the ideal, transcendent

field that is the content's condition of possibility, the *form* of any content whatsoever. Which is

"true," which "authentic"? "Form" or "content"? The question is as old as philosophy itself.

Philosophy wears a Janus mask, and we cannot be certain whether to put our trust in what is

structured or in the structure itself, whether in *beings* or in *Being*. We trust first this face then the

other, each disappearing beneath the other like so many masks. The mask gives only more

masks, but beneath the mask is the wearer, the subject. The subject unifies materiality and

ideality, bridging them by having a foot in each.

The subject thinks. Thinking is the determinate actualization of an indeterminate

actuality. The subject is the site of this determination. Though we do not find the subject

without a world in which the subject appears, the subject, as something that can act on the world,

seems to occupy a special place amongst worldly things. The subject is in a world of things but

is not a thing itself. The body can certainly be understood to be a "thing," but the subject is not

reducible to a body; *subjectivity* itself cannot be said to be a body, a thing. Nevertheless,

embodied, subjectivity finds itself necessarily extended in space and embedded in time, into the

objectivity of things and the determination of time. On the other hand, subjectivity itself

transcends determination as such, a *becoming* that apprehends itself among concrete beings, a

possibility that inhabits *actuality* itself. Subjectivity is immanent within space-time but

transcendent to any concrete determination thereof. Who or what is the subject of this

subjectivity? Certainly, there have been other accounts of "the subject." Aristotle conceived the

subject as that which underlies its predicates, the "subject" of predication.[1] Whereas modern

subjectivity is concerned with the "life" of the thinking subject, Aristotle saw the subject as a

mostly logical function. In *De Anima*,[2] he treats the life of the animal we call human as the soul

or substance that is unified with its particular body, a body which operates according to material

laws spelled out in in great detail in his other works, e.g. the *Physics.* This largely materially

construed subject dominates philosophy until Descartes' discovery of the cogito. While his

contemporary, Hobbes, remained committed to a materially conceived subject, seeing the human

subject articulated within a quasi-syllogistic material order designed to achieve particular ends,[3]

Descartes' cogito opened an entirely new way of envisioning the subject as something other than

its materiality: the "I think," the form of thinking as such. Kant reckons with the cogito, giving

us the forms of intuition and the categories, providing us a temporalized transcendental subject

who empirically knows its material reality but has no access to "noumena," the things

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[1] Aristotle's *Categories* spells this out quite clearly.

[2] *De Anima* takes up the question of the "life" of the living subject, but, in this work, subjects are "animals," and there is no reason to believe Aristotle conceived of the subject in the same way modernity has.

[3] Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis, Hackett, 1994), 80-9. The first law, "to seek peace," establishes a chain of consequences leading to the second law "to contract in way of peace," leading to the third law, "justice" in the establishment of the commonwealth, and so on. The subject is that which these laws produce.

themselves. Husserl will inherit this problem, Heidegger later. The thinking subject and its relationship to its world remains a perennially perplexing problem. What does it mean to be in a world? How do I know I am in one? Who am I that knows this? What does it mean "to know" it? I unravel. And yet I cannot *not* be in some world wherein I *do* pose questions of it, questions I *must* know intuitively as expressive both of this I that asks it and of the world that it suspends in the interrogation but to which it always returns in any response. The subject and the world are intimately related. The subject is *subjected* to subjectivity. The subject is born of and shaped by the forces of the material world,[4] is nourished and eroded by them. The subject's materiality cannot be conceived without simultaneously conceiving the subject's ideality. The subject's concrete materiality presents the subject as a "this." But this materialization or particularization immediately gives way to the conditions of possibility for any particularization as such. As the subject discovers the transcendent field of its appearance, the infinite array of possibilities before it, the "here and now" of "this" finitude vanishes in the procession of an eternally incomplete particularization: ideality. The subject is the concrete manifestation of the subject's own reflection upon the ideality of its material concretization. Materiality and ideality are two opposed but fundamentally united poles of the subject. The subject is their two-faced composition.

 The subject is composed. It is com-posed. It is posed-with. It is a posturing, a stance. That which stands stands against something; the pose is a *relation*. The pose gives us the subject, who appears like a beacon of light in an otherwise dark and shapeless void. The subject is unique and singular, differentiated against a featureless background but necessarily wedded to it. The subject *is* this relation of ideality and materiality, of indeterminateness of form and

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[4] Human newborns are extruded matter.

determinateness of content.   The subject is position between these two poles. We seek an account of both "form" and "content" of the subject conceived as a relation between ideality and materiality. It is our position that an adequate formulation of subjectivity will unify "form" and "content" without violating the bipolar nature of the subject. It is precisely this that characterizes the "authentic" work of Kierkegaard, who is often called the father existentialist philosophy. Much has been written about this diverse school of philosophy. There are countless excellent accounts of existentialism,[5] and I do not intend here to offer yet another. Instead, I would like to focus on the philosophical origins of modern "authenticity," which begins with Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard attempts to account for the subject as a relation between what the subject is and what the subject does, both the "transcendent" and the "concrete" subject. Kierkegaard's authenticity will show us what it is to be this relation. Whether we are up to the challenge is another thing altogether, though.

Externality and Interiority: Authenticity's Roots in Kierkegaard

Our concern is with the "existential" use of authenticity. This use is born with Kierkegaard, but Kierkegaard does not rigorously define authenticity the way Heidegger will, as we will see in chapter three, so we will have to draw out what Kierkegaard says of authenticity in the absence of any explicit definition of the term. We can find thematic antecedents to authenticity in Plato, Rousseau, Augustine, and others, but Kierkegaard is existential authenticity's philosophical father. While some scholars trace the roots of authenticity as far

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[5] Walter Kaufmann's *Existentialism Dostoyevsky to Sartre* (New York: Plume, 1956) is probably the most popular. This is for good reason as Kaufmann does his best to represent the diversity of existentialist thinkers, and his book provides a reasonable selection from primary "existentialist" thinkers like Heidegger, Sartre, Jaspers, and others. For a more secondary analysis of existentialism as a philosophical movement, an excellent book is Robert Olson's *An Introduction to Existentialism* (New York: Dover, 1962).

back as Plato and his attempt to distinguish the real from the simulacrum, and others find authenticity posited for the first time in Rousseau,[6] these generally solid philosophical interpretations of the concept are largely genealogical. The philosophical provenance of authenticity is one thing, but the remarkable philosophical power it is given in existentialist philosophy is another. It is Kierkegaard who sets authenticity on its "ontological" path. Kierkegaard's concern with "authentic" existence is twofold: comparative, and ontological. Thus, in Kierkegaard, we find "comparative" authenticity as well as "ontological" authenticity. The latter comes by way of a critique of the former.

Comparative authenticity characterizes Kierkegaard's raillery against public opinion, mass communication, and the great "leveling" of thought during his time. The stories are well-known, so we will merely recapitulate: Kierkegaard was a great antagonist of public opinion, the opinions of everyone, therefore, in Kierkegaard's view, no one at all. The public spoke for everyone and so no one was responsible for thinking for himself. Thinking, and, for Kierkegaard, religious thinking in particular, which is to say, Christianity, had been leveled, rendered uniform, facile, easily circulated, a commodity, a reproduction, inauthentic. Real faith was dead; there were no more real Christians or true believers. Instead, there were pious mimics who attended services regularly and followed all the instructions, never considering the depth of their own, actual convictions, yet passing as true believers nonetheless since they wore the same outward signs as the latter and were therefore indistinguishable from "real" or "authentic" believers. When Kierkegaard is concerned with "authenticity,"[7] it is often in this comparative

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[6] Lionel Trilling's *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971) provides an excellent historical analysis of the concept. Jacob Golumb peppers much of his *In Search of Authenticity from Kierkegaard to Camus* (New York: Routledge, 1995) with authenticity's historical excavation as well.

[7] In the passage we cite after this note, the Hong translation has the Danish "paalidilgt" rendered as "authentic." I am not competent enough in Danish to dispute this translation, but "paalidilgt" has cognates with "true," "accurate," or "reliable," as well as authentic.

sense, which distinguishes the real from the unreal or the original from the copy. This is the tradition of authenticity Kierkegaard inherited. For example, in *Fear and Trembling,* when contrasting the knight of faith from the knight of infinite resignation, Kierkegaard writes,

> I pay attention only to the movements…The knights of infinite resignation are easily recognizable -- their walk is light and bold. But they who carry the treasure of faith are likely to disappoint, for externally they have a striking resemblance to bourgeois philistinism, which infinite resignation, like faith, deeply disdains. I honestly confess that in my experience I have not found a single authentic instance, although I do not therefore deny that every second person may be such an instance.[8]

One reading of this passage has Kierkegaard searching for a "genuinely" faithful person, and here we easily see echoes of Plato. Kierkegaard is searching for a concrete manifestation of a "real" Christian, a determinate particularization of faith reflected in practice, an "authentic instance," faith's "real" finite instantiation. Indeed, we could paraphrase Kierkegaard to read "I have not found a single *real* Christian" without betraying much of his meaning. But originality is only one sense of "authentic," and it does not go far enough. Kierkegaard will go further, critiquing even the *authenticity* of "authentic" believers; in so doing, he founds the modern notion of authenticity.

The problem of comparative authenticity lies at the level of particular beings. When it comes to faith, for instance, Kierkegaard places faith in a hall of mirrors, comparing each reflection to every other, searching the one faith responsible for the faith of them all. But Kierkegaard tells us that he has never found a true knight of faith; instead, he is surrounded by knights of infinite resignation whose walks are "light and bold." Comparative authenticity concerns what is "external," what a thing looks like, how it behaves. In externality, there are countless knights of infinite resignation; each one "light and bold," each one as real or true in his

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[8] Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling/Repetition*, trans. Howard V. Hong and E. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 38.

resignation as every other is in his. "Resignation" is a kind of commodity, readily available to all who comport themselves accordingly. These were "authentic" Christians, if we understand Christianity to be the name given to certain kind of readily identifiable externality. Thus, for Kierkegaard, comparative authenticity can provide no more than a hermeneutic to measure whether and how well a particular materialization accords with other materializations of the same kind. Comparative authenticity tells us nothing about the subject himself; instead, it is only a kind of quantifying that asks, "who *counts* as a subject?" At this level, who doesn't? But there is another kind of "movement" says Kierkegaard, one which properly belongs to the knight of faith, one which "externally" resembles "bourgeois philistinism" but is altogether different and rare: an "*authentic* instance," if we read this same passage differently. As one would guess when it comes to Kierkegaard, he is using "authentic" ironically, as if to say, "yes, you are all authentic Christians, but not one of you is an *authentic* Christian." And yet, perhaps even more ironically, it may be that *no one* is an authentic Christian, not even Kierkegaard himself. It is this nuance lying at the heart of the word "authentic" that sets philosophy in a new direction after Kierkegaard, a direction twentieth-century existentialism explicitly assumes: interiority.

Kierkegaard shows us that the subject is necessarily externalized or posed between materiality and ideality. This externalization can occur in two ways: the subject can *be* posed, or the subject can *create* its own pose. The first proceeds externally and is the subject of comparative authenticity; the second proceeds *internally* and is the subject of ontological authenticity. In a sense, both are "authentic" poses, but how they attain their authenticity makes all the difference. If the subject is externally posed, the subject is made to pose or disciplined to pose. The subject makes the "right" movements; from another who learned it from another, the subject learns the dance. We may understand Aristotelian virtue to be learned this way. The

equivalence of some shared externality – language, shared history, etc. – between subjects implicates their "authenticity." In this case, "authentic" is an imprimatur. This isn't a "lesser" authenticity of course. The subject does dance and often well. But our concern – ontological authenticity – concerns a pose that is freely created and measured by a hermeneutic all its own, i.e., internality. Kierkegaard subverts traditional, "comparative" authenticity, making authenticity into a properly "ontological" problem concerning the subject's relation to itself.

Recognizing the fact that the subject is necessarily externalized – he cannot help but to act – Kierkegaard subordinates externality to the operation of the interiority of the subject, viz. to the subject's own relation to his externalization, to the subject's own creative adoption of his pose rather than the pose's disciplining of the subject. In ontological authenticity, the subject's actions are uniquely his own;[9] they have not been merely learned. "Love" is illustrative. Certainly, I "learn" to love. I learn how to love from my social milieu, which teaches me to love in certain socially acceptable ways and not others. I practice love, succeeding and failing at times. I watch others love and learn from them. There is no denying that love is something I learn. I learn to love my wife, and so on. But if I love my wife in such a way that it is no more than a perfect imitation of the most perfect spousal devotion, this cannot be said to be love in an "authentic" sense. I may *appear* to love my wife, but this externality is not "authentically" reflected in my interiority. No doubt such loves exist, convincing but ultimately meretricious. We are disturbed when we discover them, e.g. the failure of a marriage "where everything seemed fine," or worse, the sociopathy of the family-man-cum-serial-killer. Or we might explain love from a material perspective, identifying it as the name we give to a particularly arranged social dance. But this gleans only the surface of love, ignoring its internal depth. Indeed, this is

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[9]Heidegger is indebted to Kierkegaard for "own," but Heidegger will ground this concept differently, as we shall see in chapters four and five.

precisely what makes authenticity all the more troubling: the external, imitative dance and the internal creative dance *are* often indistinguishable from one another. How do I *know* I love? I do everything "right," and isn't that enough? I love my daughter. I read her stories and tuck her in at night and say "I love you" and make her macaroni and cheese. I do everything right. She believes I love her. To the core of her being, she believes it. Is this enough? Is it enough if I *perform* well enough to be convincing? Is that what it means to love a daughter? No. Of course not. The knight of faith may externally look to be exactly the same as the knight of infinite resignation or a "tax collector,"[10] but Kierkegaard directs our attention to the way this externality arrives, which is via an *internal* movement. The confusion arises from the qualitative rather than quantitative difference between them. "Authenticity has nothing to do with quantities and sequences…but…with…quality.… One cannot stipulate degrees of authenticity and … levels of its realization."[11] It happens all at once or not at all. M. Jamie Ferreira describes it as akin to a gestalt shift.[12] Isn't this what we mean when we "fall in love"? It is not how many times we dance or which steps we take that determines whether we fall in love. We might dance for a lifetime and not fall in love at all, but *if* we do, it happens to us all at once. We do not miss a step; there is no measurable pause, but suddenly our dancing is transformed.[13] The knight of faith appears the same as everyone else, but his pose is his own. As if in a sea of dancers, he is dancing alone. The knight of faith becomes *responsible* for his own externality, he *owns* it, and in so doing wrests his from a commodified subjectivity. In this sense, the knight of faith is an ontologically "authentic" subject, commanding his own determination of externality by way of

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[10] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 39.

[11] Jacob Golumb, *In Search of Authenticity from Kierkegaard to Camus*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 54.

[12] M. Jamie Ferreira, "Faith and the Kierkegaardian Leap," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, eds. A. Hannay and G.D. Marino (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 217.

[13] We fall out of love just as suddenly.

an internality that at once transcends externality only to return to it exactly as it was, a qualitative rather than quantitative difference. Indeed, that the dance of the knight of faith is *not* measurably different than the other dancers' is only evidence of its miraculous nature.

On Subjects in Despair: Kierkegaard Contra Hegel

Authenticity's ontological sense is born out of Kierkegaard's conflict with Hegel. Indeed, it is well-accepted that Kierkegaard is responding to Hegel's "going further" than faith in the movement of Geist, which is "… the authentic Science of Spirit… when consciousness itself grasps itself grasps this its own essence… signify[ing] the nature of absolute knowledge itself."[14] Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* is an attempt at turning Hegel's own logic against him by offering Abraham and his famous paradox, challenging Hegel's system to account for Abraham, who "in 130 years… got no further than faith."[15] It is not my intent to draw out the nuances of Kierkegaard's engagement with Hegel. Others with greater interest and expertise than I have done the latter work,[16] but it would be an oversight to ignore the fact that Kierkegaard was profoundly influenced by Hegel, and much of Kierkegaard's own thinking is a response to Hegel's demanding and stimulating system. Nevertheless, it is beyond the scope of this project to engage critically with all of Hegel or all of Kierkegaard. We are interested in authenticity. Authenticity begins properly with Kierkegaard, and we cannot understand Kierkegaard without backgrounding some Hegel.

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[14] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 57, ¶89.
[15] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 23.
[16] Jon Stewart's *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003) is an excellent guide to the debate between these two thinkers.

"Kierkegaard and Hegel appear to be irreconcilable," writes Clare Carlisle in her excellent book, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Becoming*.[17] She goes on, "Although they both insist on movement, they assume different positions and occupy different planes."[18] We can understand Kierkegaard to occupy the "internal" plane of passion, while Hegel inhabits the "external" plane of logic and "reflexive thinking."[19] Kierkegaard "criticizes Hegelian philosophy…for being existentially impotent… that someone who is engaged in reflection is indifferent to existence."[20] In Kierkegaard's eyes, Hegel's Spirit resolves the relation between finitude and infinitude at the expense of individuals themselves. As Kierkegaard sees it, in Hegel's system, men are overcome precisely because they are concrete particulars; the absolute moving from particular to universal, from individual men to *man*. Individual men are the concrete determinations of Spirit, and Spirit cannot be thought absent individual men who give Spirit its actuality, but Spirit supersedes individuality and actuality as such. As Kierkegaard states in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript,* "World-historically, being a single individual is nothing at all, infinitely nothing – and yet for a human being it is the only true and its highest meaning, and higher accordingly than any other meaning."[21] For Kierkegaard, Hegel sees "only the concept 'man,'" not the "individual human being l[ying] beneath the concept."[22] Carlise reminds us that "much of Kierkegaard's acquaintance with Hegel was, at best, second hand";[23] nevertheless, Kierkegaard would have us understand that Hegel's Geist advances without much

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[17] Clare Carlisle, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Becoming: Movements and Positions* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 131.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid*,* 96.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, ed. Alastair Hannay (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 124-5.
[22] Soren Kierkegaard*, The Sickness Unto Death*, trans. Howard V. Hong and E. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 119.
[23] Carlise, 34.

regard for the individuals caught in its movement. This gives us subjectivity at the expense of subjects, at least, as Kierkegaard sees it. In response, as if isolating a single combatant's voice from the more general din of swirling chaos, Kierkegaard shows us the fear, anxiety, dread, and despair of the individual subject who undergoes this process, the subject of faith who knows that all is lost but believes that everything can be saved nonetheless.

"Faith is just this[:] the contradiction between the infinite passion of inwardness and objective uncertainty. If I can grasp God objectively, then I do not have faith, but just because I cannot do this, I must have faith. If I wish to stay in my faith, I must take constant care to keep hold of the objective uncertainty, to be 'on the 70,000 fathoms deep' but still have faith,"[24] writes Johannes Climacus in Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postcript.* Faith is the zenith of Kierkegaard's project, whereas for Hegel, faith has an objective being,[25] which is overcome in Geist, "Spirit," because Spirit is self-consciousness and mediation. Kierkegaard will show us how faith is something we must return to again and again, not something we overcome. Hegel's Spirit recognizes the content of faith as having the "characteristic of an antithesis to actuality as *this* actuality in general, and of an antithesis to self-consciousness in particular."[26] Faith is "contingent knowledge"[27] and "slumbering knowledge."[28] It is "submerged" knowledge that "depict[s] actuality itself in a non-actual manner"[29] because it is "conceived and expressed merely as essence" rather than manifested in the "whole wealth of the developed form… expressed as an actuality." [30] "The Absolute as *Spirit*,"[31] is an altogether

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[24] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 171-2.
[25] Hegel*, The Phenomenology of Spirit,* ¶529.
[26] Ibid, ¶528.
[27] Ibid, ¶568
[28] Ibid, ¶572.
[29] Ibid, ¶17.
[30] Ibid, ¶19.
[31] Ibid, ¶25.

different kind of spirit than the spirit of the Christian faith, and when it comes to this term, Hegel

and Kierkegaard diverge dramatically. Kierkegaard's vision of faith is that it is "absurd," that it

is beyond "human calculation."[32] His famous description from *Fear and Trembling* has it that

"faith begins precisely where thought stops."[33] "Faith is [the] paradox that the single individual

is higher than the universal"[34] and the "single individual places himself in an absolute relation to

the absolute."[35] Kierkegaard's religiosity is not nearly as interesting to us as his ontology. Our

questions concern faith and what it means to exist absurdly, as a paradox. Whether faith and

authenticity are the same thing remains to be determined. Nevertheless, by illuminating the

structure of Kierkegaard's faith, we may come to better understand how it establishes the ground

for the practice of authenticity, which is as much a concern for those of us who believe in God as

it is for those of us who do not, for "authenticity is not about the realization of one's self but

about its spontaneous creation. The self is something that should be created and formed, not

something possessing an intrinsic essence to be further developed."[36] This is a task for all of us,

regardless of our feelings about "God."

Kierkegaard's *The Sickness Unto Death* is dedicated to the analysis of the self, its various

torments, and how it might find peace. The self is the relation between the finite and the

infinite.[37] Finitude is concreteness, determinacy. I am writing this sentence, here, now, finitely.

The world *is* finite. Infinitude is indeterminacy, that from which determinacy *becomes*

determinate. I write this sentence, but to do so I must begin with one determinate keystroke

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[32] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 35.
[33] Ibid, 53.
[34] Ibid, 55
[35] Ibid, 62
[36] Golumb, 54.
[37] Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death,* 14

followed by another, themselves indeterminate until I make them determinate[38] and so produce

this sentence, which will soon be gone. Poof. The self is the synthesis of this relation, an

"eternal becoming."[39] Patrick Stokes characterizes it as "an unusual ontology, in that its object

never *is* but is always *coming to be*."[40] In following Kierkegaard, we find that the self for the

most part misunderstands this relation it is, which condemns the self to one of two (proper)[41]

forms of despair: first, "not to will to be oneself" or, what is the same thing, "to will to do away

with oneself"; and second, "in despair to will to be oneself."[42] Both forms of despair are

consequences of failing to resolve the relation between finitude and infinitude, or, what is the

same thing, the determinate and the indeterminate.

> The self is the conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude that relates itself to itself, whose task it is to become itself, which can be done only through the relationship to God. To become oneself is to become concrete. But to become concrete is neither to become finite nor to become infinite, for that which is to become concrete is indeed a synthesis. Consequently, the progress of the becoming must be an infinite moving away from itself in the infinitizing of the self, and an infinite coming back to itself in the finitizing process… Yet every moment that a self exists, it is in a process of becoming, for the self [considered as a potentiality] does not *actually* exist[; it] is simply that which ought to come into existence. Insofar, then, as the self does not become itself, it is not itself; but not to be itself is precisely despair.[43]

The self must at once be what it is as well as *not* be this determination in order to be what

becomes some other perpetually deferred determination. The self is the site of this conflict.

Indeed, the self *is* this conflict or relation itself. For Kierkegaard, though, despair derives largely

from man's having overestimated his own power: "a relation that relates itself to itself, a self,

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[38] Or until they arrive, which entails a different account of events.

[39] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 73.

[40] Patrick Stokes, *The Naked Self: Kierkegaard and Personal Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 143.

[41] What makes matters even worse is that as well as the despair that comes from being aware of one's self as being the relation between finitude and infinitude, being ignorant of one's self as this relation is also despair, albeit not of the same order as the despair that comes from being aware of one's self as this relation. Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, 13.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid*,* 30.

must either have established itself or have been established by another."[44] For the devoutly

Christian Kierkegaard, the power that creates the relation we are – the self – is God. Thus, "to

have a self, to be a self, is the greatest concession, an infinite concession, given to man, but it is

also eternity's claim upon him."[45] Despair faces the subject with this ontological structure,

which Kierkegaard describes as "the sickness unto death, perpetually to be dying, to die and yet

not to die, to die death."[46] We are this being that persists despite its continual annihilation, a self

that is but is not responsible for its own being. But if we are perpetually dying, "[w]hat could

justify saying that the *same* self comes back into existence?"[47] Despair is this "existential

contradiction."[48] Alastair Hannay calls despair an "unwillingness to live up to the expectation of

selfhood."[49] Kierkegaard details this as follows:

> [T]he existing subject is existing…, he is indeed on the way to being. Then just as
> the form of his imparting must conform essentially with his own existence, so
> must his thought correspond to the form of existence. Every subject is an existing
> subject, and that fact must therefore express itself in all his knowing…. In
> historical knowledge he gets to know a great deal about the world, nothing about
> himself, moving constantly in the sphere of approximation-knowledge while in
> his supposed positivity imagining himself to possess certainty, which can only be
> had in infinitude, where however, as existing, he cannot be but only be constantly
> arriving. Nothing historical can become infinitely certain for me except this, that I
> exist (which in turn cannot become infinitely certain for any other individual, who
> in turn can only be infinitely certain of his own existence), and that is not
> something historical. The speculative result is an illusion in so far as the existing
> subject wants as thinker to abstract from the fact that he is existing…. The
> important thing, then, is that the existing subject's thinking have a form in which
> this can be rendered…. The existing subject is eternal, but as existing temporal.
> Infinitude's treachery [renders a]ll positive reliability … suspect. Unless I am
> aware of this at every moment my positive trust in life becomes childishness …

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[44] Ibid, 13.

[45] Ibid, 21.

[46] Ibid, 18.

[47] Stokes, 152.

[48] Michael Theunissen, *Kierkegaard's Concept of Despair*, trans. B. Harshav and H. Illbruck (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 113.

[49] Alastair Hannay, "Kierkegaard and the Variety of Despair," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, eds. A. Hannay and G.D. Marino (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 338.

but if I do become aware of it, so infinite is infinitude's thought that it is as though it transformed my existence into a vanishing nothing.[50]

The self is a concrete determinacy whose determinacy is "constantly arriving" and therefore is not yet. "[H]uman beings are peculiar among other beings by not being exhaustively identified by their finite properties. There is an irreducible particularity, an 'I," for which each 'definite' collection of properties is its own collection."[51] The subject cannot be explained by virtue of its historical situation or through speculative knowledge, e.g. sciences like mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc. The subject "exists" temporally in the here and now. Both history and science also exist here and now, of course, but objective sciences cannot adequately describe the experience of subjectivity, of the subject who thinks existence (which includes objective sciences) from within existence itself. The subject is neither the pure form of the I – the cogito – nor is it reducible to its material content. The subject is a relation between form and content.

We may regard history and science as useful hermeneutics to understanding subjectivity, but no one of them nor all of them taken together completely circumscribe the experience of subjectivity. "At the level of singularity we have to be our own selves."[52] Thus, the subject is concretely embedded in determinate reality, and yet this determinate reality arrives via an indeterminacy that *includes* the determinate, concrete, individual subject who thinks it, a paradox.

> When the eternal truth relates to someone existing, it becomes the paradox. The paradox, in the objective uncertainty and ignorance, repels in the inwardness of the one who exists. But since the paradox is not in itself the paradox, the repulsion is not sufficiently inward, for without risk, no faith; the more risk, the more faith; the more objective dependability, the less inwardness (since inwardness is precisely subjectivity); the less objective dependability, the deeper the possible

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[50] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 68-70.
[51] Hannay, 339.
[52] Ibid.

inwardness. When the paradox itself is paradoxical, it pushes off on the strength of the absurd, and the corresponding passion of inwardness is faith.[53]

The self, the subject, is a relation between the finite and the infinite that culminates in a paradox. Therefore, "the absolute paradox [of] understanding … is that it cannot be understood."[54] And yet we *can* understand this paradox, that it *is* a paradox, for we ourselves *are* this paradox. Facing this, we are forced to ask ourselves what it means to exist as subjects who understand that they do not understand. "'Quite right,'" says Kierkegaard, "'that is just what the paradox says; it pushes you away in the direction of inwardness in existence.' Perhaps the reason for this is that objectively there is no truth for existing beings, but only approximations; while subjectively truth for them is in inwardness, because the decision of truth is in subjectivity."[55] "Truth is subjectivity,"[56] claims Kierkegaard. Lamentably, for some, this paradox itself has come to mean that the truth is relative, that "authenticity" is believing whatever any subject wants to believe, no matter how silly or disastrous the consequences. This is precisely Allan Bloom's critique of authenticity in his *The Closing of the American Mind*.[57] But this is not at all Kierkegaard's point. Instead, Kierkegaard is interested in uncovering the ontologically structured self to show us how, through faith, the human being attains the highest possibility for the kind of being that it is, a paradoxical knowledge that knows that it does not know. Theunissen approaches Kierkegaard's text from an analytic perspective,[58] and he shows us Kierkegaard's God, while being the basis

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[53] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 176.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid, 288

[57] Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987). Bloom laments the decline of truth in the age of relativism.

[58] Theunissen begins his study with the explicit aim "to reconstruct the representation of despair…. The reconstruction is aimed primarily at exposing Kierkegaard's hidden intentions and facilitating a rational debate with his analysis of despair through a cautious correction of his conceptualization" Michael Theunissen, *Kierkegaard's Concept of Despair*, trans. B. Harshav and H. Illbruck. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 1. Theunissen delivers on his promise, but, in my opinion, does so by privileging conceptual clarity over the more

for a theological argument, can also be understood to represent the thought "that everything is possible."[59] For beings like us, whose "truth" is "subjectivity," it would seem that knowledge is decidedly *impossible,* yet to know that we cannot know intimates the *possibility* of knowledge. "God" is this possibility, the possibility of possibility itself.

Though Kierkegaard would himself object, there is no reason to insist that one must believe in the same God as Kierkegaard – nor any "God" at all, really – to attain faith. Kierkegaard's Socrates makes a movement much the same as faith, and Socrates was no Christian. Kierkegaard writes, "[i]n his belief that God was there, Socrates held fast to the objective uncertainty with all the passion of inwardness, and faith lies exactly in this contradiction, in this risk. …Instead of objective uncertainty, we have here the certainty that objectively it is the absurd; and this absurdity, when held fast in the passion of inwardness, is faith."[60] Granted, Kierkegaard says in the next sentence that "Socratic existing inwardness, compared with the exertion of [authentic] faith" we find in Abraham appears as "a Greek insouciance," but it is nonetheless clear that Socrates makes the movement of faith, albeit to a lesser degree than does Abraham in *Fear and Trembling*. Ferreira notes that "[a]ll leaps are qualitative shifts, and *formally* all qualitative transitions are similar."[61] Both Socrates and Abraham are "formally similar"[62] in this way. It is not the particular faith that matters (though, admittedly, Kierkegaard would exhort us all to the Christian faith) so much at the *structure* of faith that matters. Socrates has faith in the same qualitative form as Abraham – though perhaps not in the same intensity. When we pair Kierkegaard's conception of the subject with his

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literary or "passionate" affects of Kierkegaard's writing. Nonetheless, Theunissen's text is an excellent guide to Kierkegaard' secret system," as Theunissen calls it.

[59] Theunissen, 85.

[60] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 176.

[61] Ferreira, 230.

[62] Ibid.

conception of faith, we come to see how the famous Kierkegaardian "qualitative leap"[63] gives us an authentic subject. I needn't believe in God to make this leap. Kierkegaard's leap is designed to bring terrible "vanishing nothing" of existence to a stop.[64] This vanishing nothing is the self that we are, a restless finitude reflecting the infinite. To demonstrate the leap in *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard offers us Abraham. Through the leap, the knight of faith, Abraham, is "sufficient to himself."[65] The knight of infinite resignation is also self-sufficient, but Abraham's self-sufficiency is of a qualitatively different order, and only Abraham can be said to attain authentic rest. "What did he achieve? He remained true to his love. But anyone who loves God needs no tears; he forgets his suffering in the love."[66] Abraham is discrete, finite, and yet absolutely infinite. With Abraham, "[w]e discover the absolute in the relative."[67] A paradox indeed. Perhaps no one can attain faith to the degree Abraham does, and, when we consider his story, most of us are likely to be thankful for this mercy. But even in the absence of faith like Abraham's, we can learn from him, for "life has tasks enough also for the person who does not have faith, and if he loves these honestly, his life will not be wasted, even if it is never comparable to [Abraham's]."[68]

In his celebrated excursus on Abraham, Kierkegaard employs several allegories to help the reader understand the distinction between infinite resignation and faith. On the surface, the movements look the same, but if we understand their genesis, we see they are produced by entirely different mechanisms. Both move from particular to universal, from determinate to

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[63] Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* details the leap in full.
[64] Ibid, 287.
[65] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling,* 44.
[66] Ibid, 120.
[67] Jean-Paul Sartre, "Kierkegaard: The Singular Universal," in *Jean-Paul Sartre: Between Existentialism and Marxism*, trans. John Mathews (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 155.
[68] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 122.

indeterminate, from the finite to infinite. But infinite resignation is despair by another name. It proceeds externally and manifests externally. Faith, on the other hand, proceeds internally and manifests externally. In the allegory of the "lad" in love with the princess whom he can never have, Kierkegaard shows us how the lad is "sufficient" in infinite resignation:

> Spiritually speaking, everything is possible, but in the finite world there is much that is not possible. The knight [of infinite resignation], however, makes this impossibility possible by expressing it spiritually, but he expresses it spiritually by renouncing it. The desire that would lead him out into actuality but has stranded on impossibility is now turned inward, but it is not therefore lost, nor is it forgotten… He is no longer finitely concerned about what the princess does, and precisely thus proves that he has made the movement infinitely. Here one has occasion to see whether the movement in an individual is authentic or feigned… for one who has resigned infinitely is sufficient to oneself… What the princess does cannot disturb him; it is only the lower natures who have the law for their actions in someone else ... In infinite resignation there is peace and rest; every person who wills it, who has not debased himself by self-disdain … can discipline himself to make this movement, which in its pain reconciles one to existence.[69]

In infinite resignation, the lad appears as a concrete determination that includes some possibilities and excludes others. This is the finite world to which we are all condemned, where "there is much that is not possible" because to live is to determine oneself in particular ways, to be "this" and not "that." The lad cannot be the lad who gets the princess because, *resigning* himself to determination, he makes himself a possibility that precludes the possibility of the princess. The lad can no more gain the princess than I can secure a tenure-track position teaching philosophy at the Sorbonne. Like me, the lad considers his circumstances, his history, his abilities and disabilities and *resigns* himself to these determinations: "'lads" like me don't get princesses, princes do," the lad reasons. First-generation college graduates with blue-collar roots like mine don't teach at the Sorbonne. Now, if my history had been different, if I could be someone else, but it is too late. I resign myself to this determination that I am. The lad does the

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[69] Ibid, 44-5.

same; however, he can take solace in the recognition that some other finitude might have given him the princess, just as I can take solace that in another life I might have taught at the Sorbonne. "If things had been different," I say to myself, "I could have done the things I cannot do." "If I were not a lad," says the lad, "I could have had the princess." Granted, were this to occur, the lad would not be the lad he is, but he would nevertheless still be finite, which is expressive of an order governing finitude as such, viz. that finitude itself is inescapable. This order provides the lad with solace, with "peace and rest," for as a subject determined by the laws of determination as such, the lad stands as a finitude expressive of those laws. Himself determined by the laws of finitude, the lad is here "sufficient to himself," but not in the same way as Abraham, as we will see shortly. In infinite resignation the lad recognizes himself as an individual determination, "this" lad, realizes this determination as dependent on the laws of determination as such, and "resigns" himself to this order, becoming "a" lad. He renounces his particular determinacy in the name of determinacy as such, mollified by the knowledge that as a lad among other lads, some lad somewhere at some time will have the princess, and so, insofar as he part of the universal whole of "lads," the lad can be said to have the princess.

In infinite resignation, the lad sacrifices his specific love for the princess for the general love of mankind, of which the princess is part. The lad moves in the spheres of both particularity and universality, but it is universality that gives him "self-sufficiency." He is not of a "lower nature," having the "law for [his] actions" in "someone else," i.e. some other concrete, determinate, particularly, viz. the princess. The lad is presumably of a "higher" nature, having the law of his action in the universal. The lad has subsumed the concrete self within the universal self, and so is self-sufficient, the laws of determination "reconcil[ing him] to existence." The lad is therefore not "disturbed." This "movement" is a "discipline." The lad

learns this pose. We can see that infinite resignation is comparative authenticity, which is measured externally. The lad knows himself as a lad among lads, all of whom taken together comprise the universal class of lads. Kierkegaard says that resignation is a "philosophical movement" that gains us our eternal consciousness by moving us from our finite selves to a purely formal "self." Kierkegaard remarks that this takes "courage"; it isn't easy to sacrifice one's particular self in the name of the ethical order. Indeed, it "takes all [our] strength," for once we give ourselves over to this order, we relinquish our *own* relationship to existence for the existence of "everyone." Kierkegaard sees infinite resignation as privileging the external transferability of subjectivity, its disciplinary aspect, and neglecting the internal composition of particular subjects as such. Kierkegaard objects to this kind of subjectivity, where subjects give over their unique determinations in the name of an anonymous subjectivity. This is a far cry from Kierkegaard's Christian God, who would have numbered the hairs on Kierkegaard's head[70] and known him absolutely in his discrete determination. Kierkegaard hopes to unify the form and the content of the subject – its transcendent and immanent poles, respectively – not by sublating the concrete existence of individual subjects in a movement that reveals the operation of some impersonal albeit materially grounded subjectivity, but by preserving the individual determinateness of the subject, the subject's *actual* being.

Ontological Authenticity: Kierkegaard's Concept of Authenticity

Kierkegaardian faith subverts Hegelian movement, describing a movement not of mediation between the finite and the infinite but one that expresses the infinite as it moves immediately from finitude to finitude. Kierkegaard's "problem of the Crumbs" discusses the

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[70] *Luke* 12:7 (KJV)

immediacy of faith in great detail. In faith, "[t]he individual does not stop being a human being

[and] take off finitude's motley… [but] all is changed…. He still lives in the finite, but he does

not have his life in it. His life, just like anyone else's, has the diverse predicates of a human

existence, but he … is a stranger in the world of the finite…; he is incognito, but his incognito

consists precisely in looking just like everyone else."[71] Faith gives us an entirely different way of

being "sufficient to oneself," and it is in this break that we can see Kierkegaard's "ontological"

authenticity at work.

> The act of resignation does not require faith, for what I gain in resignation is my
> eternal consciousness. This is a purely philosophical movement… The act of
> resignation does not require faith, but to get the least little bit more than my
> eternal consciousness requires faith, for this is the paradox. The movements are
> often confused… Through resignation I renounce everything. I make this
> movement all by myself… By faith I do not renounce anything; on the contrary,
> by faith I receive everything exactly in the sense in which it is said that one who
> has faith like a mustard seed can move mountains. It takes a purely human
> courage to renounce the whole temporal realm in order to gain eternity, but this I
> do gain and in all eternity can never renounce – it is a self-contradiction. But it
> takes a paradoxical and humble courage to grasp the whole temporal realm now
> by virtue of the absurd, and this is the courage of faith… By my own strength, I
> can give up the princess, and I will not sulk about it but find joy and peace and
> rest in my pain, but by my own strength I cannot get her back again, for I use all
> my strength in resigning. On the other hand, by faith, says that marvelous knight,
> by faith you will get her by virtue of the absurd. But this movement I cannot
> make. As soon as I want to begin, everything reverses itself, and I take refuge in
> the pain of resignation…To exist [*existere*] in such a way that my contrast to
> existence constantly expresses itself as the most beautiful and secure harmony
> with it – this I cannot do… And yet it must be wonderful to get the princess, and
> the knight of faith is the only happy man.[72]

Kierkegaard focuses on the internal relation that characterizes ontological authenticity, which

"grasps" the "whole temporal realm… by virtue of the absurd." To grasp the "temporal realm"

is to hold onto the world, to maintain it, to have it as one's "own." In faith, the lad never gives

up the princess at all. This refusal is not an expression of selfishness or cowardice, nor is it

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71 Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 344-5.
72 Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 48-50.

mired in the particularity of the finite. Instead, "faith" is an expression of the finite and the infinite that does not move from the finite to the infinite to the sublated finite but from the finite to the finite, *immediately* through the infinite. Insofar as it is immediate, the self that comes into being through faith cannot be "understood" in the sense that it cannot be said to conform to any external, objective criteria. "The point is not to deny that there are objective moral and religious truths, but to raise the question as to how a person can learn to live truly. What is it that makes a person's life true?"[73] This kind of truth – the internal truth of subjectivity – is only possible through the leap. Kierkegaard writes, "everyone knows that to leap into the air from where one stands and then land again on the same spot is the most difficult of all leaps to make."[74] It is precisely this leap that Abraham makes.

Again, the allegory of the lad helps us to understand Abraham. Understood externally through comparative authenticity, the lad gives up or "renounces" the princess so that he can become "a lad" like any other lad. He finds rest in the ethical order, in the universal, his subjectivity externally transferable or interchangeable among or between subjects, "authentic" in the sense that his subjectivity is verifiable since it adheres to a model/copy paradigm. This is the choice most of us make. At least, it's the one I made. We all renounce the ones we love, don't we? I met a woman who was to become my wife, but the woman I married is not the same woman I desired to marry. Desire itself is a determinacy that concretely excludes the having of what one desires, at least, if we conceive of desire as a lack, which Kierkegaard does. It is impossible that I marry the woman I desire, for to marry her is to have her, thereby negating the determinate desire to marry. No one marries the one they love, even if they marry. We cannot

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[73] C. Steven Evans, "Realism and Anti-realism in Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, eds. A. Hannay and G.D. Marino (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 172.
[74] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript,* 307

repeat our original desire. We all renounce one determinacy for another.   Not so with Abraham, the consummate knight of faith. He renounces nothing. Abraham moves in the realm of determinacy only by "holding onto" or "grasping" determinacy, which is already a paradox. The determinate cannot be *maintained*; it has always already vanished, like the woman I wanted to marry. And yet the determinate *is*, namely, as the determination of the indeterminate. Abraham is a determinate indeterminate, a subject like all of us, but because Abraham expresses an internal rather than external relation, his authenticity is differently derived. Unlike the lad who determines himself to be the lad who does not get the princess and in so doing resolves the finite and the infinite by becoming part of a whole, Abraham does not make some determinations true and some not. Abraham is not a knight of infinite resignation but of infinite faith. Abraham makes every determination indeterminate, a paradox. The infinitely resigned actualize concrete determinations from the infinite field of possible determinations, which gives the subject's concrete determinations meaning, value, or coherence, which is mediated in the ethical order. The tragic hero kills Iphigenia and so enacts a world that continues on without her concrete presence. Such a sacrifice is difficult, profound, and unalterable. The tragic hero, in his finitude, must choose one finite world, which is largely the same ethically ordered world other subjects choose, where some things are "possible" and others "impossible." We can understand the tragic hero. He is like us. He marries or does not marry, enacting one world at the expense of another. The faithful Abraham, on the other hand, refuses to "renounce" the whole temporal realm, enacting a world that precludes nothing because Abraham does not choose *a* world. He chooses every world, all worlds, a determinate indeterminacy. How can we understand this?

Fear and Trembling opens with the preface by Johannes de Silentio followed immediately by the Exordium, which is broken into four parts. Generally, these are taken to

represent four ways Abraham's story might have worked out differently than it otherwise does.

Each of these stories shows us a different way that Abraham might have dealt with God's terrible

commandment, and each story shows us the methods whereby a child might be "weaned" from

its mother. The effect of the stories taken together is that, had Abraham acted differently, he

could not be said to have acted in authentic faith, which Kierkegaard subsequently describes in

the Eulogy on Abraham. The implication of the quadripartite Exordium is that Abraham did not

act in any of these ways; he did not "blacken his breast," did not "virginally conceal" it, "did not

grieve [in] brief sorrow," and did not have "stronger sustenance,"[75] for each of these can be said

to be a concrete determination that would have forever undermined Abraham's relation to God.

Any one of these determinations would commit Abraham to whatever world followed from such

a determination. Abraham does act, but Abraham's act cannot be said to enact one world at the

expense of another. "The Self is chosen finitude, nothingness affirmed and delimited by an act;

it is determination conquered."[76] Rather than reading the Exordium as exclusions, we should

read them as inclusions. Abraham enacts *all* of these determinations *and more*. "Thus and in

many similar ways did the man of whom we speak [he who tried to understand Abraham] ponder

this event,"[77] writes Kierkegaard. We may understand Abraham as a shadow that haunts every

determination as having already fled every determination. The tragic hero raises the knife and

determines the world without Iphigenia, committing to it with all of his strength. If the tragic

hero leaps, he leaps from one determinacy to another mediated by the universal of the ethical

order, and once he has attained the sufficiency of this order, he can never leap again.

Alternatively, Abraham raises the knife and determines a world both with and without Isaac, a

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[75] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 11-4.
[76] Sartre, "Kierkegaard: The Singular Universal," 159.
[77] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 14.

paradox. He leaps again and again committing not to one determinate world but to the determination of *all* worlds. In some worlds, Abraham does attempt to kill Isaac with a wild gaze, "his whole being [a] sheer terror,"[78] which is precisely that which allows for a world where he does not. In some other world, Abraham's "hand was clenched in despair,"[79] and yet it is exactly this world that allows there to be world where it does not. Abraham is all four of the worlds of the Exordium as well as "many similar" others. Every world includes him. In *this* world, he is a paragon of faith. In some other, he is an apostate. It is not Abraham himself who makes this world. Through faith that it is God alone who renders the determinate determinate, Abraham can act in such a way as to simultaneously affirm and deny any determination whatsoever. Abraham's faith brings the truth of his subjectivity into being. The truth of Abraham's subjectivity is that there is a God for whom all things are possible. That all things are possible is impossible, and this impossibility requires Abraham to have faith that the impossible is possible. It is impossible that Abraham both obey God *and* spare Isaac in any one determinate world, but it is toward this impossibility that Abraham leaps. He leaps *from* a determinate world governed by possibility *to* a world where anything is possible. In so doing, Abraham *enacts* the truth of his subjectivity.[80] Abraham's individual subjectivity is preserved, which gives Abraham's subjectivity meaning as that which is maintained or "grasped," not renounced like the knight of infinite resignation. As a "self" – the relation between the finite and the infinite – Abraham is just like the rest of us, but through the leap of faith, he is utterly transformed.

In his act, Abraham is not subject to the same rubric of judgment as Agamemnon. Abraham cannot be *mediated*. Kierkegaard spends ample time explaining this. For example,

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[78] Ibid, 10.
[79] Ibid, 14.
[80] Whether this means that Abraham in effect "creates God" is a question we cannot take up here but an interesting one nonetheless. For an analysis, see Golumb, 63.

"The authentic tragic hero sacrifices himself and everything that is his for the universal; his act and every emotion in him belong to the universal; he is open, and in this disclosure is the beloved son of ethics. This does not fit Abraham; he does nothing for the universal and is hidden."[81] Abraham does not move from part to whole in sublation. He makes a different kind of movement: his own. Of course, we *can* judge Abraham by the ethical order. He looks like a madman or a murderer.[82] But Kierkegaard's point is that, no matter how "appalling"[83] Abraham might be, this rubric no longer applies precisely because Abraham's sufficiency is not given through the universal. Abraham is not one of us; he is his own. Indeed, it is Abraham's *internal* self-sufficiency that marks him as ontologically authentic and which reveals the great difficulty it is to be a self. That Abraham moves from finitude to finitude *immediately*, without passing *through* infinite indeterminateness and returning to the finite afterward, means that Abraham directly *enacts* infinite determinateness in his determinate act. He is entirely "self-sufficient" in the truest sense, the most "authentic" sense. Faith in God allows Abraham to believe that despite himself determining the world in one way, God may make it so that the world is actually determined in another. God can "make murder into a holy …act."[84] Of course, to say that God can make murder into a holy act is already problematic since both "murder" and "the holy," are mediated ideas; they are public and open to disclosure. What counts as murder to one person in one world cannot also be holy to the same person in the same world at the same time, but Abraham's determination of the world is not of one world to the exclusion of others. Instead, it is an affirmation of *all* worlds. Abraham gives up nothing. He is "sufficient to himself." Through faith, Abraham's can be the individual self that is the relation between finitude and

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[81] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 113.
[82] Ibid, 55.
[83] Ibid, 60.
[84] Ibid, 53.

infinitude without having to sacrifice his particular individuality for universal subjectivity at the altar of the ethical order. As Kierkegaard says, "the progress of the becoming must be an infinite moving away from itself in the infinitizing of the self, and an infinite coming back to itself in the finitizing process."[85] Abraham has done this through his self alone. With Abraham, interiority becomes the measure for action and for authenticity.

Should we imitate Abraham? I wouldn't want to, but I can imagine how it happens. I *have* heard voices, after all. If they whispered to me to kill myself, it's not hard to imagine them whispering to me to do the same to my child. We read stories like Abraham's all too often: parents who murder their children because "God told them to do it." Surely their "faith" is merely insanity, we say. Yet, aren't we all just obeying voices in our heads, even if we comfort ourselves by calling it the "voice of reason"? In my experience with it, I found that insanity masquerades as reason, that one does not know that one is mad, that madness makes absolute sense when one is mad. The decline into madness is imperceptible, and, as difficult as it is for me to admit it, it is not hard for me to imagine loving a child one day and killing it the next and doing both with absolute reasonableness. Indeed, for me, the great problem is how do I guard against such a decline? The sheer contingency of the return of a selfsame subject fills me with terror. I cannot know that I will return the same from one moment to the next. I must have *faith* that I will. To kill a child is terrible, and Abraham's act is this. The story is not the point; rather, it's the ontological *structure* the story reveals. Kierkegaard's telling of Abraham's story brings this structure to the fore. Kierkegaard's Abraham "unmasks the fact that every man is all [men] as a singular universal."[86] Kierkegaard has shown us another kind of authenticity than comparative authenticity. After Kierkegaard, it is no longer enough that an individual appeal to

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85 Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, 30.
86 Sartre, "Kierkegaard: The Singular Universal," 167.

the general form of subjectivity to secure his own particular subjectivity. Externality becomes insufficient. Instead, after Kierkegaard, each of us is alone responsible for his own self. Interiority supplants exteriority. Isn't this how each of us thinks of himself, as determining ourselves in the here and now by virtue of some vision of who we are "on the inside"? Who of us is content to relinquish our responsibility for ourselves, for our *self*? Kierkegaard reckons with this responsibility through the leap of faith, which attempts to resolve "[his] contrast to existence… express[ing] itself as the most beautiful and secure harmony with it."[87] In Kierkegaard's leap, the subject "leaps in" to his actual, concrete, determinate existence. This the subject does not by renouncing his own unique self but by unifying both form and content, becoming that which determines itself according to the laws of determination, which are themselves indeterminate. This is the goal we have sought: the unity of the form and the content of subjectivity within the subject itself. Kierkegaard calls this subject the knight of faith. We will call him "authentic."

Having uncovered the properly authentic subject through Kierkegaard, we will next see how well Kierkegaard's theorization withstands a critique, for after Kierkegaard, philosophy largely abandons God since such religiosity flies in the face of much of early twentieth century thinking, as well as our own. And God is not the only problem we will discover. In exploring the foundation of authenticity Kierkegaard has laid for us, seeing how, in laying the cornerstones of authenticity, he enables us to better understand what we are, he advances our understanding of authenticity, but he also missteps along the way.

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[87] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 50.

Chapter Three

A Critique of Kierkegaard's Thematization of Authenticity

Kierkegaard distinguishes between two ways to "measure" the self. In the first, the subject is identified via its externality, that is, by its concrete ramification within a discursively intelligible field, i.e. "society." In the second, we focus on internality – the subject's own reflection on itself as a relation between externality and internality. This reflection is lived out on the same field as the external, but it is not intelligible in the same way as the external – it is the reflection of an altogether different order, i.e., "the self." We can think of this difference along the lines of the distinction between religiousness A and religiousness B in Kierkegaard.[1] A and B represent a difference within the religious sphere, which supersedes both the aesthetic and the ethical.[2] A achieves faith one way; B, another. Kierkegaard's preoccupation with the "faith" of religiousness B opposed to the resignation of A in *The Concluding Unscientific Postscript* is mostly theological and distinguishes between a kind of faith that paganism and Christianity both achieve but which is "higher" in Christianity.[3]

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[1] This is a controversial position. Here, I would like to appeal to Hubert Dreyfus' "Appendix" to his book *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), "Kierkegaard, Division II, and Later Heidegger. Dreyfus acknowledges the difference between Religiousness A and B, their respective projects, but nonetheless declaims that Heidegger "secularizes" Religiousness A and "salvages" religiousness B by doing away with the need for faith. Dreyfus acknowledges Alastair Hannay's critique of his position in his "Reply to Hannay" from *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus. Vol 1* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000) but establishes its warrant in its interpretative fecundity. I would like to appeal to the spirit of this interpretation if not its letter. That A and B are structurally comparable bears nourishing fruit for thinking.

[2] See Merold Westphal, "Kierkegaard's Religiousness C: A Defense," *International Philosophical Quarterly* (Vol 44, Iss 4; Dec, 2004), pp 535-548 for a detailed account of the movement from the aesthetic to the religiousness of A, and B. We wonder though whether Westphal's religiousness C is perhaps a kind of Kierkegaardian intoxication.

[3] For an excellent and illuminating discussion of the difference between A and B, see Sylvia Walsh Utterback, "Kierkegaard's Inverse Dialectic," *Kierkegaardiana* 11 (1980), 34-54.

Theology aside however, both A and B attempt to unify the "form" of subjectivity – interiority – with the "content" of subjectivity – objective externality – which we asserted perhaps too dogmatically at the beginning of our last chapter as a requirement for an adequate theory of subjectivity. [4] Following him through his conceptions of exteriority and interiority, we will discover Kierkegaard's attempt at self-unification gratuitous, a philosophical demand that stems from an erroneous formulation about the way we actually live our lives. Kierkegaard sees interiority and exteriority as fundamentally opposed subjective poles whose successful mediation is accomplished through faith in God alone. The critique of this chapter demonstrates the inadequacy of externality and internality, rejects Kierkegaard's dependence on a transcendent God, and envisions another path toward an adequate theory of subjectivity.

The Expressive Model and Secularized Religiousness A

A secularized version of religiousness A might be the best kind of existence we can hope for, one where the individual is reconciled both inwardly within himself and externally to his community. After all, to be an individual, one needn't be in conflict with the community; "to the contrary, self-choice operates as the condition of possibility that I can think normatively and act morally in the public sphere."[5] Individualism isn't de jure antagonistic, and to resign is to recognize oneself as "the subject" of a social encoding – the language, history, legal status and so on of every subject is delimited by this domain. We can call it "culture" for short. To be implicated in a culture is to recognize the interiority of the self but resign it to the necessarily externalized social field, a publicly available social construction. Part of this construction is

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[4] The way each does this produces "guilt" in A and "sin" in B. This is an interpretation we cannot develop here.
[5] Martin J. Matustik, "Kierkegaard's Radical Existential Praxis, or Why the Individual Defies Liberal, Communitarian, and Postmodern Categories," in *Kierkegaard in Post/Modernity*, eds. M. Matustik and M. Westphal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 244.

what Kierkegaard calls "the public," which is illustrative of the "leveling" effect of exteriority.[6]

Though Kierkegaard used this term mostly to refer to newspapers and the media – what we

would call "public opinion" – it speaks to an undeniable trivializing effect of culture and its

sometimes de facto inauthenticity. Whether this effect vitiates exteriority wholesale, as

Kierkegaard seems to think it does, is a question we will return to later. For now, though, let's

allow that if authenticity consists in recognizing oneself as a foundationless, self-annihilative

relation, the infinite resignation of religiousness A has this feature.

In a secularized religiousness A, one "authentically" resigns himself to the external; one

puts one's "faith" in the social order. Here, the subject's identity is secured by the external. The

subject is rendered legible, regular, predictable, *unified*.[7] Birth certificates, marriage records,

school attendance rosters and such all point to this legibility, as do bank statements, DNA

sequencing, internet activity and so on. In secularized A, the subject commits to the legitimacy

of externality, being governed and articulated by it. Socrates is our paradigmatic subject here: he

supports his own execution because he resigns himself to the public, whose charge it is to "do the

right thing," which, in this case, is executing Socrates. "Let us act in this way, since this is the

way the god is leading us,"[8] says Socrates. To the extent we participate in the public world and

let its "god" lead us, this is what we all do.

Alasdair MacIntyre characterizes religiousness A this way: "in the ethical life the

commitments and responsibilities to the future springing from past episodes in which obligations

were conceived and debts assumed unite the present to and to future in such a way as to make of

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[6] Kierkegaard, *The Present Age*, in *Two Ages*, trans. and eds. trans. H. Hong and E. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

[7] Heidegger's "enframing" is an extreme form of this. See "The Question Concerning Technology," in Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. W. Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

[8] Plato, *Crito*, trans G.M.A. Grube in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed J.M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

a human life a unity."[9] Granted, there are other ways people negotiate their relationship with the public. Some of us refuse to accept externality, fleeing from it or rebelling against it literally or otherwise. But who would Socrates have been had he taken Crito's advice? Certainly not the Socrates we know today, and this is precisely the point. Without the public, without externality, there is no Socrates at all. Socrates *is* because externality sustains his identity. Externality provides him the unity of *a* life. It is certainly possible to live without resigning to externality, but "to live" and to live "a life" are not the same. To live a life, one must resign oneself to externality, for society delimits the kinds of lives we can live, and it is only by entering the public ledger that someone can be said to live "a life." Kierkegaard's own pseudonyms are an attempt to negotiate the fraught status of external identity, a fight he has for the most part lost, for even in scholarship we acknowledge that it is Kierkegaard who "really" wrote *Fear and Trembling* and not Johannes de Silento. As it does for Kierkegaard, externality demands of us all that we be some *one,* and in this demand it *frees* us to be someone. It is through our subjection that we are granted subjectivity.

In secularized religiousness A, externality avails me of a life to live with its various roles to fulfill, and I articulate myself through them. This articulation is physical as much as it is psychical, gestural as well as lexical/semantic. I understand myself *as* these roles as well as *through them*; I am thoroughly imbued with externality. I make myself understood by expressing myself on the external field and so may be said to animate "my" part of it. I am legible to society precisely because "I" can be said to be *this* part of its legibility, this particular *expression* of a socially constructed order that *includes* me, this "life." The socially constructed external world gives me a seemingly infinite array of complex possibilities. I can "be" anything

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[9] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 242.

I want to be so long as I can make it externality intelligible. I am a teacher *because I teach*, a student *because I study*, and I can do all of these things in my "own" unique way. There is an inexhaustible reserve of expressions available to me so long as I resign my status as a foundationless self-annihilative relation in favor of the positive content of the external, socially constructed world. The world provides me with the *content* that the self – the purely *formal* self of annihilation – cannot generate on its own. Form and content are unified, and subjectivity is evidenced in the world that "expresses" it.   This is the vision of a secular religiousness A. We put or faith in culture, and we live our lives as complex, socially-coherent projects, unique and sophisticated compositions of the pre-established rhythms culture offers us and which we shape in turn.

In this version of authenticity, we "author" our own lives by underwriting externality, "authorizing" it and giving it expressive content in a language that we do not invent. And while it does provide a compelling account of how we live, this "expressive" model[10] of authenticity posits that the recognition of one's formal self is ontologically prior to its resignation into external content. Expressive authenticity can also be called the "substantial" model for reasons that will be clear in the next section.[11] Either way, its formulation is philosophically suspect, and upon closer inspection, we will see how it results in a thoroughly materialist ontology that motivates the leap into religiousness B, which we detail below.

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[10] Charles Guignon's "Authenticity, Moral Values, and Psychotherapy" in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, 2nd Edition, ed. C. Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) interprets authenticity "expressively." Charles Taylor offers a similar interpretation, but by way of a critique of "subjectivism," in his *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[11] Charles Taylor's "Heidegger on Language" in *A Companion to Heidegger*, eds. H Dreyfus and M. Wrathall (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005) makes clear how the expressive model and the substantial model are essentially the same.

The Hegemony of Externality in A as the Impetus for the Leap into the Interiority of B

Material identity is the engine of externality, and it tends to "take over," as it were, colonizing territory not appropriately its own and giving otherwise amorphous forces (social forces, personal forces) a determinate morphology. Its hegemony is a byproduct of its structure. Externality is objective. It is "out there" as the background upon which subjectivity appears. It "is what it is" as that which *is* "other" than that *to which* it appears. That to which it appears is me, is us, is "the subject." We can doubt its validity, but we cannot doubt that it *is* doubted. Thus, externality appears as *the same* externality we question again and again as it somehow undergoes a continuous transformation. This motivates a metaphysical assumption that externality is somehow independent from the subjectivity to which it appears, that externality is *complete.* This assumption drives a vision of the subject as the "subjectum" that underlies a certain concatenation of material acts; hence, the "substantial model" we noted above. When we approach subjectivity this way, we totalize it by representing it as the identifiable correlate of relations between materially real objects – their "synthesis." Since the synthesis is derived from the objects related, we come to prioritize objectivity, treating the subject "programmatically" as something that can be managed and manipulated in the same way we manipulate objects. The consequence of such a formulation is a kind of subjective violence, which we shall now examine.

With every role I fulfill, I commit to externality conceived as a quasi-totality, a relatively closed system of referential articulations or, what is the same, expressions. This relative closure is sustained insofar as the subject maintains the possibility of articulating or synthesizing something new, something that hasn't been given in advance. However, the material engine of externality tends toward totalization – its absolute closure – by colonizing the inner space of interiority itself, quantifying it and thereby determining the range of the subject's possible

articulations. "There are no final secrets for philosophy, ethics, or politics. The manifest is given priority,"[12] says Derrida of this colonization. Externality's apotheosis is a self understood according to the objectivity of science (psychology and neurology, for instance) with vapid conventionality positioned as its "meaningful" articulation ("the news" is one example). Here, the public performance of externality opens the curtain on an act that is no longer animated by an authentically resigned internality, no longer legitimately underwritten but rather *overruled* by externality's material rubric, giving us "right" and "wrong" ways to be. Such an outcome flies in the face of the expressive authenticity's goal of preserving the interplay between internality and externality, and yet it is expressive authenticity's own materialist presuppositions that have led us here.

Secularized religiousness A can make meaning for me, but it can't make meaning for *me*. In other words, externality can delimit the sphere of material possibilities available to me, but it can't heuristically determine any of them. For this, I am on my own. Limit cases where "meaning" breaks down illustrate this: I open a letter from my doctor stating that I will be dead in two months. What can this mean for my external, public self? How does "a father" die? But *I* am going to die. What can externality provide me but superficial banalities about loss and grief? Externality can only tell me that I am going to die and how to socially-responsibly prepare for it. It can reveal to me the "science of death," the objective mechanisms in place to help me "go through it" as if I were no more than the subjectum of material relations, but externality cannot tell me what death means to *me*. What existence means to *me* Derrida will call a "secret" that cannot be spoken.[13] To be clear, it's not just tragedies that do this to us. Joys can upend us just as easily. The birth of a child, an unexpected financial windfall, the receipt of a

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[12] Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. D. Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 63.
[13] Ibid, 61-2.

great honor are all equally disruptive. In these cases, I am suddenly and apodictically certain of *myself* as somehow categorically different than the world in which I am nevertheless embedded.

Here, we have discovered externality's ultimate frailty, that while it *does* provide our lives with meaning, it cannot do so comprehensively. "While the Kierkegaardian individual is always-already a well socialized member of a society, to become such an individual it is insufficient to be individuated via socialization alone."[14] Externality alone cannot render us whole. Form never truly reconciles with content. Once we get a glimpse of the roiling tumult beneath externality's ostensible order, secularized religiousness A falls apart, and we can never really put our faith in it again. This failure leads us to the abyss of interiority, which religiousness B attempts to fathom. But just as externality fails to fully account for our experience, so shall interiority. We turn to this failure now.

The Abyss of Interiority: The Impossibility of Interior Ground

It is perhaps true that not everyone will experience externality's failure, but for those of us who have, we can see that, for the most part, we can go along with our external, public self. For the most part, we can understand this latter self as the attempt to expressively articulate an authentically resigned self: externality underwritten by internality. We can see that the self as "wanting to be a self"[15] makes sense only insofar at this self actually attempts *to be* a self, a form expressed in material content. The "self" emerges as it concretizes its content. For the most part, I can rest in the security that externality compliments internality right up until the moment it doesn't, but then externality falls apart completely, and I see that it was never more than a facade

[14] Matustik, 242
[15] This is Kierkegaard's formulation, which we saw in chapter 2.

from the start. "I" find myself not *expressed in* but rather *expelled from* it, leaving me face to

face with my own fathomless interiority.

We assume that interiority is real, that it explains something about existence that

exteriority cannot. It seems obvious that interiority *does* do this. If two people hear the same

piece of music and one reacts with boredom while the other is enthralled, we would say the

music has affected them differently. From exteriority, we might describe this affect by resorting

to a material explanation, that the sound is somehow different between the listeners, or that one

of the listeners is himself composed dissimilarly to the other, or that there is some other

empirically observable difference is at work. Are musical tastes indicative of a physical or

psychical process? The likely answer is "both," but the idea that neither the music nor the

listeners need be materially different and that the listener's reactions are illustrative of the way

the music "affects" a person's interiority seems intuitive. We *do* understand people as having

interior proclivities that are or are not materially satisfied. We sometimes call this

"temperament." And we *do* think of "the self" as something independent from the objective,

external world, that any subject has a "sense" of his own self. We usually call this "self-

awareness." Are we wrong about this? I don't think so. Is this reducible to a material

explanation? Maybe. But if not, what kind of explanation *can* we give it? Moreover, how does

interiority understand or relate these states to one another without resorting to language, which is

itself part of exteriority?[16]

Kierkegaard understands interiority to be a kind of ongoing inner synthesis.[17] The

subject's present state is understood in relation to its past state as well as to some future state, but

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[16] Derrida's *Voice and Phenomenon: Introduction to the Problem of the Sign in Husserl's Phenomenology*, trans. L Lawlor (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2011) offers a different account of discourse and interiority. This debate is outside our immediate concern with Kierkegaard here.

[17] "The self is a relation that relates itself to itself… a *synthesis*." Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death,* 13.

since every state is arrived at via its own subjectively unique synthesis, no one state can claim priority to any other; thus we are left with the bare "moment" of interiority. In his *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, Adorno calls this "objectless inwardness," which is "inwardness… deduced as the substantiality of the subject directly from its disproportionateness to the outer world." [18] In such a formulation, no one internal state establishes a ground from which to investigate any other. To argue for the primacy of, for example, an interrogative state ignores the obvious objection that assertive states are equally synthetic, and thus the former state does not have an intrinsic priority over the latter type or vice versa. Whatever state we are "in," we must understand it as a composition whose parts are themselves compositions, a teeming mass of obscure states. Adorno continues, "there is only an isolated subjectivity, surrounded by a dark otherness. Indeed, only by crossing over this abyss would subjectivity be able to participate in the 'meaning' that otherwise denies itself to subjectivity's solitude."[19] To cross over, that is, to understand my internal state, to interrogate it, I must externalize it in language. Adorno claims "objectless inwardness is reached in language by the external dialectic."[20] Absent discourse, there can be no questioning nor understanding of interiority, but discourse itself is necessarily external. After all, when I quietly "talk to myself" or when I think alone in my study, I am engaging with externality just as much as if I were engaged with an actual interlocutor. Derrida puts the problem this way: "language...deprives me of…my singularity…. Once I speak, I am never and no longer myself, alone and unique."[21]

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[18] Theodor Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic,* trans. R. Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 27-9.

[19] Ibid, 29.

[20] Ibid, 35.

[21] Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 61.

Language is necessarily expressive to another, even if that other is our own self. Indeed, that we often *are* more than one "self" in this way further complicates the question: which of these selves is the "true" self of interiority? Are we the analyst, the analysand, or the analysis itself? Externality ensures interrogatability by rendering the identity of the subject stable within a publicly exchangeable socially constructed field. Language structures the world, giving names to things and arranging the world in an objectively intelligible way. Interiority attempts to do the same by developing a "private language" as it were, seeking stability, its "grammar," in the state of the subject, in the intensity of its passion. But this is nonsensical. Not only can there not be such a thing as a wholly private language, but the subject never presents a singular, subjectively normative state from which to launch anything like a language in the first place. The subject is always in flux, never submitting to formal continuity between states, never providing anything that could be "named" in any real sense, for nothing namable persists. Pure affectivity isn't anything coherent. It cannot be articulated. At best, it is a "secret," as Derrida says, and "no manifestation can…render the interior exterior nor show what is hidden."[22] The most we can say is that interiority is the condition of possibility for the appearance of any state, which is a decided *absence* of content. The subject can never find a state that adequately expresses the subject in his or her fulness, for insofar as *any* state expresses the subject, *every* state does. Interiority founders on its own inaccessibility. To render interiority analytically determinate is to violate interiority itself. Kierkegaard attempts to work around this problem by resorting to God. We review the problem and reject his solution next.

The Leap into B and the Dissolution of Abrahamic Grounding

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[22] Ibid, 64. Translation modified.

In religiousness B, we can see Kierkegaard's problem having to do with the difficulty of grounding pure affectivity, "passion," of giving it some kind of coherence, an identity. From interiority itself, this is impossible without an appeal to some transcendent principle that will bring "reflection to a halt,"[23] in other words, *ground* it. Without such a principle, interiority endlessly reflects on itself, eternally excavating itself in search of something that persists in the otherwise chaotic efflorescence of appearances. In Kant, this principle is the unity of apperception, the "I think" that is "capable of accompanying all my presentations."[24] For Kierkegaard, without "God," Abraham is doomed to an infinite regress of reflection, as we shall see.

Imagine Abraham is just a man.[25] He hears a voice. It tells him to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham queries, "should I obey?" We will call his state "conflicted." Abraham's current state of conflict is a synthesis of previous states. He compares the intensity of this conflict with another conflict that seemed at the time to be equivalent to this conflict but which, it is now obvious, pales in comparison. He is perpetually "in" conflict, and we can certainly imagine a conflict to come that will render the conflict whether to kill Isaac negligible in its light. In short, Abraham's experience of conflict is never *given*. Instead, Abraham's interiority appears as the condition of possibility of any experience and as the negation of any particular experience as such. No one state of "conflicted" can serve as a foundation for its own critique. "It remains irreducible to presence or presentation."[26] Nowhere can Abraham find a foothold to ground the fathomless subjectivity he *is in being it*. It is as if he is experiencing conflict for the first time

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[23] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 96.
[24] Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. W. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996), 177.
[25] In other words, that he is not already faithful. That Abraham *is* a priori faithful makes quite a difference, as we shall see.
[26] Derrida, *The Gift of Death,* 66.

again and again. Reflection on his state reveals only another state, and so everywhere Abraham turns he finds the ground suddenly and irrevocably eroded. In light of this, it would seem that Kierkegaard sees two options: 1) either abandon the quest for subjective identity in interiority, thus returning to exteriority and its totalizing tendency, or 2) save interiority by grounding it in a transcendental principle. Of course, Kierkegaard chooses the latter, which is the leap into religiousness B.

God gives Abraham an identity in interiority, providing him with stability when it comes to the "state" of faith. God alone ensures that we are "single individuals,"[27] which means that God knows us throughout our many changes. God provides us the identity we cannot provide ourselves. God "knows" Abraham, and Abraham *is* faithful. He always has been, as we will see. He hears a voice. It tells him to sacrifice Isaac. Faithful, Abraham asks not about states of conflict nor sacrifice nor voices or anything else. He accepts that the voice he hears is God, that this is God's commandment, and so on. His question is not "should I obey?" but rather, "*how* should I obey?" Already in faith, it is a question of persisting in faith, in sustaining the "state of faith." Since Kierkegaard sets up faith as belief despite insufficient evidence, faith is structured as a non-rational act. Killing his son to obey his God is non-rational, and it functions as a demonstration of Abraham's faith. For Kierkegaard, this demonstration works as a kind of backdoor proof for the existence of God: if we reach God through faith, and faith is non-rational, then non-rational acts (sacrificing one's son, for example) are demonstrative of faith, which is to reach God. All along, Kierkegaard has presupposed God's existence. Abraham was never in danger of losing Isaac, not really, since God loves Abraham because Abraham is faithful, which is a tautology of sorts. That Kierkegaard's "proof" depends on irrationality is a paradox, which

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[27] Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, 123.

Kierkegaard tells us is exactly the point, but neither tautologies nor paradoxes are terribly convincing.

All of Kierkegaard's anxiety over Abraham is a little tongue-in-cheek, for God always saves him. That God "saves" us all this way is the theological import of the story. Ontologically, however, God functions to secure Abraham's identity from within interiority. Just as the unity of apperception can be said to accompany every subjective state for Kant, faith in God gives Kierkegaard's fathomless interiority if not a bedrock then at least a stable point of access; at least following Kierkegaard's own formulation it does. In Kierkegaard's solution in religiousness B, while interiority might be fathomless to *us,* God can sound it with no problem. By placing our faith in God and his knowledge of our interiority, we may rest securely in the belief that interiority *does* offer subjective identity, that interiority is not some vanishing state that gives us no ground for a "self." God allows us to treat interiority discursively, ensuring some positive account of what we are. It renders us whole, and we can be "judged"[28] by it. But what if we refuse Kierkegaard's God, then what?

Without a transcendent principle to structure it, we cannot comprehend our passion; we can only undergo it precisely insofar as we continue not to comprehend what our passion *is*. Without God, we cannot say that any one passion is more or less intense than another, for to do so implies that there is an order to the chaos of interiority. For instance, I can say feel "angry." This feeling is *something*, for sure, but what? I feel the throbbing veins in my neck, the heat in my cheeks, my heart beats faster, my lip quivers. All this happens *to me* pre-reflectively. I *discover* my "self" already *in* it, as it were. Reflective of this discovery, I may say, "I feel

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[28] Ibid. Here, Kierkegaard means judgment before God. Judgment before God (salvation or damnation) is not important for us; rather, that we "can be judged" implies we are "whole," that we "can be judged" to be a unity. God – as a transcendental principle – secures this.

angry," but this is no longer true in the strict sense, for once I *recognize* my anger, it is no longer the same anger I experienced prior to its recognition; rather, this is a *new* anger, a new synthesis. For Kierkegaard, that we are continuously perplexed about what we are, that it is never revealed to us, functions as evidence that such an understanding is possible, albeit for God alone. But here, Kierkegaard puts the *deus* in *deus ex machina*: our imperfection is demonstrative of God's perfection, and that we are imperfect and yet still have a concept of perfection is God's mark on us. This is another iteration of a very old argument that reaches back to the very beginnings of philosophy and is repeated over and over again throughout the ages.[29] In Kierkegaard's use of this argument, "God" rescues us from fathomless interiority. But, upon closer inspection we see that God does not save interiority. Quite the contrary, he radically alters it. Considered in itself, interiority is unstructured. God structures it. Faith is structured interiority, which is itself a perhaps yet another Kierkegaardian paradox but one we do not accept here. Rather, this outcome fundamentally undermines the authenticity Kierkegaard discovered in faith, which destroys our hope that interiority alone could buoy us after the capsize of exteriority. We wonder, is religiousness B "salvageable"?

Kierkegaard's Precipice and a Return to the Problem of Interiority

It seems that we can put our faith in neither exteriority nor interiority. But what if this bifurcation of exteriority/interiority is simply an illusion? At the lived level, we are all both comparatively and ontologically authentic, I'd venture. We drive to work, we shoot the breeze

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[29] Such a conception of imperfection moving toward perfection is at work in Aristotle's account of movement and Neoplatonic thought about the nature of reality, for sure. We can see it in Augustine as well as in Aquinas. God's "mark" is one of the hallmark moments in Descartes' ontological proof, itself a reworking of Anselm's. Even when thinkers do not agree with this conception (for example, Kant) they have variously grappled with it. Here we are, thousands of years since its inception returning to it once again. *Can* we get past this?

with our colleagues, we buy stuff online and otherwise implicate ourselves in the ready-made, socially constructed, external, everyday world. And yet simultaneously we marry, have children, receive terminal diagnoses, bury our loved ones and otherwise face our most intimate self in the absolute solitude of our own fathomless interiority. But Kierkegaard urges us toward the meaning of "inward" truth. Why?

From Abraham and religiousness B we discover the depth and profundity of our own interior, subjective self, the boundless passion that exceeds any attempt to contain it and which seems to offer succor against the indignities of externality. This intuitive sense of interiority is what we called self-awareness. But I cannot rest in interior subjectivity without God to bring my reflection to halt, which isn't terribly persuasive. God seems a dodge, a way of meliorating our terror, a way of calming our fear and trembling, not facing it. Kierkegaard reveals God in much the same way Gabriel reveals the ram, as if to say, "just kidding! Everything is okay!" However, if we set aside this sleight of hand, we can see that Kierkegaard has otherwise led us to an otherwise important conceptual precipice. We *do* cling hand and foot to dime-thick holds on the edge of externality at the limit of the concrete, determinate world. We have no tethers and no net below. Indeed, we are mostly already in the void of subjectivity, and one slip on externality will have us falling forever into our own fathomless interiority, unable to make sense of the world. Kierkegaard calls out: "Leap!" Miraculously, we land again in the same precipitous position. We do this over and over in faith. But what if we set faith aside? Does this invalidate Kierkegaard's precipice? Are we suddenly on solid ground and interiority is no longer a threat that continues the attempt to swallow us whole? Not at all. Abraham's reluctance if not outright refusal to enter into any determinate externality forces us to ask to what extent we should do the same. That exteriority demands I bring one and only one world into being seems a cosmic

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injustice, for, as the condition of possibility for any world, there are so many worlds within me, so many possibilities I would animate with the passion that I am. If Abraham is "authentic," then we should emulate Abraham, right?

It's important to remember that nowhere in Genesis 22 does Abraham "develop" or "come to" faith. He already has it when the story begins. Kierkegaard's retelling focuses on the anxiety that is decidedly and perhaps frighteningly absent in the scripture to illustrate the great divide between resignation and faith. But the scriptural Abraham was never a knight of infinite resignation, not before he became a knight of faith, not ever. From "Here I am" to drawing the knife, Abraham's actual activity is always an expression of love – both of God and of Isaac. There is no paradox for Abraham. But, "there is no language, no reason, no generality or mediation to justify this ultimate responsibility which leads [him] to absolute sacrifice."[30] It is only when objective, rational externality intrudes and demands an accounting of this that we come up against the either/or of externality. If we imagine that interiority generally "underwrites" objective exteriority, in Abraham's case, exteriority cannot provide a role adequate to the task. Abraham's paradox attacks exteriority at its most fundamental level – whether it "makes sense" to enter into externality at all.

From within interiority alone, we should imagine Abraham in constant crisis, constantly upended and overturned not just about killing his son but about brushing his teeth, choosing a breakfast cereal, taking the stairs or the elevator, like he is locked in a game of cosmic chicken. Of course, he *must* commit to externality. But Abraham is "committed" the way a maniac is committed to an institution – externality contains his passion to bring every possibility into existence by forcing him to bring *one* of them into existence. No one exteriority can resolve the

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[30] Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 71

innumerable paradoxes of a figure like Abraham, which is why we argued in our last chapter that

he must enact all of them. There is no socially constructed publicly exchangeable word that does

full justice to Abraham. We can only get to him by abandoning externality altogether, by

forgoing the multitudinous albeit insufficient expressions externality offers us in the service of

comprehending him. The abandonment of externality is articulated in silence. This is how faith,

the leap into religiousness B supposedly "makes sense." Abraham's silence is profound. It tells

us that words – the currency of externality, for sure – fail to adequately express what he is, "the

unique Abraham in a singular relation with the unique God."[31]

Abraham irks us. He shows us that externality *does* fail to provide us with the means to

adequately express what we are, and he shows *why* this is so: that the determinacy of externality

immediately dissolves if not underwritten by interiority. Unless I give over my interiority to

exteriority, that is, *resign* it, it's not that externality doesn't mean anything at all, it's just that it

no longer means anything "for me." "Murderer!" we scream at Abraham. His silence tells us

the sounds we make no longer mean anything to Abraham, that our voices come from another

world as it were. What appears at first to be relativism is in fact revelatory of Abraham's interior

"world." This "inner" world is the truth of subjectivity we discover in religiousness B. "God is

in me, he is the absolute 'me' or 'self,' he is that structure of invisible interiority that is called…

subjectivity."[32] Kierkegaard forces us to acknowledge the immediacy of interiority and the

impossibility of ever adequately expressing it. Its discovery is intuitive; it makes sense though

we can say nothing about it. Although we strangely do so together, each of us reckons with an

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[31] Ibid, 74.
[32] Ibid, 108.

interior world of his own, "the center of one's own existence that remains the exclusive province of the incognito."[33] Certainly, this is something worth salvaging. The question is, how?

<u>From A to B: A Bipolar Illustration</u>

Abraham begs the question "should we enter into externality at all?" What does it look like when we take this question seriously, when we can't brush our teeth without crisis? A lot like clinical depression, I submit. In chapter one, I described myself from the transcendental pole of subjectivity this way. The question whether one should enter into existence is one interiority qua interiority answers in silence. We must clarify what we mean by "silence" here. Certainly there is a kind of silence that is not really silence at all, for example, a silent protest or vigil whose silence is in fact a kind of speech. This kind of silence "can be appropriate, even mandatory… [to] draw the attention of the prevailing normativity to certain fissures out of which a new historical constellation of order could arise."[34] But we can also imagine silence as the withdrawal from the articulation, engagement, or animation of one's world, a "leaving silent" all of one's previous projects. This other silence is a kind of death, not some "authentic" way of life. Interiority without exteriority leaves us only the most bare existence, the mere persistence of flesh: respiration, circulation, digestion. The "subject" has fled. He has leaped himself right out of existence. In interiority alone, the subject finds no ground, only deeper and deeper fathomlessness, a "depression" without beginning or end, the utter loss of self. Interiority can discover our *passion*, our *desire* to be something, the fundamental *lack* that we are, but it can't bridge the gap into exteriority, into the "meaningful" activity of actuality itself, for interiority

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[33] Klaus-M Kodalle, "The Utilitarian Self and the 'Useless' Passion of Faith," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, eds. A. Hannay and G.D. Marino (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 403.
[34] Ibid, 404.

alone offers us only silence as absence, the inability to "make sense." Interiority provides the conditions of possibility for meaning but it cannot necessitate any actual meaning. Interiority itself can never provide a convincing argument for getting off the couch since staying there is equally meaningful. If this is what Abraham achieves, who would want to do the same? Without God, religiousness B, absolute interiority, cannot justify *any* concrete act, and so it "authorizes" none.

On the other hand, in religiousness A, we discover externality and the socially constructed, publicly exchangeable world. Of course, externality structures us in certain ways as it delimits what is and what is not possible within one, concrete, determinate reality, but the ways it structures us are generally rich and complex. We're not automatons. We do make choices, and we do "express" our "selves" in externality. But there are certain limit cases where externality fails us. These cases look like madness: Abraham, the maniac, the schizophrenic, the grieving parent, the newly-informed cancer patient, the insufferable newlyweds. These subjects refuse to commit to externality in ways that render them intelligible to the "one world"[35] externality would have them attest. The discovery that externality can be disrupted by interiority implies that externality is parasitic on internality, that should I discover externality hermeneutically deficient there is some other way for me to find "meaning" independently of it. To do so is the withdrawal from existence, the leap out of it into interiority I described as a failure above. But as an alternative to the retreat into interiority, externality attempts its own solution: totalization.

Externality tends toward totalization. In externality's ideal state, everything is "known"; every space (whether physical or psychical) is quantified, measured, codified, and surveilled so as to become *one* space; every time becomes *one* time. This is a structural byproduct of

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[35] Heidegger will take up the world of "the one" in his analysis of *das Man* in *Being and Time*.

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externality, and its essentially nefarious feature forced Kierkegaard to condemn externality as a whole.[36] Its most extreme form is what I would like to call "infinite representation." In infinite representation, externality is conceived as the total, unified field of relations between objects absent any observer. Observers themselves are objectified as the loci of relations between objects. Since they are themselves their loci, externality takes the observers themselves as representable in turn. What this does to the observer – the subject with his interiority – is a kind of conceptual colonization, "no…interiority outside of objectivity… no nonobjectifiable inside."[37] Exteriority intrudes into interiority, dissecting it, quantifying it, turning interiority into a function of exteriority. Isn't this what priests do? Psychotherapists? Facebook? Externality would lay claim to our identity by rendering us subject to a kind of mechanistic social determinism. In infinite representation, our identity is pregiven to us, something that constrains us from birth to death. We never notice how poorly it fits, where it pinches, where it almost bursts as it contains us. We never get out, we are never our "naked self."[38] Indeed, we come to accept that we are no more than our external self. We are "objectified."

Should we put our faith so completely in externality that we succumb to its siren song, we find ourselves as I did when I fell into certain obsessive-compulsive routines. Externality swept me up and made me prisoner to the restless, hegemonic, indefatigable determination of my identity within its totalizing field. I have to wash my hands over and over again because this ensures I am the same subject who returns again and again to this body; my washed hands are proof that I have been here before, a breadcrumb trail I leave behind to know I have returned. I

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[36] This is the main conclusion of his text *The Present Age*.

[37] Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 100.

[38] In his book of the same title, Patrick Stokes calls the naked self "an irreducible component of the phenomenology of selfhood…[which] knows itself as more than its concretion and facticity but which is nonetheless responsible *for* this facticity." Patrick Stokes, *The Naked Self: Kierkegaard and Personal Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 23-4.

have to check the locks on the door so many times before I leave my home so that I know the house is "safe," that its identity is secured, that it will be there when I come home. We may think of OCD as a profound skepticism of the external world, its causal connections and explanatory schema. It is a distrust in the real's ability to secure an identity, any "meaning" governed by simple cause and effect. Though certainly concrete, such a world seems absolutely so, a rigid totality that has no room for the dynamism of the self. This absolute world of a totalized secular religiousness A seems little better than Abraham's.

The Representationalist Metaphysics of A and B and a Third Way Out of the Problem

We asserted that an adequate theory of subjectivity would "unify form and content." We have understood the form to be the "subject" of interiority and the content to be the "objective" materiality of externality. We have seen how the comparative authenticity of infinite resignation (religiousness A) and the ontological authenticity of faith (religiousness B) attempt to bring form and content – subject and object – together. Both fail, but this is because both approaches take form and content not just as conceptually distinct but as *actually* distinct. Kierkegaard's formulation assumes that form and content are separable, which shapes his problem as being one of joining subject and object – self and world. Of course, as ideas, self and world are separable. We can *think* about form as conceptually distinct from content, but we never have *actual* access to these concepts other than through thinking. Thinking, and here we mean reflexive, theoretically engaged thinking, is only one way of existing and is dependent on myriad non-reflexive engagements we never "get behind," so to speak.

There is no reasonable doubt that the world is even if it's not what we think it is. This much is apodictically certain. That there *is* a world at all might be said to make up philosophy's

primal "wonder." How do we make sense of the world that is? It is in this moment we risk a metaphysical overindulgence. To say that the world "is," is for *me* to say that it is. The world "appears" to me, certainly, but that *it* appears to *me*, that there is a categorical distinction between what appears and to whom it appears introduces an unnecessary dualism that has us falling into conceptual traps. Content and form, object and subject, external and internal, all of these irresolvable problems are the result of a basic assumption that when we first wonder at the world, we do so from somewhere outside of it, that "the world" appears "to us." This supposition is reified in every attempt to respond to it. It is the core tenet of representationalist epistemology, which has ancient roots. We may take Plato as inquiring into the constitution of understanding in its capacity to have knowledge "of" a world. In Plato's vision, the world is the proving ground of the mind, and we go around discovering what does and does not hold up to Forms. Here, the focus is on the "subjective" aspect of our experience in recollection. Aristotle theorizes the subject differently according to a formulation that emphasizes not just the materiality of the subject (the human animal) but the entire causal mechanism of reality, the "objective" itself. In this case, it's a matter of discovering the world's own physical order, of revealing it to be "such and such." Once we see the problem this way, as having to do with bridging the gap between the knowing subject and the known object in Plato, or in accessing the totality of objects of which the subject is a part in Aristotle, we're doomed. Though subject and object presuppose one another, their respective conceptualizations render them irresolvable.

Religiousness A's emphasis on externality conceives of the world as materially identifiable, as connected and continuous, positing that everything can be known for what it is so long as "what it is" is taken to mean the observable relations between materially real objects. A seems to offer us a way of understanding the world as an ordered totality. From A's perspective,

we come to an understanding of the world – our "wonder" at it – when we have given a total

account of the material conditions that manifest the "appearance" of the world, conditions which

also include the "subject" itself conceived as the locus of particular material properties. Thus,

the subject is rendered "objective" and identifiable. The form of the subject is unified with its

material content insofar as form is derived from content: the "subject" appears as the body with

its affects. The concrete content of ordered materiality delimits its possible syntheses, and the

world is "re-presented" as whole and complete: totalized. Such an outcome is galling.

To take up a well-used example: we can say that the "sun" is the "form" of the

objectively quantifiable movements of a ball of light in the sky, which are its "content." The sun

(the form) is uncertain insofar as its ongoing movement (its content) is uncertain; therefore, we

can claim it might not rise tomorrow. But this approach seems preposterous. Of course the sun

will rise tomorrow. In the world we live in – not the representational world of reflection – the

sun's rising tomorrow is part and parcel of what the "sun" is. The nature of the thought

experiment itself determines the sun's rising. If the sun doesn't rise tomorrow, it will "not rise"

only because we understand it as something that does rise. Furthermore, if it doesn't rise, there

is no tomorrow, only the endless night of today. The sun's disappearance is always predicated

on its appearance. Even if the sun explodes (and we somehow survived long enough to know it

had) or is towed away by intergalactic star pirates, it will disappear because we *live* in a world

where its perpetual appearance is conceptually guaranteed although we know, materially, it is

not. What the sun *is* is different than what the sun *means.* This cuts to the quick of religiousness

A's externality. While we *do* live in a world that exists independently of us, and this world *does*

operate according to inescapable laws that also govern us, our actual confrontation with this

world shows us that materiality is not all there is. Indeed, our sense of the world – the way we

actually live in it – is that we are bound to the world in a way that we make something out of it, that we ourselves bring to the world something it did not otherwise already contain: its *meaning*. The external materiality of religiousness A cannot itself provide this meaning, and so we must look to the interiority of B.

However, religiousness B's interiority is naught but unstructured chaos without a transcendental principle to hold it together. Kierkegaard appeals to God, Kant to the unity of apperception. Without such a principle, interiority devolves into pure groundlessness; we cannot bridge the divide between subject and object, and we are lost in a subjective sea. Given a grounding principle, however, B ostensibly seems to offer a way out of A's problems. Since the subject must accompany any actual manifestation of reality as that to which the manifestation appears, we *can* know the world for what it is if by this we mean "as it appears to us." Since the subject always accompanies the appearance of the manifold, the question is no longer about discovering the order of the external world but of discovering the way our internal constitution provides access to it. Formally prior to content, the subject is here the condition of content's possibility. In this case, the world is a representation of my internal state. Again, this is surely more a theoretical problem than a practical one, and B's damning failure is that, like A, it doesn't pass the smell test. Religiousness B's internality, like religiousness A's externality, misses the way we *actually* live. I may indeed be thrown into my fathomless interiority and be unable to justify any externality whatsoever, but that doesn't negate the fact that I am nevertheless still *in* externality in a way that I cannot justify. Although I may always be said to do so theoretically, I never *actually* experience myself as a condition of possibility. Rather, I experience myself *as* possibilities (of typing, thinking, breathing). I never enter the world; indeed, I am always

already in it. When I question whether the world is "really" something other than my own representation of it, I do so only by taking for granted that it is.

The outcome of the foregoing is that we can put our faith neither in the exteriority of A nor the interiority of B. Kierkegaard tries to thread this needle, and his work on authenticity characterizes the delicacy of this task. Both A and B are solutions to an existential problem about how we live – whether in exteriority or interiority. We find ourselves leaping from one to the other and back again, for neither does full justice to our unique situation. However, if we step back for a moment, we might see another solution besides this seeming either/or. We can never unify form and content – subject and object – because they stem from entirely different orientations toward what is, in actual experience, not even a real problem. The demand that we reconcile them seems therefore unwarranted. Reflection separates form from content, subject from object, essence from existence and establishes the representational metaphysics that underlies Kierkegaard's thematization of authenticity. As Adorno states: "If subject and object are historical concepts, they constitute at the same time the concrete conditions of Kierkegaard's description of human existence."[39] Adorno is right about this, and Kierkegaard falls victim to this philosophical history in the end. Nevertheless, Kierkegaard makes plain the urgency of breaking with a tradition that upholds it.

Kierkegaard's thematization of authenticity founders on the dualism of exteriority and interiority, but there is a third way between A and B and their competing approaches to authenticity: Being-in-the-world. Kierkegaard's reckoning of both comparative authenticity's externality in religiousness A and ontological authenticity's internality in religiousness B was the work necessary to prepare the way for Heidegger. In our account, neither infinite resignation nor

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[39] Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, 27. We will discuss Adorno again in chapter five.

faith succeeds in capturing the "whole" of the world that appears to each of us as we actually live it in the mass of seemingly inconsequential everyday things we do. On our reading, externality does violence to subjectivity, and faith employs smoke and mirrors to ground subjectivity in God. Not everyone will agree. Some will argue that interiority is no more than the "inner" experience of externality and that there's nothing terribly special about it, that the inner experience of my self is derivative of and entirely dependent on externality. Others will argue that faith is enough, that God does indeed structure both the external world as well as our experience of it. To these arguments, we can do little more than submit this chapter as the attestation of our position that while both religiousness A and religiousness B recognize subjectivity, each captures it only in a fragmented way. Instead of attempting to render subjectivity whole by resolving exteriority with interiority, we will next look to a different kind of "whole," the whole of Dasein, and for this, we must turn to Heidegger's *Being and Time*. We do so now.

Chapter Four

Heidegger's Analytic of Authenticity in Division One of *Being and Time*

Our search for authenticity is a search for the continuity of the self. What does it mean for the self to be continuous? How is the self continuous? *Is* the self continuous? Earlier formulations of these questions bore on the relationship between a formal subject opposed to its material contents. We attempted this approach with Kierkegaard who pointed us to the task of an *existential* analysis of our relation to the world – our actual finitude within it. To begin our present chapter in Heideggerian terms, we can say that Kierkegaard lights up an approach to Being but does not pursue it, instead tending down a well-worn road toward theology. Faith is not our destination, and so we leave Kierkegaard to follow that road without us. It has been well argued that Heidegger secularizes Kierkegaard, providing the framework otherwise lacking in the Dane for the explicit analysis of the possibility of authenticity.[1] Heidegger employs many of Kierkegaard's themes, particularly "publicness," "idle talk," "fallenness," and "guilt." In *The Jargon of Authenticity,* Adorno condemns this as a reification of religious ideology, as we shall see in our next chapter, but a critique of Heidegger we put aside for the present. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that Heidegger's own religious background makes him a sensitive reader of Kierkegaard, even a sympathetic one, but *Being and Time* makes no pronouncements as to

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[1] Calvin O. Schrag's *Existence and Freedom: Towards an Ontology of Human Freedom* (Northwestern University Press, 1961) is an authoritative text in this regard. Hubert L. Dreyfus also notes Heidegger's debt to Kierkegaard in *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's "Being and Time," Division 1* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991). It is more or less universally acknowledged that Heidegger "borrowed" from Kierkegaard despite the mere three footnotes to the Dane in *Being and Time* itself.

validity of religious faith – faith certainly is an existential possibility – but that instead it seeks to account for a fundamental ontology that makes religious faith possible in the first place.[2]

Metaphysically more self-aware than Kierkegaard, Heidegger picks up the self as it appears in its "everyday" state, avoiding philosophically loaded talk of "the subject," interiority, or exteriority. Such formulations fail to capture what Heidegger sees as the fundamental Being-in-the-world of Dasein. Dasein is the disclosure of its authenticity, and to this extent, authenticity is a central component of Heidegger's entire philosophy, both the early Heidegger of *Being and Time* and the later Heidegger of the *Contributions*. To the latter, we may understand the mature notion of *Ereignis* as "authenticity," but the development of this interpretation must be left for another time. For the present, we are concerned with the "early" Heidegger of *Being and Time*.[3] Authenticity is implicitly at work from the get-go in *Being and Time*, and its theme appears as early as the preface. Authenticity, in Heidegger, is the repetition of the question of Being, i.e. "being" *Being*. The "manifest[ly]"[4] circular performativity of being the being that asks the question of Being is itself the discovery of authenticity, as we shall see. The circular unity of Heidegger's this formulation allows us to understand the problem of being a self differently than in Kierkegaard's dualistic formulation, and in this chapter, we shall see how Heidegger's formulation overcomes the representational pitfalls to which Kierkegaard succumbs.

Authenticity is latent in Heidegger's Introductions to *Being and Time*, it comes into focus in Division One, and it takes center stage in Division Two. Although authenticity appears

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[2] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 30. Hereafter, I will refer to this text as *Being and Time*. For a fuller discussion of Heidegger and faith, see John D. Caputo, "Heidegger and Theology," in *A Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. C. Guignon (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[3] *A Companion to Heidegger*, eds. H.L. Dreyfus and M. Wrathall (Malden: Blackwell, 2007) contains an excellent selection of essays organized by the respective periods of Heidegger's thought.

[4] *Being and Time*, 27. Note that to "manifest" is to make true, as in to articulate or "to bring into being."

thematically right away in *Being and Time*, it isn't developed in full until the second division of the text.[5] We can understand the existential orientation of Division Two to be the working out "concretely" the meaning of Being for which Division One prepares the way analytically. Nonetheless, though its full concept cannot be understood until the second half of Heidegger's text, authenticity is explicitly at work in Division One, and to this extent both halves of the text cohere relative to authenticity. Indeed, *Being and Time* itself may be understood as authenticity's performance: as we think with Heidegger, he forces us to face authenticity as the understanding of oneself as one's potentiality-for-Being. What follows is an exposition of Division One that focuses on authenticity as a structural element inherent in the existential constitution of Dasein.

The Structural Necessity of Authenticity in Division One

In *Being and Time,* "authenticity" is already at work on Heidegger's most well-known definition of Dasein as that being "that in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it."[6] It is of course this very being (though Dasein is not merely an ontic being) that will "work out the question of the meaning of *Being*… concretely," namely, by being the being that asks "*the question of the meaning of Being*"— which "raise[s] anew" this question time and time again. "Authentic" is the English translation of the German *eigentlich*,[7] which is generally used comparatively to distinguish between something "real" and its copy, much like Kierkegaard in our second chapter. Heidegger, like Kierkegaard, gives authenticity an ontological twist by making the question of Being one concerned with Dasein's "authenticity." *Eigentlich* is cognate

[5] The "anticipatory resoluteness" of chapter three of Division Two, which I discuss in the next chapter.
[6] *Being and Time*, 32. The emphasis is Heidegger's. Hereafter, I will not preserve Heidegger's original emphases since they occasionally obscure the emphases I try to make, albeit with his text.
[7] MacQuarrie and Robinson deal with the translation issue. *Being and Time*, 24, ft 3.

with *eigen*, which is usually translated as "own" as in "mine." That *eigentlich* also hearkens to *Augenblick,* which, in Division Two, has its own philosophical function in the service of authenticity,[8] should not go overlooked here. Heidegger is as much a poet as he is a philosopher, and this makes his work not only beautiful but intricate and complex, dauntingly so at times. Like Dasein who asks, answers, and *is* that which it asks and answers *about*, Heidegger's use of *eigentlich* implicates a complicated and, as we shall see, circular, structure at work behind it.

Authenticity is something only Dasein attains. As early as the introduction, Heidegger writes, "Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence—in terms of a possibility itself: to be or not be itself." Dasein understands itself in light of its possibilities. It can or can not be its "self." Taking this "self" very generally and by following with a few qualifications in a moment, it is safe to say that Dasein describes the human subject and its attempt to understand itself. Heidegger himself says as much.[9] The question of the meaning of Being is about discovering the possibilities of one's concretely lived existential situation – its meaning and whether this meaning is one's "ownmost" meaning or simply "one's," as in "anyone's," meaning. The competing hermeneutic orientations of "one's" meaning and "ownmost meaning" *are* the two fundamental possibilities that Dasein *is.* Dasein "presents" its "there" as the site of manifestation, and so Dasein is always authentic or inauthentic. If Dasein takes its orientation from "the one," it is "inauthentic." When Dasein takes its meaning as "ownmost," it is authentic. Authenticity and inauthenticity are Dasein's two possible modes. Hubert Dreyfus discusses a third mode for Dasein as "undifferentiated,"[10] but this seems a misreading of the text. When Heidegger mentions for Dasein "a mode in which neither [authenticity nor inauthenticity] has

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[8] Augenblick is translated as "moment of vision," and literally means "in the blink of an eye." For its function, see *Being and Time*, 387.
[9] Ibid*,* 27.
[10] Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*. See especially chapter one, section 5, and table 10 in chapter 14.

been differentiated,"[11] it seems to me he means a mode that will be shown to be authentic or inauthentic but has not yet been differentiated, i.e., worked out, not that there is an "undifferentiated mode" in addition to the authentic and inauthentic modes. On my interpretation, Dasein is either authentic or inauthentic; there is no third "undifferentiated" mode.[12]

First, though, our promised qualifications about Dasein as a "human subject."[13] With Dasein, we are concerned with subjectivity, but Dasein is not "the subject" in any formal sense of the word. "The subject" is an empty concept, a purely formal notion. We have already noted in our analysis of Kierkegaard that "the subject" never appears outside of its content, and Heidegger reveals Dasein as always embedded in the world. That Dasein is not a "formal subject" Heidegger emphasizes repeatedly.[14] Moreover, we can say that Dasein is "human" if we understand this to mean that humans are the kind of Being Dasein is. Though this is not an interpretation I can offer in full here, I aver it is entirely possible that things other than humans are Dasein.[15] The ontic mark of Dasein is that it *is* ontological. Dasein's ontological character is "attested" to in "discourse," as we shall see below. While "language" is a kind of discourse, there are other kinds,[16] so we can't say that Dasein is a strictly "linguistic subject." If we're going to say that Dasein gets at what it is to be a subject, it is better to say Dasein is an "hermeneutic subject."[17] That Dasein makes sense of its word, i.e., that it makes the world

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[11] *Being and Time*, 276.

[12] To this extent, my interpretation follows Taylor Carman in his "Authenticity," in *A Companion to Heidegger*.

[13] Heidegger himself deals with the "human subject" in his *Letter on "Humanism,"* in Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, ed W. McNeill (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[14] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 72, for example.

[15] Charles Taylor, in "Heidegger on Language," in *A Companion to Heidegger*, points to this possibility.

[16] For example, building a shelter is discursive and non-linguistic. The builder "discourses" with his environment and the availability of materials, working on them with his own being in mind. Even birds do this.

[17] In this respect, Taylor Carman's *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in "Being and Time"* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003) may be said to theorize Dasein as a "hermeneutic subject."

"meaningful," is attested to not only in language but in all the various ways Dasein has at its disposal to "discourse" with Being – all of the ways it "understands" Being, which includes perception itself.[18] That humans understand Being seems obvious enough, but this is hardly evidence that humans alone understand Being. In the end, Dasein is that which "cares" for Being; on this interpretation, Dasein needn't be specifically human.

If Dasein is that which "understands" Being, an inclusive interpretation allows us to extend Dasein to non-human beings, while an exclusive interpretation allows us to argue that not all beings we otherwise call "human" are Dasein. Paired with Heidegger's known Nazi affiliations, this interpretation looks none too kindly on Heidegger. To make matters worse, Adorno argues that fascism is an inherent outgrowth of Heidegger's thought.[19] However, to interpret Heidegger charitably on this point, we note that "Dasein" is Heidegger's attempt to avoid a conflation not only with the traditional subject, as we discussed above, but with anything like "consciousness" as well. If Dasein is "human," by this we mean the part of us that is properly "alive" in us, which we usually identify as our "consciousness" more than we do our body. However, if Dasein is that being that asks the question of Being, there is danger in prescribing it some ontic form like human subjectivity or consciousness. "Conscious human being" is specifically ontic. Dasein's ontic mark is that it is *ontological*, and, other than this, "Dasein" does not entail any specific description. If we equate Dasein with the specifically human subject of consciousness, we have spectacularly misunderstood Heidegger. To argue that anthropological exclusivism and its most virulent forms in anti-Semitism are the logical outgrowth of *Being and Time* is not only wrong, it seems to me to rely on a deliberate misreading

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[18] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 88-9.
[19] Theodor Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. K. Tarnowski and F. Will (New York: Routledge, 2003). We offer an analysis of Adorno's position in chapter five.

of the text. While Dasein does explain the conscious human subject, nowhere in *Being and Time* does Heidegger say that Dasein is *only* the conscious human subject. Rather, Heidegger *allows* that humans are Dasein, but Dasein's Being is not the same as "human being." In *Being and Time,* humans are *included* in the definition of Dasein; this inclusion does not then warrant the exclusion of non-humans.

Dasein is the being that asks the question of Being. Against Adorno's interpretation, Dasein is not a subject opposed to a world; it is not "consciousness" of some "object."[20] Unlike the traditional dualistic subject of Cartesianism, Dasein is hermeneutically embedded. It is *in the* world. "Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather, it is ontically[21] distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it…. That kind of Being toward which Dasein can comport itself in one way or another, and always does comport itself somehow, we call '*existence'* [*Existenz*]."[22] Thus, "Dasein" *is* existence, and "existence" *is* only for Dasein. Dasein's "essence is existence."[23] Dasein is that which exists in an "existential" way. Ontically, it is ontological; it is that which *understands* its existence insofar as existence is always an *issue* for it. We are the human subjects who do this in "consciousness," but we do so not *as* humans nor *as* consciousness but as Dasein. Dasein makes "human being" and "consciousness" possible; it is that which understands the world in such a way that "humanity" appears as a meaningful concept, as something that gets at what is *at issue* for Dasein, viz. its "Being." Dasein is not "the subject" nor it is "consciousness," for while it *is* these things, it is these things only insofar as they are *issues* for Dasein. This understanding of

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[20] Ibid*,* 99.
[21] The reader's familiarity with Heidegger's ontic/ontological distinction – being and Being – is assumed. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, sections 4 and 5.
[22] Ibid*,* 32.
[23] Ibid*,* 67.

what is an "issue" for Dasein is its "hermeneutic situation" and is the root of fundamental ontology.[24] With Dasein as its "subject," Heidegger rigorously constructs an analytic of authenticity that demands we interpret Dasein as Being-in-the-world.

Dasein is that which always already makes sense of existence, i.e., the "world." The "meaning" of this world is always an issue for Dasein, which Dasein always understands by attending to it in "meaningful" ways. "If to Interpret the meaning of Being becomes our task, Dasein is not only the primary entity to be interrogated; it is also that entity which already comports itself, in its Being, towards what we are asking about when we ask this question. But in that case the question of Being is nothing other than the radicalization of an essential tendency-of-Being which belongs to Dasein itself—the pre-ontological understanding of Being."[25] This "pre-ontological" understanding, this "tendency-of-Being," is Dasein's "everydayness." The "radicalizing" of everydayness is accomplished via Dasein's *own* approach to the question of Being. Indeed, since Dasein *is* the "approach" itself, it is only by "modifying"[26] Dasein that the question of Being can be answered. The "modification" of Dasein so that its "everydayness" appears to Dasein is authenticity; whereas, remaining in everydayness is Dasein's inauthenticity. On my reading of *Being and Time*, authenticity is a structural constituent of Dasein insofar as it describes Dasein's perpetual confrontation with the kinds of answers it can give to the question of Being: either the inauthentically modified "everyday" type or the authentically modified "ownmost" (*eigentlich*) type. Both of these are, in the end, modifications of temporality itself, and Dasein is temporality's "movement" via an ongoing modification of Dasein itself.

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[24] Ibid, 62.
[25] Ibid, 35.
[26] We will discuss this later when we take up the existential modification of the they-self.

Heidegger's "fundamental ontology" of *Being and Time* concerns nothing less than the modification of Dasein.[27] Heidegger's shift from traditional ontology to fundamental ontology demands the reader undergo this modification in the very reading of *Being and Time* itself. To this end, we say that the text is performative. By taking Dasein as its "subject" and interpreting it phenomenologically, *Being and Time* establishes "the possibility and necessity of the most radical individuation."[28] The reader must ask to what extent Dasein describes his or her "own" being, which makes possible an "authentic" modification toward oneself. This is no simple task. Having established the task of destroying the history of ontology, Heidegger discusses the methodology of phenomenology as itself a shift from our "everyday" philosophical viewpoint to another, more primordial one in the "Logos" of "apophantical signification."[29] Phenomenology then "let[s] that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself."[30] This kind of obscure formulation is exactly what Adorno had in mind when he lambasts authenticity's "jargon," but if we recognize that Heidegger is trying to avoid the language of representational metaphysics he finds in Descartes and Kant[31] and invents a philosophical language that allows him to do so, we come to understand phenomenology as "directly opposed to… a haphazard… and unreflective 'beholding,'"[32] which Adorno seems to think phenomenology is when he characterizes its method as "hypocrisy" and philosophical "blasphemy."[33] Instead, Heidegger's "phenomenology is the science of the being of entities—

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[27] Charles Guignon notes that "one must be authentic to do fundamental ontology" in "Philosophy and Authenticity: Heidegger's Search for a Ground for Philosophizing," in *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity: Essays in Honor of Hubert L Dreyfus, Vol 1,* eds. M. Wrathall and J. Malpas (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 79-80.
[28] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 62.
[29] Ibid, 56. Apophantical signification, Heidegger says on this page, is "letting something be seen *as* something."
[30] Ibid, 38.
[31] Ibid, section 6.
[32] Ibid, 61.
[33] Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity,* 8.

ontology."[34] This "fundamental ontology tak[es] as its theme that entity which is ontologico-ontically distinctive, Dasein."[35] "The phenomenology of Dasein is a hermeneutic"[36] in the sense of an "interpreting" as well as the "working out the conditions on which the possibility of any ontological investigation depends."[37] In an analysis of Dasein, we find the existentiality of existence, that is, we find the kind of being that interprets its Being, a being for whom its Being is an issue. Hermeneutic embeddedness is existential embeddedness. "Average everyday understanding constitutes the permanent background of all interpretation," Carman insists.[38] To this end, the phenomenology of Dasein begins in its everydayness and the existentiality of everydayness, which is Being-in-the-world.

Authenticity and The World

Division One is dedicated to Dasein's Being-in-the-world. Chapter one of this division reveals Dasein as that which is to be examined. Heidegger spends a good deal of time here distinguishing Dasein from a traditional definition of "the subject," which we have already dealt with above. Different from the traditional subject, Dasein's essence is existence that is in each case mine, which is to say that "Dasein has already made some decision as to the way in which it is."[39] Dasein is always already in the world and has adopted some stance toward the world, "within some culture that has already decided on specific possible ways to be."[40] Dasein "comports itself towards its Being as its ownmost possibility."[41] "Possibility" here does not

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[34] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 61.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid*,* 62.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic*, 154.
[39] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 68.
[40] Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 24.
[41] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 68.

mean logical possibility but existential possibility. Heidegger fleshes out the difference between

these two respective understandings of possibility in section 31, which is summarized in the

doctrine "[h]igher than actuality stands possibility."[42] Because Dasein

> is its possibility… it can, in its very Being, 'choose' itself and win itself; it can
> also lose itself and never win itself; or only 'seem' to do so. But only in so far as
> it is essentially something which can become *authentic*—that is, something of its
> own—can it have lost itself and not yet won itself. As modes of Being,
> *authenticity* and *inauthenticity…* are both grounded in the fact that any Dasein
> whatsoever is characterized by mineness.[43]

The authenticity and inauthenticity appearing in this passage are "terminologically strict."[44]

They describe Dasein's modification toward its own possibilities. Authenticity is thus an

inherent part of Dasein's structure as a "possibility," not some "homey" jargon that encourages

us to find our true "inner" self as Adorno would have it.[45] Dasein, throughout the entirely of

Division One, must be understood "in the mode of average everydayness, …the mode of

fleeing… and forgetfulness."[46] This does not mean that "the explication of Dasein in its average

everydayness… give[s] us just average structures in the sense of a hazy indefiniteness. Anything

which, taken ontically, *is* in an average way, can be very well grasped ontologically in pregnant

structures which may be structurally indistinguishable from certain ontological characteristics of

an *authentic* Being of Dasein."[47] Heidegger contends that indefiniteness is a positive

phenomenon, and the entirety of Heidegger's phenomenological method depends on Dasein's

own ability to distinguish between its average, everyday, inauthentic self, and its authentic,

ownmost self to which its averageness can appear *as* averageness. In other words, if we note that

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[42] Ibid,63.
[43] Ibid, 68.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, 43.
[46] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 69.
[47] Ibid, 70.

something is "indefinite," we can do so only because we ourselves stand in a *definite* relation to this indefiniteness. Thus, the examination of Dasein in its "everydayness" is possible only because Dasein is already possessed of the possibility of seeing itself in another, more "primordial" or fundamental way: authentically. This *hermeneutic* position is critical to Heidegger's overall project.

Dasein is concerned with its Being – whether it is authentic or inauthentic – and this Being is always Being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world exhibits a tripartite but "unitary"[48] phenomenon in the worldhood of the world, Being-with, and Being-in as such. As a unifying phenomenon, Being-in-the-world reveals the existential meaning of Dasein as "care" [*Sorge*]. Heidegger characterizes Being-in as "residing" or "dwelling"[49] in the world, which is part of Dasein's facticity. Dasein's "facticity implies that [it] has Being-in-the-world in such a way that it can understand itself as bound up in its 'destiny' with the Being of those entities which it encounters within its own world."[50] Dasein "has always been dispersed… into definite ways of Being-in."[51] The ways in which Dasein is "dispersed" are its moods, and they constitute Dasein's "circumspective concern" with its Being. Concern reveals the existential structure of "care." Dasein "cares" about Being and can do so in one of two ways – authentically or inauthentically. Heidegger's description of "the world" and its "worldhood" is given in its "everyday" sense, which is inauthentic. The inauthenticity of the everyday world is possible only insofar as there is another world – an authentic world – available to Dasein. Dasein uncovers its world.

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[48] Ibid, 78.
[49] Ibid, 80.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid, 81.

Chapter three of Division One contains Heidegger's famous distinction between the present-at-hand and the ready-to-hand. Heidegger writes, "Being-in-the-world… amounts to a non-thematic circumspective absorption in references or assignments constitutive for the readiness-to-hand of a totality of equipment…. The presence-at-hand of entities is thrust to the fore by the possible breaks in that referential totality in which circumspection 'operates'."[52] These "breaks" in the referential totality of the world are the means by which we access authenticity, which is there all along albeit hidden and covered over; the "breaks" uncover it, and this is connected to Heidegger's conception of truth as *aletheia*, as we shall later see. For now though, Dasein's everyday world is one of equipment and equipmentality. Dasein is given to a world in which there are things "to do," a public and practical world. "Dasein already understands itself [in the worldhood of the world] with which it is primordially familiar."[53] The world is the hermeneutic "background" to which Dasein "submits."[54] Readiness to hand and presence-at-hand are "categories" for the kinds of entities that Dasein accesses, and the worldhood of the world is an "existential" constitution that gives the categories operative order.[55] The "relations" between Dasein and the entities it concerns itself with reveal the "in-order-to" of the future, the "for-the-sake-of" of the past, and the "with-which" of the present. The world is thus given as a referential totality with which Dasein is "involved"[56] as care:

> the totality of involvements itself goes back ultimately to a 'towards-which' in which there is no further involvement: this 'toward-which' is not an entity with the kind of Being that belongs to what is ready-to-hand- within a world; it is rather an entity whose Being is defined as Being-in-the-world, and to whose state of Being, worldhood itself belongs.[57]

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[52] Ibid, 107.
[53] Ibid, 119.
[54] Ibid, 121.
[55] For a fuller account of the categories, see Robert Brandom's "Heidegger's Categories in *Being and Time*," in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, eds. H.L. Dreyfus and H. Hall (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992).
[56] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 115.
[57] Ibid, 116.

Dasein makes a "world" appear. This is not to say that Dasein is some freely positing

consciousness; Dasein is always delimited by the world into which it is thrown. Dasein does not

make the world; it is *in* it from within a particular "region."[58] Thus, the world shows up as

something in which Dasein is meaningfully, i.e. hermeneutically, "involved."[59]

Section 16 shows us how this involvement breaks down at times, and it is authenticity

that allows this. The example Heidegger gives is of the broken hammer. In my everyday

dealings with the world, I treat it as a thing to be used, as equipment I employ in going about my

life; this is the world of the ready-to-hand. The ready-to-hand has its meaning by virtue of its

assignment within a socially constituted referential totality. The hammer is meaningful because

among Dasein's possibilities is that of "hammering." When I'm hammering, I'm not thinking

about hammering, I'm just doing it. The world in which hammering is an existential possibility

is "inconspicuous."[60] I *am* this possibility. My world is a "hammering" world. But then the

hammer breaks, and with it goes this inconspicuousness as well as this world. My world stops.

Suddenly, the hammer is no longer a ready-to-hand hammer; it is present at hand. This doesn't

mean that the hammer shows up as some brute "thing"; this never happens since, after all, a

broken hammer is still understood with the referential totality of hammering, in this case, that it

has been disrupted and made conspicuous. Indeed, this is precisely Heidegger's point. "[T]he

structure of an involvement leads to Dasein's very Being as the sole authentic 'for-the-sake-of-

which'."[61] In the breakdown of the ready-to-hand or in signs and the world they point to, Dasein

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[58] Ibid, 136.
[59] Ibid, 115.
[60] Ibid, 106.
[61] Ibid, 117.

comes face to face with its "world," that this is an issue for it, and that it has already taken a meaningful stance toward it.[62] This realization is given through authenticity.

The perspectival shift from the ready-to-hand to presence-at-hand attests to authenticity at work. Dasein discovers the "obtrusive obstinacy"[63] of the world "deprived of its worldhood"[64] only from an authentic stance that permits the conspicuous character of the world to rise up out of its inconspicuousness – for the "world" of the present-at-hand and "worldhood" of the ready-to-hand to stand in contrast. Were authenticity not a possibility for Dasein, such a shift in perspective would never occur. We would never be alarmed that our "world" has "broken down"; indeed, we would likely never be aware of a world at all. Only because Dasein stands in a transcendent relation to the whole of its referential totality can Dasein survey the "worldhood" of the world. Authenticity names this transcendence, which is not transcendental in the sense of "outside" the world, but transcendent to any particular iteration of the world.[65] What Dasein discovers in authenticity is that its world is a meaningful one, and it is one in which Dasein is inherently involved, but this world is not Dasein's own.

Authenticity as the Modification of the They-self and the Ownmost Self

Dasein's everyday world is the world of *das Man* or, as the Macquarrie and Robinson translation has it, "the they."[66] Chapter four of Division One is dedicated to the "who" of Dasein in its everydayness. Heidegger writes, "It could be that the 'who' of everyday Dasein just is *not*

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[62] Charles Guignon captures this well in chapter three, "Being-in-the-World," of his *Heidegger and The Problem of Knowledge* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993).

[63] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 105.

[64] Ibid, 147.

[65] See Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 299-305.

[66] The Macquarrie and Robinson translation renders das Man "the they." I agree with Dreyfus that this is misleading in that leads to the assumption that Dasein is not a part of the they. He suggests "the one" (*Being-in-the-World*, xi). Nevertheless, for consistency sake, I use "the they" to refer to das Man and "they-self" to refer to Dasein's constitution in the they.

the 'I myself'."[67] Indeed, everyday Dasein is not itself, and Heidegger echoes much of

Kierkegaard's thematization of "the public" in his description of the they-self:

> The Self of everyday Dasein is the *they-self,* which we distinguish from the *authentic Self*—that is, from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way. As they-self, the particular Dasein has been *dispersed* into the they…. [T]his means… that the 'they' itself prescribes that way of interpreting the world and Being-in-the-world… [T]he 'they' itself Articulates the referential context of significance…. If Dasein discovers the world in its own way and brings it close, if it discloses to itself its own authentic Being, then this discovery of the 'world' and this disclosure of Dasein are always accomplished as a clearing-away of concealments and obscurities, as a breaking up of the disguises with which Dasein bars its own way.[68]

The they-self is one of the most well-known features of *Being and Time*. Against a solipsistic

reading that takes the they as everyone other than Dasein, Heidegger is quick to point out that

"equiprimoridial with Being-in-the-world [are] Being-with and Dasein-with."[69] I am necessarily

in a world with others, and "[b]y '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 on is too."[70] In the they-self, we are just like

everyone else. The world is a necessarily social phenomenon, and the they points to the essential

conformity at work in any world. In the world of philosophy, say, I am just like everyone else

who has written a dissertation. I do it in the same way others have done it, and I likely even say

the same things they do. I speak the same language, use the same word-processing software, and

so on. Heidegger sums it up nicely: "Everyone is the other, and no one is himself."[71] The point

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[67] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 150.
[68] Ibid, 167.
[69] Ibid, 149.
[70] Ibid, 154.
[71] Ibid, 165.

is that "who" we are as *das Man* is more or less unremarkable. "Dasein, as everyday Being-with-another, stands in subjection to Others. It itself is not."[72] Thus,

> the real dictatorship of the 'they' is unfolded. We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise, we shrink back from the 'great mass' as *they* shrink back; we find 'shocking' what *they* find shocking. The 'they', which is nothing definite, and which all are, though not as the sum, prescribes the kind of Being of everydayness.[73]

The self of the they-self is not a fiction, nor is it hyperbole. For the most part, this is exactly who we are in our actual determinateness, which "is nothing definite since it differs somewhat for each person."[74] The way we actually live our lives is in large part no different from anyone else, but "[t]he they is not… a 'universal subject' [nor] the genus to which the individual Dasein belongs… The 'they' is an existentiale"[75] Thus, "[f]rom the kind of Being which belongs to 'they'… everyday Dasein draws its pre-ontological way of interpreting its Being."[76] The they-self glosses over the "worldhood" of the world by taking the meaningful interpretation of the referential totality – the world – as something present-at-hand. In "publicness everything gets obscured, and what has thus been covered up gets passed off as something familiar and accessible to everyone."[77] But the meaning that is lost in the they-self, like the they-self itself, is only visible if juxtaposed to authentic Dasein. If the they-self is a real possibility of Being,[78] this is so only insofar as an authentic self is also given as a possibility. If Dasein *can* recognize itself as a they-self or recognize that there is something that gets passed over in the they-self, this is

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[72] Ibid, 164.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Michael E. Zimmerman, *Eclipse of the Self: The Development of Heidegger's Concept of Authenticity* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981), 48.
[75] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 166-7.
[76] Ibid, 168.
[77] Ibid, 165.
[78] And it certainly seems to be – look at political tribalism or allegiance to particular sporting teams.

only possible because Dasein is not coextensive with the they-self; instead, in the they-self, Dasein "misses itself and covers itself up."[79] To recognize that it *has* missed something is Dasein's modification as authentic.

There is an authentic self that makes the they-self stand out as inauthentic, but we must note that "[a]uthentic Being-one's-Self does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from the 'they'; it is rather an existentiell modification of the 'they'."[80] In discussions of authenticity, this is an oft-quoted passage, but few commentators include the sentence that immediately follows, which lays the groundwork for an important argument Heidegger will develop in Division Two and which here in Division One shows us what authenticity is really all about. Heidegger continues: "But in that case there is a gap separating the selfsameness of the authentically existing Self from the identity of that 'I' which maintains itself throughout its manifold Experiences."[81] Dasein is constantly in modification from the they-self to the authentic self. The they-self gives us "identity" and the authentically existing self gives us "selfsameness." Macquarrie and Robinson translate the German *Kluft* as "gap." A better translation would be cleft or fissure, a fundamental rift – a faultline between the they-self and one's own self. Dasein shows up proximally and for the most part in the they-self because "Dasein in its everydayness is *disburdened* by the they."[82] But what is Dasein's burden? It is always what is in each case *mine* – my "self." Both authenticity and inauthenticity concern Dasein's structural unity.[83] The they-self provides unity in "identity," which is ontic and pertains to something present at hand. My driver's license gives me an

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[79] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 168.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid, 165.
[83] Charles Guignon, "Authenticity, Moral Values, and Psychotherapy," in *A Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* makes this point with respect to the "quality of life" such a unity entails.

identity – it's not that it's not a "real" identity, it's just mostly incomplete, hardly my "self." On the other hand, there is the "selfsameness" of authenticity, which provides a different kind of unity: "If Dasein is in each case mine, …as something identical throughout changes in its Experiences and ways of behavior, and which relates itself to this changing multiplicity in so doing…, as something selfsame in its manifold otherness, it has the character of the *Self*."[84] Selfsameness isn't ontic, it is ontological insofar as it concerns a self-relation to one's Self.

Both inauthenticity and authenticity "unify" the self, which is to say, both give it coherence and "constancy."[85] The they-self is no doubt a "real" self. It is even our "closest" self: "everyday Being-among-one-another, distantiality, averageness, levelling down, publicness, and disburdening of one's Being, and accommodation—lies that 'constancy' of Dasein which is closest to us."[86] Closest to us is the self of "inauthenticity and failure to stand by one's Self."[87] But this is possible only because there is another possibility that makes the they-self possible – the "Self" of authenticity.

Existential Constitution and Authenticity

Chapter five of Division One illustrates Dasein's perpetual wavering between inauthenticity and authenticity. Heidegger divides this chapter into two parts A: the existential constitution of the "there," in other words, Dasein's existential features, and B, the everyday Being of the there and the falling of Dasein, or, what is the same, how the everyday self, the they-self, appears in its existential constitution, which, as Heidegger has already noted, is in "falling"; Dasein will "fall" into the they-self.

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[84] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 150.
[85] Ibid, 152.
[86] Ibid, 166.
[87] Ibid.

In its existential constitution, Dasein always has state-of-mind and understanding. These two features are equiprimordially circular. Here, Heidegger calls our attention to Dasein's hermeneutic constitution, that Being-in-the-world is a disclosiveness (*gelichtet* – "lighting," "illumination," or "clearing") of Being that is itself an understanding of Being. This understanding is implicated in further disclosure and is therefore an interpretation of Being. Interpretation is articulated in the way Dasein "cares" for its Being, which is through discourse, of which language is a feature. Taylor Carman characterizes the entirety of Division One "as an account of the hermeneutic conditions, which is to say conditions of interpretation, [in other words the] conditions of our understanding something as something."[88] That we understand anything at all is already to enter into this hermeneutics, and we do so a priori in "mood" or "attunement." "[M]ood (*Stimmung*) makes manifest 'how one is'… having a mood brings Being to its 'there'."[89] That Dasein is already 'there' is its "thrownness,"[90] which is Dasein's facticity. This means that "Dasein always has some mood."[91] Moods "light up" Being, disclosing Dasein's existential possibilities in certain ways. For example, in a good mood, I see the world in this light – the world is "colored" by my mood and everything seems possible, the future bright, my fortunes overflowing. On the other hand, we speak of bad moods as if a dark cloud is hanging over us – the world appears dimly lit and possibilities are obscured in shadow. In a creative mood, the words I write flow easily from my fingers and I think without effort, but in a perplexed mood I cannot make one letter follow from another in any meaningful way and I stare at the blinking cursor for what seems an eternity. One mood gives way to another without reason and without notice. I wake after hours of sleep and I am already in a mood. I am even in moods

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[88] Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic*, 23.
[89] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 173.
[90] Ibid, 174.
[91] Ibid, 173.

in my dreams. "[W]e are never free of moods. Ontologically, we thus obtain as the first essential characteristic of states-of-mind that they disclose Dasein in its thrownness, and—proximally and for the most part—in the manner of an evasive turning away."[92] Dasein *is* its mood[93] but "[f]or the most part the mood does not turn towards the burdensome character of Dasein."[94] What is this "burdensome character" of Dasein? In Division Two, we discover it to be guilt, but what Heidegger means here in Division One is that "[e]xistentially, a state-of-mind implies a disclosive submission to the world, out of which we can encounter something that matters to us."[95] Because Dasein "submits" to its world, which is at this point in Heidegger's analysis the everyday world of the they-self, what is disclosed to Dasein as "mattering" for it is what "matters" for the they. This is why Heidegger claims that "Dasein can, should, and must, through knowledge and will, become master of its moods."[96] In other words, only through an understanding of state-of-mind can Dasein come to a place where state of mind itself appears as something Dasein *can* understand. This procedure is grounded in authenticity.

> Dasein is such that in every case it has understood (or alternatively, not understood) that it is to be thus or thus. As such understanding it 'knows' what it is capable of—that is, what its potentiality-for-Being is capable of…. And only because Dasein, in understanding, is its 'there', can it go astray and fail to recognize itself. And in so far as understanding is accompanied by state-of-mind and as such is existentially surrendered to thrownness, Dasein has in every case already gone astray and failed to recognize itself. In its potentiality-for-Being it is therefore delivered over to the possibility of first finding itself again in its possibilities. Understanding is the existential Being of Dasein's own potentiality-for-Being; and it is so in such a way that this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of."[97]

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[92] Ibid, 175.
[93] Ibid, 178.
[94] Ibid, 174.
[95] Ibid, 177.
[96] Ibid, 175.
[97] Ibid, 184.

Understanding is "projection"[98] towards Dasein's possibilities. Possibilities are themselves determined by Dasein's thrownness in its state of mind, which is, proximally and for the most part, the state of mind of the they. Everyday Dasein's mood is not its own.

As we have seen above, the they-self is a possibility for Dasein only because Dasein's ownmost self is also a possibility that is never erased. "As projecting, understanding is the kind of Being of Dasein in which it is its possibilities as possibilities."[99] Thus, in understanding its state of mind, Dasein projects itself toward its thrown possibilities in such a way that Dasein can take over its thrownness. Again, this does not mean that Dasein extricates itself from the they, but Dasein has clearly been modified.

> Understanding is either authentic, arising out of one's own Self as such, or inauthentic, …[which] understands 'only' the world [of the they]…. Because understanding, in every case, pertains rather to Dasein's full disclosedness as Being-in-the-world, this diversion of the understanding is an existential modification of projection as a whole…. In its projective character, understanding goes to make up existentially what we call Dasein's 'sight'…. The sight which is related primarily and on the whole to existence we call 'transparency'. We choose this term to designate 'knowledge of the Self' …[which] seize[es] upon the full disclosedness of Being-in-the-world."[100]

The development of the understanding is interpretation,[101] and interpretation is always already about something meaningful.

> Meaning is the 'upon-which' of a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something; it gets its structure from a fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception…. [M]eaning must be conceived as the formal-existential framework of the disclosedness which belongs to understanding. Meaning is an existentiale of Dasein…. [O]nly Dasein can be meaningful or meaningless.[102]

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[98] Ibid, 185.
[99] Ibid, 185.
[100] Ibid, 186-7.
[101] Ibid, 188.
[102] Ibid, 193.

Dasein is its state-of-mind, and Heidegger establishes state-of-mind as always already understanding, and understanding is the interpretation of the meaning of Being, which is an issue only for Dasein, which is its state-of-mind. "The 'circle' in understanding belongs to the structure of meaning, and the latter phenomenon is rooted in the existential constitution of Dasein—that is, in the understanding which interprets. An entity for which, as Being-in-the-world, its Being is itself an issue, has, ontologically, a circular structure."[103] Dasein discloses, understands, interprets and "means" itself, but this is possible only if Dasein's meaning is not given, that is, only if its "meaning" is something it must decide on, that is, answer by already being in it.[104] In order for there to be an interpretation, there must be at least two possible meanings for Dasein, and there are: the meaning of the they-self and the meaning of the owned Self. Dasein's structure is circular. From itself, it asks about itself and whether its self is the "identity" of the they-self or the "selfsameness" of the owned Self. Though Heidegger will not deal with temporality until the second division, we can see already that authenticity is Dasein's temporal movement – the "temporalizing" of temporality.

We can illustrate this with Heidegger's discussion of discourse. Authenticity plays into Heidegger's conception of discourse since "to be able to keep silent, Dasein must have something to say—that is, it must have at its disposal an authentic and rich disclosedness of itself."[105] Whatever authentic Dasein might articulate must come from its *own* disclosure rather than that of the public. The main feature of everyday Dasein is its fallenness, which is evidenced in idle talk, curiosity, ambiguity, tranquilization, and alienation. In idle talk the they "prescribes

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[103] Ibid, 195.
[104] Charles Taylor takes up this circularity in "Engaged Agency and Background in Heidegger," in *A Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*.
[105] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 208.

one's state-of-mind, and determines what and how one 'sees'."[106] "[W]hen Dasein maintains itself in idle talk, it is… cut off from its primary and primordially genuine relationships-of-Being towards the world, towards Dasein-with, and towards its very Being-in. Such a Dasein keeps floating unattached…. [This] ever-increasing groundlessness as it floats… [is] uncanniness."[107] This uncanniness (*unheimlich*) plays a critical role in Heidegger's later analysis of anxiety. By establishing the they-self as "uncanny," Heidegger is calling our attention to the fact that we live in at least two different worlds – the "public" world of our they-self[108] and the "private" though always publicly mediated world of our "own" self. Heidegger argues,

> Being-lost in the publicness of the 'they'[,] Dasein has… fallen away from itself as an authentic potentiality for Being its Self, and has fallen into the 'world'. 'Fallenness' into the 'world' means an absorption in Being-with-one-another, in so far as the latter is guided by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity. Through the Interpretation of falling, what we have called the 'inauthenticity' of Dasein may now be defined… [as being] completely fascinated by the 'world' and by the Dasein-with of Others in the 'they.' Not-Being-itself functions as a positive possibility of that entity which, in its essential concern, is absorbed in a world.[109]

Dasein is constantly "tempted" toward falling. Falling is the essential "tendency-of-Being" at work already noted in Heidegger's first introduction. "Being-in-the-world is itself tempting."[110] Dasein is tempted to "disburden" itself of the burden of interpretation. This is accomplished by relinquishing selfsameness for identity, and here we can hear the echoes of Kierkegaard's resignation. Disburdening Dasein, the they's assurances "that one is leading and sustaining a full and genuine 'life' brings Dasein a tranquility."[111] Tranquilized in the they, Dasein is alienated

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[106] Ibid, 213.
[107] Ibid, 214.
[108] Theodore R. Schatzki's "Early Heidegger on Sociality," in *A Companion to Heidegger* explicates Dasein's world as thoroughly a with-world, though perhaps not an intersubjective one.
[109] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 220.
[110] Ibid, 221.
[111] Ibid, 222.

from its own self. "[A]lienation closes off from Dasein its authenticity and possibility."[112]

Having fallen into the identity of the they-self, "Dasein plunges out of itself into itself, into the groundlessness and nullity of inauthentic everydayness."[113]

Inauthenticity and authenticity are temporal modifications.[114] The temporality of the they-self is the "idle-talk" of the immediately surpassed present, the "now" of "ordinary" time which Heidegger discusses in section 5 briefly and in detail in chapter 6 of Division Two. "Idle talk… ensure[s] that what is genuinely and newly created is out of date as soon as it emerges before the public… talking about things ahead of the game and making surmises about them… gets passed off as what is really happening… [idle talk] keep[s] 'things moving'."[115] In the inauthenticity of idle talk, Dasein cannot properly "dwell."[116] On the other hand, in authentic genuine discoursing, "when Dasein goes in for something of the reticence of carrying it through or even of genuinely breaking down on it, its time is a different time and, as seen by the public, an essentially slower time that that of idle talk, which 'lives at a faster rate'."[117] This "slower" time of authenticity allows Dasein to dwell.

Thus, we see that Dasein is a unitary phenomenon that has two modifications in authenticity and inauthenticity. These are temporal modifications as much as they are "subjective" modifications.[118] Authenticity and inauthenticity are co-determinative, and both

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[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid, 223.
[114] See William Blattner, "Temporality," in *A Companion to Heidegger* for a further discussion of temporal modification.
[115] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 218-9.
[116] For an extended an illuminating discussion of "dwelling," see Julian Young's "What is Dwelling," in *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity*.
[117] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 218.
[118] On temporal modifications and the subjects they produce, see "Death, Time, and History: Division II of *Being and Time*," by Piotr Hoffman in *A Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*.

force Dasein to take a stance toward its Being, for no matter what, as Dasein, "nothing other than our potentiality-for-Being-in-the-world is the issue, even if in the mode of inauthenticity."[119]

Authenticity and Care

In chapter six of Division One, Heidegger finally reveals the full care structure. Care is the Being of Dasein. If "Being-in-the-world is a structure which is primordially and constantly whole,"[120] it is care that allows for the unification of the manifold. Having described Dasein's Being-in-the-world in chapters 2 through 5, we reach the conclusion that "Dasein's 'average everydayness' can be defined as 'Being-in-the-world which is falling and disclosed, thrown and projecting, and for which its ownmost potentiality-for-Being is an issue, both in its Being alongside the "world" and in its Being-with Others'."[121] The problem at this point is whether we can "succeed in grasping this structural whole of Dasein's everydayness in its totality."[122] Because Dasein is in everydayness rendered ambiguous and indeterminate through the they, we are unsure whether "there is in Dasein an understanding state-of-mind in which Dasein has been disclosed to itself in some distinctive way."[123] In other words, is there a modification of Dasein so unique that it utterly individualizes Dasein out of the they-self of its everyday Being-in-the-world so that the structures Heidegger has been describing are evidenced primordially in Dasein itself? Can Dasein even *have* a sense of its "own" self? "The Being of Dasein, upon which the structural whole as such is ontologically supported, becomes accessible to us when we look all the way through this whole to a single primordially unitary phenomenon which is already in this

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[119] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 224.
[120] Ibid, 225.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid, 226.
[123] Ibid.

whole in such a way that it provides the ontological foundation for each structural item in its structural possibility."[124] If Heidegger has all along mentioned the circularity of the hermeneutic – it's "orbit," so to speak – Dasein is the gravity upon which its orbit depends. Of course, there is a distinctive way Dasein is disclosed to itself: anxiety. Anxiety reveals the care structure.

"No sooner has Dasein expressed anything about itself to itself, than it has already interpreted itself as care (*cura*), even though it has done so only pre-ontologically." We should note "care" is not only to care about something but the root "*cura*" is related to "curate," "cultivate," and other "nurturing" kinds of comportments. Being is something we not only care about but *nurture*. Again, the critical nature of authenticity to Heidegger's entire project comes to the fore:

> Since our aim is to proceed towards the Being of the totality of the structural whole, we shall take as our point of departure the concrete analysis of falling which we have just carried through. Dasein's absorption in the 'they' and its absorption in the 'world' of its concern, make manifest something like the fleeing of Dasein in the face of itself—of itself as an authentic potentiality-for-Being-itself. This phenomenon of Dasein's fleeing in the face of itself and in the face of its authenticity, seems at least a suitable phenomenal basis for the following investigation. To bring itself face to face with itself, is precisely what Dasein does not do when it flees.[125]

The phenomenon in which Dasein turns away from itself in the face of itself is anxiety. Because it is about "nothing,"

> Anxiety thus takes away from Dasein the possibility of understanding itself, as it falls, in terms of the world and the way things have been publicly interpreted. Anxiety throws Dasein back upon that which it is anxious about—its authentic potentiality-for-Being-in-the-world. Anxiety individualizes Dasein for its ownmost Being-in-the-world, which is something that understands and projects itself essentially upon possibilities. Therefore, with what it is anxious about, anxiety discloses Dasein as Being-possible, and indeed as the only kind of thing which it can be of its own accord as something individualized in individualization. Anxiety makes manifest in Dasein its Being towards its ownmost potentiality-for-Being—that is, its Being-free for the freedom of

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[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid, 229.

choosing itself and of taking hold of itself. Anxiety brings Dasein face to face
with its Being-free for the authenticity of its Being, and for this authenticity as a
possibility which it always is.[126]

Heidegger addresses solipsism here, which seems appropriate given that anxiety is so

individualizing. "Anxiety individualizes Dasein and this discloses it as 'solus ipse'. But this

existential 'solipsism' is so far from the displacement of putting an isolated subject-Thing into

the innocuous emptiness of a worldless occurring, that in an extreme sense what it does is

precisely bring it face to face with itself as Being-in-the-world."[127] Existential solipsism places

me firmly with others precisely as I am myself an other.[128] It individuates me as belonging to a

world of others, not to some private world of my own to which I alone have privileged access.

Existential solipsism is the recognition that "[i]n anxiety one feels uncanny

(*unheimlich*)"[129] What this means is that "my" world is an "other" world. I myself am not at

home (*unheimlich*) in it, and I can never be, not even and perhaps especially in the they-self. "In

Being-ahead-of-oneself as Being towards one's ownmost potentiality-for-Being, lies the

existential-ontological condition for the possibility of Being-free for authentic existentiell

possibilities… Even in inauthenticity Dasein remains essentially ahead of itself."[130]

"Uncanniness" is precisely what Dasein is. It is "not at home." In section 42, with the myth of

Cura, Heidegger shows us how the care structure is really the temporalizing of temporality,

which, as we have already noted, he will not deal with in detail until Division Two, but suffice it

to say that because it is temporal Dasein is never "at home." Dasein is transcendent to any

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[126] Ibid, 232.
[127] Ibid, 233.
[128] Charles Taylor's *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) is an attempt to establish a normative ethics that recognizes existential solipsism but is not undermined by its seeming relativity.
[129] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 233.
[130] Ibid, 237-8.

"home" it might otherwise have. [131]   Instead, Dasein "dwells" in the world, and the world is the

manifold which Dasein unifies in Being-toward it.   At the end of chapter six of Division One,

Heidegger defines primordial truth as "*Aletheia*,"[132] which means "unforgetting."[133]   Heidegger

says that "'Being-true' means Being-uncovering."[134] Heidegger writes, "In so far as Dasein is its

disclosedness essentially, and discloses and uncovers as something disclosed to this extent it is

essentially 'true'. Dasein is 'in the truth'."[135] Dasein is the uncovering of Being. Dasein

primordially dis-closes Being. This disclosure is a thrown projected falling, which is to say, a

world in which Dasein is thrown projected being-in. Under the characteristic of "projection,"

Heidegger writes,

> As something that understands, Dasein can understand itself in terms of the
> 'world' and Others or in terms of its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. The
> possibility just mentioned means that Dasein discloses itself in and as its ownmost
> potentiality-for-Being. This authentic disclosedness shows the phenomenon of
> the most primordial truth in the mode of authenticity. The most primordial, and
> indeed the most authentic, disclosedness in which Dasein, as a potentiality-for-
> Being, can be, in the truth of existence. This becomes existentially and
> ontologically definite only in connection with the analysis of Dasein's
> authenticity.[136]

While the full analysis of Dasein's authenticity will not appear until Division Two, this passage

is remarkable in that it shows us the crucial role authenticity already plays in Division One.

Projection is the futural horizon of Dasein's existential temporality itself. What Heidegger has

said here is nothing less than that the futural horizon is determined by Dasein's authenticity.

Dasein exists, and insofar as it exists, it is in the truth of its ownmost potentiality for Being, but

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[131] Blatter's "Temporality," speaks to Heidegger's "temporal idealism."
[132] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 262.
[133] Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World,* 270.
[134] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 262.
[135] Ibid, 263.
[136] Ibid, 264.

this "truth" is conditioned by the possibility of falling into the "semblance and disguise"[137] of the "world" and inauthenticity. Because Dasein must be either authentic or inauthentic, because these are temporal modifications of Dasein's Being itself, Dasein's Being is an issue for it – whether or not its Being is "true."[138] Heidegger tells us that it is "essential that Dasein should explicitly appropriate what has already been uncovered, defend it against semblance and disguise, and assure itself of its uncoveredness again and again."[139] In returning us to primordial disclosure, this is exactly what authenticity does. It is therefore a necessary structural component of fundamental ontology.

Authenticity's Performative Appeal

At the end of Division One, we have learned that,

> Being and truth 'are' equiprimordially…. By laying bare the phenomenon of care, we have clarified the state of Being of that entity to whose Being something like an understanding of Being belongs…. Understanding has been elucidated; and at the same time the methodological transparency of the procedure of Interpreting Being by understanding it and interpreting it, has thus been guaranteed.[140]

Structurally, authenticity is the means by which we access and understand Heidegger's text; it is the revelation of a fundamental disclosure of Being we are already in. Though it will not be fleshed out fully until Division Two, authenticity already operates at every critical moment in the development of Heidegger's argument in Division One. This methodological transparency has all along depended on the authentic Dasein of the reader. Heidegger offers us an interpretation of

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[137] Ibid, 265.
[138] This is largely the reason I reject Dreyfus's "undifferentiated mode." In such a mode, it's hard to see how Dasein's Being could ever become an issue for it, for Dasein's "issue" is precisely whether to be authentic or inauthentic. To be undifferentiated is to be indifferent to these possibilities, in which case, one cannot be said to be Dasein.
[139] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 265.
[140] Ibid, 273.

our everyday lived experience, and he asks us, "does this seem right? Have I captured what it means '*to be*'?" If we have answered in the affirmative, if we agree with Heidegger's description of existence, this is because Heidegger has appealed to us as the kind of entities who have the kind of existence he describes and who intuitively grasp the phenomena of Being he describes: Dasein. *Being and Time* appeals to our authentic Self who knows the kind of description Heidegger gives to be "true" as an authentic uncovering of the life we live; this is the text's performative aspect.

In modifying our everyday self and its dogmas, we arrive at a "primordial" understanding of Being, an "authentic" understanding that forces us to recognize to what extent we already understand Being as that which we question from the outset in the everyday itself. Thus, Heidegger largely bypasses the pitfalls to which Kierkegaard succumbs. Kierkegaard wants to be assured of the unity of the self prior to its entrance into concrete materiality, which he accomplishes by subordinating finite exteriority to infinite interiority grounded in an eternal God. This taints his entire approach to the problem, and Kierkegaard never really overcomes the opposition between subject and object. We dealt with this in the last chapter. Here, having followed Heidegger through Division One's exposition of Dasein and the inchoate though structurally necessary concept of authenticity, we see how Heidegger establishes Dasein as immanently transcendent. Dasein is fundamentally Being-in-the-world, and Being-in-the-world is either authentic or inauthentic. Indeed, Dasein *is* in/authentic, a coinage we'll reserve for our next chapter, where we'll discuss Dasein's full authentic constitution in anticipatory resoluteness and whether authenticity withstands Adorno's sustained barrage in *The Jargon of Authenticity*.

Chapter Five

Anticipatory Resoluteness, Adorno, and Authenticity

In understanding authenticity as a structural necessity in the very constitution of Dasein, which we discussed in our last chapter on Division One, we have been concerned with nothing less than "the primordial unity of the structural whole" of Dasein,[1] which Heidegger exposes in Division Two. Examining everydayness *as* everydayness was only possible via the modification of authenticity, so, in a less than explicit way, we have already been authentic if we have followed Heidegger through Division One. Now, if we have followed his phenomenology thus far, our everyday understanding of the world and accompanying explanatory rationale begin to tremble as if undermined by a primordial upheaval. Our inauthentic everyday understanding is uprooted by an authentic disclosure. To make authenticity explicit is the task of Division Two.

Dasein's is a transcendent everydayness, an immanent Being-in-the-world that discloses itself as a "Self" that is necessarily related to the "one" of *das Man.* Division One has taken us through this orbit and "uncovered" Dasein's authentic Being in care, which founds a different kind of truth. We saw this in at the end of Division One in Heidegger's conception of truth as *aletheia* – an uncoveredness, an *unforgetting*: a-lethe. Granted, in forgetting, Dasein inevitably "falls" back into "the one," but it does so in much the same way one can be said to fall asleep and to much the same effect – unawares into "tranquility," as it were. No one can stay awake forever, and we unforget only to immediately forget again. This circle is not a vicious one that implies we never get anywhere; instead, we are transformed by the orbit. Division One prepares the way for the full "unforgetting" of Dasein's authentic, ownmost (*eigentlich*), i.e. primordially

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[1] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 275.

open "clearing" (*Lichtung*). Now, beginning Division Two, Heidegger explains, "[w]e have defined the idea of existence as a potentiality-for-Being… which is in each case mine, … free either for authenticity or for inauthenticity."[2] That to which authenticity happens is Dasein, whose structure is given in Division One. *How* authenticity happens is the concern of Division Two, and so it is our concern here.

Anticipation and Resoluteness: Preparation for Authenticity

Most discussions of authenticity focus on Division Two and largely ignore the important structural purpose it serves in Division One. For example, Taylor Carman's *Heidegger's Analytic* dedicates its last chapter to a reading of authenticity derived almost entirely from Division Two.[3] Of course, this makes sense since in Division Two authenticity has to do with the concrete constitution of actual Dasein, i.e. an individuated and discreet human being. Heidegger locates this in anticipatory resoluteness, which we detail below. In this regard, Division Two offers a much richer discussion of authenticity than Division One, but it's worth pointing out that the revelations of Division Two depend on the work authenticity does in Division One.

In section 45, Heidegger lays out the overall argument of Division Two and the respective phenomena it will treat. Authenticity bears on Heidegger's notions of death, Being-towards-death, guilt, the call of conscience, and as he deals with these phenomena, Heidegger emphasizes the primordial understanding of Being that "founds" our secondary interpretation of them in the

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[2] Ibid,, 275-6.

[3] The last chapter is "Authenticity and Asymmetry," and this chapter, like the others in his book, is excellent. Carman engages with Dreyfus and Guignon and their reading of Division Two. Taylor Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in "Being and Time"* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

everyday: anticipatory resoluteness. This is a complicated hermeneutic, and though he talks of

"primordial" and "secondary" understanding, it is inappropriate to take this to mean anything

like a priority that "relates" the one to the other. The primordial and the secondary are factically

equiprimordial; there is never one without the other. Authenticity and inauthenticity mutually

ground one another; to denote this, we'll use "in/authenticity" when referring to this feature.

Death is the delimitation of Dasein's possibilities, which therefore makes all of Dasein's

possibilities a matter of in/authenticity. In this regard, Heidegger's discussion of death makes

clear the difference between the everyday understanding of anxiety in Division One and the

authentic, primordial, *ontological* understanding of death as ownmost, non-relational, not-to-be-

outstripped potentiality-for-Being[4] that is the explicit elucidation of Division Two.

Death is the concrete, human phenomenon in which the analysis of Dasein of Division One is

put to work in illuminating Dasein "in its possibilities of authenticity and totality."[5] To this

extent, Division Two is a continuation of *Being and Time*'s performative argument: we're

actually undergoing authenticity as we read about it. For Heidegger, death is apodictically

certain. To be clear, however, this apodicticity is not the outcome of deduction but as the

apophantic[6] revelation of Dasein's essential existentality. On death, Heidegger writes,

> Dasein, as thrown Being-in-the-world, has in every case already been delivered
> over to its death. In being towards its death, Dasein is dying factically and indeed
> constantly…. When we say that Dasein is factically dying, we are saying at the
> same time that in its Being-towards-death Dasein has always decided itself in one
> way or another. Our everyday falling evasion in the face of death is an inauthentic
> Being-towards-death. But inauthenticity is based on the possibility of authenticity.
> Inauthenticity characterizes a kind of Being into which Dasein can divert itself
> and has for the most part always diverted itself; but Dasein does not necessarily
> and constantly have to divert itself into this kind of Being. Because Dasein exists,

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[4] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 294.
[5] Ibid*,* 276.
[6] Ibid*,* section 7. See also our chapter four. It means "letting something be seen *as* something," like letting
something "show up."

> it determines its own character as the kind of entity it is, and it does so in every case in terms of a possibility which it itself is and which it understands.[7]

Death is an utterly individualizing possibility towards which Dasein is already delivered. Death is a potentiality-of-Being that is an end to all other potentialities-for-Being, a "certain"[8] potentiality-for-Being that reveals the "measureless impossibility of existence" that "first makes…possibility possible."[9] The point is that if Dasein *is*, it is conditioned by the possibility of its non-being. Dasein is a possibility only because it is thrown against its impossibility, and in this way, we can say that Dasein is already at its "end." Better, its circle is already closed. By "possibility," Heidegger of course means existential possibility, not logical possibility. Existential possibilities, as "ways to be," are always a question of in/authenticity. All my possibilities are either authentic or inauthentic relative to the impossibility that counterposes against them. Death is, therefore, the existential principle of individuation,[10] and it is only because Dasein dies that we can say that it *is*. Dasein *is* dying.[11]

This authentic understanding of death is Dasein's Being-towards-death, which is an "anticipation" of "the closest closeness" of Dasein's Being – its "impossibility."[12] Having been primordiality revealed in anticipation of death, everyday Dasein conceals this understanding again in the fall rather than authentically "maintain"[13] it. Dasein's inevitable fall back into *das Man* and idle talk about death is inauthenticity. On the other hand, anticipation "discloses to [Dasein] that its uttermost possibility lies in giving itself up, …shatter[ing] all one's

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[7] Ibid, 303-4.
[8] Ibid, 309.
[9] Ibid, 307.
[10] Ibid, 308.
[11] Ibid, 291.
[12] Ibid, 307.
[13] Ibid, 304.

tenaciousness to whatever existence [*Existenz*] one has reached."[14] To do this is "resolution,"

which we'll get to shortly. For now, "anticipation" is the authentic modification of projection

(the futural horizon of Dasein's existential temporality) that gives Dasein its "freedom towards

death… which has been released from the Illusions of the 'they'."[15] Anticipation "understands"

death ontologically in anxiety.[16] As the authentic projection of Being-toward-death, anxiety is

"self-understanding of Dasein on the basis of Dasein itself."[17] In anxiety, Dasein "wins"[18] itself

in being individuated out of its "oneself" in the they; hence, we will call authentic Dasein its

"wonself." This is no once and for all game, however, and each time Dasein wins itself, Dasein

is immediately in danger of losing itself again.

The foundational reciprocity of the oneself and the wonself is in/authenticity. In Being-

toward-death in anticipation, Dasein's wonself runs up against its oneself and is individuated out

of the they. Anxiety is a spotlight that suddenly individuates Dasein from the teeming mass of

das Man of which it is part. In anxiety, Dasein's wonself is uncovered from its hiddenness in the

they as the disguised oneself. This is anxiety as uncanniness (*unheimlich*). Hubert Dreyfus's

and Jane Rubin's discussion of authenticity in their analysis of Division Two is notable in that

they see authenticity bridging the gap between the apparent "mineness" of the wonself with the

publicness of the oneself. Through authenticity, Dreyfus and Rubin contend, Heidegger

secularizes Kierkegaard, thus preserving Kierkegaard's interiority without having to resort to a

theological argument. I have already discussed their project with reference to the promising

inroads it made to Kierkegaard. When it comes to Heidegger, their analysis is equally astute.

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[14] Ibid, 308.
[15] Ibid, 311.
[16] Ibid, 310.
[17] Ibid, 310.
[18] Ibid, 68, 386.

Toward the end of their treatment of both thinkers, they say "the very success of Heidegger's description of the authentic life makes his account of inauthenticity incoherent."[19] "If anxiety is the truth… and the truth sets it free, why doesn't Dasein seek anxiety rather than flee it"?[20] This is a well-intentioned question, but its premise is faulty. We cannot maintain ourselves in anxiety. Authenticity is not something we achieve in some once and for all fashion.

Heidegger is relatively silent on the question of how to become authentic because "authentic" isn't anything one becomes in this way. Anxiety is not something we voluntarily produce or fashion, but something that *happens* to us.[21] On my reading, it is something that demands a "choice," for sure, but Dasein does not choose between authenticity or inauthenticity in any traditional sense, as we shall see. Rather, Dasein is in/authentic; this describes Dasein's bipolarity, its foundation in the continuous revolution between its oneself and its wonself. There is no "gap" here, as we said in our last chapter, and so there is no need to build a bridge between the oneself and the wonself.[22] Dasein is the faultline of in/authenticity, the subduction of authenticity beneath inauthenticity and vice versa. The choice of self is never a matter of separating one from the other, for this is impossible. Rather, the choice is of choosing to choose in the first place, and this means choosing one's ownmost self, for the they self does not properly have choices, as we shall see.

Anticipation lays the temporal groundwork for resoluteness. Resoluteness is the existentiell "attestation" of anticipation, i.e., the existential "evidence" of anticipation's

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[19] Hubert L. Dreyfus and Jane Rubin, "Kierkegaard, Division II, and Later Heidegger," in Dreyfus, Hubert L. *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's "Being and Time," Division 1.* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 333.
[20] Ibid*,* 335.
[21] Carman takes up a response to Dreyfus and Rubin in "Must We Be Inauthentic," *in Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity: Essays in Honor of Hubert L Dreyfus, Vol 1.,* eds M. Wrathall and J. Malpas. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).
[22] Which Dreyfus does through the "undifferentiated mode" in *Being-in-the-World.* In chapter four, I stated my disagreement with Dreyfus on this interpretation.

ontological workings. Resoluteness is the "shattering" of our tenacious hold on existence

Heidegger alluded to above. If death determines Dasein's individuality (*jemeinkeit*) by

delimiting its futural horizon as a possibility beyond which no other possibilities *are*, an

"impossibility" that therefore makes existential possibilities possible, resoluteness describes

how, through an anticipatory projection towards Dasein's own facticity – its thrown Being-in –

facticity itself may be taken up authentically, which produces an "existentiell modification" that

allows the "whole" of Dasein to appear.[23] Heidegger gets to this through an analysis of

conscience and guilt. These existentiell phenomena reveal their existential foundations, and

Dasein recognizes itself as existentially "guilty"[24] of not being responsible for its own

foundation, of "Being-the-basis for a nullity."[25] Dasein exists factically as thrown, and to this

extent, Dasein never gets behind its thrownness – its ecstatic horizonal past, which Heidegger

clarifies later in chapter four of Division Two.[26] Dasein never manages to pull itself up by its

own bootstraps and "become" authentic. Resoluteness isn't fortitude or uprightness and guilt the

recognition of failure of this kind. Instead, Dasein's authentic Being-toward-death is the

discovery that Dasein *is* a nullity, a thrown nullity. Conscience demands that Dasein take up this

nullity by either "slinking" away from it or choosing it, and choosing it is to "want to have a

conscience."[27] Dasein cultivates a space to face its conscience in guilt again and again.[28] We do

not thereby escape existential guilt, however, and "[t]he call of conscience fails to give any such

'practical' injunctions, solely because it summons Dasein to existence."[29] Existence is for the

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[23] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 312.
[24] Ibid, 325.
[25] Ibid, 329.
[26] Ibid, 416.
[27] Ibid, 334.
[28] This connects to Heidegger's discussion of repetition in *Being and Time* section 74.
[29] Ibid, 340.

most part everyday existence, and it is out of the everyday that Dasein is uncovered in much the same way living things are uncovered when we turn over the rocks in our gardens. Surprised it is found out, for a moment, Dasein is lit up and singled out – individuated in anxiety. In its individuation, Dasein has a "choice." This isn't *whether* to seek some other shelter, as if it could somehow survive without one, but *which* shelter will it seek: the shelter of "the they" or its "ownmost" shelter – oneself or wonself.

Dasein's resolute choice is "making this decision from one's own self."[30] Having delimited its futural horizon in anticipation of death thus individuating Dasein out of the one, Heidegger extricates Dasein's thrown horizon from its thrownness by establishing the possibility of Dasein's radical self-reclamation in the choice of choice. In other words, to not slink away from the recognition of its nullity positions Dasein to disclose the nullity of its existence again and again. Projection is always projection toward Dasein's thrown possibilities; anticipation therefore demands that Dasein make some real choice about its thrownness; it demands concrete action. This does not mean that it demands some *particular* action, however, and Dasein's choice is not a question of good or bad choices[31] but rather of the in/authentic ontological status of the choice itself: whether Dasein chooses oneself or wonself. In resoluteness, the wonself "wins" the choosing of choice itself; whereas, the oneself remains thoroughly chained to the choice of the one (*das Man*).[32]

If "Dasein lets its ownmost self take action in itself in terms of that potentiality-of-Being which it has chosen,"[33] this makes it possible for Dasein to take up its thrownness, the Being of

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[30] Ibid, 313.
[31] Ibid, 334.
[32] Unlike our last chapter, in this chapter, I will use Dreyfus's suggested translation of *das Man* as "the one."
[33] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 334.

its "there" in a way that attests to "an existentiell modification of 'they'"[34] that we can properly

call authentic. Resoluteness is the choice of wonself articulated in "reticence,"[35] which

cultivates (*cura*) a silence that makes possible the authentic saying of anything at all.

Analogically, it is the silence upon which music is heard. "In resoluteness we have now arrived

at that truth of Dasein which-is most primordial because it is authentic. Wherever a 'there' is

disclosed, its whole Being-in-the-world—that is to say, the world, Being-in, and the Self which,

as an 'I am,' this entity is—is disclosed with equal primordiality."[36] Resoluteness

(*Entschlossenheit*) is primordial disclosure (*Erscholssenheit*) of Dasein's Being-in-the-world. It

is "precisely the disclosive projection and determination of what is factically possible at the

time."[37] In other words, in resoluteness, Dasein makes its "Situation"[38] by delimiting its own

(*eigen*) horizons in an authentic mode. Dasein brings a world into being. However,

"[r]esoluteness does not first take cognizance of a Situation and put that Situation before itself; it

has put itself into that Situation already. As resolute, Dasein is already taking action."[39] Dasein

is not an absolute subject, and Heidegger is cautious in using "action" here because while Dasein

is activity and resoluteness is action, it is not action in the sense of willful determination or

voluntarism. Dasein is always in-the-world, and resolute Dasein's primordially authentic

disclosure in anxiety gives way to other disclosures without anything like "will" intervening.

This is how we "fall" into oneself like we fall asleep, without "intending" it. Rather, as resolute,

Dasein takes over its situation as its *own* situation. Just as a sailor abandoned overboard is faced

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[34] Ibid, 312.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid..
[37] Ibid, 345.
[38] Ibid, 346.
[39] Ibid, 347.

with the recognition that he is already drowned, Dasein discovers its situation as its "own." Dasein owns up to it.

Resoluteness is always a question of in/authenticity and the respective "situations" they disclose: oneself or wonself situations. Dasein cannot resolve to be irresolute in the they self; this is mere sophistry, for the they self does not resolve[40] and lacks a properly existential situation.[41] Dasein's authentic situation is anxiety, and whenever this situation is disclosed, Dasein is already taking action as resolute, for it has resolved to resolve on itself; it is Dasein's "care" for itself. Indeed, resoluteness is "the authenticity of care itself."[42] That Dasein is uncovered primordially in resoluteness only to cover itself again by falling back into irresoluteness evinces the reciprocal structure of in/authenticity, and Dasein's ongoing disclosure of the possibility of its resolute wonself or its irresolute oneself points to two concrete outcomes that are precisely the *issue* for Dasein – the question of Being. The question, then, is whether Dasein's in/authentic modifications are something to which it is subject or can master, which Heidegger explicitly discusses at the end of chapter four[43] but which is provisionally answered in chapter three of Division Two and to which we turn to in the next section.

Anticipatory Resoluteness: The Full Concept of Heidegger's Authenticity

Though he has dealt with them separately in chapters one and two of Division Two, anticipation and resoluteness are inherently connected. Chapter three centers on the "authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole which belongs to Dasein"[44] that is made possible in care.[45]

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[40] Ibid, 345.
[41] Ibid, 346.
[42] Ibid, 348.
[43] Ibid, 422.
[44] Ibid, 357.
[45] Ibid, 371.

Though he has hinted at it all along, Heidegger makes clear that authentic care is none other than temporality itself.[46] Heidegger shows us how Dasein's Being is fundamentally temporality, which is the "temporalizing of primordial temporality."[47] Temporality temporalizes, and after chapter three of Division Two, Heidegger will shift his attention to temporality itself for the remainder of *Being and Time*. Temporality is none other than Dasein's primordial temporalization itself. Authentic Dasein *is* the temporalization of temporality, and chapter three shows us how this works via an analysis of anticipatory resoluteness, in which "[T]emporality gets experienced in a phenomenally primordial way in Dasein's Being-a-whole."[48]

Anticipatory resoluteness is Dasein's authentic wholeness, its unity. "As Being-towards-the-end which understands—that is to say, as anticipation of death—resoluteness becomes authentically what it can be. Resoluteness does not just 'have' a connection with anticipation, as with something other than itself. It harbours in itself authentic Being-towards-death, as the possible existentiell modality of its own authenticity."[49] Anticipation describes the existential temporality of existentielly resolute Dasein. Resoluteness *is* anticipatory. "Only in anticipatory resoluteness is [Dasein] understood authentically and wholly"[50] with respect to "'the 'nothing' with which anxiety brings us face to face."[51] Michael Zimmerman in his *Eclipse of the Self* describes this as akin to a religious conversion,[52] and to a degree, we can understand anticipatory resoluteness along these lines. Conversions, whether religious or otherwise, "happen" as if from nowhere but are really evidence of a deep underlying strife that manifests suddenly in a shift that

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[46] Ibid, 374.
[47] Ibid, 382.
[48] Ibid, 351.
[49] Ibid, 353.
[50] Ibid, 354.
[51] Ibid, 356.
[52] Michael E. Zimmerman, *Eclipse of the Self: The Development of Heidegger's Concept of Authenticity* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981), 81.

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allows us to see something that was there all along, bubbling beneath the surface and which

suddenly appears. I have likened it to a faultline rather than a conversion, and we can understand

"conversion" better if we say Dasein is "converted" in the same way San Francisco is

"converted" after a tremblor: if not decimated, then at least shaken by the agonistic forces that

always underly it. More importantly, Zimmerman acknowledges that there is a "voluntaristic or

willful strain in resoluteness"[53] that makes resoluteness sound like a choice one makes – some

action on which one "resolves." We agree with Zimmerman on this point, and our analysis thus

far has already made clear Dasein's perpetually shifting ground between the oneself and the

wonself is never a matter of choice, but nor is it a matter of divine revelation.

> Anticipatory resoluteness is not a way of escape, fabricated for the 'overcoming' of death; rather, it is that understanding which… frees for death the possibility of acquiring power over Dasein's existence and of basically dispersing all fugitive self-concealments. Nor does [it] signify a kind of seclusion in which one flees the world; rather it brings one… into the resoluteness of 'taking action.' [Anticipatory resoluteness is] the sober anxiety which brings us face to face with our individualized potentiality-for-Being…[, with the] unshakable joy [of] this possibility. In it Dasein becomes free.[54]

Anticipatory resoluteness is not Dasein's abstraction out of its world; rather, it is the utterly

individualizing existentiell experience of resolute Being-towards-death that frees Dasein for the

possibility of taking up the world in its ownmost way, viz. existentially. Through anticipatory

projection on its thrownness, Dasein authentically takes up its thrownness in an existentially

modified way. Authenticity's modification, unlike the "tranquil" modification of inauthenticity,

however, comprises a "violence."[55]

   Authenticity overturns Dasein, tearing away its disguises and masks and leaving it with

nowhere to hide. Dasein can be authentic only because it is always in some respects inauthentic

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[53] Ibid, 76.
[54] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 357-8.
[55] Ibid, 359

and vice versa.[56] Heidegger deals with the circularity of this argument at the end of section 63; his point is that Dasein's very Being is circular. The question, then, is not how to get out of the circle, but how to "leap into" it.[57] This is precisely the task of fundamental ontology – to dispel our illusions about what we "know" and take for granted and force us to face ourselves in the clearing of Being we are. Less an ethical mandate than an ontological imperative, this is a never-ending task, perhaps even a Sisyphean one. Nevertheless, by now, it should be obvious that we can leap[58] into this circle in the two ways that correspond to the two temporally distinguishable but inherently linked modifications of authenticity and inauthenticity. Dasein leaps into the possibilities-for-Being that are disclosed in these respective modifications as a "Self" or as an "I," which Heidegger differentiates in Section 64. In Heidegger's analysis of the "I," he sees Kant as failing to think through the "I" to reach its fundamental existentiality.[59] The "I" is apodictically certain, but when I think myself as an "I," I understand merely the "formal structure of representing as such"[60] and therefore remain thoroughly within the realm of representation rather than in primordial Being-in, which is primarily an apophantical revelation that is only secondarily represented. Again, this implies neither a temporal nor logical priority. Properly speaking, the primordial and the secondary are equiprimordial, but for the purposes of phenomenological analysis, we're stuck with this nomenclature. Thus, though secondary, the representative "identity" of the "I" is real; however, it is the identity of the oneself of das Man, which we discussed in our chapter three with respect to infinite representation. "Identity"

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[56] Charles Guignon makes this clear in "Philosophy and Authenticity: Heidegger's Search for a Ground for Philosophizing" in *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity*.

[57] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 363

[58] This is a different "leap" than the leap into faith in Kierkegaard. Heidegger would have us leap into our hermeneutic situation, which is very different from a leap into "faith."

[59] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 368.

[60] Ibid, 367.

comprises our "everyday" self that is overturned by fundamental ontology's revelation that "the everyday fugitive way we have of saying 'I' must be understood in terms of our authentic potentiality-for-Being."[61] Opposed to but intimately related to the "I" then is the Self, and here Dasein's totality begins to take definite shape.

"Selfhood is to be discerned existentially… [which] opens our eyes for the constancy of the self in the sense of its having achieved some sort of position. The constancy of the Self, in the double sense of steadiness and steadfastness, is the authentic counter-possibility to the non-Self-constancy which is characteristic of irresolute falling."[62] The infinite representability of the I gives way in Being-toward-death to the fundamental mineness of the Self, what "I" am, primordially. This "self-constancy" is "nothing other than anticipatory resoluteness…. Dasein is authentically itself in the primordial individualization of the reticent resoluteness which exacts anxiety of itself."[63] What Heidegger means by "self-constancy" isn't that we should cultivate a perpetual dwelling on death, to "constantly" remind our "self" of its inevitable death, for what would this be but more idle talk anyway? Rather, what Heidegger means is that the resolute self is there, constantly. The authentic Self is constant, even when we have forgotten about it. The whole point is to un-forget it (*aletheia*). The non-self is also constant, of course, and this is the "I" of inauthenticity. Dasein's constant tension between the I and the Self is in/authenticity. Dasein is "the self-understanding of Dasein itself."[64] The question of the meaning of Dasein's Being then is which "self" will it understand – the "I" of representability, or the ownmost Self?

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[61] Ibid, 369.
[62] Ibid, 369.
[63] Ibid, 369.
[64] Ibid, 372.

This question about Dasein's in/authenticity is answered *temporally* in the way Dasein temporalizes itself, how it "reckons"[65] with time.

The full exposition of temporality Heidegger reserves for chapters four, five, and six of Division Two, but, for the moment, we should mention a few important moves in Heidegger's shift to an explicit analysis of temporality and authenticity. Heidegger says, "[t]emporality makes possible the unity of existence, facticity, and falling, and in this way constitutes the primordial totality of the structure of care."[66] Temporality is ecstatical for Heidegger. Dasein "stands out" of itself toward the future, from the past, in the present. Heidegger says that temporality "makes present in the process of having been."[67] This means that primordial time is never a "measurement" of time as if Dasein were "in" time, but rather that Dasein itself *is* time.[68] Thus, authenticity isn't about recovering some lost moment in the past. Dasein's very disclosure of its situation is already temporality's temporalization in "primordial time."[69] Heidegger sums all this up nicely: "Time is primordial as the temporalizing of temporality, and as such it makes possible the Constitution of the structure of care. Temporality is essentially ecstatical. Temporality temporalizes itself primarily out of the future. Primordial time is finite."[70] These are the consequences of Heidegger's exposition of anticipatory resoluteness, and they have led us to the necessity of an analysis of authentic and inauthentic temporality. Heidegger writes, "the problem is… how inauthentic temporality arises out of finite authentic temporality, and how inauthentic temporality as inauthentic, temporalizes an in-finite time out of the finite, Only

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[65] Ibid, 382.
[66] Ibid, 376.
[67] Ibid, 374.
[68] Ibid, 381.
[69] Ibid, 377.
[70] Ibid, 380.

because primordial time is finite can the 'derived' time temporalize itself as infinite."[71] In essence, the question concerns how the "primordial time" of reckoning is modified to become the "within-time-ness" of inauthentic, "everyday" time. This difficult problem will lead Heidegger to "the temporality of Dasein as everydayness, historicality, and within-time-ness"[72] which comprise chapters four, five, and six of Division Two. For now though, we have reached a point where we must ask whether death and the individuation that succeeds it in anticipatory resoluteness has broken any ground in our search for a unified subject.

Kierkegaard is right about the anxiety that underlies our existence, but his formulation does not adequately explain it. Heidegger remedies this, or, at least, he tries to. In Division One of *Being and Time*, anxiety revealed the contingent nature of Dasein's world. In Division Two it reveals the contingent nature of Dasein itself in death. As anyone who has lived it will tell you, there is no doubt that anxiety is meaningful, but the question Heidegger asks is how there can be anything like "meaning" in the first place. How is our very relationship with the world, not just the acts that appertain within it, *itself* meaningful? Dasein is the being that asks this question about Being; therefore, only Dasein can attest to the truth of its answer. "[T]ruth is only in so far as and as long as Dasein is. Being and truth 'are' equiprimordially."[73] For the most part, Dasein is appropriated by "the oneself" and articulates itself as "oneself" – as any "one" would. But this possibility always points us back to the possibility of *not* articulating the hermeneutic of the they, the result of which is the articulation of "wonself" instead of "oneself." Authenticity is characterized by the unforgetting of "wonself" rather than the forgetting of "oneself," which is existentially attested in anxiety. Anxiety delimits the futural dimension of Dasein – "possibility"

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[71] Ibid, 379.
[72] Ibid, 382.
[73] Ibid, 272.

itself. This is an *existential* operation of temporality that effects an *existentiell* modification.

Modification is "mode-ification," and Dasein exists in two modes: inauthentic or authentic. Has

the anxiety of death provided Heidegger an adequate answer to explain the agonistic heart of

in/authenticity? In/authenticity concerns the way we live as actual, engaged, human beings in

the world. Does this mean then that seeing things "authentically" amounts to seeing them

"correctly," that authenticity gives us a way forward into normative ethics? Wherever there is

anything like a "world," there is Dasein. The world *is* Dasein insofar as the world is an

interpretation Dasein has made of what appears to it as a hermeneutic situation – *aletheia*. Does

this make Heidegger an idealist?[74] While Heidegger argues that the idealist position is a

"fanciful idealization,"[75] Adorno takes Heidegger to task for a "disguised idealism"[76] that

ultimately devolves into solipsism. Adorno puts Heidegger in the hot seat and in *The Jargon of

Authenticity* launches a critique of Heidegger that cuts to the heart of Dasein. To address the

questions we have just posed, we shall turn to Adorno.

Adorno on Authenticity in Kierkegaard and Heidegger

In his book on Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic,* Adorno writes,

"Kierkegaard's psychology of emotion wants to use the eternally, authentically human to conjure

up historically lost meaning.… Kierkegaard conceives of such meaning, contradictorily, as

radically developed upon the 'I' – as purely immanent to the subject and, at the same time, as

renounced and unreachable transcendence – Free, active subjectivity is for Kierkegaard the

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[74] The answer is yes and no. Taylor Carman calls Heidegger an "ontic realist" but a "temporal idealist". The latter is William Blattner's term. See chapter four of Carman's *Heidegger's Analytic*.
[75] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 272.
[76] Theodor Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. K. Tarnowski and F. Will (New York: Routledge, 2003).

bearer of all reality."[77] Adorno's interpretation of Kierkegaard as well as of Heidegger in *The Jargon of Authenticity* positions authentic subjectivity as the most severe kind of relativism, "[s]olpsism"[78] even. On Kierkegaard, Adorno elaborates:

> "[i]nwardness is deduced as the substantiality of the subject directly from its disproportionateness to the outer world…. The world of things is… neither part of the subject nor independent of it. Rather, the world is omitted. It supplies the subject with the mere 'occasion' for the deed, the mere resistance to the act of faith. In itself, this world remains random and totally indeterminate. Participation in 'meaning' is not one of its potentials."[79]

Thus, Kierkegaard's "subject" is envisioned as absolutely other than any "content" whatsoever, not just the material content of the world but its hermeneutic content as well. In chapter three, we saw this in subjectivity's fathomless interiority. "Subjectivity, in the form of objectless inwardness, mourns in its painful affects for the world of things as for 'meaning.'"[80] This vision of subjectivity entails the isolationist ethics of a solitary thinker disengaged from the world. Of course, as we have noted and on which Adorno insists, the subject never *actually* disengages from the world; he is always embedded in the external world and its practices, but Kierkegaard's position, as well as Heidegger's to a degree, is that it is this very embeddedness about which the thinker despairs.

As we've already seen in chapter three, Kierkegaard's subject is unable to resolve interiority and exteriority, "inwardness… becomes the refuge of the subject."[81] The subject pursues the impossible project of extricating himself from the world by refusing – "resisting"—its legitimacy. He retreats into interiority. For Adorno, it is only by understanding the subject

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[77] Theodor Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, trans. R Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 27.
[78] Adorno, *Construction of the Aesthetic,* 30.
[79] Ibid*,* 29.
[80] Ibid*,* 30.
[81] Ibid*,* 37-8.

with reference to its social constitution that any meaningful – that is, *useful* – notion of "the subject" comes into view. Kierkegaard does not provide this. From this analysis, Adorno's *Construction of the Aesthetic* goes on to a reading of Kierkegaard's "interieur" in the bourgeois apartment: "the *flaneur* promenades in his room; the world only appears to him reflected by pure inwardness."[82] Such a figure is ridiculous in Adorno's eyes, and any theory of subjectivity that conceives of "the subject" outside of its concrete material and social embeddedness is equally so.

Thus, Kierkegaard's interiority is no more than narcissism of the most original kind, and one is enchanted by one's reflection such that one drowns in it. Parading around all day worrying to oneself about one's interiority is a bourgeois privilege of the highest order, and Adorno calls Kierkegaard to task for this, pointing out the fact that Kierkegaard's own moderate wealth allowed for "his exclusion from economic production"[83] and enabled his philosophizing. Adorno reveals Kierkegaard's as the philosophy of bourgeois privilege, and he extends this critique to Heidegger. To disengage from the world, to cultivate solitude, to focus on oneself and agonize over every little tremor of one's interiority or one's "mood," these are things one does only if one's material needs are already met, only if one's life is economically stable within an otherwise alienating social constitution. Making matters worse, Kierkegaard positions alienation itself as the fundamental objective fact of existence with which philosophical subjectivity reckons. In Kierkegaard, alienation is metaphysically presupposed. The reification and subsequent valorization of alienation is similarly Adorno's target in his critique of Heidegger in *The Jargon of Authenticity*.

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[82] Ibid, 41.
[83] Ibid, 48.

Adorno's first volley against Heidegger begins by describing "the cult of authenticity,"[84] which has its roots in the "dark drives of the intelligentsia"[85] and their domination of the cultural sphere. Damningly, Adorno argues, "[f]ascism was not simply a conspiracy…but…something that came to life in the course of a powerful social development. Language provides it with a refuge… [the] jargon of authenticity."[86] Adorno's argument is, in essence, that existentialism's theorization of "authenticity," from its roots in Kierkegaard to its apotheosis in Heidegger, is in service to an inherently exploitative ideology that reaches its zenith in the brutality of the Nazi regime. To make matters worse, Adorno's pillory of Heidegger's philosophy is hard to reckon with since it is only substantiated by Heidegger's actual affiliation with the Nazi party. For some, this alone is enough to dismiss Heidegger, but, while I do think it is possible to support an interpretation that posits fascism as the logical outgrowth of *Being and Time*,[87] I don't think Heidegger's philosophy necessarily entails such a dire outcome. Adorno might be right that "authenticity" is sometimes used in the service of oppression, but I would contend that in these cases, authenticity has been co-opted and is therefore hardly "authentic" at all in the sense that Heidegger means. Adorno's critique merits careful attention, however, so we continue.

Adorno believes authenticity "insinuates a preestablished harmony between essential content and homey murmuring,"[88] and he gives a reading of Heidegger's conversation with a Swabian farmer to illustrate authenticity's roots in a vision of "the simple life" opposed to the bustle of cosmopolitanism: "[a]llegedly hale life opposed to damaged life, on whose societalized [sic] consciousness, on whose 'malaise,' [authenticity] speculates. Through the ingrained

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[84] Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, 3
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] In his lectures at Duquesne, Tom Rockmore routinely excoriated Heidegger on this score. See his *On Heidegger's Nazism and Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992)
[88] Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*,43.

language form of the jargon, that hale life is equated with agrarian conditions, or at least with a

simple commodity economy, far from all social conditions."[89] Thus, authenticity speaks to a sort

of primordial connectedness to "roots," which is really just a homily to the "simple commodity

economy" of the agrarian countryside that was fast disappearing in the burgeoning industrialism

of early twentieth century Germany. Adorno points out that authenticity's "language is a

trademark of societalized [sic] closeness, noble and homely at once… terms like 'existential,' 'in

the decision,' 'commission,' 'appeal,' 'encounter,' 'genuine dialogue,' 'statement,' 'concern,'

will do for examples."[90] For Adorno, authenticity's jargon is an irrational obscuritanism masked

as a "liturgy of inwardness"[91] that births a philosophical cult. "Whoever is versed in the jargon

does not have to say what he thinks, does not even have to think it properly. The jargon takes

over this task and devalues thought."[92] Kierkegaard's Abraham is the apogee of this

irrationalism, but Adorno sees it equally in Heidegger, whose jargon "exaggerates general

concepts and ideas of philosophy – as for instance the concept of being – so grossly that their

conceptual essence, the mediation through the thinking subject, disappears completely under the

varnish."[93] Adorno's attack on authenticity's philosophical cogency is pointed and severe. In

Adorno's analysis, "authenticity" is not a properly philosophical concept at all; rather, it is

founded in a metaphysics of "stupidity."[94] Ouch.

Not only does authenticity fail to hold up to Adorno's demands for philosophical

consistency, Adorno's analysis of authenticity shows it to be no more than ideology – the

enshrining of established forms of alienation, which themselves have a long and complicated

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[89] Ibid, 47.
[90] Ibid, 3.
[91] Ibid, 57.
[92] Ibid, 6.
[93] Ibid, 8-9.
[94] Ibid, 11.

history of reification.[95] When we consider authenticity in this light, we see that "[w]hat remains after the removal of existential bombast are religious customs cut off from their content."[96] The cult of authenticity takes what was religion's place as the axle around which society revolves, and authenticity "trains mankind for the reproduction of itself."[97] In this sense, what Adorno finds inexcusable in Kierkegaard's overt theology he finds equally inexcusable in Heidegger's secularized religious themes. But even worse than its apparent irrationalism is that, as Adorno sees it, authenticity is employed in the service of oppression. If authenticity was meant to liberate men from their despair, in Adorno's eyes, "authenticity… perpetuate[s] want."[98] For Adorno, "authenticity" is just the status quo by another name. What is worse than this failure, however, is that authenticity establishes a justification for a relativism of the most abhorrent kind, as we shall see below.

Reading Heidegger as an idealist, Adorno argues, "[i]t is impossible to subtract the ontic and leave the ontological self as a remainder, or to preserve it as a structure of the ontic in general."[99] Faced with this problem, Adorno asserts that "Heidegger secretly reinstates the creator quality of the absolute subject…. This is Heidegger's disguised idealism."[100] Ignoring the social conditions that produce alienation, authenticity builds a temple to alienation itself in its endless perseveration over the "meaninglessness" of contingent existence: "death becomes the ontological foundation of totality. Thus it becomes a meaning-giving element in the midst of that fragmentation which… characterizes the atomized consciousness of the late industrial

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[95] Ibid, 12.
[96] Ibid, 19.
[97] Ibid, 29.
[98] Ibid, 92.
[99] Ibid, 111.
[100] Ibid, 99.

age."[101] As Adorno interprets Heidegger, that without *my* death to order it the world is chaotic and meaningless is philosophical effrontery of the highest order. "Only a solipsistic philosophy could acknowledge an ontological priority to 'my' death over and against any other."[102] In solipsism, Adorno has taken Heidegger's "disguised idealism" to its extreme conclusion. Here, even the "true torturer"[103] can be authentic. Indeed, this is Adorno's point. He characterizes authenticity as no more than a "suppressed animality,"[104] a drive toward domination and exploitation, not their overcoming. In the end, authenticity is "the claim of people who consider themselves blessed simply by virtue of being what they are."[105] Of course, in Nietzschean fashion, the "blessed" among us are those who write the prayers – the elite and the powerful, the intelligentsia and the bourgeoise. In authenticity, "bourgeois thinking reforms itself into naked self-preservation,"[106] and "sells [its] self-identity as something higher."[107] Authenticity smacks of elitism at best and brutality at worst: even the Nazis were "authentic." For Adorno, it is inevitably toward fascism that authenticity tends.

For Adorno, there is little difference between Kierkegaard and Heidegger on authenticity since authenticity is really just religion – overtly so in Kierkegaard and disguisedly so in the "creator quality" Heidegger's "absolute subject." Thus, in true religious fashion, "[t]he jargon cures Dasein from the wound of meaninglessness and summons salvation from the world of ideas into Dasein."[108] This concern with salvation – overt in Kierkegaard, implicit in Heidegger – does evidence a certain "anxiety," but Adorno sees anxiety stemming not from our ontological

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[101] Ibid, 120.
[102] Ibid, 123.
[103] Ibid, 102.
[104] Ibid, 136.
[105] Ibid, 61.
[106] Ibid, 100.
[107] Ibid, 61.
[108] Ibid, 93.

condition but from our social condition. "Everyone knows that he could become expendable as technology develops, as long as production is only carried on for production's sake."[109] Thus, our alienation isn't existential, argues Adorno, it is economic. Philosophy must seek a way to understand and, hopefully, to change this, but "[i]n the mask of the jargon any self-interested action can give itself the air of public interest, of service to Man. Thus, nothing is done in any serious fashion to alleviate men's suffering and need."[110] Heidegger, like Kierkegaard, is ethically barren.

In the end, Adorno sees Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and the entire project of "authenticity" in unflattering light. For Adorno, authenticity is just solipsism by another name. The existential individuality of the solitary thinker abstracts from his concrete, lived existence. The "liturgy" of inwardness is a bourgeois prayer to oneself, a philosophical onanism that does nothing to change reality. Worse, the canonization of authenticity within the philosophical tradition is in service to a totalitarian ideology that only perpetuates man's alienation. Of course, Adorno's Marxist orientation is altogether different from either Heidegger and Kierkegaard, but Adorno's critique of both these thinkers brings to the fore some serious questions we must confront head-on: Is authenticity solipsism? Is it the mark of privilege, a bourgeois cult? Does it tend toward fascism or other forms of totalitarianism? Is authenticity an empty concept, or does Adorno have it wrong?

A Response to Adorno's Critique of Authenticity

Adorno's attack on both Heidegger and Kierkegaard is grounded in his assertion that both thinkers conceive the subject in absolute alterity to its socius. For Kierkegaard, this comes in the

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[109] Ibid, 27.
[110] Ibid, 54.

leap of faith, which, as we saw above, Adorno sees as the absolute negativity of interiority

opposed to its absolute positivity in material and social concretion, "[i]nwardness … deduced as

the substantiality of the subject directly from its disproportionateness to the outer world."[111] For

Adorno on Heidegger, it is the same. Adorno sees authenticity's opposition to inauthenticity as

one that produces different subjects: "authentics" and inauthentics. From this reading, Adorno

attacks Heidegger on the grounds of elitism. However, this erroneously conflates Dasein with

human subjectivity, and we have emphasized that there is no neat division between authentic and

inauthentic ways of life. If I am a teacher, I cannot claim to be any more "authentic" a teacher

than another teacher, at least, while both of us are teaching.[112] The only time I am properly

"authentic," in our exposition of Heidegger, is when I face the anxiety of the mineness of my

own impossibility. If I *am* in anxiety, however, I am no longer teaching. Certainly, I might

undergo anxiety in the middle of teaching (and what a terrible thing that would be), but the

whole point of anxiety is that when I am in it, I am nothing but it, and it is "nothing" itself. The

"I" of social identity falls away and authenticity faces me with my Self. On this utter

individualization, Adorno reads Heidegger positing a solipsistic idealism, but this seems to

ignore Being-with and the mutual co-foundedness of the I and the Self on which Heidegger

emphatically insists. Even in the anticipatory resoluteness of death, authenticity is never the

attainment of some once and for all position outside society. Indeed, authenticity describes an

intimate commerce between the wonself and the oneself, albeit a modified one. Authenticity

does not escape the social; rather, it brings the social to analysis. Nevertheless, whether in

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[111] Adorno, *Construction of the Aesthetic,* 29.
[112] Robert Brandom, "Heidegger's Categories in Being and Time," in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, eds. H. L. Dreyfus and H. Hall (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992).

solicitude or indifference, Dasein is always with others.[113] In/authenticity determines the mode in which the other appears.

By disrupting its world in anxiety, authenticity discloses Dasein to its Self, cultivating (*cura*) the space of possibilities and their ensuing disclosures. Dasein's disclosures are always of a with-world. To say that Heidegger is a solipsist is to ignore whole chapters of *Being and Time*, and Adorno didn't do that, of course. Rather, Adorno is saying that Heidegger is "in the last analysis" solipsistic because authenticity fetishizes "my" death. There is no arguing the critical role death plays in Heidegger. After all, Dasein is its dying. But, of course, Dasein doesn't actually die. Death is not some absolutely individualizing event I somehow undergo all alone in my own world, and Adorno knows this. Rather, Adorno sees death as the vanishing point of a hermeneutic horizon, an unrealizable and idealized coherence at which I "authentically" aim as the meaning of "my" death, to which I alone have privileged access. This point is my "authentic truth," the "meaning" of my life, which is true only for me: hermeneutic solipsism. If this were in fact the case with Heidegger, then even a torturer could be authentic, but I think Heidegger escapes this criticism on the simple grounds that Dasein's hermeneutic situation is always socially constituted.

Hermeneutic solipsism is an oxymoron, and Heidegger's philosophy is not solipsistic. Moreover, authenticity doesn't sanction or "authorize" any particular way of being in the world. Rather, in Heidegger, authenticity is structural, and it brings us face to face with the impossibility of Being. There is no idealized point at which meaning coheres, and Dasein dies right in the middle of its situation. If authentic, the executioner is no longer an executioner; rather, he is his Self, which is "nothing" at all. Indeed, to the extent the executioner identifies as an executioner,

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[113] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, section 26 makes this abundantly clear.

he can only do so inauthentically. "Authentic" executioners are impossible if we take Heidegger seriously. Indeed, authenticity faces the actual executioner with the possibility of following his "own" orders rather than those of his fascist commanders. But what about the fetishization of death? Has Heidegger so emphasized death that *Being and Time* justifies the claim that bringing people to the anxiety of their death is an "authentic" task, therefore warranting the Nazi motto "*Arbeit macht Frei*"?[114] Absolutely not, and it is clear that such an approach treats people as ontic objects rather than ontological Dasein. The mechanized slaughter of people is not only reprehensible, it is ontologically misguided. Heidegger's concern in *Being and Time* is an ontological one and nothing short of the question of the meaning of Being itself. What *kind* of world should we bring into existence is an altogether different question than what we must be able to do in order to disclose *any* world to bring into Being in the first place. This is what Heidegger does in *Being and Time*, and to this extent, Heidegger should have stuck to philosophy and stayed away from politics. That Heidegger was personally allied with fascism for a brief time seriously stains his genius.

Heidegger does largely sidestep ethical considerations in *Being and Time*, and a good number of commentators see this as a problem and offer their own "ethics of authenticity" to fill what they perceive as a lacuna in Heidegger's thinking.[115] Surely, Adorno thinks Heidegger fails the ethical test, and he excoriates Heidegger for bourgeois reification, but this seems disingenuous. To the extent that philosophy itself is a political act, Heidegger does offer an ethics. Thinking depends on and therefore implicitly condones institutional structures. Thinking

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[114] "Work makes you free" is the typical rendering of this phrase, which, cast in in its iron gates, infamously greeted new arrivals to Auschwitz. "Work is freedom" is another way to say it. For the Nazis, the work of freedom was death.

[115] Charles Taylor's *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) is the most obvious example, and establishing an ethics based on authenticity seems to be de rigueur among commentators.

can be explicitly ethical or political, a hortative to actual, concrete activity, but *Being and Time* is not this, and Heidegger is clear about avoiding this front. Rather, Heidegger is concerned with thinking the possibility of thinking itself. This is what "fundamental ontology" sets out to accomplish. If we ever do get "behind" ideology, it will be via fundamental ontology, and in this way, Heidegger is perhaps "primordially" ethical. "Secondary" sciences like ethics and politics discover beings and not Being. Certainly, secondary sciences discover "facts" about the beings we are, but these facts generally treat us as "things" that can be calculated according to the rules of instrumental rationality. Fundamental ontology, on the other hand, examines Being-in-the world as the Being-toward-possibilities of a hermeneutically constituted with-world of others, i.e, the "everyday" world we live in and render meaningful by virtue of our ongoing engagement with it. Heidegger has pointed out that there is a "modification" at work here. If we were no more than "in" the world – were this world and our "in-ness" never an *issue* for us – we could never turn toward it in some other way than the way we are already "in" it. Other possibilities of Being would never appear.

We have found Adorno's ultimate criticism is actually a pretty Heideggerian one. If Adorno sees a "better" way of doing things than in capitalism, it is only because he is engaged in a fundamental ontology that modifies the world in such a way that its "mode of production" appears as an issue. Adorno asks, fundamentally, if our very being is connected to the entire world, what kind of being *can* we pursue? Secondarily, what kind *should* we pursue? Here, it becomes clear that authenticity is not an empty concept at all. It is in fact what disrupts our acceptance of everyday ideology and allows us to envision ideological possibilities other than capitalism. Heidegger depended on what was, to some, an alienating economic system to buoy his actual practice of philosophical thinking, granted. But this is no less true for Adorno himself.

Serious thinking is often done in isolation, removed from the "everyday" concerns of life. This is indeed a bourgeois privilege, but Adorno is as familiar with this privilege as Heidegger. Indeed, our own practice betrays this privilege right now in these words. In the end, we must choose some kind of Being to be. What we choose depends on authenticity.

The authentic wonself comes at great expense, and Heidegger shows us why. Authenticity upends us, devastates us, and reduces us to ruins only so that we may again rebuild ourselves. The choices we make determine the selves we are. This is ineluctable, and while we are busy taking for granted the stability of the identity we constantly build, great forces are at work beneath us, slowly eroding the foundations until suddenly they give way. That all things tend toward entropy is no less true of personal identity than it is of matter, and though who I am is not the same as what I am, I can say that both are falling apart. Heidegger provides us with the language to describe this fall and, perhaps, the means to arrest it in the choices we make. What I have chosen concerns our next and final chapter.

Chapter Six

A Conclusion

I have a memory of being very young, standing on the beach facing the sea in the ankle-deep wash of gently breaking waves. My mother and my father sat in sand-chairs in the shade beneath the boardwalk. My brothers were very small, and my mother held one while the other slept on a blanket, the sun illuminating the downy hair on his back. My mother and father talked and laughed behind me as I faced the water. Other families sat nearby in similar arrangements. The beach was crowded with people, but because the water was too cold, no one was swimming. At the water's edge, if I stood facing the right direction, the beach itself would disappear from my peripheral vision, and I enjoyed the illusion of being surrounded entirely by water. Far out on the horizon was a sailboat, and I imagined myself standing at the bow of a boat of my own, cruising along some great circle to unseen shores. The voices behind me faded away. Rising to take their place was the crash of the waves, the cries of gulls on the air, and the breath of the great ocean itself as it filled its lungs with the hot land breeze and returned it freshened from the sea. I held my arms up at my sides and closed my eyes and but for the melting sand beneath and around my two tiny feet, the sensation was that I was impossibly upright on the water, as if standing on its surface. I became dizzy. A quickly receding wave undermined the sand where I stood, and I fell forward into the water, my feet stuck in the hole. The next wave pounced on me and grabbed me up, and I tumbled out to sea coughing and spitting the icy water, shocked and helpless. Just then, the land itself reached out and reclaimed me in the form of my father's tight grip around my upper arm. He stood me up, scooped handfuls of seawater onto me to wash away the sand, brushed back my hair and told me to keep crying to get the sand out of my eyes –

that under the circumstances, this was the best thing to do – and so I did. He picked me up and held me tight, and I cried and cried while he reassured me and told me I would be alright if I just kept crying. In that moment, I was sure he was right.

I felt whole and secure once, and much of my life has been an attempt to feel that way again. For as long as I can remember, I have been fundamentally insecure. My insecurity is ontological and concerns my relationship to myself as well as to my social environment. I have known since an early age that the ground is unstable and liable to disruption; indeed, for me, this discovery has been unrelenting. I have lost and regained my world more than once. It happens out of the blue, in the blink of an eye, as it were. I cannot will these moments, nor would I want to, but I have learned to cultivate a relationship toward them by inquiring into the status of the ground that shifts and what I am relative to this shift.

In chapter one, I gave a description of my own facticity, where I came from, what has historically "happened" to me and how I made sense of it through the masks with which I "faced" the world. I understood the self pragmatically. A kind of crafting, I consciously fashioned myself to resemble a type. I imagined the self as a relation between form and content, and I fastened onto socially available identities, e.g. "a scholar," and attained all of the things that were supposed to fulfill me, yet I felt totally empty. The early lessons of my life were painful, and I often wonder whether I have ever truly learned from them. The idea that even now, in these very words, I cannot trust that what I am writing is a true expression of who I "really" am or is just another quixotic quest to find satisfaction in having produced an externally evincible validation of my own worth disgusts me. I hate that I cannot trust myself. I hate myself for not trusting. Yet what would it mean for an identity to fulfill me in the first place?

How would such a fulfillment even work? I do not know the answer to these questions, but I know that I am living in the search.

I did eventually get a sailboat of my own. When I was 26 years old, I bought a 30 foot fin-keel sloop in Newport, Rhode Island and sailed it with my two younger brothers to Baltimore, Maryland. Over the next four years, my father and I rebuilt the entire boat, re-rigged her, and had new sails sewn. We took a short offshore cruise to sea-trial the boat the summer of my 30th year, during which time it was becoming increasingly clear that I was mentally ill. My wife, Liz, was pregnant, and while she vacationed with my mother, my father and I took a two-week cruise around the Delmarva Peninsula. After spending a few days offshore, we made our way up the Delaware Bay to return the boat to the dock in Baltimore via the Chesapeake and Delaware canal. I had vivid thoughts of leaving my father at the dock and continuing back out to sea alone, of choosing to be a sailor rather than a husband and father myself. From where I sit now, these thoughts cause my entire body to shudder, and though I am terrified by them, I acknowledge that they were once mine and are still mine now, albeit modified. But the allure of the world that called me to leave my wife and daughter is dead, and I confront these thoughts from a world that finds them abhorrent. It gives me pause to consider from what world will I confront them next. My constant fear is that my seeming stability is being undermined even now.

I cannot be assured that my world will persist. Indeed, my experience has shown the case to be quite otherwise, but this discovery comes only through failure in the attempt. For me, socially constructed identities once represented more than what they truly afford. I once clung to the supposed surety of certain forms of existence. I imagined myself in a particular way and tried to bring that person into existence. I wanted to be unique and special and so my life

became no more than the attempt to prove I was. The external verifiability of the identities I had chosen legitimized me and gave me worth. I craved this kind of validation and it sickens me to recognize it. And again, I cannot trust that I am not repeating it once more now. Is all of what I have written no more than a desperate cry for recognition? Is all of this just a roundabout way of asking that you pick me up and tell me everything will be alright, or is this something else?

My earlier faith in identities was too zealous, it seems to me now. The idea that I was to be someone had led me to the false conclusion that some *one* identity had to comprise the whole of who I was. Faced with being a sailor or being a husband and father, I saw the one as incompatible with the other. A sailor sailed; he did not return to a wife and child. A father stayed home, sold the boat, got fat, and read bedtime stories to his daughter. These were mutually exclusive identities, simple as that. I thought of myself as a relation between form and content, and I thought that to be someone was to be some *one* form and that all content – every act I performed – was to be performed with reference to this form. The idea that I could be both a father and a sailor seemed preposterous, contradictory even. Fatherhood demanded *all* of me, and so to be a father left no room for sailing. Likewise, sailing left no room for fatherhood. Certainly, a sailor may have children, perhaps some in every port, but he is not a father to any of them in the proper sense of the word. As I returned to the dock with my father from our cruise around the Delmarva, I debated which choice I should make, but not how to make it, for that part was clear to me. I was at a junction of Being: on the one hand, fatherhood; on the other, sailing. Both forms were possible. I could bring either of these worlds into existence. All I had to do was commit to the performance. And this was precisely the problem: identity was a *performance* for me. I spoke my lines convincingly. I hit my marks on cue. When the curtains lifted, I moved about the stage with vigor and passion. But all of that was an act. When the play was not

on, when I had no performance to enact, I was nothing at all. Beneath the acts I performed, there was no authentic act of my own. All I ever did was wear the masks of Being, and there was no "me" independent of the always externally verifiable acts I performed. My attempt to secure myself solely via socially-available means utterly failed, and the entire world fell apart for me, which is to say, lost its meaning. I tumbled toward a vast abyss, drowning. The desperate attempt to a foothold of ground by which to resist it has been, for me, the struggle of authenticity. What am I that finds itself battered between solidity and nothingness?

My investigation of authenticity began with Kierkegaard in chapter two. Here, I focused on materiality and ideality, how Kierkegaard "unifies" them through an authentic subject. I conceived of the subject in terms of objective externality and subjective internality. This problematic duality demands "coincidence" between subject and object wherein one expresses the other in a kind of ongoing validation. Subjective form coincides with objective content, and the latter fills the void of the former, thereby establishing wholeness and unity. To the extent that I perform a particular action, I can be said to "be" this activity, this subjective form. I am a sailor because I sail. There are greater and lesser sailors, but insofar as anyone sails, she is a sailor, even a "first-time" sailor. Who "I" am is what I do. There is an enticing, demonstrable security in exteriority. For example, I know I am a teacher because I have a classroom, students, knowledge of a subject evidenced by an academic degree. I can *prove* I am a teacher. I know who I am by virtue of the acts I perform. When I doubt the meaning of the world, I can look to my subjective form to provide it. Teaching, sailing, or fatherhood circumscribes the world, giving it shape and meaning. The formal self picks me up from the swirling chaos, brushes me off and tells me everything will be alright. My mastery of a subjective form gives me a kind of authority over objective content. The world is meaningful because I say it is, and I have the

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authority to say it is because I bear the verifiable marks of authority – the objects, titles, and privileges of authorship. I am authorized to render the world meaningful in the ways that authenticate my authorship. I am "authentic" because I validate an externally verifiable form of subjectivity, of which I myself am the origin.

Kierkegaard demands, however, that if I am what I do, then I should do what I most properly am. What I am most properly is a "self," which, we might say, is who I am to "me." Measuring external authenticity comparatively and internal authenticity ontologically, Kierkegaard directs us to the ontological level: internality. Establishing internality's ontological priority, he positions subjectivity as a perpetual conflict with exteriority, a conflict in which the only refuge is faith in God. The act of faith is a paradox. It is the affirmation of a negation, the positive content of an annihilation. Faith is the presence of God's *absence*. Through faith, the authentic subject resolves exteriority and interiority, attaining "the most beautiful and secure" harmony with existence by committing the formal, self-annihilative activity that he is to the positive content of faith. Kierkegaard establishes faith as the paradigm for authenticity. Through the leap into faith – into an absence conceived as presence – Abraham is assured of God's reality. By saying nothing, Abraham articulates everything. The knight of faith makes his truth true. He "expresses" his truth as a coincidence between form and content, their mutually reinforcing validation.

Ostensibly, Kierkegaard's faith sufficiently establishes an authentic subject, but in chapter three, I revisited Kierkegaard's thematization of authenticity, which I find problematic in its overt dependence on God. If faith is the way to authenticity, then this is not a road I can follow with Kierkegaard. Instead, I looked to secularized religiousness A to see how externality might be understood as "expressive" of internality. Expressive authenticity fails to withstand the

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critique of chapter three. Internality's attempt to secure wholeness and unity in externality tends toward totalitarianism, which itself motivates the leap into religiousness B, which I also reject for its theological presuppositions.

I tried Abrahamic faith. I had faith that if I persisted in my madness, everything would, in the end, be alright. Abraham chose both God and Isaac, and so he never really chooses at all. He persists in the paradox of faith, which is all well and good when you have God to save you, but it isn't terribly helpful in actual practice. To pursue the life of an involved father was exclusive of a solitary life upon the sea. In the summer of my 30th birthday, I refused to acknowledge the paradox of my position, and I tried to be two different people at the same time. I refused to choose, and so it suddenly appeared that no more choices were available to me, as if "possibility" itself was foreclosed. There was nothing left to be, so, it seems, I tried to become a piece of furniture. Inert and barren, months later and just as suddenly, possibility reappeared and choices of choosing with it. Again, this happened to *me*. I awoke to the world just as suddenly as I had left it – as if I had been merely trapped in a nightmare. How could this happen? "I" could be well or unwell, but this always happened to "me." Since this time, I have been in quest of an account for the gap between the I and the me and whether there is a way to bridge it.

Kierkegaard attempted this through the knight of faith, and though he fails, his efforts have not been in vain. Kierkegaard shows us how externality inevitably forces us into interiority. Kierkegaard is right that interiority is what I most authentically "am." Nevertheless, while it is true that beneath the "I" of externality is an internal "me," internality without externality condemns me to a fathomless abyss, which is inescapable without an appeal to a transcendent principle. Without God, Kierkegaard's retreat into interiority never reaches an end; reflection never comes to a halt. Through more careful attention to the situation, however, we

have seen that by inheriting and reifying a representationalist metaphysics, Kierkegaard never really overcomes the opposition between subject and object, which taints his entire approach to the problem. It seems to me that Kierkegaard wants to be assured of the unity of the self prior to its entrance in concrete materiality. He wants the "Self" of interiority to be sufficient without the "I" of exteriority, which he accomplishes by tying interiority to eternal God. In short, if God assures me of the wholeness and unity of the Self, then the exteriority of the I is of negligible concern since it is secondary to what I most truly am as a self-relation before God. Thus, I agree with Adorno that Kierkegaard abstracts from concrete, lived experience in favor of interiority. Indeed, for Kierkegaard, the more I retreat from exteriority, the more "authentic" I become, for exteriority is the sinful fallenness I suffer for a time until, in death, it gives way to interiority's rightful place in eternity. Kierkegaard's argument rests on the assumption that subject and object are in fact separable, establishing a dualism that undermines him. The "unity" of the self cannot be given in thinking the problem as one between subject and object. The self cannot be secured in advance of its trial because the self is none other than the trial itself.

Heidegger's Being-in-the-world theorizes this trial. In chapters four and five, I left Kierkegaard's authenticity for Heidegger's. Heidegger refines authenticity by starting with the self as it appears in its everyday state. Metaphysically self-aware, he avoids talk of "the subject" as well as interiority or exteriority and pursues a far more systematic approach to the question of the Self, one that centers on Dasein. Dasein is thrown, projected, and Being-amidst its possibilities. Possibilities are always inauthentic or authentic. In/authenticity is Dasein's circular structure; it is what is revealed/concealed. Dasein understands itself hermeneutically through disclosiveness as state-of-mind and understanding, which are socially predicated in "the they." When Dasein is disclosed in anxiety, the inescapability of Being-with is revealed as

uncanniness. This is Heidegger's ground in *Being and Time,* the sudden and inevitable upheaval of the self, the apodicticity of its apophantical illumination. We neither choose this nor will it into being. It happens, and when it happens, the choices we make with respect to it define who we are. Heidegger teaches that Dasein's Being-with is an inherent part of its world. The world is not the raw state of matter but the world *that* matters to us – the world of meaning to which our attitudes and activities attest. The worlds we live in are socially constituted. At no point, and Heidegger repeatedly emphasizes this, do we exist alone in the world *solus ipse*. Adorno is wrong to interpret Heidegger this way. Dasein is a socially constituted being. Its world of meaningful situations is always pregiven to it – Dasein is "thrown." Dasein never "coincides" with its world; it *is* its world. By finitely living out its possibilities, Dasein gives them life. Indeed, insofar as Dasein is dying, it gives its world *its own* life. Dasein does not determine what is to be sacrificed ahead of time, as in Kierkegaard, but it is itself already the sacrifice.

Taking a resolute position toward its possibilities, Dasein ties together its worlds – their coherence is Dasein's coherence insofar as Dasein's possibilities are limited by its utmost possibility, which is the impossibility of Dasein itself. Dasein is finite, and Dasein therefore brings a finite world into existence. It gives life to a world by dying for it. However, the worlds Dasein brings to life are already delineated by the "worlds" it lives in. If Dasein is being in the world, then the Being that is an issue for Dasein is the "meaning" of any of the worlds it dies for. To inhabit possibilities is to do what one does when one occupies a possibility. Every possibility is either inauthentic or authentic. Dasein's "projects" are prescribed by its worlds. To the extent that Dasein is "authentic," Dasein is not some particular project but rather the structural condition of possibility for any project whatsoever. Given that authenticity is nothing more than the revelation of this structure, the project of authenticity is from the start an impossible one.

Dasein never "attains" authenticity the way one attains faith. We can't *stay* authentic. In anxiety, our worlds break down. There is nothing at all to be. In these moments, Dasein is faced with the "Self." From the Self, though, Dasein necessarily seeks refuge and falls into the they and the "I." The ongoing revolution of in/authenticity is the "hermeneutic situation" in which Dasein *is*. To a degree, therefore, all activity is "fallen," an articulation of the one (*das Man*). But whether I can "be" authentic is something I ask only because in/authenticity is precisely the issue for me; it is a relation between the oneself and the wonself. Heideggerian authenticity is the recognition that I am ontologically dual.

Has Dasein helped secure any clarity on the question of what "I" am? I can't say who I "am," if by "am" I mean "am determinately so." But this was never "me" to begin with. "I" am not "me." "I" can to some degree say that "me" is this being that I am as I write these words from this chair in this room on a Tuesday as my dog lies napping on the floor. But the "real" "me" who is actually writing is unaware of it. In the writing, "me" disappears. "I" write about writing. "I" cannot capture "me." There is just a happening. Something "happens": me. The moment I think about its happening, it is gone, appearing only modified as "I." I stop for a moment, go back, re-read the sentences, and it is as if they have materialized from nowhere. Who wrote them? "I" did, not "me." While I am public, "me" is private. Not even I know who "me" is, and yet this is a question "I" always attempt to answer. I/me am a being whose being is a question of whether I/me. This is what Heidegger's "fundamental ontology" is all about. Fundamental ontology means primordially fundamental, as in, coming before anything else, but it also names the ontology of foundations. Dasein has two foundations: the oneself and the wonself. Fundamental ontology concerns the perpetually shifting ground of Dasein's foundation. As primordially disclosed Being-in-the-world, Dasein discovers itself within an

already established hermeneutic situation. Thrownness is the very peculiar horizon by which I recognize the fact that "I" am hermeneutically founded. Taking up a founded mode – a "oneself" – is the way the "wonself" copes with the burden of "guilt," of being the null basis of its own nullity, which Dasein primordially is. I am founded on a me that its itself foundationless. Neither sea nor sand, my proper terrain is the boiling surf.

If I think about what "me" is, I can't call it a "subject." There is nothing "subjective" in it if by subjective we mean properties pertaining to a subject, things like personality, history and language, for example. "I" have those properties. "Me" does not. I can imagine all of these things being different from what they are without annihilating "me." "Me" would persist, and yet "I" would be different. Insofar as "me" accompanies every "I," it seems a priori, a condition of possibility and therefore the most "objective" kind of thing there is. But I can't call "me" an object; it obviously isn't any "thing." Furthermore, "me" isn't a priori if by this we mean temporally prior. In human life, one is an "I" well before one is a "me"; our cultural embeddedness precedes our self-awareness. Indeed, considered this way, it would seem that "I" is just as much a condition of possibility for "me" as it is the other way around. If "me" is the condition of possibility for "I," then without the actualization of those possibilities of "I" for which the "me" is a condition, the "me" has no sense whatsoever. In other words, a "condition of possibility" is a meaningless expression if it lacks actual content, i.e, possibilities become actual. The "I" is as constitutive for "me" as much as "me" is for "I." We cannot divorce the two. Indeed, we are the place where they meet, where I/me intimately commingle. This being we are, whose being is a question, is neither a subject nor an object, an immanence nor a transcendence, an interiority nor an exteriority. It *is* these things, but only when it is these things. When it is these things, it *is* there, when it is some other thing, it is there. It is *as* there.

It is a being-there. It is Da-sein. Heidegger's Dasein itself is unfounded, but Dasein's unfoundedness is established only in the foundedness of the actual existential possibilities open to Dasein in its thrownness. The Self underpins the I and the I the Self. Dasein's issue is: on which foundation does it rest? For the most part, Dasein rests in the everydayness of the I, but, like a child's small feet in the sand at the edge of the sea, great forces of nourishment and erosion are at work on it from all sides. Inevitably, its repose is broken, its delicate balance is disrupted, and it finds itself submerged, drowning, only to be picked up again and reassured. Again and again this happens. If I have learned anything, it is that the past the present and the future endlessly repeat the truth of this discovery.

Life does demand choices of us. We cannot persist in paradoxes. I did eventually choose between sailing and fatherhood. A year after I almost abandoned my wife and daughter and threw myself upon the sea, I returned to it. My hospitalization was behind me, and I was stable now. I would return to teaching in a month and a half. My life was getting back to normal. I stepped onto my sailboat and felt it bounce beneath me on the water. The wind was up, and the halyards clanged against the mast excitedly, like applause. I untied the lines and headed for the channel markers. I sailed alone for a week south until I caught sight of the deep blue of the ocean where it stands against the muddy brown waters of the Chesapeake. I sailed closer to this boundary until I was suddenly past it. Alone on the ocean, I walked forward to the bow and leaned out past the pulpit, the metal cage that secured me onboard, until I could see nothing but the endless blue horizon of ocean before me. I recalled a boy standing on the shore looking out to sea, him imaging a life other than the one he had, him raising his arms as if the wind itself would lift him from where he stood and take him away. A few minutes later, I was returning

northbound up the slow brown current of the Chesapeake and back to the dock. I was crying. I

was headed home to my wife and daughter, and everything was alright.

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