

TRACING MARTIN HEIDEGGER'S ORIGIN OF AUTHENTICITY IN BEING AND TIME

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Abstract: Since the publication of *Sein und Zeit* in 1927, scholars have coupled Martin Heidegger's reflections on authenticity with a rich tradition of thought which reminds us that philosophy can, from time to time, function as a catalyst for self-discovery. While this function is an undeniable feature of Heideggerian authenticity, we suggest that it is secondary to the role that authenticity plays in Heidegger's philosophical investigations. By analyzing the full phenomena of authenticity and tracing its first technical uses back to Heidegger's early lectures on Aristotle, we show that Heidegger's methodological breakthrough in the early 1920s, the development of hermeneutic phenomenology, and the very structure of *Being and Time* are the result of Heidegger's appropriation of Aristotle's philosophical method. By analyzing these lectures and traditionally ignored uses of authenticity in *Being and Time*, we advance an account of the methodological sense of authenticity which looks to the tradition to uncover phenomena which have been obscured and covered over. In comparing this methodological reading to some standard readings, what we call the existential, intentional, and practical readings of authenticity, we demonstrate that the problems which arise in these accounts can be addressed by considering the full phenomena of authenticity and its methodological role in Heidegger's thinking. Finally, the term "authenticity [Eigentlichkeit]" is not only an ineliminable part of the structure of Heidegger's *Being and Time* but that it is also at the heart of his phenomenological method.

Keywords: Authenticity, Being and Time, Origin, Phenomenological

Introduction

When it comes to identifying what Heidegger means by authenticity in *Being and Time*, we face a complex challenge. Although Heidegger talks about authenticity often and in relation to numerous concepts, he never defines the term outright. He may mention that he intends it to have a technical status or that it is not to be confused with some sort of moral or religious concept, but these negative qualifiers only stand to ward off misinterpretations. When it comes to understanding any concept in particular, Heidegger looks to three important aspects: (1) What has been said about that concept by the tradition, (2) the phenomena that the concept is attempting to capture, and (3) the context for the discussion of the phenomena that the concept refers to. In uncovering the uses of authenticity from Heidegger's early writings, we make a crucial step toward understanding the role of authenticity in Heidegger's phenomenological method.

WHAT IS AUTHENTICITY?

According to Charles Guignon, who, in his wonderfully concise book, *On Being Authentic*, describes authenticity as one of the central ideals of the modern age¹. In this text, Guignon argues that authenticity, which can be found in various variations through various new-age movements and self-help books, is something that all human beings desire. Although Guignon characterizes these contemporary views of authenticity as a recent development, various formulations of it can be found in the thinking of Plato. According to Guignon, as an ideal, authenticity has two distinct stages: First, authenticity calls us to become more reflective of our lives and choices. Second, this reflection prompts one of two responses: either self-ownership, or self-loss². The act of reflection echoes one of the Delphic

¹ Charles Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), xiii.

² Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, 7.

maxims: “know thyself”, and Socrates’ view that “the unexamined life is not worth living”³. These battle cries of western philosophy emphasize the importance of reflecting on the human condition and our greater place within the world. Such reflection can lead to a kind of self- knowing that proves beneficial to living a fulfilling life, but it can also come at a cost.

In Socrates’ case, his own introspection leads him toward a conflict with the status quo, a disruption of the social order and reveals to him that most people have no idea what they are talking about⁴. Ultimately, this reflection and investigation reveals to Socrates that what we believe we know is mostly a jumbled and confused mess of opinions passed down to us unquestioningly⁵. But in telling everyone what he has learned about himself and the limits of human understanding, Socrates is denigrated and put to death. It is understandable then, why, in the *Crito*, Socrates suggests that we reject what has been understood by most people and instead shift our focus to the opinions of only those who can claim to be experts on the matter at hand⁶. Indeed, central to the concept of authenticity, throughout its various historical permutations, is the idea that we ought to maintain a healthy skepticism of what is said or understood by the public since what is understood by all is often a step or two removed from the truth. The consequence of this reflection is not entirely negative, as this reflection can do more than just dismiss the views of the *hoi polloi*. Instead, reflection can give rise to a “moment of vision” which Guignon describes as follows:

In the moment of vision, what is disclosed is not something outside yourself; rather it is you yourself. Yet this you that is discovered is a you that is for the most part concealed, hidden, lost, displaced, almost totally forgotten. What is needed, then, is a project of self-transformation aimed at recovering this lost you and reinstating it to its proper place at the center of your life⁷.

To borrow from Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, in the moment of vision, we come to see the shackles on our hands, recognize the shadows on the walls for what they are, and begin looking for an exit. At this point, Plato’s story holds up, since by most accounts of authenticity, our initial response is to feel compelled to turn back towards the shadows⁸. But if we find the courage to leave the cave, what do we find at the exit? Historically, what one finds when they give up the shadows on the wall varies depending on your view of what it means to be a self. In other words, while many philosophical perspectives favor the initial step of reflecting on your situation, what to do with that information is going to depend on what you think you have found. For the French existentialists, the act of reflection may reveal to you your role in choosing a path for yourself through self-ownership. For the religiously inclined, it may reveal to you your role in accepting your fate, surrendering to a higher power through an act of self-loss.

Authenticity as Self-Ownership

As a call to self-ownership, authenticity echoes Pindar’s maxim: “become who you are”⁹. That is, authenticity is not just about knowing who we are and examining ourselves but putting that knowledge to work: changing who we are or becoming who we are supposed to be. In English, the word “authenticity” meaning self-doing, captures this aspect well since this version of becoming authentic requires an act of the will; a doing which originates from the self. To will oneself authentically on this account requires one to understand oneself authentically.

For the French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre, the act of reflection reveals that what it means to be a self is to be a pure consciousness, what he calls a for-itself (*être-pour-soi*). This act of reflection reveals to us that, as conscious

³ Plato, *Plato: Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*, ed. John M. Cooper, trans. G. M. A. Grube, Second Edition, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002),38.

⁴ Plato, *Apology*, 21c-22e.

⁵ Plato, *Apology*, 23

⁶ Plato, *Crito*, 47.

⁷ Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, 2-3.

⁸ Plato, *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Publishing Co., 1997).56

⁹ Pindar’s quote is really “become who you are, knowing who that is.” Within the original Greek is the sense that becoming who you are depends on a revelatory experience of understanding.

beings, we are solely responsible for all that is good and bad in our experience of the world¹⁰. This has the potential to make us relatively uncomfortable, generating a great deal of anxiety, since we come to understand that we must make choices to become what we want to be. Sartre thinks that for the most part, we try to avoid this responsibility and cover up our understanding of this fact. The numerous ways of being that we take up to avoid this responsibility are what Sartre calls “bad faith” or inauthenticity. One of the main ways that we behave in bad faith is to adopt a role which is given to us in society¹¹. Sartre gives an account of the waiter who inauthentically performs the role of waiter to the highest degree¹². Everything the waiter does is completely planned out and manufactured: “he is playing at being a waiter in a cafe”¹³. Sartre thinks that this form of inauthenticity is just a way for the waiter to hide from the anxious call of his conscious being. Adopting a social role then becomes a way in which we pretend we are not free. Often, accounts of authenticity view falling into some socially assigned role as a failure to adequately respond to the anxiety that accompanies the freedom to choose your own fate.

Additional main example of this kind of self-ownership can be found in Nietzsche’s later philosophy. In the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche argues that humans have a drive to exalt their own ideals to the level of deities. In cultures where polytheism is practiced, humans are able to find fulfilment in following gods or spirits who embody the values that they find within themselves. With the dominance of monotheism, Nietzsche believes that western culture has adopted a stance counter to their own will, which limits the pursuit of ideals intrinsic to the individual¹⁴. For Nietzsche, this step has come at the cost of undermining the individuality of each person and can only be overcome with a radical transformation of our relation to the world and to ourselves. This radically transformed individual, which Nietzsche calls the *Übermensch*, is self-owning above all else, a creator who sculpts himself out of marble¹⁵. As Nietzsche describes it, the *Übermensch* breaks free from the views of the masses, with mankind as it has previously been understood, and becomes something completely new. The *Übermensch* is not ignorant, but rather, enlightened, and it is from the state of heightened understanding that he comes to be. Although Nietzsche does not use the language of authenticity, the idea of radical self-transformation is central to his later philosophy. For Nietzsche, however, this transformation precedes a radical transformation of society in general. This is not always the case with accounts of self-ownership, since society is often construed as the source of inauthentic social conformism.

Authenticity as self-ownership is often criticized for its tendency to interpret the world in egoistic or subjectivistic terms. These criticisms are not unfounded, since authenticity as self-ownership is usually accompanied by social criticism and frequently regards the people we encounter in our everyday lives as mere sheep, or counters, under the control of their overlords who they obey without question. From the perspective of everyday folks, these self-owned individuals may appear as delusional tyrants determined on controlling themselves and the world around them. This situates the self-owned as masters of their own destiny, supermen who strike out to create the world anew in their own image. Those who are critical of self-ownership often propose that a radical self-transformation is impossible, or even a mere delusion. For those who propose that self-ownership is unattainable, authenticity as self-loss may present a humbler alternative.

Authenticity as Self-Loss

Authenticity can also be thought of as a form of self-loss. Rather than inspiring us to choose our own path, authenticity reveals to us our place within the cosmos, our obligation to others, or our subservience to God. Authenticity on these accounts is best realized through a process of letting go of the desires of the ego, and letting oneself be what we already are. As self-loss, authenticity can be an acceptance of the world as it is and one’s place within it.

¹⁰ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York, New York: Washington Square Press, 1992), 77.

¹¹ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 82.

¹² Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 101.

¹³ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 102.

¹⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche: The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff and Adrian Del Caro, (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 128.

¹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unpublished Fragments from the Period of Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, ed. Alan D. Schrift and Duncan Large, trans. Paul S. Loeb and David F. Tinsley, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2019), 56

Socrates can be seen in this paradigm in the *Apology* where he describes himself as a being on a mission from God, inspired by an encounter between Chaerephon and the Oracle at Delphi who claimed that no one is wiser than Socrates¹⁶. It is an open question as to whether we should take Socrates at his word when he discusses his divine mission to a room of people looking to condemn him to death. But if we take him seriously, his description of this divine revelation, which inspires his entire life pursuit, embodies this spirit of authenticity as letting-go or acceptance of one's fate in the name of something larger. Such self-resignation for something bigger than one's own aspirations is central to the ideal of authenticity as self-loss. This reading is supported by the *Crito* where, when asked to flee to save his life, Socrates rejects the arguments of his interlocutor; not because he does not think it would work, but because it would fly in the face of who he is, or at least, who he has surrendered himself to be. To flee would be to reject the divine fate which has been offered to him¹⁷. To flee would be inauthentic; and so, to be authentic, Socrates accepts his unjust punishment and drinks the hemlock¹⁸.

In authenticity as self-loss, death is not always required. The loss of the self-need not be a literal destruction of the authentic person. Instead, authenticity as self-loss tends to focus on surrender or resignation to forces beyond our control, and consequently, features prominently in the tenets of stoic philosophy. Marcus Aurelius argues that philosophy "consists in keeping the divine spirit within each of us free from disrespect and harm... accepting all that may happen and is allotted to us as coming from that source, whatever it is, from which we ourselves came"¹⁹. In proper stoic fashion, Marcus Aurelius argued that to accept that there are things out of our control, as we can only affect small things like our judgments of the events, or actions we are responsible for. Equally Guignon describes it as "... having a place in the shared world and fulfilling one's responsibilities is sufficient to provide a secure sense that one is faring well and achieving one's proper purpose in the scheme of things"²⁰. This is not to say that stoic philosophy requires inaction, or some form of defeatism, but it usually involves accepting one's place within a larger system, resigning the possibility that one is solely in charge of their own fate. On some accounts, this self-resignation still involves a conscious choice, but it is a choice to come to terms with our limitations rather than attempt to overcome them.

We can also find such views in Augustine, who, in his *Confessions*, begins the long reflective process of understanding himself and who he is. The result of this act of reflection is the revelation that he is a servant of God. Consequently, he spends the rest of his life attempting to accept this fact while ignoring his sinful call to be anything else. As Guignon puts it: "What Augustine finds through his self-inspection is that the self is like a free radical, incomplete and hopelessly unstable unless it is bound in the right way to God."²¹ The only way to become bound to God is resign one's willful existence and give it up to God in an act of self-loss. Critics of authenticity as self-loss often note the possibility that whatever the individual is surrendering themselves to may, in fact, not be real. For instance, a man who surrenders himself to the will of God in an act of self-loss may think he is fulfilling his true potential as a servant of God. If that god does not, in fact, exist, then what this individual is surrendering themselves to is likely a set of culturally contingent practices. Rather than becoming one's true self, this person may in fact become the exact opposite; a person living a prescribed life based on a lie. Even worse if the cultural practices are not contingent or random but are in fact the result of a concerted effort to manipulate people, then not only could you be giving up your only chance at being yourself but you might also be the victim of overt manipulation. A prime example may be the number of individuals who, out of their surrender to the will of God, set off for battle during the crusades. These soldiers caused great suffering and suffered greatly themselves, all in the name of something which may not even exist. Thus, authenticity as self-loss can lead to dangerous ideological territory as well.

The debate over self-ownership and self-loss within the broader notion of authenticity conveys why Guignon is correct in establishing authenticity as a central modern ideal. In essence, these debates are just a different way of

¹⁶ Plato, *Apology*. 21

¹⁷ Plato, *Crito*. 54

¹⁸ Plato, *Phaedo*, 118a

¹⁹ Marcus Aurelius, *The Essential Marcus Aurelius*, translated by Jacob Needleman and John Piazza (New York: Tarcher Perigee, 2008), 17

²⁰ Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, 25.

²¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095a27.

asking “what does it mean to be a true human being and how do I achieve it?” Even though these two paths of authenticity radically diverge when it comes to the means of achieving authenticity, they both agree that what is desirable is an authentic, and thus true relation to our own self.

On the account of self-ownership, this self is something we are responsible for creating. On the account of authenticity as self-loss, our responsibility is to let go, and open up ourselves to a self which is given to us by others, our society, or God. Nevertheless, both accounts view authenticity as an ideal of the self and begin with a moment of reflection or insight which prompts a radical self-transformation to achieve some harmonious state of being. The influence of this tradition of authenticity is visible in the way that scholars debate the nature of Heideggerian authenticity in *Being and Time*.²² While scholars disagree on whether Heidegger sides with self-ownership or self-loss, they seem to agree that Heidegger’s reflections on authenticity are best understood as an ideal self-relation, where the goals of authenticity are seen entirely in terms of some accomplishment of the self. While it is understandable to attempt to situate Heidegger’s views on authenticity within this larger tradition, what results is a narrower interpretation of authenticity than Heidegger intended. This narrower interpretation is what we call the “traditional interpretation” of Heideggerian authenticity and refers to any account which argues that authenticity is a self-focused ideal which is achieved through self-ownership or self-loss.

DEFINITIONS OF HEIDEGGERIAN AUTHENTICITY

Although some parts of *Being and Time* seem to corroborate the traditional interpretation of authenticity and cast Heidegger as just another voice in a long history of debates over this ideal self-relation, when juxtaposed against the stated goals of the text, this traditional interpretation casts Heidegger’s project in a strange light. Since the goal at the outset of *Being and Time* is to investigate what we mean by “being” and how that relates to time, it is not entirely clear why Heidegger would bother to spend so much time talking about authenticity and becoming a self. It is as though Heidegger merely got unfocused into composing an ethical treatise in the middle of writing his magnum opus. Of course, scholars can just appeal to the fact that Heidegger wrote this text quickly, relying mostly on lecture notes, in hopes of securing a job.

Thus, any strangeness in the organization of the text, its topics, and its apparent detours, can all be explained as an unintended consequence of its hasty construction²³. Instead of asking if this is really what Heidegger had in mind, the traditional interpretation of authenticity devolves into a debate as to whether Heidegger successfully carried out this task of mapping out the guidelines for this self-focused ideal.

Heidegger’s use of authenticity has some affinity with traditional considerations, its role is much more significant. We consider three excellent attempts within the traditional view to make sense of the complex phenomena of authenticity. These attempts are found in dictionaries and lexicons dedicated to decoding the complexities of Heidegger’s robust family of terms. These definitions are particularly useful because, while they attempt to remain neutral concerning the various ways that authenticity can be interpreted, they demonstrate the clear influence of the tradition in how they focus on certain aspects of authenticity while ignoring others.

In their Heidegger dictionary, *Historical Dictionary of Heidegger’s Philosophy*, Frank Schalow and Alfred Denker provide a dense and limited interpretation of the phenomena of authenticity which aligns with the traditional interpretation. This definition provides us with two insights concerning authenticity: the importance of translation, and the role of anxiety in self-reflection. But this definition also presents us with a puzzle concerning how authenticity is achieved for *Dasein* in terms of practical action.

When it comes to interpreting and translating Heidegger’s works, etymology is always an essential first step. Heidegger painstakingly picks his words, often changing his terminology when it fails to meet his expectations or creating new words when he finds it necessary. The German word for authenticity, *Eigentlichkeit*, is no exception.

²² Guignon, On Being Authentic, 16.

²³ Lee Braver, ed., *Division III of Heidegger’s Being and Time: The Unanswered Question of Being*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2015).

The root, *eigen*, which means “own” is central to what Heidegger means by this term²⁴. In acknowledging the etymological root, Schalow and Denker opt to translate *Eigentlichkeit* and *Uneigentlichkeit* as “ownedness” and “unownedness” respectively, which they define as “two modes of human existing that are grounded in the mineness of being-there”²⁵. Already we can see that this definition coincides nicely with the traditional conception of authenticity discussed above by thinking of authenticity as a self-focused ideal. For Schalow and Denker, Heideggerian authenticity is best understood as a mode of human existence that requires taking ownership of one’s own self, echoing the notion of authenticity as self-ownership discussed above.

Their definition also captures the fact that for Heidegger, *Dasein* is always in a state of tension between ownedness and unownedness. To take ownership of our self, we must overcome the unownedness of our being. Taking ownership is made possible by anxiety which brings “[Dasein] face-to-face with its ownmost, individualized self and for the possibility of coming into its own, which it already is”²⁶. Here again we see the traditional view of authenticity in plain sight, there is a reflective moment which reveals to us our ownmost being, and makes self-ownership possible. We can see that the moment of reflection, what precipitates authentic self-choosing, is brought about through an encounter with anxiety and self-ownership is described as a mode of human existence that we can take up in response.

The problem which arises in this definition concerns the logistics of achieving authenticity. According to Schalow and Denker, *Dasein* becomes authentic insofar as it comes “face-to-face with its ownmost, individualized self,” but they describe this self as something “which it already is.” In describing the authentic encounter as “coming face-to-face” it is not entirely clear what that requires. Perhaps coming face-to-face would merely require recognizing who we are. But if authenticity is merely discovering who we are, then what does this have to do with resolutely choosing? Is choosing yourself merely acknowledging who you are and accepting it? From this definition alone, it is altogether unclear if *Dasein* even needs to do anything except reflect on its anxiety in order to achieve authenticity. Given the limited space that Schalow and Denker dedicate to this definition, we should not expect an exhaustive definition, or a full account of how *Dasein* achieves authenticity.

Nevertheless, this definition shows why the traditional interpretation of authenticity is so often applied to discussions of Heideggerian authenticity. From this definition alone, it seems like Heideggerian authenticity is fairly straight-forward: To become authentic is to own yourself, which can only happen after a moment of reflection inspired by anxiety. This puts Heidegger in line with a rich tradition of thinkers who argued along the lines of self-ownership outlined above. The only puzzle left is to figure out the requisite criteria for self-ownership. Unfortunately, things are not so simple

In his work, *The Heidegger Dictionary*, Daniel Dahlstrom’s definition is helpful because it addresses the negative and positive significance of social assimilation, the call of conscience and the importance of the unyielding choice. This definition, gives rise to an additional puzzle, since Heidegger’s account struggles to provide adequate motivation for the resolute choice which is requisite for authenticity. Dahlstrom’s definition follows the traditional interpretation of authenticity as self-ownership and identifies the importance of overcoming social influence for becoming a self: “Before we have even come of age, we have fallen prey to forces of assimilation. We seemingly make choices all the time, but it is not clear that we are doing any more than going through the motions since the choices are made under the sway of some group²⁷.” According to Dahlstrom he indicates the centrality of overcoming the sway of “the They,” a social influence that assimilates us into fallenness. On this account, authenticity is only achieved by going against the grain of social conventions and practices by way of a Kierkegaardian or Sartrean rejection of social conformism. This is common to the traditional interpretation of Heideggerian authenticity that casts the social in opposition to the will of the individual: To be authentic is to break free of the herd.

²⁴Daniel O. Dahlstrom, *The Heidegger Dictionary* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 28.

²⁵Frank Schalow and Alfred Denker, *Historical Dictionary of Heidegger’s Philosophy, 2nd edition* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 213.

²⁶ Schalow and Denker, *Historical Dictionary of Heidegger’s Philosophy*, 213

²⁷ Dahlstrom, *The Heidegger Dictionary*, 29.

Although Dahlstrom does focus on this anti-social element, his definition also draws our attention to the possibility of authentically being-with others whereby we avoid “foisting our possibilities upon [others.]”²⁸ Already, we can see glints of conflict between Heideggerian authenticity and the traditional model of authenticity as self-ownership, which tends to view society as a source of inauthenticity, rather than a possible avenue for authentic self-realization. Dahlstrom’s brief but notable discussion on authentic being-with suggests a level of community and shared concern that usually goes unexamined. Thus, our first crucial insight concerns the possibility that Heideggerian authenticity is in part a rejection of the social, while simultaneously being amenable to being-with our fellow Dasein. For Dahlstrom, it is the call of our conscience that calls *Dasein* to “take accountability of itself,” and to help release it from the demands of the herd²⁹.

According to Dahlstrom, for Heidegger it is the conscience that “attests to [our] authentic capability”³⁰. In other words, while authentic self-reflection is preempted by anxiety, the resolute self-choice is inspired by the call of conscience, which is ultimately just *Dasein* listening to itself for the first time. Thus, from Dahlstrom’s definition, our second crucial insight is that an adequate interpretation of authenticity must account for the role of conscience in our resolute choosing.

Despite his brief departure to address a more positive aspect of the social, Dahlstrom’s definition is fairly close to the traditional interpretation of authenticity, which characterizes authenticity as a self-focused ideal. Nevertheless, Dahlstrom is aware that there are some serious limitations to this view, which he attributes to Heidegger’s views on the nature of authentic choosing. Here he demonstrates that the traditional interpretation struggles to find an intelligible middle path between unbounded radical freedom and rigid social conformism arguing that:

If that basis [for the choice], e.g., some reason or belief, is drawn from the averageness of everyday Dasein, then the authenticity of the choice seems questionable. Some interpreters countenance this enabling role of average everydayness in Dasein’s capacity to be authentic, while others contend that the authentic choice to choose prescind from any such norm, thereby inviting the charge of decisionism. Both approaches are problematic. The former seems to violate the indexicality of Dasein’s authentic choice, i.e., the fact that its choice to choose is made in view of its projection of its death, not shared with any other Dasein. The latter approach renders authenticity an unmotivated spontaneity, a kind of moral luck³¹.

Dahlstrom’s definition of authenticity brings out the long held interpretive problems that have surrounded the traditional reading of authenticity. To be authentic, we must transcend the influence of the social. The problem with this conception of authenticity is that in order for something to be own most, it must come completely from within³². In order to break free of the herd, we would have to choose to be something that has not been passed down to us through society. But what roles or ways of being exist that have not already been influenced by society? All choices, all ways of being, are historically and socially contingent. Dahlstrom notes that the two viable options are unsatisfying. For scholars who tend to see Heideggerian authenticity as part of this traditional debate, this dilemma between the social and the self is a point of extreme contention³³.

Dahlstrom’s definition shows authenticity to be a terminologically rich phenomenon. It emphasizes a significant relation between authenticity and the social, the call of conscience, and questions the possibility of making a truly resolute choice. What we can glean from this definition is that if we are going to make sense of authenticity, we will have to be able to address the role of the social, the conscience, and resolve the puzzle concerning the conditions for authentic choosing.

²⁸ Dahlstrom, *The Heidegger Dictionary*, 28.

²⁹ Dahlstrom, *The Heidegger Dictionary*, 32.

³⁰ Dahlstrom, *The Heidegger Dictionary*, 43.

³¹ Dahlstrom, *The Heidegger Dictionary*, 29-30.

³² Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 98

³³ Olafson, Frederick. “Heidegger a la Wittgenstein or ‘Coping’ with Professor Dreyfus.” *Inquiry*. 37. (1994): 45–64.

Our final definition comes from Käufer's entry on "Authenticity" in *The Heidegger Lexicon*. Käufer's definition is much more detailed and containing much of the content of the above definitions with some important additions. The crucial insights gleaned from this definition are as follows: the emphasis on authenticity as self-expression that has historically gone astray and the recognition that inauthentic self-interpretations have plagued the history of philosophy. The puzzle of this definition is derived from the fact that while Käufer attributes a methodological role to authenticity, he does not adequately explain what that role is.

In line with the traditional interpretation of authenticity, Käufer considers authenticity entirely in terms of an ideal self-relation when he defines authenticity generally: "As a general definition one can say that Dasein exists authentically if it exists in such a way as to express its own ontological make-up, including the vulnerability of its basic commitments."³⁴ Authenticity here is understood as a way of existing, one that is preferable to its inauthentic counter-point. According to Käufer, the counter-concept, inauthenticity, can be understood as "exist[ing] in such a way as to cover up its own ontological make-up..."³⁵ Thus authenticity and inauthenticity are characterized by the way that they uncover or cover up Dasein's ontology respectively.

For Käufer, authentic self-relating is a mode of disclosure which uncovers the ontology of Dasein, whereas inauthentic self-relating result in the covering up or obfuscation of Dasein's ontology. Thus, the first insight from this definition is the link between authenticity and unconcealment. Käufer's general definition of authenticity also leads us to the next crucial insight: Historically we have been conceptualizing the self in a way that covers up its ontology. Käufer describes the historical self-conceptions from Kant and Descartes, which see human beings as a "persistent, world-independent self-identifying entity."³⁶ Käufer sees Heidegger's account of authenticity as a corrective to these Kantian and Cartesian inauthentic depictions of the self. To overcome the mistaken (and inauthentic) self-interpretations passed down to us through our history, we have to gain an authentic self-understanding. Thus, our second insight is that authenticity is part of Heidegger's attempt to overcome the traditional misinterpretation of the self. Taken together, these two insights lead us to our puzzle: Käufer believes that authenticity as the self-relation which unconceals Dasein's ontological structure is important for Heidegger's method in *Being and Time*, but his description of how that takes place is incredibly vague.

According to Käufer, while the first division of *Being and Time* introduces the concepts of authenticity and inauthenticity, they do "little conceptual work until division two."³⁷ He notes that since the goal of *Being and Time* is to uncover the full ontology of Dasein, and because it is only in division two that Heidegger adds his analysis of authentic Dasein to the account of Dasein's ontological structure, it is only with the second division where we find the account of Dasein in its authentic mode of being, and consequently, see the full picture of *Dasein's* ontology³⁸. Here the "full picture" refers to both the authentic self-interpretation found in the latter half of *Being and Time*, and the various inauthentic self-interpretations which have been passed down through the tradition which can be found in the first half of *Being and Time*. The problem is that Käufer gives no justification for why Heidegger would need to bother with these inauthentic conceptions of the self in his demonstration of the ontology of *Dasein*. If the goal of *Being and Time* really is to uncover the full ontology of *Dasein*, why would Heidegger even want to focus on accounts which distort that ontology in the first place? Thus, the puzzle of this definition which must be resolved pertains to the role of authenticity and inauthenticity for Heidegger's method. If we are to better understand Heideggerian authenticity, we will need to explain why Heidegger would dedicate so much time to talking about inauthentic modes of being. This puzzle notwithstanding, Käufer's definition should be praised for defending the multifaceted nature of authenticity. As we will see in chapters three and four, the link between authenticity and unconcealment will prove crucial for understanding Heidegger's views on authenticity. Furthermore, the problem of inauthentic self-interpretations passed down through the tradition of philosophy will also be vital for understanding the importance of history in Heidegger's phenomenological method which informs

³⁴ Stephen Käufer, "Authenticity," in Mark A. Wrathall, ed., *The Cambridge Heidegger Lexicon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 71.

³⁵ Käufer, "Authenticity," 71.

³⁶ Käufer, "Authenticity," 73.

³⁷ Käufer, "Authenticity," 76.

³⁸ Käufer, "Authenticity," 79.

the very structure Being and Time. Lastly, Käufer's suggestion that authenticity is methodological is insightful, even if his description of that method is underdeveloped.

Conclusion

We now have a conditional understanding of Heideggerian authenticity. Even if, for the most part, these definitions remain framed by the traditional interpretation of authenticity. From Schalow and Denker we learned that, for Heidegger, anxiety prompts the moment of self-reflection which makes authenticity possible. However, it was unclear what, other than self-reflection or awareness, is required to achieve authenticity for *Dasein*. From Dahlstrom we learned that authenticity involves a complex relation to the social. However, the depiction of authenticity as a rejection of the social put the possibility for a resolute choice in question. From Käufer we saw that authenticity is a condition for the possibility of uncovering the ontology of *Dasein* and thus is rooted in the method of *Being and Time* itself. But the way that authenticity and method were related remained underdeveloped. Taken together, these definitions demonstrate the tension found in the secondary scholarship concerning authenticity. Synthesizing these views into a singular definition, what we call the "traditional interpretation of Heideggerian authenticity" could be defined as follows: "A self-focused and ideal mode of being for *Dasein* that is brought about through an anxious moment of insight, which prompts *Dasein* to overcome the social roles that it has heretofore unthinkingly adopted in its inauthentic everydayness."

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