

The Problem of *das Man*—A Simmelian Solution

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ABSTRACT Current interpretations of Heidegger's notion of *das Man* are caught in a dilemma: either they cannot accommodate the ontological status Heidegger accords it or they cannot explain his negative evaluation of it, in which it is treated as ontic. This paper uses Simmel's agonistic account of human sociality to integrate the ontological and the ontic, indeed perjorative aspects of Heidegger's account. Section I introduces the general problem, breaks the exclusive link of Heidegger's account to Kierkegaard and delineates the general form of a solution. Section II then sketches Simmel's conception of sociology and sociality. Section III determines what Heidegger is trying to do in Ch.4 of Division I in *Being and Time* in order to formulate a strictly ontological account of *das Man*. Section IV uses Simmel's account of sociality to build into this ontological account an inherent tendency to display the negative features Heidegger ascribes to *das Man*. In conclusion, section V points to how the proposed account of *das Man* intimates the character of fundamental ontology as nascently a form of critical theory. It also explains the extent to which Heidegger's perjorative characterisations of *das Man* and the *man selbst* are legitimate.

I. Introduction: A Stand-Off in Interpretation

All hands would agree that a correct interpretation of Heidegger's account of *das Man* is crucial to understanding his philosophy and its relation to his politics.ⁱ Just how crucial is shown by an assumption made by some of the more venerable interpretations: from the outset, they take *das Man* to be a merely *ontic* phenomenon not itself an essential feature or *ontological* character of selfhood, but rather, wherever it contingently occurs, a perversion of what *is* this, namely, being-with (*Mitsein*). This assumption underpins the interpretation of Habermas 1989, for example, for whom Heidegger's account of *das Man* is a theoretically bankrupt expression of contempt for modern liberal democratic society.ⁱⁱ It can, however, also be made by Heidegger's friends. Thus, Olafson 1987 takes *das Man* to be the *false hypostatisation* of public opinion which engenders conformism, thereby undermining possibilities for authentic selfhood. For him as for Habermas, *das Man* is an ontic corruption of something ontological rather than itself something ontological.

Now this assumption contradicts Heidegger's claim that *das Man* "is an *existentiale*; and as a primordial phenomenon, it belongs to Dasein's positive constitution." (Heidegger (1979), § 27, H 129) So more recently some have tried to give *das Man* a genuinely *ontological* significance. Dreyfus, for example, has given a Wittgenstein-inspired, pragmatist reading according to which *das Man* is the source of "all significance and intelligibility," "the end of the line of explanations of intelligibility;"ⁱⁱⁱ as such, it is a condition of the possibility of Dasein wherever and whenever this latter exists. But this reading stumbles on a diametrically opposed problem: Heidegger speaks of *das Man* not just ontologically but also ontically, namely, as a characteristic of distinctively modern society, indeed as one to be evaluated negatively.

The difficulty for Dreyfus lies in the ontological significance he gives *das Man*. Because this implies nothing which would legitimate, hence explain negative assessment of any ontic form assumed by *das Man*, for example, in modernity, Dreyfus cannot explain why Heidegger should speak ontically of *das Man* at all. In consequence, he has no counter to the charge made by Habermas and others that, when speaking ontically about *das Man*, Heidegger is merely indulging his anti-modern prejudices. More importantly, Dreyfus is forced to read Heidegger as either naively or disingenuously equivocal in his use of the term "das Man." For on Dreyfus' reading, the two connotations of the term, either as a genuine *Existenzial* which licenses no negative evaluation of it or as a distinctive and indeed disagreeable feature of specifically modern society, have nothing to do with one another.

It is therefore not enough simply to find some way of according *das Man* the status of an *Existential*. An adequate interpretation requires that one do this in a fashion which permits explanation of why Heidegger speaks of *das Man* both ontically and perjoratively. A first clue as to how such an interpretation might be developed lies in appreciating that those who, like Habermas, interpret *das Man* as *merely* ontic, have typically taken Heidegger's negative evaluations as the key to understanding the

reason why Heidegger speaks of it at all. They see in these negative evaluations great similarity to Kierkegaard's assessment of contemporary society in his work *The Two Ages*. On this basis, they conclude that Heidegger, too, is simply providing a cultural critique of the same distinctively modern ontic phenomenon, namely, the domain of public opinion, discourse and debate, in which all who are competent to participate may participate, irrespective of social position.

Importantly, Dreyfus and others who give genuinely ontological accounts of *das Man* have also assumed that Heidegger's negative assessment of it derives primarily from Kierkegaard. But Kierkegaard, because he thinks exclusively in ontic terms about contemporary society, provides no resources for linking Heidegger's ontological and ontic uses of the term "*das Man*." It now becomes inexplicable why, within the context of a fundamental ontology of Dasein, Heidegger should speak ontically and perjoratively of *das Man* at all. Heidegger seems simply to be conflating tasks: on the one hand, the task of providing an account of *das Man* as a condition of the possibility, indeed an ontological character, of Dasein and its Being-in-the-world, on the other, the task of providing a cultural critique of modernity in the manner of Kierkegaard.

Now Kierkegaard certainly had some influence on Heidegger's account of *das Man*. This is shown by Heidegger's talk of levelling (*Einebnung*)^{iv} and his terminology of the one-self (*man-selbst*).^v Yet there are crucial disparities. Whatever *das Man* is, it cannot be *identified* with what Kierkegaard means by either the public or public opinion because it does not possess the same properties as the latter: according to Kierkegaard one is only "a few hours of the day ... part of the public"^{vi} whereas for Heidegger Dasein is always caught up in (its particular ontic form of) *das Man*. More importantly, Heidegger speaks of features which find no obvious precedent in Kierkegaard, viz., "stand-offishness (*Abständigkeit*), averageness (*Durchschnittlichkeit*), the disburdening-of-one's-being (*Seinsentlastung*), and accommodatingness (*Entgegenkommen*)" (Heidegger (1979), § 27, H 128; my

translation) So Heidegger cannot be drawing upon Kierkegaard for these features. Perhaps, then, it is wrong to focus exclusively upon Kierkegaard as the sole source of Heidegger's perjorative, hence ontic assessment of *das Man*. Might there be someone else upon whom he could be drawing, someone who does provide the resources needed for integrating Heidegger's ontological and ontic uses of the term "*das Man*"?

II. Simmel's Conception of Sociology and Human Sociality

In Heidegger's times cultural critique had become fashionable. Many thinkers could have attributed to modern society the phenomena Heidegger is getting at when he describes everyday being-amongst-others as characterised, not just by levelling, but also by stand-offishness, the disburdening-of-one's-being and accommodatingness. Moreover, such phenomena could have made them similarly ambivalent about modern society. One such thinker is Georg Simmel (1858-1918). Importantly, Simmel, unlike Kierkegaard, is genuinely ontological in his account of modern society. That is, he is interested in identifying, within the concrete forms of human sociality empirically available to him—principally his own late modern society and its historical predecessors—the nature and grounds of human sociality *as such*.

This approach reflects Simmel's understanding of the sociological enterprise. According to Simmel, sociology must provide an account of the nature of human sociality or, as one might call it, a social ontology. At the same time, it must proceed empirically, which empirical character Simmel always understands in a qualitative, interpretative, hence implicitly first-person, even phenomenological sense.^{vii} So as Simmel construes it, sociology delivers a social *ontology* through a social *ontic*: it reflects, in quasi-phenomenological fashion, on specific forms of human sociality, including the sociologist's own, in order to provide an interpretation of these *ontic* phenomena which shows them to exemplify a certain *ontology*. Consequently, Simmel always works at two levels at once, in a fashion which corresponds to Heidegger's distinction between the ontological and the ontic.

Crucially, Simmel undertakes his quasi-phenomenological reflection on human sociality in full recognition that it is distinctively human. Because humans are self-conscious, moderately rational beings, their sociality is essentially characterised by an awareness of and concern about the fact that others may be pursuing interests which conflict with one's own and that therefore one needs to be cognisant of their often not readily scrutable motives. Distinctively human social interaction is structured by shared appreciation of this watchfulness or diffidence in the Hobbesian sense.^{viii} For this reason, it is ambivalent and agonistic in a way in which the sociality of bees is not: on the one hand, it enables human beings to exist as human beings in the first place; on the other, precisely because what it enables is self-conscious human being, it is also potentially disabling^{ix} of who or what any individual seeks to be and do. Human sociality thus always implicates, whatever its concrete ontic form, a tendency to negative features—negative in the sense that they inhibit the self-realisation of individual human beings, hence their optimal existence as distinctively human beings. As manifestations of an *inherent* tendency of human sociality to assume *sub-optimal* form relative to what this sociality enables, such negative features are therefore *privative*.

So in order to integrate Heidegger's ontic and indeed perjorative account of *das Man* with its ontological status, we should take our lead from the way Simmel thinks about the social. His thinking intimates both what might resolve the stand-off between interpretation in the style of Habermas and interpretation in the style of Dreyfus; and how one should set about accomplishing this resolution. Just as Simmel thinks of human sociality as essentially agonistic, so, too, we should try to construe *das Man* as inherently agonistic, that is, as possessed, at the *ontological* level, of a *tendency* to display the negative features Heidegger lists. Furthermore, we must do this in a recognisably Simmelian way: since a tendency is typically recognisable through its expression, the ontological significance of *das Man* will only become fully apparent if it is arrived at through reflection on a specific and indeed actual ontic form of being-

with in which the tendency is expressed, at least to some sufficient degree. Indeed, since the tendency at issue is a tendency to display features which are, in the sense intimated above, privative, the ontological significance of *das Man* will only be reached as *critique* of this specific and actual form, which will be, if not necessarily exclusively or solely, the phenomenologist's own. What goes for the Simmelian sociologist goes for the Heideggerian phenomenologist: *negative evaluation* of some actual *ontic* form of *das Man*, in particular, the phenomenologist's own, is an essential aspect of the *ontological* enterprise.

At this point, a word of cautionary clarification is in order: strictly speaking, the strategy just suggested does not entail that there actually was any causal link or influence, direct or indirect, extending from Simmel's social-theoretic reflections to Heidegger's account of *das Man*. It allows for the possibility of Heidegger's having arrived quite independently at an account of *das Man* in which ontological and ontic characterisation go hand in hand. Nonetheless, it is not unreasonable to assume that Heidegger was at least indirectly influenced by Simmel. They did, after all, share a common intellectual milieu characterised by an interest in cultural critique of the kind practised by Kierkegaard, a milieu to which Simmel contributed and from which Heidegger drew.^x That there is an at least indirect influence could, I believe, be rendered plausible by detailed exploration of Simmel's texts because it would show that the ontological characters which Heidegger attributes to human sociality, including the negative features he attributes to its late modern form, find surprisingly similar, similarly ambivalent analogues in Simmel. But such detailed exploration cannot be undertaken here. In any case, we must first find some strictly *ontological* interpretation of *das Man* which, unlike Dreyfus', permits us to use Simmel as a model for integrating the ontic, indeed perjorative, with the ontological. In order to accomplish this, we must determine, independently of any consideration of Simmel, just what Heidegger is trying to do in Chapter Four of Division I in *Being and Time*, in which the notion of *das Man* is introduced.

III. What is the Question concerning the Who of Dasein?

According to its title, Chapter Four of Division I in *Being and Time* seeks to explicate being-in-the-world as a unity of being-with and being-a-self. The title also makes explicit reference to *das Man*. So whatever Heidegger means by *das Man* precisely, the chapter seeks to show it to be a necessary condition for the unity of being-with and being-a-self. Note now that the first section of the chapter, § 25, is titled “The Approach via the Existential Question concerning the Who of Dasein.” So Heidegger intends to address the topic of the whole chapter—the complementary character of being-with and being-a-self and the role of *das Man* as a condition of the possibility for this—by answering what he calls the question concerning the Who of Dasein. We must therefore understand this question properly and interpret Heidegger’s notion of *das Man* as an essential component in its answer.

So let us look first at § 25. It begins with the following passage:

With the formal indication of the basic ontological characteristics of Dasein (cf. § 9) we seem already to have given the answer to the question as to who in each case this entity (Dasein) is. Dasein is an entity which in each case I myself am, its Being is in each case mine. (Heidegger (1979), § 25, H 114; my translation)

But, says Heidegger, this formal indication does not constitute a fully worked out account of Dasein’s ontological deep-structure. It needs elaboration and one needs to ensure that the elaboration of such pre-philosophically available intimations does not make a false start. One such false start is the following: the question as to who Dasein initially and for the most part is is taken as answering itself

from out of the I itself, the ‘subject’, the ‘self’. The Who is that which maintains itself as one and the same in the flux of comportments and experiences, therein relating itself to this multiplicity [*Mannigfaltigkeit*]. Ontologically, we understand it [the Who] as occurring in a closed region for which it is always already and constantly present at hand, that which is, in an exemplary sense, underlying, as the *subjectum*. This has, as what remains the same in a multifaceted otherness (*Andersheit*), the character of the *self*. (Heidegger (1979), § 25, H 114; my translation)

What exactly is Heidegger saying here? Dasein is the kind of entity *we* are, who, as his readers, are accompanying Heidegger on his fundamentally ontological journey. So a minimal characterisation of Dasein is that it is any entity which can think to itself, “I am.”^{xi} More precisely because more fully, “(t)he first proposition is ... “sum,” and this in the sense of “I-am-in-a-world.” (Heidegger (1979), § 43 b), H 211; my translation) Now as an entity which can think to itself, “I am,” Dasein is, in a strictly formal-ontological sense, a unity across some kind of temporally extended difference or change, a unity, moreover which is aware of itself as such. But what form of temporal difference or change? In particular, what form of temporal difference or change is the *primordial* one, such that it is all there needs to be for the unity of it to be aware of itself *as* itself?

Just this constitutes at least the central core of what Heidegger means by the question concerning the Who of Dasein. At the heart of this question lies the issue of how Dasein *most originally* is as a unity in difference over time, i.e., the unity there must be, initially and for the most part, in order that what displays this unity might be aware of itself *as* itself.^{xii} And the false start mentioned in the opening lines of § 25 concerns a very traditional answer to this question. Since Descartes, that ontology of the world of which Descartes is a first and certainly the paradigmatic representative has combined with Cartesian doubt to yield a very minimal answer to this question: the most primordial form of temporal difference is the flux of intentional states and experiences. The most basic way in which any entity capable of the “I am” exists is as a temporally structured bundle or a bearer of intentional states and experiences. Any other, richer sense in which one might to speak of a self or a subject, e.g., as an embodied, socialised human being, can be explicated in terms involving the idea of the “I” *qua* locus of intentional states and experiences.^{xiii} The “I” is, hence is most originally given to itself, *in the flux of intentional states and experiences*.^{xiv}

So in Chapter Four Heidegger is out to accomplish the following: in the first instance, he seeks to provide an alternative answer to a question which the tradition

answers by saying that an entity capable of the “I am” exists originally, hence is most originally aware of itself as existing, in the flux of intentional states and experiences.^{xv} In the second instance, he seeks to identify the conditions of possibility for an entity which can think, “I am,” given this alternative account of how the “I” is most originally given to itself. Section 25 sets the whole issue up to which Heidegger will give an alternative answer. Section 26 provides Heidegger’s alternative answer, namely, that the “I” is most originally given to itself, not in the flux of intentional states and experiences, but in the flux of equipment-mediated social roles and relations^{xvi}—in which case being-a-self and being-with constitute an original unity. Finally, § 27 identifies *das Man* as something essentially presupposed by the existence of the entity which can think, “I am,” given that this entity most originally exists, and is aware of itself as existing, in the flux of equipment-mediated social roles and relations.

A closer look at Heidegger’s argument across §§ 26 and 27 confirms this account of Chapter Four. Section 26 opens with the following passage:

The answer to the question concerning the Who of everyday Dasein is to be gained in the analysis of *that* kind of Being in which Dasein initially and mostly maintains itself. The investigation takes as its orientation being-in-the-world, through which basic ontological constitution all modes of Dasein’s being are co-determined. If we correctly said that with the explication of the world given above the remaining structural moments of being-in-the-world have also already come into view, then in a certain sense what is needed for answering the question of Who must already be at our disposal.

The ‘description’ of the initial environing world, for example, the working world of the tradesman, yielded the result that the others for whom the ‘work’ is intended are ‘co-encountered’ in and through equipment in use. In the kind of Being possessed by what is ready-to-hand, that is, in its functional suitedness [*Bewandtnis*] there lies an essential reference to possible wearers to whose ‘body’ the work is to be ‘cut to fit’. In similar fashion, in the material used the maker or ‘supplier’ of the same is encountered as he who ‘serves’ well or poorly. The field, for example, alongside which we pass when ‘outside’ walking shows itself as belonging to such and such, as well-maintained by him, the used

book has been purchased from ..., given by ..., and the like. The boat anchored on the beach points away from itself in its Being-in-itself to an acquaintance who undertakes his trips with it, but also as a 'boat unknown to one' it shows others. The others who are thus encountered in the ready-to-hand, immediately surrounding matrix of equipment are not so to speak tacked on by thought to a thing initially only present-at-hand. Rather, these 'things' are encountered from out of the world in which they are ready-to-hand for others, which world is, from the outset, also always already my world. (Heidegger (1979), § 26, H 117-118; my translation)

The previous analysis of world and worldhood has shown that to be an entity capable of the "I am" is primarily to be an entity self-evaluatingly wielding equipment for certain typical others in certain typical scenarios of use in a certain form of life. So this entity primarily occupies a social role *vis-à-vis* others and stands in social relation to them. But it does not make sense to speak of something as possessing social roles and relations singly and statically; I am not just an academic, but a husband, an environmentalist, a devotee of native plants, an admirer of German culture, etc., and I cycle through these and the social relations they implicate according to situation. So any entity which can think, "I am," to itself is primarily a locus of different social roles and relations through which it cycles across time.

The "I" is thus originally given to itself as itself not as thinking in Descartes' and Husserl's broad sense of the term, but rather as acting out different social roles and relations. Or to put things in a fashion which more explicitly captures the temporal character so crucial to the point at issue, the "I" is originally given to itself not in the flux of intentional states and experiences, but in the flux of social roles and relations. And this "is no *mere* taking note [*keine bloße Kenntnisnahme*] of one's self which *merely* accompanies all of Dasein's comportings [*alle Verhaltungen des Daseins*]." (Heidegger (1979), § 75, H 387-388; my translation and italics) Precisely as a self-conscious locus of intentionality, Dasein is always also a self in the sense of an entity self-evaluatingly acting out diverse social relations and roles in the more or less typical use of equipment. For this reason,

one ‘comes across’ ... one’s *own* Dasein precisely in *looking away* from, or rather not even ‘seeing’ ‘lived experiences’ [*Erlebnisse*] and a ‘centre of acts’ [*Aktzentrum*]. Dasein finds “itself” initially in *what* it pursues, needs, expects, prevents—in that which is, as ready-to-hand in the immediate environment, initially taken care of. (Heidegger (1979), § 26, H 119; my translation)^{xvii}

Being-a-self, i.e., an entity capable of the “I am,” is most primordially a matter of an entity concernfully engaged with entities that are ready-to-hand in the immediate environment, which engagement is essentially undertaken “with, for or against ... others.” (Heidegger (1979), § 27, H 126)

But what *is* the flux of equipment-mediated social roles and relations? In particular, how must this flux be if it is to “give” the entity that enacts it, not just to others, but to this entity itself (*as* itself)? With this, we come to § 27. If the flux of social roles and relations is to “give” oneself as an “I” both to oneself and to others, it must evince across time a coherent identity of self. And one would not display, either to oneself or to others, any coherent identity of self across time and the flux of one’s various social roles and relations were one not able to identify when it is time to stop acting out one role or relation and begin acting out another. Being an academic entails knowing how to do *proficiently* the various things typical of engaging in this social role. But precisely for this reason, it also consists in knowing when it is and is not *prudent, socially appropriate* or even *ethically right* to engage in this role since in this kind of case at least proficiency consists at least in part in mediating the standard tasks of the role with the demands of the particular situation. I know, for example, that it is both imprudent and ethically wrong to engage in these tasks to exclusion of my other roles and social relations—as when individuals are so consumed by ambition to climb the greasy academic pole that they harm their health and underperform in their role as, say, parents. Similarly, I know that it would be ethically wrong and potentially imprudent to permit the loyalty I feel towards a friend to influence the way I behave when sitting on a committee charged with deciding my friend’s job application. Had I no beliefs of these diverse kinds, or rather, did I not act mostly in conformity with

such beliefs, I would display no coherent identity of self across time; the more incoherent and confused my behaviour is in this regard, the more I literally dissolve as a self, not just for others, but also for myself.

Naturally, the beliefs I have about when it is and is not time to do this rather than that are *shared*. I am, after all, most originally in a flux of *social* roles and relations. I can therefore only actually be in this flux, hence given to myself, if I am given to others. I must be recognisable to others as coherently or rationally mediating the demands of my various roles and relations. And for such recognition to be possible, my beliefs as to when it is and is not time to do this rather than that must be shared. Indeed, I must share many other beliefs with them—not only about what it is *ceteris paribus* prudential, appropriate, right or good to do in such and such circumstances, but also about what individuals like us do as a matter of brute fact in such and such circumstances and situations. I am only a self in the ontologically most basic sense of the term, that is to say, aware of myself as the locus of diverse equipment-mediated social roles and relations, insofar as I exist, not just *alongside* others, but positively *with* others in the sense of sharing with them an understanding of what “people like us” do in such and such circumstances. I can only think, “I am,” hence only be as the self-conscious self I am, insofar as I am comporting myself towards others in the light of shared belief that in our group, i.e., the group defined in part by this very shared belief, one typically does such and such, e.g., has breakfast before going to work, can read and write, holds one’s fork in the left hand at dinner, and so on. My very existence as an ego presupposes my sharing in a sense of what one typically does or indeed is.

Just this shared sense of the typical or average is what Heidegger means by *das Man*. And the typicality or averageness at issue here—what Heidegger calls *Durchschnittlichkeit*—is not normative or in any way evaluative, nor does it express anything crudely statistical, i.e., what is *actually* true of more than fifty percent. Rather, in the sense intended here something is typical or average in the way in which

Australians typically or averagely live on quarter-acre blocks. Blocks of this size are neither what Australians in *any* sense *ought* to live on, nor indeed what most *actually* live on, as opposed to what most believe most live on. The typical or average in this sense is indeed both “everyone, although not as a sum” (Heidegger (1979), § 27, H 127) and “no one”. (Heidegger (1979), § 27, H 128) Only as being with others in this sense, as belonging to a group defined by such a shared sense of the average or typical, am I initially aware of myself. As Heidegger himself puts it, “*Initially*, I am ‘given’ to ‘myself’ from out of [the One] and as this [i.e., as the One portrays the typical, everyday self to be, namely, a One-self].” (Heidegger (1979), § 27, H 129; my translation)

So here we see at least that much of what Heidegger means by *das Man* which captures its existential-ontological status—that part of what Heidegger means which licenses translation of the term as “the One”. *Das Man* in its existential-ontological capacity is not a set of norms or social practices, as Dreyfus maintains.^{xviii} Nor is it shared belief *merely* about the average *right* way of acting. Rather, it is shared belief as to the typical or average way of acting and being *simpliciter*, which is not to deny, of course, that it properly includes shared belief about the right way of acting. As the body of shared belief which fixes the shared sense of the average or typical definitive of a group of distinctively self-conscious beings,^{xix} it is an instance, indeed the central instance, of what Lewis (1974) calls common knowledge and Schiffer (1972) mutual knowledge*.

Of course, the similarity with Lewis and Schiffer raises an important question: if one interprets *das Man* in this way, does one commit Heidegger to infinitely iterated belief states of the kind to which Lewis and Schiffer resort? Not if one is prepared to acknowledge self-referential belief states along the lines described in Christensen (1997). Two subjects *S* and *A* then have shared belief that *p* if and only if (i) *S* has a belief *b* that (*p* and *A* knows that (*p* and *S* has *b* and *b* counts as knowledge)); and (ii) *A* has a belief *b'* that (*p* and *S* knows that (*p* and *A* has *b'* and *b'* counts as knowledge)).

The shared beliefs which constitute *das Man* will have this form except that for the most part they will involve quantification roughly of the form “All (or most or many or some) within such and such a group^{xx} have the shared belief that”

Note two important implications of this account of *das Man* and of Chapter Four generally: firstly, it permits a ready elaboration of Heidegger’s insistence that one not think of the self or the person on the model of a present-at-hand thing. “The ontological question concerning the Being of the self must,” he says, “be rescued [*herausgedreht*] from the interpretative predisposition [*Vorhabe*] continually insinuated by the dominant pre-occupation with ‘I’-saying, the predisposition, namely, to treat it as a persistently present-at-hand self-thing.” (Heidegger (1979), § 64, H 323; my translation) When the notion of *das Man* is understood as suggested here, it becomes clear why the self and its unity are not “thing-like”: the existence of a present-at-hand thing does not presuppose the existence of other such things with which it shares a sense of what such things typically are and do, this because it does not need to display who and what it is to other things in order to be as it is. The unity of a thing is not an accomplishment in the way it is for a self.

Secondly, this account of *das Man* makes clear that Heidegger is not out to deny that any entity capable of the “I am” is always a locus of intentionality. Not this is the target of his attack, but rather, as § 25 indicates, the traditional idea that an entity capable of the first person is *most originally* given to itself, hence *most originally* exists, as a locus of intentionality. In order to undermine this idea, it suffices to show that existence as a locus of intentionality is merely a constitutive aspect or moment of what it is to be an entity capable of the “I am.” What the tradition takes to be the “essence” of the “I” is in fact a mere dependent part or moment. To claim this is *not* to deny that this dependent part or moment is still very much there, as a genuine feature of Dasein—always there, of course, since “the “I” is an essential determination of Dasein” (Heidegger (1979), § 25, H 117; my translation)

Of course, simply to say that *das Man* is shared belief as to the typical or average is not to capture those negative elements in Heidegger's account of *das Man* which suggest critique of contemporary social existence and which license the standard translation "the They." It might appear, therefore, that our alternative interpretation of *das Man* will fare no better than Dreyfus'. But as we shall now see, this is not the case.

IV. Using Simmel to integrate the Negative Connotations of *das Man*

Can the *ontological* account of *das Man* just given be made to accommodate the ambivalence of the various features Heidegger attributes to Dasein's being-with—stand-offishness, the disburdening-of-one's-being and accommodatingness? Let us look more closely at stand-offishness (*Abständigkeit*), the most interesting and prominent of these features, in order to identify how one might be ambivalent about it without this constituting an extraneous evaluation with no proper place in a fundamental ontology of Dasein. If successful, we will have a model for how the other features might be handled.

Heidegger introduces the notion of stand-offishness in the following passage:

In taking care of what one has undertaken with, for or against the others, there persistently resides care about difference from the others, whether it be care merely to remove difference from the others or, having lagged behind, to catch up with them, or to preserve one's superior position by keeping them down. Being-amongst-others (*Miteinandersein*) is, in a fashion hidden from itself, unsettled by care about this distance. Expressed existentially, it has the character of stand-offishness (*Abständigkeit*). (Heidegger (1979), § 27, H 126; my translation)

Underlying this is, I suggest, the following *ontological* thought: given that Dasein initially and for the most part exists, and is aware of itself as existing, as a locus of social roles and relations, it necessarily exists at some point on a scale of greater or less distance from the average or typical way of doing things implicit in its social roles and relations. That is, whether or not it is at any given moment conforming to

the average or typical way of doing things, it is at all times oriented towards this in the sense that this constitutes the default, that is, what one does *unless something renders the specific situation an exception*. At this point, it becomes clear that *das Man* articulates what Dasein typically is or does *unless in the particular circumstances some reason for not so being or doing is evident to it*. Furthermore, when some such reason is evident to it, it is able to give an account to others of why in this case it makes sense not to conform to the average or typical way of doing things.

It is in this ontological spirit that a sentence with much potential for misunderstanding is *in the first instance* to be understood. Heidegger says, by way of illustrating how *das Man* functions, that “(w)e enjoy and amuse ourselves as *one* enjoys; we read, see and judge about literature and art as *one* sees and judges; we seek refuge from the “crowd” (*großen Haufen*) as *one* seeks refuge; we get “indignant” (*wir finden empörend*) about what *one* gets indignant.” (Heidegger (1979), § 27, H 126; my translation) Notice that there is nothing normative in this sentence. It is simply saying that for the most part we habitually and unreflectingly do what others do; of an evening we go to the pictures or theatre for relaxation or stimulation—as any averagely intelligible, predictable individual does. We go out to dinner with our friends, as any averagely intelligible, predictable individual does. And so on, for all the activities Heidegger mentions and many more.

In particular, this sentence is non-normative in *two* distinct senses. Firstly, it is non-normative in the sense of not being a statement that such and such is acknowledged as a behavioural norm by such and such individuals, or by such and such a group. It makes no sense to suggest that current social existence is subject to a norm requiring us to enjoy or amuse ourselves by going to the pictures or to the theatre rather than to, say, a mud-wrestling match. In general, no norms or rules govern the “practice” of enjoying oneself because enjoying oneself is not a norm- or rule-governed practice at all.^{xxi} Secondly, the sentence is non-normative in the sense that it does not necessarily constitute a negative evaluation on the part of someone

who asserts it. When taken simply on its own terms, the sentence does not insinuate any ethical evaluation of our habitually and unreflectingly doing what others do. It then simply articulates the *exclusively ontological* feature of Dasein articulated above: initially and for the most part, Dasein acts unthinkingly out of shared belief as to what one does and is but its doing so is not blind. For every so often it will distance itself from the average and when it does so, it can justify its divergence as rational to those others who share in its sense of the average and its understanding of the particular situation. So the mere fact of Dasein's distancing itself justifies others in thinking that it will be able to provide an account of why it has distanced itself. In this non-normative sense, Dasein necessarily exists *at some distance or other* from the average it shares, and knows itself to share, with others. As one might also put it, Dasein displays *Abständigkeit* in the strictly ontological, non-evaluative sense suggested by the translation used by Macquarrie and Robinson, viz., distantiality.

Yet the whole passage containing this sentence clearly does have a reprobative flavour, hence is normative in the second sense. This is shown by the reference to Dasein's attempt to preserve its superior position by keeping others down. And by the end of the passage, things have become normative in the first sense: *das Man* is described as *prescribing* or *demanding* average everydayness:

The more inconspicuous this mode of being [i.e., stand-offishness] is to everyday Dasein itself, the more stubbornly and primordially it takes effect.

The stand-offishness which belongs to being-with entails, however, the following: Dasein stands, as everyday being-amongst-others, at the bidding [*Botmäßigkeit*] of the others. Not it itself *is*, the others have assumed its Being for it. The whim of the others disposes over Dasein's everyday possibilities of being. At the same time, these others are not *specific* others. On the contrary, every other can represent them. Decisive is only the inconspicuous rule of the others, which Dasein has, as being-with, inadvertently made its own. One belongs oneself to the others and reinforces their power. Those whom one calls "the others" in order to hide one's own essential belonging to them are they who initially and for the most part "*are there*" in everyday being-amongst-others.

The Who is not this one and not that, not one self, not several and not the sum of all. The “Who” is the neutrum, *the One*.

Previously it was shown how always already in the nearest surrounding world [*Umwelt*] the public “surrounding world” is ready-to-hand and conjointly taken care of. In the using of public transportation, in availing oneself of the media (the papers), each other is like the other. This being-amongst-others dissipates Dasein completely in the mode of being “the others”, indeed in such a way that the others disappear all the more in their differentiatedness and explicitness. In this inconspicuousness and inability to be tied down the One unfolds its true dictatorship. We enjoy and amuse ourselves as *one* enjoys; we read, see and judge about literature and art as *one* sees and judges; we seek refuge from the “crowd” [*großen Haufen*] as *one* seeks refuge; we get “indignant” [*wir finden empörend*] about what *one* gets indignant. The One, which is nothing determinate and is everyone, although not as a sum, prescribes the mode of being of everydayness. (Heidegger (1979), § 27, H 126-127; my translation)

Note the slide in this passage: the non-normative idea that Dasein’s everyday concernful activity involves situating oneself at *some contextually appropriate distance or other* from the average has passed over into the the idea that Dasein exists as subject to the expectation of “the others” that it will not put itself at any distance to the average. It now seems to be part of Dasein’s very being to be subject to this expectation. Correlatively, a *demand* for typical existence and behaviour now seems inherent to *das Man*—in which case it must be characterised, even at the ontological level, in terms normative in the first sense. And if *das Man* is in this way inherently, that is to say, ontologically, repressive of individuality, then surely it must be characterised in terms negatively normative in the second sense. In other words, one seems forced to pass negative ethical judgement on it.

Evidently, this is *Abständigkeit* in the evaluatively charged sense underpinning the translation used here, namely, stand-offishness. For now *Abständigkeit* insinuates a *stand-off*, a *chronic opposition*, between being-with and being-a-self as it truly, fully or even actually^{xxii} (*eigentlich*) is. It is, however, not plausible to take the *actuality* of such stand-offishness as ontological. As much as certain ontic realisations of *das Man* might exert the envisaged pressure to conform, this hardly seems a necessary

condition or consequence of Dasein's being. Is then stand-offishness *simply* an ontic, presumably a *social-psychological* feature of a specific form of being-with, that form, namely, which it takes in late modernity? Then we would be accusing Heidegger of failing to distinguish between a genuinely ontological claim about the essentially social character of Dasein as such and a true but merely ontic claim about the form this social character takes in particular circumstances. Clearly, we need to show some *internal connection* between ontological and ontic pronouncements in Heidegger's texts, a connection which explains why certain ontic claims *must* occur in Heidegger's text.

At this point, it is useful to look more deeply at Simmel's views on the nature of distinctively human sociality. As we have seen, Simmel thinks both *ontologically* and *ontically*. Just this provides a clue as to how there might be an internal connection between being-with and *das Man*, understood ontologically, and those ontic forms which invite negative assessment. This internal connection between the ontological and the ontic permits us to identify the extent to which negative assessment of these essential, hence ontological features of human sociality is legitimately present.

According to Simmel, we cannot be without others yet our being-with inherently tends to generate conflict and contradiction between conforming to what one does and being our own individual selves. This tendency to conflict and contradiction arises from that Hobbesian diffidence towards others which we, as entities capable of the "I am", must display. Evidently, this diffidence occurs at the level of what Simmel calls the "a priori of empirical social life." (Simmel (1992), p.53) It and the tendencies it imparts to human sociality must therefore be ontological.

Yet this is not to suggest that our being-with is fragile—as if it were finely balanced on a knife-edge, always on the verge of tipping over into chaos. One can only think this if one thinks of social existence as standing in contrast or opposition to all conflict and contradiction. But according to Simmel, "... dispute [*Streit*] itself, irrespective of what follows from it or accompanies it, is ... a form of socialisation."

(Simmel (1992), p.284; my translation) Antagonism can have a positive, integrating capacity—see Simmel (1992), p.284f. In general, claims Simmel, “(j)ust as the cosmos needs “love and hate,” forces of attraction and repulsion, in order to have a form, so, too, society needs some quantitative relationship between harmony and disharmony, association and competition, favour and disfavour in order to attain determinate shaping.” (Simmel (1992), p.286; my translation) Our being-with is thus a system neither stolidly homeostatic nor chronically on the verge of collapse. Rather, it is a system *dynamically* robust precisely because it is a unity of counteracting tendencies to fragmentation and consolidation.^{xxiii}

Yet Simmel does not buy into any Hobbesian methodological individualism; he rejects all forms of social theory which construe the self as prior to society. “Just as little as we have, as natural beings, a being-for-ourselves [i.e., self-consciousness], ... just as little do we, as social beings, live around an autonomous centre, but are, from moment to moment, composed out of reciprocal relations to others” (Simmel (1992), p.55; my translation) Our being entities capable of the “I am” is bound up with our being-with, and it is so for precisely the same reason as it is for Heidegger: the self primarily exists as a principle of unity *in the flux of social roles and relations*, hence can only be given to itself as such a unity insofar as it is given to others as such a unity and they are reciprocally given to it as such unities. Simmel’s agonistic account of the distinctively self-conscious, reason-wielding way in which humans are social is thus a genuinely ontological conception not just of human sociality, but of *human existence* itself.

With this, we have integrated diffidence into being-with, hence into the fundamental ontology of Dasein. Consequently, we have built a tendency to stand-offishness *in the richer, negative sense* into the way in which entities capable of the “I am” are social. For the essentially rational response of others to Dasein’s diffidence will be the *demand* that it maintain itself as thoroughly transparent to them.

Being-amongst-others [*Miteinandersein*] in *das Man* is not at all a closed-off, indifferent alongside-one-another [*Nebeneinander*], but a tense, ambivalent watching of one another, a secretive mutual eavesdropping. Behind the mask of a for-one-another [*Füreinander*] there lurks an against-one-another [*Gegeneinander*]. (Heidegger (1979), § 37, H 175; my translation)

So already at the ontological level, *das Man* must possess a tendency to pass from shared belief that one typically does such and such to shared belief that one *is expected* (by others) to do such and such. One might put this as a transition from *das Man* as merely the One to *das Man* as the Others (*die Anderen*) or the They. Dasein's sociality now shows itself to be ontologically agonistic. In particular, we now have an internal connection between the general ontological account of sociality and subjectivity; and those ontic forms of it which are governed by a normativised expectation of conformity. For it is part of the very identity, the ontological nature, of Dasein's sociality to possess a disposition or tendency to assume such ontic forms. And so the character of certain ontic forms of *das Man* as stifling individuality is not contingent but the realisation of a possibility inherent to being-with itself.

Admittedly, when Heidegger describes Dasein's sociality and *das Man* in negative ways, he takes himself to be describing *actualities*, not mere *potentialities*. But Simmel helps us to resolve this puzzle, too. For he is deriving, in quasi-phenomenological fashion, an account of how human sociality *as such* is possible through the interpretation of the structure and dynamic of *actual* human societies, in particular, his own late modern one.^{xxiv} Evidently, Heidegger is and must be doing something analogous. On the one hand, Heidegger is describing the ontological constitution of Dasein *as such*. On the other, he is deriving this general description from, and feeding it back into, the interpretation of an entity *which factually is*. The analytic of Dasein requires this interplay between the ontological and the ontic.

The reason for this is clear. Dasein is the entity who *we ourselves are*—we who, under Heidegger's guidance, are conducting the investigation which is *Being and Time*. This reflexivity is essential to the method of fundamental ontology, which is

phenomenological in Heidegger's sense, namely, the methodologically controlled return to "the" everyday, i.e., *our* everyday. Through this return, the general, ontological constitution of Dasein becomes available to us *as it is realised in our own case*. We are therefore accessing what *das Man* is *in general* through accessing what it is *in our own case*. And in our own case, or at least so Heidegger thinks, the negative potentialities of *das Man* are markedly realised.^{xxv} Heidegger's not distinguishing clearly between actuality and potentiality is therefore neither oversight nor simply literary device. Rather, it reflects the essentially *self*-explicative character of his investigation, in which ontic specifics and ontological generalities become evident in the one process of phenomenologically differentiating both out from one another.

Simmel's social ontology thus provides an effective guide as to how one might integrate Heidegger's negative evaluations of *das Man* into an ontological account of Dasein. *Das Man*, and not just *Mitsein*, is a genuine existential. Yet it has a genuinely agonistic, ambivalent character, as a phenomenon which inherently possess at least a tendency towards conformism and related privations of that for which it is a condition of possibility, namely, Dasein in general and "authentic" being-a-self (*eigentliches Selbstsein*) in particular. This tendency is not an illicit external imposition upon the genuinely ontological project. For it is a genuinely ontological, structural feature of the being-with enabled by *das Man*.

But what has allowed us to use Simmel's thought in this way? That is, what assumptions from his social ontology must we extend to Heidegger in order to mediate in the fashion indicated between the ontological and the ontic? As much as Simmel rejects all methodologically individualist conceptions of society, he rejects the position diametrically opposed to this, which construes the self-conscious subject as so totally defined by its social existence that it is capable only of those concepts and conceptual frameworks by appropriating which from its culture and tradition it has emerged as a self-conscious subject in the first place. Repeatedly Simmel insists

that human beings are not completely social; just as constitutive of us as human beings and indeed of the way humans are social is the fact that, as self-conscious subjects, we have a private domain which is not readily intelligible to others. Moreover, we have an inherent tendency or impulse to assert ourselves as individuals who are not simply numerically distinct but qualitatively distinguish themselves from other individuals. To be social in the manner of humans is to be irreducibly both in a group and not (completely) in it:

(E)very element of a group is not only a part of society, it is also in addition something more. This functions as a social a priori insofar as that part of the individual which is not turned towards society, which is not completely absorbed by it, does not simply lie unrelatedly next to its socially significant part, is not merely something outside [*ein Außerhalb*] of society for which this latter, willingly or unwillingly, finds a place. Rather, that the individual is, in certain aspects of its being, not an element of society constitutes a positive condition for the individual's being, in other aspects, an element: the manner of the individual's being socialised is determined or co-determined through the manner of its being not socialised. (Simmel (1992), p.51; my translation)

As always, the reason why human beings are not completely social is bound up with their character as self-conscious. We have already encountered one sense in which Simmel believes that the self-conscious character of human sociality entails the incompleteness of this sociality: this character generates diffidence amongst humans because it entails shared belief about the real possibility that every so often the interests of some members of the group will stand at odds with the interests of others. Human sociality is not unconditional but comes with a degree of reserve. Here, however, we encounter a second sense in which according to Simmel self-consciousness makes for a merely partial sociality. Being *self-consciously* amongst others, i.e., not merely belonging to a group, but knowing oneself thus to belong, requires that one not completely belong to it. In order to grasp oneself as in a group, one must also be beyond it, i.e., not exhaustively defined in one's identity by membership of the group. This being-simultaneously-within-and-without a group is

required if any group, up to and including society itself, is to stand over against an individual *as* something to which this individual itself belongs:

That social formations are composed of beings which are simultaneously inside and outside of them is the basis for one of the most important sociological formings: that, namely, a relationship can obtain, perhaps indeed does persist, openly or latently, between a society and its individuals as a relationship between two parties. In this way, society engenders perhaps the most conscious, and certainly the most universal elaboration of a basic form of life as such: that the individual psyché [*Seele*] can never stand within a bond without also simultaneously standing outside of it, that it can never be located within an order without simultaneously *finding itself as standing over and against it*. (Simmel (1992), p.53; my translation and emphasis)

Distinctively *self-conscious* social existence thus presupposes that individuals are more than just a product of their social existence. The self-conscious subject must exist in society, must indeed emerge as such through initiation into the concepts and conceptual frameworks of a shared culture and tradition. It is, however, as self-conscious, never *restricted* to these initial concepts and conceptual frameworks. The existence of a human being

... stands under the fundamental, forming, irreducible category of a unity which we cannot express otherwise than as through the synthesis or the simultaneity of the two logically opposed characteristics of being a member [*Gliedstellung*] and being for itself, of being produced and comprehended by society and of being life out of the centre and for the sake of its own centre. (Simmel (1992), p.56; my translation)

Consequently, a human being is always capable of *transcending* the initial concepts and conceptual frameworks by initiation into which it emerges as self-conscious in the first place.^{xxvi}

This is an important result. For it shows that Simmel is able to get stand-offishness and diffidence into the general *ontological* picture of human selfhood and its sociality only because he assumes from the outset that the human individual is not simply or solely what Heidegger calls a one-self. According to Heidegger, being-a-one-self

presupposes at least the possibility of transcending one's character as a one-self—in that one responds *so* intelligently, *so* context-sensitively to one's particular situation that one's behaviour is not simply the acting out of routines, rules and habits into which one has been socialised. This conception of the human self as both depending on, yet also transcending, its character as a social actor reflects what Simmel wishes to take from methodologically individualist thinkers like Hobbes. Such thinkers err in maintaining that the self-conscious, deliberating self could exist *prior to* engagement in social roles and relations. Yet they maintain this false belief for a sound reason: such thinkers see no way of accounting for distinctively human sociality without reference to the self-conscious and the deliberate, hence to the inner.

So we were able to use Simmel to dispel the appearance of tension between the ontological and the ontic in Heidegger's account of *das Man* because Simmel is not hostile to the self-conscious, deliberative and inner. We must therefore attribute this lack of hostility to Heidegger. That is, we must attribute to him Simmel's even-handed, neither Cartesian nor pragmatist conception of the relation between "inner" subjectivity and "outer" public behaviour. And when we do, we see why Dreyfus could not cope with Heidegger's characterisation of (certain ontic forms of) *das Man* in perjorative terms: he could only do so by giving up his central claim that in *Being and Time* Heidegger is arguing for a pragmatist, even behaviourist conception of subjectivity and the mental.

V. Conclusion: Fundamental Ontology as Critical Theory

The Simmel-inspired interpretation of *das Man* given here integrates Heidegger's ontological claims with his negatively evaluative ontic ones by showing these latter to be characterisations of certain ontic forms of *das Man* as *ontologically privative*, i.e., sub-optimal realisations to which it is by nature inclined. To this extent, and in this sense, an evaluative character is inherent to fundamental ontology. This raises a crucial question: might not this inherently evaluative character make the fundamental

ontology of Dasein a kind of critical theory? In order to answer this question, we must reflect a little on how fundamental ontology proceeds.

According to Heidegger, the concept of phenomenology is primarily a methodological one.^{xxvii} With this claim Heidegger seeks to break Husserl's stipulative binding of phenomenology to reflection *on the contents of one's sphere of consciousness*. On Heidegger's account of it, one can engage in phenomenology when one reflects *on the contents of one's sphere of everyday life*^{xxviii} for the sake of identifying its ontological constitution and thereby that of Dasein itself. Just this is the the fundamental ontology of Dasein. Through phenomenological reflection on *one's own* everyday life, one identifies certain clearly ontic phenomena of one's own *actual* existence—use of equipment, sociality, etc.^{xxix}—as enabling conditions for Dasein as such or in general. In effect, one brings actual ontic phenomena into view in their capacity as instantiating certain general ontological determinations which capture how such phenomena must in general be in order that Dasein as such might be.^{xxx}

But as Dasein, we are entities capable of thinking, "I am." And to be such an entity is to be capable of responding, whether in thought or deed, *more or less adequately* to the demands of the particular, possibly unique circumstances in which one finds oneself. So ultimately a phenomenologically conducted fundamental ontology of Dasein is a process in which we come to differentiate from one another what it is to be *truly, fully* or *actually (eigentlich)* the kind of entity we are and *how adequately* we factually instantiate this general ontological characterisation. For this reason, the ontological account of all those actual everyday phenomena from which fundamental ontology proceeds must also display an inherently evaluative character. For these ontic phenomena we now see to be, and to have been implicitly thematised as, enabling conditions of Dasein so to speak *at its best*, that is, as it truly, fully or actually (*eigentlich*) is. So they must enable this *more or less adequately*. In bringing the ontic phenomena of our own everyday life into distinctively ontological view, a phenomenologically conducted fundamental ontology of Dasein must reveal, at least

if reflection is sustained enough, *how well* these ontic phenomena enable us truly, fully or actually to be as Dasein.^{xxx}

Crucially, this dual evaluation both of how truly, fully or actually we are as selves and of how well our world enables us to be truly, fully or actually as selves is not normative in the second sense distinguished above. For to state what it is to be truly, fully or actually a self is not necessarily to commit oneself to the claim that one ought to be such a self. But neither must such a statement be normative in the first sense distinguished above since being a true, full or actual self need not be a norm for any group. Indeed, to state what it is to be truly, fully or actually a self is not necessarily to endorse the claim that it is *always*, that is to say, unconditionally, good or rational to be such a self. It is thus neither to make an ethical evaluation oneself nor to identify some ethical norm or value as endorsed by some group. So the evaluative character of fundamental ontology does not derive from any ethical norm or value imposed from without. Rather, it derives from how phenomenological method and phenomenological object interact with one another—from *how* fundamental ontology must uncover *what* it uncovers, namely, what it is truly, fully or actually to be as the entities we are.^{xxxii}

Just this suggests a link to the tradition of critical theory. Horkheimer distinguishes a “critical” theory from a “traditional” one by claiming that the former “never aims simply at an increase of knowledge as such” but rather has an intrinsic practical purpose, viz., “man’s emancipation from slavery.” (Horkheimer 1972, p.246) In saying this, Horkheimer is not claiming that one is engaging in distinctively critical theorising only if in doing so one is seeking human emancipation since this would be too strong. Nor is he claiming that if in theorising one is seeking human emancipation, then one is doing so critically; this would be too weak. Rather, he is claiming that, whatever one’s individual motivations, the very business of engaging in distinctively critical theory leads one to see how one’s own present condition, both psychological and social, measures up as a realisation of a general human potential. So by critical

theory Horkheimer means a kind of theorising which has evaluativeness of the kind found in fundamental ontology methodologically built into it. Fundamental ontology must therefore count as a kind of critical theory.

Of course, when Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse speak of emancipation, they do not just mean freedom from social oppression and natural deprivation as well as reconciliation of one's ethical and sensuous nature in the kind of reflective equilibrium Aristotle once called *sophrosyne*.^{xxxiii} At least implicitly, they understand the concept of emancipation reflexively to include within itself the idea of collective pursuit and maintenance of the conditions of emancipation themselves. Therewith they tap into a tradition of radically democratic thought foreign to Heidegger. But the claim being made here is not that a fundamental ontology of Dasein already *is* a full-fledged critical theory with which Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse would be happy. The claim is rather that, given its inherently evaluative character, fundamental ontology could be developed in this direction. In this regard, it is significant that the early Marcuse believed just this—see, e.g., Marcuse (2005a) and (2005b). It is also significant that much of Heidegger's later thought is explicitly cultural critique. If the interpretation developed here is right, then there should be nothing surprising about this: it is a logical extension of the project and nature of fundamental ontology itself, as this is conceived in *Being and Time*. For the character of fundamental ontology as incipiently critical becomes evident once one integrates the ontological and ontic aspects of Heidegger's account of *das Man* in the manner suggested here.

And so, too, does the extent become evident to which Heidegger's perjorative characterisations of *das Man* are legitimate. There can be no doubt that Heidegger is, at times, *condemning* (a specific ontic form of) *das Man*. Yet his insistence that he is not passing negative judgement on *das Man*^{xxxiv} is not so much disingenuous as unclear. Firstly, the claim made at the ontological level that *das Man* has an inherent tendency to conformism involves no ethical evaluation of it. Secondly, Heidegger may and indeed must, for methodological reasons, make certain evaluative claims

about specific ontic forms of *das Man*, in particular, his own—claims to the effect that these forms are *more or less adequate realisations* of being-with, in inverse proportion to the degree to which the tendency to conformism ascertained at the ontological level is realised. Such claims, too, are not ethical evaluations imposed from outside but rather internal, *ontico-ontological* ones. Finally, Heidegger does express a personal conviction as to the ethical status of *das Man* in its late modern ontic form. This, he seems to think, is bad insofar as, through its suppression of true, full or actual being-a-self (*eigentliches Selbstsein*), it fails to realise the kind of life good for Dasein. And no doubt he thinks, or at least could think, that *das Man* in its late modern ontic form is wrong insofar as, through suppression of such “authentic” being-a-self, it creates unhappiness in affected individuals. Such judgements embody the taking of an ethical stance on the results of fundamental ontology and are as such extraneous to it. But they are not illegitimately so because they have not influenced the way in which its results have been reached.

Let us use this interpretation to resolve a final puzzle. Heidegger sometimes speaks of the one-self as if he regarded it as bad while at other times he insists that, as an essential aspect of Dasein’s everyday being-in-the-world, there is nothing wrong with it. In fact there is no contradiction here, but rather, as with Heidegger’s perjorative characterisations of *das Man*, merely a lack of clarity which is to be overcome similarly. The inherently evaluative character of fundamental ontology is not ethical but ontico-ontological. Consequently, the one-self is “inauthentic” (*uneigentlich*) in a sense which need not be ethically wrong or bad. In fact, as the default mode of being-a-self, being a one-self and falling into line with *das Man* and the world of concern^{xxxv} are what it is *ceteris paribus* rational to be and do. The *ceteris paribus* character of these default modes of Dasein’s being reflects the fact that circumstances are sometimes so exceptional that established rules, routines and habits provide no satisfactory response to the situation. Dasein is then rationally required not to default to what one typically does or is, but rather to assume that *conscientious, anxiety-*

ridden^{xxxvi} relation to the situation which is a necessary but not sufficient condition for radically creative and unprecedented, hence *phronetic*^{xxxvii} insight into how, in these exceptional circumstances, it has to act or be. When Heidegger speaks perjoratively of the one-self, he is targetting the *ontological* tendency of Dasein to ignore the *ceteris paribus* character of its default modes of being, that is, its inherent tendency to default to the average *simply in order to escape debilitating anxiety and regain its ability to be in the world*.

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- ⁱ Because there is disagreement as to how Heidegger's neologism *das Man* should be properly translated; and because, more importantly, either contender can on occasion be appropriate, the term will be left untranslated here.
- ⁱⁱ See Habermas (1989), esp. p.438f.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Dreyfus (1991), p. 156, p. 161 and the note to p. 353.
- ^{iv} Yet the only German translation accessible to Heidegger does not use the term *Einebnung* but rather *Nivellierung*—see Kierkegaard [1846] (1914), p.25. Heidegger may well have taken the terms *Zweideutigkeit* (ambiguity) and *Beruhigung* (tranquility) from this translation—see p. 15 and p. 20.
- ^v We should note, however, that in Kierkegaard [1849] (1911), the only German translation of *Sickness unto Death* available to Heidegger, the term is used very generally whereas Heidegger reserves it for the inauthentic self.
- ^{vi} Kierkegaard [1849] (1978), p.93. One is only part of the public for a few hours of the day because for Kierkegaard the public is the indeterminate totality of consumers of some mass medium and one only consumes a mass medium for certain hours of the day. Kierkegaard also claims that “(t)here is no such thing as a public in spirited, passionate, tumultuous times”; (p.90) *das Man*, by contrast, is an *Existenzial* and as such everywhere that Dasein is. Once again, this difference reflects the fact that Kierkegaard understands by the public nothing other than the audience for some mass medium, specifically, the readership of the press, hence something which exists only in certain historical times. Kierkegaard's understanding of the public is reflected in the German translation used by Heidegger, for this uses the term *das Publikum*—see Kierkegaard [1846] (1914), p.34ff. In his account of *das Man* Heidegger uses the term *die Öffentlichkeit*, which has the different connotation of the public sphere.
- ^{vii} Simmel, like Dilthey, does not identify the notions of empirical method and natural scientific method.

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- viii In correspondence Nick Blake has pointed out that in contemporary English the noun “diffidence” and its cognate adjective “diffident,” although deriving from the Latin *diffidere* (“not to trust”), now seem to be associated with “lacking confidence *in one’s self*”, i.e. “lacking *self*-confidence,” rather than “lacking confidence in others.” Since I am using the term “diffidence” with the latter, more archaic meaning intended by Hobbes, I speak of diffidence in the Hobbesian sense.
- ix See Simmel (1992) p.56 and pp.58-71, where Simmel speaks of the third a priori principle of sociality, namely, that even where the actual social relations of an individual prevent it from being the individual it personally is, they are nonetheless *oriented towards* a form of sociality in which the relevant social relations facilitate the individual’s being the individual it is.
- x According to Gadamer, Heidegger highly admired Simmel’s *later* work—see Gadamer (1975), p.229, footnote 3. And Heidegger was certainly well aware of Simmel’s views generally, as is shown by his references to them—see Heidegger (1992a), § 2, H 10; Heidegger (1993), § 3, H 15, and Heidegger (1979), footnote 1, § 49, H 249, and § 72, H 375. These references are admittedly not particularly complimentary.
- xi Strictly speaking, one should say that it is any entity aware of itself as existing *finitely*, i.e., as an entity with a finite capacity for knowing and willing. Note that for Descartes, too, the self is from the outset aware of itself as finite: the self at which Descartes arrives when he concludes that at least he knows with certainty that he is (as thinking) finds that it cannot account for the source of all its ideas. By the Third Meditation this self knows that it depends for at least one of its ideas, namely, its idea of God, on something other than itself and, by the end of the Meditation, it knows that this other is God himself. Indeed, the self knows that it depends upon God for its very knowledge of itself as thinking since this knowledge turns out to be awareness of oneself as doing in limited fashion something God does unlimitedly. Precisely for this reason, the self *must* find within itself the idea of God.
- xii Heidegger confirms this account when, much later in *Being and Time*, he speaks of “the question concerning the constancy [*Ständigkeit*] of the self, which self [*das*] we determined to be the Who of Dasein.” (Heidegger (1979), § 72, H 375, my translation)
- xiii Note that, strictly speaking, this does not entail that possibly *nothing other than I* myself *qua* locus of temporally ‘flowing’ intentional states and experiences exists (without detriment to the coherence of this flux).

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- ^{xiv} See Heidegger (1983), § 49, H 302, for a passage which confirms the account given here of what Heidegger regards as the false start taken by the tradition to the question concerning the Who of Dasein. This passage also insinuates that the negative characters Heidegger attributes to *das Man* are indeed potentialities inherent in it in virtue of what Dasein essentially is.
- ^{xv} In some ways, this concern is more clearly evident in Heidegger (1989), § 15 b), H 225-228.
- ^{xvi} Heidegger is indirectly getting at or presupposing this when he says that “the ‘Here’ of an ‘I-here’ [and thus the ‘I’ itself] always understands itself from out of a ready-to-hand ‘There’ in the sense of concernful Being towards it, which brings it near and directs itself out to it [*in Sinne des entfernend-ausrichtend-besorgenden Seins zu diesem*]” (Heidegger (1979), § 28, H 132; my translation)
- ^{xvii} Cf. Simmel (1992), p.55; my translation, quoted below.
- ^{xviii} See Dreyfus (2000), p.161 and 163. At least two places in Heidegger’s texts indicate fairly clearly that Dreyfus’ account of *das Man* is wrong: firstly, *das Man* contains what Heidegger calls “the ‘one dies’” (Heidegger (1979), § 51, H 253), which is clearly not a norm or social practice but shared belief in mortality. Secondly, Heidegger characterises *das Man* as a matter of *Gerede* (*doxa*!)—see Heidegger (1979), § 35, esp. H 168, and § 51, H 252. That the interpretation given here is right is confirmed by Heidegger (2002), § 9 c), H 62-64. I am indebted to Will McNeill for this latter reference.
- ^{xix} An anonymous referee has suggested that this account of *das Man* comes close to that of Olafson 1987, for whom *das Man* is (an at least hypostasised form of) public opinion. But as the body of shared belief which fixes the sense of the average or typical definitive of a certain group, *das Man* is presupposed by public opinion, hence must not to be identified with it. Public opinion is definitive of no particular group or identity as a member of a group. Relatedly, many shared beliefs constitutive of the average or typical are too banal to count as public opinion, e.g., the shared belief (at least in our kinds of society) that one has three meals a day. Conversely, items of public opinion need not be shared beliefs constitutive of the average or typical for any group, e.g., the belief that Bill Clinton lied about his dealings with Monica Lewinsky.
- ^{xx} A group partly defined, of course, by its members’ possessing sufficiently many of this set of shared beliefs.
- ^{xxi} This remains true even when, as a matter of brute fact, individual forms of enjoyment find themselves overlain with all sorts of normative and axiological

judgements—as when, for example, one deems mud-wrestling to be culturally inferior.

^{xxii} Naturally, the adverb “actually” and the adjective “actual” must be understood in that pre-philosophical sense which permits them to serve on occasion as translations of the German word *eigentlich*. They must not be understood as attributing the decidedly philosophical ontological character of *actualitas*.

^{xxiii} In this spirit, Simmel says, “The a priori of empirical social life is that life is not wholly social, we form our reciprocal relations not only with the negative reserve of a part of our personality which does not enter into these relations, not only does this part influence social processes in the *psyché* [Seele] through universal psychological connections generally, but also precisely through its formal character of standing outside these relations it determines the nature of this influence.” (Simmel (1992), p.53; my translation)

^{xxiv} See Simmel (1992), p.46, for a general intimation of this dual ontico-ontological character.

^{xxv} This is not to allow that such negative potentialities could either be completely or even merely overwhelmingly realised. For this is impossible, just as a stable practice of communication in which participants either totally or even merely overwhelmingly lied would be impossible.

^{xxvi} This, one might add, is a condition of the possibility of its existing *historically*.

^{xxvii} See Heidegger (1979), § 7, H 27.

^{xxviii} For this reason, Heidegger says that in the concept of *life* Dilthey glimpsed the notion of Being-in-the-world—see Heidegger (1989), § 15 c), H 247,

^{xxix} The formal indications of Dasein—see Heidegger (1979), §§ 9 and 12—are initial, pre-philosophically available hints as to the ontological deep-structure which Dasein possesses in virtue of being something (finitely) capable of the “I am.” Their methodological role is to guide the phenomenologist in the identification of those features of Dasein and its world which are genuinely ontological.

^{xxx} This accords well with Heidegger’s account of phenomenology and, in particular, of “the phenomenological concept of phenomenon.” (Heidegger (1979), § 7, H 31)

^{xxxi} In *Being and Time* this reflection is indeed insufficiently sustained. But later it becomes so, when, for example, Heidegger distinguishes between (a) *Verfertigen*, i.e., making in general (Heidegger (2004), H 10); (b) *Hervorbringen* or *Herstellen*, which is Greek making (Heidegger (2004), H 15, H 16 and esp. H 24); and (c) *Herausfordern* and *Bestellen*, i.e., modern to late modern making (Heidegger (2004), H 19-H 23 and esp. H 24), the latter being a privative form. This intimates

a crucial point about the relation between *Being and Time* and Heidegger's later thought: the project of *Being and Time* must, by its very nature, pass over into a critical account of the history of Being; as Heidegger only subsequently came to see clearly, the destruction of the history of *ontology*, which restricts itself merely to the history of (Western) *philosophical reflection* on Being, must be undertaken as a structural moment in a "destructive" account of the history of Being itself.

xxxii Kant glimpses this point, admittedly in anthropologicistic form, when, in his lectures on logic, he observes that the three questions guiding critical philosophy may be summed up in one, viz., "What is man?"—see Kant [1800] (1978) A 25.

xxxiii See *NE* 1140b12.

xxxiv See, e.g., Heidegger (1979), § 27, H 128.

xxxv See Heidegger (1979), § 40, H 185.

xxxvi See Heidegger (1979), § 64, H 322-323.

xxxvii Heidegger claims that in the notion of *phronesis* Aristotle glimpsed the phenomenon of conscience—see Heidegger (1992b), § 8, H 56. His textual basis would appear to be Aristotle's claim that "it is impossible to be practically wise without being good." (*NE* 1144a35) Heidegger is arguably also right in a substantive sense—something which only becomes apparent once one distinguishes clearly between practical wisdom (*phronesis*) and mere know-how (*techné*, *Kunde*, craft or skill), or rather the sight which guides such know-how, making it intelligent (*Umsicht*).