

## ENIGMA VARIATIONS: AN INTERPRETATION OF HEIDEGGER'S *SEIN UND ZEIT*

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### *Abstract*

There are two phrases in Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* that provide a clue to what is going on in that book: *Dasein ist geworfener Entwurf* and *Dasein existiert faktisch* (Dasein is thrown projection and Dasein exists factically).<sup>1</sup> I begin by trying to show how an interpretation of these phrases can help clarify Heidegger's philosophical claim about what it means to be human. I then try and explain why it is that, in a couple of important passages in *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger describes thrown projection as *an enigma (ein Rätsel)*. After considering the meaning and etymology of the word 'enigma', I trace its usage in *Sein und Zeit*, and try and show how and why the relations between Heidegger's central conceptual pairings – state-of-mind (*Befindlichkeit*) and understanding (*Verstehen*), thrownness and projection, facticity and existentiality – are described by Heidegger as enigmatic. My thesis is that at the heart of *Sein und Zeit*, that is, at the heart of the central claim of the Dasein-analytic as to the temporal character of thrown-projective being-in-the-world, there lies an *enigmatic apriori*. That is to say, there is something resiliently opaque at the basis of the constitution of Dasein's being-in-the-world which both resists phenomenological description and which, I shall claim, is that in virtue of which the phenomenologist describes. In the more critical part of the paper, I try and show precisely how this notion of the enigmatic apriori changes the basic experience of understanding *Sein und Zeit*. I explore this in relation to three examples from Division II: death, conscience and temporality. I try and read Heidegger's analyses of each of these concepts against the grain in order to bring into view much more resilient notions of facticity and thrownness that place in doubt the move to existentiality, projection and authenticity. The perspective I develop can be described as *originary inauthenticity*. As should become evident, such an interpretation of *Sein und Zeit* is not without political consequences.

<sup>1</sup> All references to *Sein und Zeit* are to the pagination of the 15<sup>th</sup> Edition (Niemeyer, Tübingen, 1984), which can be found in the margins of English translations of the text.

### A clue to understanding the basic experience of *Sein und Zeit*

There are two phrases that provide a clue to what is going on in *Sein und Zeit*: *Dasein ist geworfener Entwurf* and *Dasein existiert faktisch*. That is, Dasein – Heidegger's word for the human being – has a double, or articulated structure: it is at once thrown and the projection or throwing-off of thrownness. Yet it is a throwing off – which is how I hear the privative *Ent-* in *Ent-Wurf* – that remains *in* the throw. As Heidegger puts it, *Dasein bleibt im Wurf* (SuZ 179). Dasein is always sucked into the turbulence of its own projection. I imagine it is a little like driving a car without a wind-screen: the faster you drive, the greater the resistance. Dasein is the name of a recoiling movement that unfolds only to fold back on itself. Its existentiality, its projective being-ahead-of-itself, is determined through and through by facticity, it is always already thrown in a world, and in a world, moreover, ontically determined in terms of fallenness: the tranquillised bustle of *das Man* ('the one' or 'the they').

This movement of thrown throwing off or factual existence is the structure of *Sorge*, the care which defines the being of Dasein in *Sein und Zeit*. Heidegger summarizes the structure of care with enigmatic formulae, such as *Dasein ist befindliches Verstehen* ('Dasein is state-of-minded, or disposed understanding' SuZ 260); or again, *Jedes Verstehen hat seine Stimmung. Jede Befindlichkeit ist verstehend* ('Every understanding has its mood. Every state-of-mind or disposition understands' SuZ 335). The principal thesis of the published portion of *Sein und Zeit* is that the meaning of care, where meaning is defined as that upon which (*das Woraufhin* SuZ 324) the thrown throwing off of Dasein takes place, is temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*). Simply stated, the meaning of the being of *Dasein* is time. With the term temporality, Heidegger seeks to capture the passage from authentic to inauthentic time and back again. That is, the masterfulness of what Heidegger calls 'ecstatic' temporality, consummated in the notion of the *Augenblick* (moment of vision, or blink of the eye) always falls back into the passive awaiting (*Gewärtigen* – SuZ 337) of inauthentic time. Thrown projection or factual existing is ultimately the activity of Dasein's temporalizing, its *Zeitigung*, an articulated, recoiling movement, between sinking away in the dullness of the everyday and momentarily gaining mastery over the everyday by not choosing *das Man* as one's hero.

Once this structure begins to become clear in one's mind, then

it can also be seen that thrown projection or factual existing defines the concept of truth. For Heidegger, truth is also a double or articulated movement of concealment and unconcealment that he finds lodged in the Greek term *aletheia*. In Paragraph 44, the famous discussion of truth in *Sein und Zeit*, with an important emphasis that goes missing in the Macquarrie and Robinson translation, Heidegger writes,

Die existenzial-ontologische Bedingung dafür, daß das In-der-Welt-sein durch 'Wahrheit' und 'Unwahrheit' bestimmt ist, liegt in der Seinsverfassung des Daseins, die wir als *geworfenen Entwurf* kennzeichneten. (SuZ 223)

The existential-ontological condition for being-in-the-world being determined through 'truth' and 'untruth' lies in *the* (the italics, and hence the linguistic and conceptual force of the definite article is missing in Macquarrie and Robinson) constitution of the Being of Dasein that we have designated as *thrown projection*.

That is, the condition of possibility for the play of truth and untruth in *aletheia* is the claim for Dasein as thrown projection. In his later work, however, Heidegger always wants to read *Sein und Zeit* from the perspective of what he calls 'the history of being' (*Seinsgeschichte*) by claiming that the 'lethic' element in truth already implies an insight into *Seinsvergessenheit*, the forgetfulness or oblivion of being. Therefore although Heidegger will admit in his later work that *Sein und Zeit* expresses itself metaphysically, it already implies an insight into the history of being and thereby into what he calls 'the overcoming of metaphysics' (*die Überwindung der Metaphysik*). This is how – in a manner that I always find questionable because of the complete assurance with which Heidegger feels himself able to shape and control the interpretation of his work – Heidegger continually seeks to preserve the unity of what he calls his *Denkweg*, his path of thought. To use Heidegger's own idiom from a manuscript on nihilism from the late 1940's, we might say that the basic experience (*die Grunderfahrung*) of *Sein und Zeit* is this belonging together of facticity and existence, of thrownness and projection, of fallenness and surmounting. It remains a hypothesis to be confirmed or disconfirmed by future research as to whether this is the basic experience of Heidegger's work as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In this regard, see the interesting *Beilagen* to 'Das Wesen des Nihilismus', in *Metaphysik und Nihilismus*, Gesamtausgabe Vol.67 (Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M., 1999), pp. 259–67.

So, what is the structure of *Existenz* for Heidegger? What is the being of being human? It is care as a temporally articulated movement of thrown throwing off or factual existing. My concern in this paper consists in working out why Heidegger describes this structure as an enigma. Once the claim for Dasein as thrown projection is introduced in Paragraph 31 on *Verstehen* (SuZ 148), which is also where the word enigma makes its most significant entry into *Sein und Zeit*, then the rest of the book is simply the deepening or nuancing of this structure, like a leitmotif in Wagner, moving through a series of variations. Let's call them 'enigma variations', to use an English rather than a German example, Elgar rather than Wagner. What fascinates me in *Sein und Zeit* is what I would call the spinning or oscillating movement of these variations, where Heidegger tries to capture this enigma in a series of oxymoronic formulations: *Dasein existiert faktisch, Dasein ist Geworfener Entwurf, Dasein ist befindliche Verstehen, Jedes Verstehen hat seine Stimmung, Jede Befindlichkeit ist verstehend, 'Dasein ist in der Wahrheit' sagt gleichursprünglich. . . Dasein ist in der Unwahrheit*, etc. etc. ('Dasein is in the truth' simultaneously says. . . 'Dasein is in the untruth' – SuZ 222).

As I shall try and make clear presently, the thought which is spinning out or being spun out in *Sein und Zeit* is that of Dasein as the enigma of a temporal stretch, an almost rhythmical movement of factual existing that is so obvious, so absolutely and completely obvious, that it is quite obscure. As Wittgenstein notes, 'The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and everydayness (*Alltäglichkeit*). (One is unable to notice something – because it is always before one's eyes)'.<sup>3</sup>

### The etymology and meaning of enigma

I would now like to try and confront this enigma. First, I should define my terms and ask: what is an enigma? The meaning of the word 'enigma' has both perceptual and linguistic aspects. Perceptually, an enigma is something one cannot see through. It

See especially, p. 265–66, where Heidegger claims that the essence of nihilism in *Sein und Zeit* is located in the thought of *das Verfallen*, which is the condition of possibility for the surmounting (*Überstieg*) of that fallenness,

<sup>3</sup> Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Blackwell, Oxford, 1958), no. 129.

is *undurchsichtig*, obscure, opaque and not transparent. Linguistically, an enigma is a riddle, like that solved by Oedipus. In Greek, *ainigma* is a dark saying, from the verb *ainissomai*, to speak darkly or to riddle. The modern German *Rätsel* shares a common Germanic root with the English *riddle*, and stems from the Old German *rædan*, which survives in the modern German *Rat*, and *raten*, as well as being linked to the *Rede* of which Heidegger speaks in *Sein und Zeit*. A riddle is therefore etymologically linked to the notion of speech, specifically giving advice and counsel. But *Rätsel* is also linked with guessing something unknown, '*raten Sie, mal. . .*', 'guess how. . .', such as guessing the solution to a riddle. In English, riddle goes back to the Middle English *redels*, and interestingly, there is an etymological link between a riddle and reading, namely that a riddle is something that one has to learn to read in order to ascertain its meaning. In this sense, hermeneutics would be the reading of riddles. There is also the sense of a person being a riddle, of trying to read the riddle of oneself or another. As when Jonathan Swift writes that, 'I am still a riddle they know not what to make of'. Or when Goethe writes that,

. . . doch der Mensch, / der ganz besonnen solche that erwählt,  
/ er ist ein räthsel. doch – und bin ich nicht / mir auch ein räthsel,  
daz ich noch an dir / mit solcher neigung hänge.<sup>4</sup>

Now, the word *Rätsel* kept catching my eye when reading certain key passages from *Sein und Zeit*, so I decided to try and follow its usage systematically. Let me give you a little catalogue of the words enigma (*Rätsel*), enigmatic (*Rätselhaftig*) and enigmaticity (*Rätselhaftigkeit*). I have found at least ten places where these words are used in *Sein und Zeit* (SuZ 4, 136, 137, 148[x2], 371, 381, 387, 389, 392), and I will examine these in detail below. The word enigma also appears in Heidegger's later work, where it is often linked to the related notion of *Geheimnis*, the so-called mystery or secret of being. Heidegger talks about *das Rätsel der Kunst*, the riddle of art, in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' from 1936.<sup>5</sup> But the most detailed discussion of *Rätsel* that I know in Heidegger is

<sup>4</sup> See Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, Achter Band (Hirzel, Leipzig, 1893), pp. 194–95. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. XIII (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989). *Middle English Dictionary*, Part Q (University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1984). Eric Partridge, *Origins. A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* (Routledge, London, 1958).

<sup>5</sup> 'Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes', in *Holzwege*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M., 1980), p. 65.

given in his 1942 lecture course on '*Der Ister*'.<sup>6</sup> Here, as elsewhere, Heidegger wishes to preserve the enigmatic quality of Hölderlin's poetry and the enigma of the topic of that poetry, namely the river. He writes, '*Das Tun des Stromes ist ein Rätsel*' ('The activity of the river is a riddle', p. 22). We should not try and 'solve' this riddle, but, on the contrary, 'we should try the bring nearer the riddle as riddle' ('...*das Rätsel als Rätsel näher zu bringen*', p. 41). This leads Heidegger to ponder the etymology and meaning of *Rätsel*, which he uncouples from its everyday usage and links to the above-mentioned *Rat*. However, he explicitly avoids the usual meaning of the latter as offering advice or counsel, and makes an interesting connection between *Rat* and his key term *Sorge*, claiming that *Rätsel* is an insight into the hitherto concealed ground of care, the care into whose belonging all human beings should be brought (p. 40–41).

### The enigmatic apriori

Returning to *Sein und Zeit*, in the opening paragraph Heidegger writes that 'in jedem Verhalten und Sein zu Seiendem als Seiendem a priori ein Rätsel liegt'. (SuZ 4) That is, in every comporting oneself to beings, or intentional relation to things, there lies an *apriori* enigma. This claim already begins to strike a rather dissonant note with the formulation of the phenomenological notion of the *apriori* in the first draft of *Sein und Zeit* in the 1925 *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs* that I discuss in detail elsewhere, where the *apriori* is that which shows itself in what Husserl calls 'categorical intuition'.<sup>7</sup> It would seem that the intentional comportment of the phenomenologist directs itself towards, and itself arises out of, something that eludes phenomenological manifestation. This 'something' is what I call the *enigmatic apriori*.

However, the form that this enigmatic apriori takes in *Sein und Zeit* becomes much more striking in Paragraphs 29 and 31, on *Stimmung*, *Befindlichkeit* and *Verstehen*. Heidegger writes that *Stimmung*, mood, brings Dasein to 'the That of its There' ('*das Daß seines Da*') in a way that stares back at it with an inexorable enigmaticity ('*in unerbittlicher Rätselhaftheit entgegenstarrt*' SuZ

<sup>6</sup> Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister'* (Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M., 1984). Subsequent page references given in the text.

<sup>7</sup> See 'Heidegger for Beginners', in *Appropriating Heidegger*, eds. J. Faulconer & M. Wrathall (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000), pp. 101–118.

136). Let me clarify this point. Heidegger's initial claim in *Sein und Zeit* is that Dasein is the being for whom being is an issue. In Division I, Chapter 5, the claim is that the being which is an issue for Dasein is the being of its 'there', the disclosure of its *Da*. (SuZ 133) Thus, Dasein is fundamentally characterized by the capacity for disclosure (*Erschlossenheit*). Or, better, Dasein itself is the clearing that discloses, '...es selbst die Lichtung ist. ...das Dasein ist seine Erschlossenheit.' (SuZ 133). As Tom Sheehan points out, this is what Jean Beaufret had in mind in translating Dasein as *l'ouverture*, which we might render as 'the openness' to convey the idea that Dasein is always already the space of its disclosure.<sup>8</sup>

Heidegger's claim in Paragraph 29 is that the way in which Dasein is its 'there' is caught with the notion of *Befindlichkeit*, namely that Dasein is disclosed as already having found oneself somewhere: 'And how did you find yourself this morning?', 'Well, I just rolled back the sheets and there I was'. The means of disclosure for this *Befindlichkeit* is *Stimmung*; namely, that I always find myself in some sort of mood: I am attentive, distracted, indifferent, anxious, bored or whatever. Therefore, Dasein's primary form of disclosure is affective, and this affective disclosure reveals Dasein as *thrown* or delivered over to its existence, its 'there'. Therefore, what stares inexorably in the face of Dasein is the enigma of its thrownness, the fact that I am, and that I am disclosed somewhere in a particular mood. This fact is like a riddle that I can see but cannot solve.

This can be expressed less technically with reference to a story related by Frank Cioffi:

One afternoon – I was about five or six – we had returned from Kensington Gardens and were waiting outside the door of the flat to be let in. After the park and the street the interior of the building seemed very silent. A long beam of sunlight, in which small particles of dust swam about, all at once slanted through an upper window on the staircase and struck the opaque glass panels of the door. On several occasions recently I had been conscious of approaching the brink of some discovery, an awareness that nearly became manifest and suddenly withdrew. Now the truth came flooding in with the dust-infected sunlight:

<sup>8</sup> See Sheehan, 'Kehre and Ereignis. A Prolegomenon to *Introduction to Metaphysics*', unpublished typescript. Jean Beaufret, *Entretiens avec Frédéric de Towarnicki* (PUF, Paris, 1992), pp. 17, 26 & 28.

the revelation of self-identity was inescapable. There was no doubt about it – I was me.<sup>9</sup>

This is a powerful description of the dawning of the self in childhood, but the self that dawns is utterly enigmatic. It is something that I can see, but not see through; it is *sichtig* but not *durchsichtig*. I am me, that's a fact, but the meaning of that fact is as opaque to me as the glass panels on the door in the above passage. This can be linked to another partial appearance of the enigmatic in Paragraph 31, although the word *Rätsel* is not itself used. Heidegger claims that every mode of Dasein's intentional relating to things has a corresponding mode of sight, whether the *Umsicht* (circumspection) of worldly concern, or the *Rücksicht* (considerateness) and *Nachsicht* (forbearance) of Dasein's relations to others. In Paragraph 31, he claims that the projective sight of understanding is 'transparency' (*Durchsichtigkeit*) or see-through-ability. (SuZ 146) Now, an enigma is something fundamentally defined by *Undurchsichtigkeit*, non-see-through-ability. It is something by definition opaque, like the self revealed to me in the dust-inflected sunlight.

Perhaps the most thought-provoking usage of enigma in *Sein und Zeit* occurs just a little further on in the text, at the end of Paragraph 31, where Heidegger summarizes the discussion of *Befindlichkeit* and *Verstehen* by introducing the idea of Dasein as thrown projection in a series of sentences that enact the very enigma that is being described:

Befindlichkeit und Verstehen charakterisieren als Existenzialen die ursprüngliche Erschlossenheit des In-der-Welt-seins. In der Weise der Gestimmtheit 'sieht' das Dasein Möglichkeiten aus denen her es ist. Im entwerfenden Erschließen solcher Möglichkeiten ist es je schon gestimmt. Der Entwurf der eigensten Seinkönnens ist dem Faktum der Geworfenheit in das Da überantwortet. Wird mit der Explikation der existenzialen Verfassung des Seins des Da im Sinne des geworfenen Entwurfs das Sein des Daseins nicht rätselhafter? In der Tat. Wir müssen erst die volle Rätselhaftigkeit dieses Seins heraustreten lassen, wenn auch nur, um an seiner 'Lösung' in echter Weise scheitern zu können und die Frage nach dem Sein des geworfenen-entwerfenden In-der-Welt-seins erneut zu stellen (SuZ 148).

<sup>9</sup> Frank Cioffi, *Wittgenstein on Freud and Frazer* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998), p. 243.



Let me closely paraphrase rather than translate this passage, as the precision of Heidegger's conceptual expression is difficult to render literally. The first sentence simply summarizes the conclusions of the opening Paragraphs of Chapter 5, namely that the disclosedness of being-in-the-world is constituted through the existentials of *Befindlichkeit* and *Verstehen*. Let's call them (B) and (V). But the following three sentences enact this conclusion in the form of a series of conceptually palindromic statements:

1. In its being-attuned in a mood (B), Dasein 'sees' possibilities (V).
2. In the projective disclosure of such possibilities (V), Dasein is already attuned in a mood (B).
3. Therefore, the projection of Dasein's ownmost potentiality-for-being (V) is delivered over to the *Faktum* of thrownness into a there (B).

Enigmatic indeed! But, Heidegger insists, the full enigmaticity (*Rätselhaftigkeit*) of this enigma must be allowed to emerge, even if this all comes to naught, founders, is wrecked, or shatters into smithereens, which are various connotations of the phrase '*scheitern zu können*'. So although Heidegger adds that out of such a wreckage might come a new formulation ('*erneut zu stellen*') of the question of thrown-projective being-in-the-world, the disruptive force of the enigma is such as to lead to a breakdown over any phenomenological 'solution' (*Lösung*) to the riddle of Dasein.

Turning now to Division II of *Sein und Zeit*, the word enigma appears on the final page of the chapter 4, 'Temporality and Everydayness', and four times in Chapter 5, 'Temporality and Historicity'. In the latter, Heidegger introduces the word enigma in order to emphasize the enigmatic quality of the movement of historicizing, to which I will turn presently (SuZ 389, 392). Let me look, then, at the other appearance of enigma, which occurs just after the temporal *Wiederholung* or recapitulation of the analytic of inauthenticity. Heidegger says that Dasein can for a moment – '*für den Augenblick*' – master the everyday, but never extinguish it (*den Alltag meistern, obzwar nie auslöschen*). He continues,

Was in der faktischen Ausgelegtheit des Daseins *ontisch* so bekannt ist, daß wir dessen nicht einmal achten, birgt existenzial-ontologisch Rätsel über Rätsel in sich. Der 'natürliche'

Horizont für den ersten Ansatz der existentialen Analytik des Daseins ist *nur scheinbar selbstverständlich* (SuZ 371).

What is ontically so familiar in the factual interpretedness of Dasein that we never pay any heed to it, conceals enigma after enigma in itself existential-ontologically. The 'natural' horizon for the first starting point of the existential analytic is *only seemingly self-evident*.

That is to say, the existential analytic renders enigmatic the everyday ontic fundament of life, what Husserl calls the natural attitude, what Plato calls the realm of *doxa*. But, and this is crucial, Heidegger does not say that the existential analytic overcomes or permanently brackets out the natural attitude of ontic life, it does not achieve some permanent breakout from the Platonic cave.<sup>10</sup> Rather, as Heidegger points out a few lines prior to the above-cited passage, 'Die Alltäglichkeit bestimmt das Dasein auch dann, wenn es sich nicht das Man als "Helden" gewählt hat.' (SuZ 371) That is, even when I have not chosen *das Man* as my hero, when I choose to become authentically who I am, the everyday is not extinguished, it is rather rendered enigmatic or uncanny. That which is ontically so familiar hides enigma after enigma ontologically. The existential analytic of Dasein seems to return ceaselessly to the enigma from which it begins, an enigma which, in Heidegger's words, shatters the seeming self-evidence of any natural attitude from which phenomenology might begin in order to force the philosopher to formulate anew the question of being-in-the-world. That is, Heidegger transforms the beginning point of phenomenology, from the self-evidence of the natural attitude to the enigma of a *Faktum*, the fact *that* one is, the 'it was me'. Philosophy begins with the riddle of the completely obvious.

So, my thesis is that at the heart of *Sein und Zeit*, that is, at the heart of the central claim of the Dasein-analytic as to the temporal character of thrown-projective being-in-the-world, there lies an enigmatic *apriori*, a fundamental opacity that both resists phenomenological description and is that in virtue of which the phenomenologist describes. As such, in Kantian terms, we might

<sup>10</sup> This phrase is Rüdiger Safranski's, which he uses to describe the undoubted Platonism of Heidegger's political commitment in 1933. See *Ein Meister aus Deutschland. Heidegger und seine Zeit* (Hanser, Munich, 1994). On the question of the enigma of the everyday in Heidegger see Michel Haar, 'L'enigme de la quotidienneté', in *Être et Temps de Martin Heidegger. Questions de méthode et voies de recherche*, eds. J-P. Cometti & D. Janicaud (Sud, Marseille, 1989), pp. 213–25.

say that the enigmatic *apriori* is not only transcendently constitutive, it is also regulative. It is not only descriptive, or rather a limit to the activity of phenomenological description, but also normative, functioning like an imperative in the philosophical analysis of being-in-the-world. Philosophy must attempt to be equal to the enigma of our being-in-the-world, whilst knowing all the time that it cannot. My question will now be: what does this fact entail for our reading of *Sein und Zeit*?

### **How the enigmatic *apriori* changes the basic experience of *Sein und Zeit***

Heidegger defines 'phenomenon' as *was sich zeigt*, and the phenomena that show themselves in *Sein und Zeit* are not empirical facts, but rather the *apriori* structures of Dasein's being-in-the-world – the existentials (SuZ 31). However, if a phenomenon is what shows itself, then an enigma by definition is what does not show itself. It is like a mirror in which all we see is our reflection scratching its chin in perplexity. An enigma is something we see, but do not see through. We might therefore, at the very least, wonder why the vast and sometimes cumbersome machinery of Heidegger's phenomenological apparatus should bring us face to face with an *apriori* enigma, with a riddle that we cannot solve. We might be even further perplexed that the riddle here is nothing particularly complex or demanding, like the final insoluble clue in a tricky crossword puzzle. No, the riddle here is that of absolute obviousness, the sheer facticity of what is under our noses, the everyday in all its palpable plainness and banality. Yet, it is this riddling quality of the obvious as the very business of phenomenology, its unstable limit and intractable *Sache*, that interests me here.

I began by saying that there are two formulae that provide a clue to understanding what takes place in *Sein und Zeit*: *Dasein existiert faktisch* and *Dasein ist geworfener Entwurf*. Ultimately, I would like to modify (*Modifikation* is an absolutely key word in *Sein und Zeit*, see for example SuZ 130) the way we hear the formulations, 'thrown projection' or 'factual existing', by placing the emphasis on the *thrown* and the *factual* rather than on projection and existence. That is, Dasein is fundamentally a *thrown* throwing off, a *factual* existing. It should be noted that what is continually appealed to in Heidegger, in *Sein und Zeit* and even more so in the later work, is a change in our capacity for hearing, that is, whether

we *hinhören auf* or listen away to *das Man*, or whether we *hören auf* or hear the appeal that Dasein makes to itself. (SuZ 271) It is my hope that a change in the way we hear these key formulae will produce what Wittgenstein would call aspect change in the way we understand the project of fundamental ontology.

I will begin to spell out this aspect change presently, but it should first be asked: why is it necessary? It is necessary, in my view, in order to move our understanding of *Sein und Zeit* away from the heroic political pathos of authenticity, consummated in the discussions of fate and destiny in the infamous Paragraph 74 on 'The Basic Constitution of Historicity'. As Karl Löwith was the first to learn when he met with Heidegger in Rome and Frascati in 1936, although he has subsequently been followed by other scholars, the concept of *historicity* (*Geschichtlichkeit*) is the link between fundamental ontology and Heidegger's political commitment to National Socialism in 1933.<sup>11</sup> Let me try and briefly restate the argument as *prima facie* the connection between historicity and politics will be far from obvious for many readers.

Dasein's authentic anticipation of its death is called 'fate' (*Schicksal*) by Heidegger and this is designated as the originary historicizing (*Geschehen*) of Dasein (SuZ 384). Heidegger's claim in Division II, Chapter 5, is that the condition of possibility for any authentic understanding of history lies in Dasein's historicity, which means the self-understanding of the temporal character of being human, i.e. finitude. So, to repeat: the meaning of the Being of Dasein is temporality, and the meaning of temporality is finitude (SuZ 331). Dasein's authentic self-understanding of finitude is 'fate', and this originary historicizing is the condition of possibility for any authentic relation to history, by which Heidegger means 'world historical historicizing' (SuZ 19). It is clear that political events, such as revolutions or general social transformations, would qualify as world historical events for Heidegger.

Now, it was established in Division I, Chapter 4, that Dasein is

<sup>11</sup> See Löwith's essay in *The Heidegger Controversy*, ed. R. Wolin (MIT, Cambridge Mass., 1993). To my mind, the systematic connection between fundamental ontology and national socialism was convincingly established by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe in his 'Transcendence Ends in Politics', *Typography* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass., 1989) and also at greater length in his *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, trans. C. Turner (Blackwell, Oxford, 1990). The same argument has been stated much more polemically and in extraordinary scholarly detail by Johannes Fritzsche in *Historical Destiny and National Socialism in Heidegger's Being and Time* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1999). About the discussion of historicity, Fritzsche claims, '... Section 74 of Heidegger's *Being and Time* is as brilliant a summary of revolutionary rightist politics as one could wish for'. (p. xii)

always already *Mitsein*. That is, the *apriori* condition of being-in-the-world is being together with others in that world. As is well known, the everyday, social actuality of this *apriori* condition of *Mitsein* is called *das Man* by Heidegger, and this is determined as inauthentic because in such everyday experience Dasein is not truly itself, but is, as it were, lived through by the customs and conventions of the existing social world. Now, returning more closely to the argument of Paragraph 74, if fateful, authentic Dasein is always already *Mitsein*, then such historicizing has to be what Heidegger calls co-historicizing (*Mitgeschehen* – SuZ 384). An authentic individual life, Heidegger would seem to be suggesting, cannot be lead in isolation and opposition to the shared life of the community. The question therefore arises: what is the *authentic* mode of being together with others? What is an authentic *Mitdasein* that escapes or masters the inauthenticity of *das Man*? Heidegger writes, fatefully in my view, ‘*Wenn aber das schicksalhafte Dasein als In-der-Welt-sein wesentlich im Mitsein mit Anderen existiert, ist sein Geschehen ein Mitgeschehen und bestimmt als **Geschick***’ (‘But if fateful Dasein as being-in-the-world essentially exists in being-with others, its historicizing is a co-historicizing and is determined as *destiny*’). So, destiny is the authentic historicizing that I share with others insofar as my individual fate is always already bound up with the collective destiny of the community to which I belong. Heidegger goes on, ‘*Im Miteinandersein in derselben Welt und in der Entschlossenheit für bestimmte Möglichkeiten sind die Schicksale im vornhinein schon geleitet. In der Mitteilung und im Kampf wird die Macht des Geschickes erst frei*’. (‘The fates are already guided from the front in the being-with-one-another in the same world and in the resoluteness for determinate possibilities. The power of destiny first becomes free in communication and struggle.’ – SuZ 384). So, the fates of authentic, individual Daseins are ‘guided from the front’ by the destiny of the collective, a destiny that first becomes free for itself or self-conscious in the activity of communication and struggle. Obviously, the word *Kampf* has acquired some rather unfortunate political connotations between the period that saw the publication of *Sein und Zeit* and the present. But that is not the worst of it. Heidegger completes this run of thought with the following words, ‘*Damit bezeichnen wir das Geschehen der Gemeinschaft, des Volkes*’ (‘In this way, we designate the historicizing of the community, of the people’ – SuZ 384). So, the authentic communal mode of *Mitsein* that masters the inauthenticity of *das Man* is *das Volk*, the people. In my view, it is the possible political

realization of a resolute and authentic *Volk* in opposition to the inauthentic nihilism of social modernity that Heidegger identified as 'the inner truth and greatness' ('*der inneren Wahrheit und Größe*') of National Socialism just a few years later in *Einführung in die Metaphysik* in 1935. Despite the utter disaster of Nazi Germany, Heidegger – to the understandable consternation of the young Habermas writing on Heidegger in his first published essay – stubbornly refused to revise his judgement on 'the inner truth and greatness' when the 1935 lectures were published in 1953.<sup>12</sup>

There is, I believe, a systematic philosophical basis to Heidegger's political commitment, which is due to the specific way in which Heidegger develops the concept of authenticity in Division II of *Sein und Zeit* and which culminates in the concept of *das Volk*. That is, the only way in which Heidegger can conceive of an authentic mode of human being-together or community, is in terms of the unity of a specific people, a particular nation, and it is the political expression of this possibility that Heidegger saw in National Socialism in 1933. In other words, as Hannah Arendt obliquely implied throughout her work, Heidegger is incapable of thinking the *plurality* of human being-together as a positive political possibility. Plurality is determined negatively by Heidegger as *das Man*. In my view, the urgent task of Heidegger interpretation – provided one is not a Nazi and provided one is still in the business of thinking, as I do, that Heidegger is a great philosopher – is to try and defuse the systematic link between Heidegger's philosophy and his politics. I will try and defuse this link by developing the notion of what I call *originary inauthenticity*, a possibility of interpretation that is available, if somewhat latent, in *Sein und Zeit*.

Let me try and explain myself. The thought behind the notion of originary inauthenticity is that human existence is fundamentally shaped in relation to a brute facticity or thrownness which cannot be mastered through any existential projection. Authenticity always slips back into a prior inauthenticity from which it cannot escape but which it would like to evade. From the perspective of originary inauthenticity, human existence is something that is first and foremost experienced as a burden, a weight, as something to which I am riveted without being able to know why

<sup>12</sup> See Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Niemeyer, Tübingen, 1953), p. 152; and Habermas, 'Mit Heidegger gegen Heidegger denken. Zur Veröffentlichung von Vorlesungen aus dem Jahre 1935', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25<sup>th</sup> July 1953, pp. 67–75.

or know further. Inauthentic existence has the character of an irreducible and intractable *thatness*, what Heidegger called above '*das Daß seines Da*'. I feel myself bound to 'the that of my there', the sheer *Faktum* of my facticity, in a way that invites some sort of response.

Now, and this is where my proposed aspect change begins to kick in, the nature of this response will not, as it is in Division II of *Sein und Zeit*, be the authentic decision of existence that comes into the simplicity of its *Schicksal* by shattering itself against death (SuZ 385). It will not be the heroic mastery of the everyday in the authentic present of what Heidegger calls the *Augenblick* (the moment of vision), which produces an experience of ecstasy (*Ekstase*) and rapture (*Entrückung*) (SuZ 338). No, the response to the *Faktum* of my finitude is a more passive and less heroic decision, a decision made in the face of a facticity whose demand can never be mastered and which faces me like a riddle that I cannot solve. As I show elsewhere, such a fact calls for comic acknowledgment rather than ecstatic affirmation.<sup>13</sup>

Dasein is, as Heidegger writes in his extraordinary discussion of guilt, a thrown basis (*ein geworfene Grund*). As this basis, Dasein continually lags behind itself, 'Being a basis (*Grund-seiend*), that is to say existing as thrown (*als geworfenes existierend* – another of Heidegger's enigmatic formulae), Dasein constantly lags behind its possibilities' (SuZ 284). In the light of these remarks, we might say that the self is not so much the ecstasy of a heroic leap energized by the experience of anxiety and being-towards-death, as much as a delay with respect to oneself that is perhaps best expressed in the experience of languor or fatigue. Oblomov answers Nietzsche *avant la lettre* by simply refusing to get out of bed. I project or throw off a thrownness that catches me in its throw and inverts the movement of possibility. As such, the present continually lags behind itself. I am always too late to meet my fate.<sup>14</sup> I think this is what Heidegger might have in mind when he writes of bringing us face to face with, 'the ontological enigma of the movement of historicizing in general' (SuZ 389).

It is my hope that if one follows my proposed aspect change from a heroics of authenticity to an originary inauthenticity then a good deal changes in how one views the project of *Sein und Zeit*

<sup>13</sup> See my *On Humour* (Routledge, London, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> This line of thought is suggested by Jean-François Lyotard's remarkable posthumously published text, *The Confession of Augustine* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2000), pp. 55–57 & 70–74.

and in particular its political consequences. My main point is that both aspects are available to an attentive reading and this is why the young Habermas was right in suggesting that it is necessary to think both with Heidegger and against Heidegger. However, such a reading is a huge task that will have to be postponed to the future. In the remainder of this paper, I would just like to sketch how we might begin this task by briefly examining three central concepts from Division II: death, conscience and temporality.

### Originary inauthenticity I : death

First, I think that the notion of originary inauthenticity places in question what Heidegger sees as the non-relational character of the experience of finitude in the death-analysis in Division II, Chapter 1. You will recall that there are four criteria in Heidegger's full existential-ontological conception of death. It is *unbezüglich*, *gewiß*, *unbestimmt* and *unüberholbar*: non-relational, certain, indefinite and not to be outstripped. It is only the first of these criteria that I would take issue with, as the other three are true, if banal. However, if the first of the criteria falls, then the whole picture changes.

Heidegger insists on the non-relational character of death because for him, crucially, '*der Tod ontologisch durch Jemeinigkeit und Existenz konstituiert wird*' ('Death is ontologically constituted through mineness and existence' – SuZ 240). Therefore, dying for an other (*sterben für*) would simply be to sacrifice oneself (*sich opfern*) for an other, or to substitute (*ersetzen* – SuZ 239) myself for another.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the fundamental experience of finitude is non-relational, and all relationality is rendered secondary because of the primacy of *Jemeinigkeit*.

Now, I just think this is wrong. It is wrong empirically and normatively. I would want to oppose it with the thought of the *fundamentally relational character of finitude*, namely that death is first and foremost experienced in a relation to the death or dying of the other and others, in being-with the dying in a caring way, and in grieving after they are dead. Yet, such relationality is not a

<sup>15</sup> Levinas responds directly to this passage in a remarkably sane and measured paper given at the hysterical height of the Heidegger affair in Paris in 1987, 'Mourir pour. . .', which translates Heidegger's 'Sterben für', in *Heidegger. Questions ouvertes* (Osiris, Paris, 1988), pp. 255–64. The theme of enigma is obviously central to Levinas work, in particular his 1965 essay 'Enigma and Phenomenon', in *Emmanuel Levinas. Basic Philosophical Writings*, eds. Peperzak et al. (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1996), pp. 65–77.



relation of comprehension, the other's dying is not like placing an intuition under a concept. It is rather a non-subsumptive relation, in Kantian terms a reflective and not a determinate judgment. In other words, the experience of finitude opens up in relation to a brute *Faktum* that escapes my understanding or what Stanley Cavell's Wittgenstein would see as being beyond the reach of my criteria.

Deliberately twisting Heidegger's words, I would say that the fundamental experience of finitude is rather like being a student of pathological anatomy where the dead other 'ist ein *lebloses materielles Ding*' ('a *lifeless* material thing' – SuZ 238). With all the terrible lucidity of grief, one watches the person one loves – parent, partner or child – die and become a lifeless material thing. That is, there is a thing – a corpse – at the heart of the experience of finitude. This is why I mourn. Antigone understood this well, it seems to me, staring at the lifeless material thing of her dead brother and demanding justice. Authentic Dasein cannot mourn. One might even say that authenticity is constituted by making the act of mourning secondary to Dasein's *Jemeinigkeit*. Heidegger writes, shockingly in my view, 'We do not experience the death of others in a genuine sense; at most we are just 'there alongside' (*nur 'dabei'*)' (SuZ 239).

A final thought here: if death and finitude are fundamentally relational, that is, if they are constituted in a relation to a lifeless material thing whom I love and this thing casts a long mournful shadow across the self, then this would also lead me to question a distinction that is fundamental to Heidegger's death-analysis. Heidegger makes the following threefold distinction:

1. dying, *Sterben*, which is proper to Dasein; which is the very mark of Dasein's ownness and its possibility of authenticity;
2. perishing, *Verenden*, which is confined to plants and animals; and
3. demise, *Ableben*, which Heidegger calls a *Zwischenphänomen* between these two extremes, and which characterises the inauthentic death of Dasein (SuZ 247).

Now, although one cannot be certain whether animals simply perish – 'if a lion could talk, we could not understand him' – I have my doubts, particularly when one thinks of domestic pets and higher mammals. Thus, I think one should at the very least leave open the possibility that certain animals die, that they undergo *Sterben* and not just *Verenden*. I also doubt whether

human beings are incapable of perishing, of dying like a dog, as Kafka's fiction insistently reminds us. And what of those persons who die at the end of a mentally debilitating disease, or who die whilst being in what is termed 'a permanently vegetative state'? Do they cease to be human on Heidegger's account? I see no other option. But, more importantly, if finitude is fundamentally relational, that is, if it is by definition a relation to the *Faktum* of an other who exceeds my powers of projection, then *the only authentic death is inauthentic*. That is, on my account, an authentic relation to death is not constituted through mineness, but rather through otherness. Death enters the world for me not through my own *timor mortis*, but rather through my relation to the other's dying, perhaps even through my relation to the other's fear, which I try to assuage as best I can. It is this notion of an essentially inauthentic relation to death that both Blanchot and Levinas have in mind when reversing Heidegger's dictum that 'death is the possibility of impossibility' into 'death is the impossibility of possibility' (SuZ 262). I have power neither over the other's death nor my own. Death is not a possibility of Dasein, but rather describes an empirical and normative limit to all possibility and to my fateful powers of projection. My relation to finitude limits my ability to be (*Seinkönnen*).

### Originary inauthenticity II : conscience

Once this relational picture of finitude is in place, then the picture of conscience would also have to change significantly. I have come to think – through an experience of teaching and against some long-held prejudices about Division II – that the discussion of conscience is potentially the most explosive and interesting part of *Sein und Zeit*, and we have already had occasion to discuss certain passages above. Of course, the analysis of conscience follows on logically from the death analysis, being the concrete ontic-existential testimony or attestation (*Zeugnis* SuZ 267) for the formal ontologico-existential claim about death. Death is ontological, conscience is ontic. Indeed, the word testimony might detain us more than it has done in the reading of *Sein und Zeit*. Testimony evokes both a notion of witnessing as testifying to something or someone, and also expresses a link to evidence and verification, where Heidegger is seeking in conscience the concrete ontic evidence for the formal ontological claim about death, a question which resolves

itself relativistically in the key concept of 'Situation' (SuZ 299–300).

My point here is simple: if death is non-relational for Heidegger, then also *a fortiori* conscience is non-relational. Heidegger writes, in italics, '*In conscience Dasein calls itself*' ('*Das Dasein ruft im Gewissen sich selbst*' – SuZ 275). That is, although in conscience it is as if the call of conscience were an alien voice (*eine fremde Stimme* – SuZ 277) that comes *über mich*, such a call, although it is not planned, really comes *aus mir*. As Heidegger insists in differentiating his concept of conscience from the 'vulgar' one, what is attested to in conscience is Dasein's ownmost or most proper ability to be (*eigensten Seinkönnen* – SuZ 295). Authentic Dasein calls to itself in conscience, and it does this not in the mode of chattering to itself, but rather in discretion (*Verschwiegenheit*) and silence (*Schweigen*). This behaviour is what Heidegger calls resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*), which is then defined as the '*authentic Selfhood*' of Dasein (SuZ 298). Heidegger completes this train of thought in a slightly troubling fashion by claiming that when Dasein has authentically individuated itself in conscience, '...it can become the "conscience" of others (*zum "Gewissen" der Anderen werden*). Only by authentically being-their-selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another. . .' (SuZ 298).

This brings me to my question: is conscience non-relational? It would seem to me that Freud, and I am thinking of the essay on Narcissism (1914) and 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1915), would have one or two interesting things to say here.<sup>16</sup> The Freudian thought I would like to retain is that of conscience as the imprint, interior mark, or agency, for a series of transference relations to the other: ego ideal, paternal super-ego, maternal imago, or whatever. Conscience is the *Über-Ich* that stands *über mich*. It is fundamentally relational. Furthermore, it is this place that the analyst has to occupy if the analysis is going to work. Conceived in this way, the appeal made by conscience would not be Dasein calling to itself or even the voice of the friend that every Dasein carries within it (SuZ 163). If that were so, then Dasein would have to be its own best friend, which is a rather solipsistic, indeed sad, state of affairs. Even worse, I would want to avoid the suggestion that I can become the conscience of others in some sort of presumptuous and potentially dominating way.

<sup>16</sup> See Volume 11 of the Penguin Freud, *On Metapsychology* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1984).

On my picture, conscience would be the ontic testimony of a certain splitting of the self in relation to a *Faktum* that it cannot assimilate, the lifeless material thing that the self carries within itself and which denies it from being fully itself. It is this failure of autarky that makes the self relational. The call of conscience is a voice within me whose source is not myself, but is the other's voice that calls me to responsibility. In other words, ethical relationality is only achieved by being inauthentic, that is, in recognizing that I am not the conscience of others, but rather that it is those others who call me to have a conscience.

It would here be a question of reading Freud's concept of narcissism, as a splitting of the self into conflictual agencies (the division of ego, super-ego, and id in the second topography) back into *Sein und Zeit*. If authentic Dasein cannot mourn, because its fundamental relation to finitude is a self-relation, then I think this is because, to put it in psychoanalytic terms, it has not effected the relationality of the transference. Transference is a relation to an other whom I face, but whom I cannot completely know, whom my criteria cannot reach. Such a relation is described by Levinas with the adjective 'ethical'. Of course, *Mitsein* is being-with-another, but it is standing shoulder-to-shoulder with those others in what Heidegger calls in one passage '*eigentliche Verbundenheit*' ('*authentic alliance or being-bound-together*' – SuZ 122). Such alliance might well be said to be the camaraderie that induces the political virtue of solidarity, but it is not a face-to-face relation and as such, in my view, is ethically impoverished. I sometimes think that *Mitsein* is a little like being in church, it is a congregational 'being-together-with-others' where we vibrate together as one body in song and prayer. Pleasant as it doubtless must be, such is not the only way of being with others.

### Originary inauthenticity III : temporality

If we begin to hear thrown projection as *thrown* projection, and factual existence as *factual* existence, then I think Heidegger's claims about temporality – the very meaning of being – would also have to be revised, away from the primacy of the future and towards the primacy of the past. To recall, Heidegger's claim in his discussion of temporality is that there are three 'ecstases' of time: the future (*Zukunft*) that is revealed in the anticipation of death, the past or 'having-been-ness' (*Gewesenheit*) that is opened in the notion of guilt and resoluteness, and the present

or 'waiting-towards' (*Gegen-wart*) that is grasped in the moment of vision (*Augenblick*), or taking action in the Situation. The claim is that Dasein is the movement of this temporalization, and that this movement is finitude: '*Die ursprüngliche Zeit ist endlich*' ('Primordial time is finite' – SuZ 331).

Now, although Heidegger insists that the structure of ecstatic temporality possesses a unity, the primary meaning of temporality is the future (SuZ 327). As Heidegger writes, '*Zeitlichkeit zeitigt sich ursprünglich aus der Zukunft*' ('Temporality temporalizes itself primordially out of the future' – SuZ 331). That is, it is the anticipatory experience of being-towards-death that makes possible the *Gewesenheit* of the past and the *Augenblick* of the present. For Heidegger, the *Augenblick* is the authentic present which is consummated in a vision of resolute rapture (*Entrückung* – SuZ 338), where Dasein is literally carried away (*ent-rückt*) in an experience of ecstasy.

Rapture is a word that worries me, not the least for the way in which *raptus* seems like a plundering of the past, some sort of rape of memory. To hear the thrownness in the throwing off, and the facticity in existence would, I think, establish the primacy of the past over the future. This past is one's rather messy, indeed often opaque, personal and cultural history.<sup>17</sup> In my view, it is this personal and cultural thrownness that pulls me back from any rapture of the present into a lag that I can never make up and which I can only assemble into a *fate* on the basis of a delusory relation to history, and into a *destiny* on the basis of a congregational interpretation of that delusion.

On the contrary, from the perspective developed in this paper, the unfolding future always folds back into the experience of an irredeemable past, a past that constitutes the present as having a delay with respect to itself. Now is not the now when I say 'now'. My relation to the present is one where I am always trying – and failing – to catch up with myself. As such, then, I do not rise up rapturously or affirmatively into time, becoming as Nietzsche exclaimed on the verge of madness, 'all the names in history'. No, I wait, I await. Time passes. For Heidegger, this is the passive awaiting (*Gewärtigen*) of inauthentic time. Of course, this makes me fatigued, sleepy even. As such, in my fatigue, the river of time begins to flow backwards, away from the future and the resolute

<sup>17</sup> On this topic, see Paul Ricoeur, 'La marque du passé', *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, Janvier-Mars 1998, No. 1.

rapture of the present, and towards a past that I can never make present, but which I dramatize involuntarily in the life of dreams. True, I can always interpret my dreams or, better, get another to interpret them for me. But what Freud calls the navel of the dream, its source, its facticity, always escapes me, like an enigma.

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