The Theory of Community in *Being and Time*
THE THEORY OF COMMUNITY IN

BEING AND TIME

By

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This thesis seeks to show that there is a substantive theory of community in Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. There is more to this theory of community than is commonly thought. While the importance of the structures of Being-with and authenticity is stressed, I argue that Heidegger’s account of historicality from Division II, Chapter 5 is vital for any adequate understanding of the theory of community in this text. In Part 2, the theory of community in *Being and Time* is compared to that which Heidegger appeals to in his speech "The Self-Assertion of the German University". I argue that the two theories are very similar to one another. Having established this, I offer some criticisms of the theory of community. Heidegger’s theory of community is unacceptable to those of us who accept a liberal-pluralist vision of society. The theory of community he gives in *Being and Time*, by appealing to monolithic notions of "people" (*Volk*) and "destiny" contradicts the liberal-pluralist vision.
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Bibliography
Introduction

Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time* is a text which is rich in detail and dense philosophical arguments. Its influence has extended to this day not only because of what or whom it has influenced but also because of the scope and depth of the solutions presented to the philosophical problems it treats. Not only does Heidegger deploy novel solutions, but his doctrine of authenticity, influenced, no doubt, by the aftermath of the First World War and turbulent times of the Weimar Republic, offers a radical conception of the place of the individual within society. Among the many concepts elaborated in this text, it is arguable that the notion of authenticity has attracted the most attention from disciples and critics. I make this remark, not because this thesis will undertake yet another analysis of authenticity, but rather because I wish to highlight a concept which has perhaps been overlooked due to the fascination the concept of authenticity has aroused. Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness* takes its departure from Heidegger’s analysis of authenticity and attempts to reformulate this notion in terms of a radically existentialist standpoint. While Sartre’s conception has been shown to be clearly not

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what Heidegger conceived authenticity to be, there is still a tendency to interpret authenticity as radical individualization. The interpretation of Being and Time as a doctrine of radical individualization is what I will be calling the “solipsistic interpretation”. While there is certainly some merit to seeing matters in that light, this interpretation neglects or downplays the important substantive role played by Dasein’s Being-with-Others.

This “solipsistic” interpretation is to be found in many of the “Introductions to Being and Time” and “Commentaries on Being and Time”. For instance, Richard Schmitt claims that “the failure of [Being and Time] to provide a vocabulary appropriate to social phenomena is particularly serious”. Stephen Mulhall dismisses Heidegger’s talk of authenticity as being overly personal and presumptuous. Other commentators focus on the mechanics of authenticity and Heidegger’s fascinating meditation on the ontological meaning of death which inaugurates the analysis of authenticity. This thesis will focus upon the element which we feel is neglected by these interpretations. It is our contention that a substantive theory of community is to be found in Being and Time.

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2For example, see Joan Stambaugh, “An Inquiry into Authenticity and Inauthenticity in Being and Time”, Research in Phenomenology 7 (1977): 153-161.

3Richard Schmitt, Martin Heidegger on Being Human (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1976), pp. 245-246.

To speak of a theory of community in *Being and Time* may appear to be a hopeless or absurd task. The word “community” is mentioned only once in the text during the analysis of the historicality of Dasein. At first glance, there is little to suggest that there is a theory of community to be found in this text. Any analysis which touches on Dasein’s dealings with others is highly theoretical and seems to be directed exclusively toward the completion of the existential analytic and the completion of the task of fundamental ontology. Heidegger’s own remarks about the limitation of his existential analytic to the task of fundamental ontology only encourages the idea that there is no theory of community to be found in *Being and Time*. However, it is my claim that there is indeed such a theory. To be sure, it is not in the form of a fully developed theory, nor often does it appear as an explicit element of the text. However, it is operative under the surface of the text: it is a latent element of the existential analytic.

The motivation for an inquiry into the idea of community in Heidegger arises from the controversy surrounding the so-called Heidegger Case. Heidegger’s affiliation with the Nazi Party has been so well established that even his most resolute defenders concede that his activities during the period when he was Rector of the University of Freiburg were those of a Nazi sympathizer.\(^5\) However, one might wonder why such a topic has

been chosen in the light of the enormous quantity of work which has recently appeared on this subject. A quick survey of the mountain of monographs, essays, articles, chapters, and various other texts put forth on this question in the last decade may give the reader pause. Various texts have focussed on the political implications of Heidegger's ontology; many are concerned with establishing a break between the Heidegger who made the "Rector's Address" and the Heidegger who later withdrew from public engagement in political action. Others seek to contradict these works by showing that there exists a continuity between the "two" Heideggers. Some have suggested that a distinction must be drawn between Heidegger the man and his philosophy. It is, however, difficult to accept such a claim given that Karl Löwith reports that Heidegger himself told him in 1936 that his own concept of historicity provided the basis for his engagement with the National Socialist movement.  

Regardless of the accuracy of this anecdote, it is important to determine the extent to which Heidegger's philosophy permits an affiliation


with fascism.

Despite the enormous volume of work produced on the implications of Heidegger’s association with Nazism, there is little written on Heidegger’s notion of a community or a people. This is surprising given the centrality of nationalist language in Nazi ideology. One might think that an individual who aligned himself with a nationalist movement would have a notion of what constitutes a nation. Many commentators have avoided this question because there is allegedly too little to be said on this matter; Heidegger has not written anything about this other than a few lines scattered throughout his writings.\(^7\) It is my intention to show the inadequacy of such a claim by elucidating the “latent” theory of community to be found in the text.

It is not my intention to discuss the specifics of Heidegger’s involvement with the regime. I shall deliberately avoid inquiry into the details of Heidegger’s engagement with Nazism for two reasons: 1) Such an inquiry would likely take the form of an examination of the events of Heidegger’s life in the 1930’s and this has already been done several times over. 2) Such an inquiry cannot directly tell us much about the substance of his philosophy, only Heidegger’s application of his own thought. My first

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\(^7\) Cf. for instance Hans Ruin, *Enigmatic Origins* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1994), p. 140, note 57. Ruin remarks that the “few lines” on destiny in *BT* II:5 “exhaust” what Heidegger has to say of political philosophy in this text.
concern in this essay is to establish the existence of a theory of community in *Being and Time*. After showing that there is indeed such a theory, I want to draw out its implications. Given Heidegger’s support of the Nazi Party, I want to see what sort of theory of community he is espousing. My focus will be exclusively on two texts, *Being and Time* (1927), and “The Self- Assertion of the German University”\(^8\) (1933). I shall analyse the theory of community contained therein, in an attempt to further our understanding of the troubling link between a movement of monstrous barbarism and the thought of a man who has been hailed by many as the greatest philosophical thinker of the twentieth century. However, I will not be drawing any conclusions about the role the theory of community might have played in Heidegger’s adoption of Nazism.

The first part will be concerned with tracing the theme of community in *Being and Time*. The investigation will focus on Heidegger’s notion of the world, Being-with-Others and authenticity, and historicality. Heidegger’s presentation of the concept of historicity, which is found in Division II, Chapter 5, sheds the most light upon the theory of community. I will be paying close attention to the related concept of destiny which is also expounded in this section. Destiny stands for the “historizing” of “the community or a people”; what this means will be explored at the end of Part 1. Part 2 consists of an

analysis of the Rector’s Address which will show that it makes use of a theory of community which is analogous to that of *Being and Time*. Following this, I will critically assess Heidegger’s theory by demonstrating its philosophical and political implications.
Part 1: The Theory of Community of Being and Time

As I pointed out in my Introduction, the concept of community occupies a vague and contentious space in Heidegger’s thought and its reception. In this part, I shall examine the conceptual structure which Heidegger sets forth in Being and Time as the basis for any theory of community. I shall also show that there is a theory of community in this text. However, due to the (uncompleted) task Heidegger set for himself in this text and because of the distinction he wants to draw between fundamental ontology and “philosophical anthropology”, the concepts which I will be drawing out of Being and Time will be of a highly general nature. The basic orientation of this text toward fundamental ontology leaves many concrete questions unanswered. For instance, Heidegger would have relegated both theoretical and practical political questions to the realm of a philosophical anthropology. Since political questions do not further the search for the meaning of Being, and moreover, since the answers to such questions depend implicitly upon an understanding of Being, their consideration is to be put off until after the meaning of Being has been clarified. (cf. BT ¶3) Thus, it might seem that there is no room in Being and Time for a theory of community. Despite this, I intend to show in this part that there is not only a formal sense of “community” in Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein’s Being-with-Others, but that he provides a substantive account of community
which is more robust than most people recognize. The analytic of Mitsein in Division I and the discussion of the historicity of Dasein in Division II will provide us with sufficient conceptual material from which we can form an understanding of Heidegger's conception of community. As was noted in the introduction, the characterization of Being and Time as a strongly existentialist or individualistic work neglects the fundamental communitarian themes of the last portion of Division II. It is my intention to show the inadequacy of such an interpretation here.

In Part I, I will first consider the fundamental formal structures which underlie the possibility of any community, the concept of "world" and the existential structure of Being-with. It is with these concepts that Heidegger accounts for the communal and social orientation of human existence. However, this picture is rather impoverished. We are only given the idea of the most general "categories" of social interaction. I shall proceed to an interpretation of authenticity as a perhaps paradoxically communal structure. It is my claim that Heidegger does give us the beginnings of a theory of community through his notion of authenticity. This claim is only paradoxical in the light of the strongly existentialist and solipsistic readings of Being and Time. Finally, the account of community which arises from my reading of the general structures of existence will be integrated with the penultimate chapter of Division II, where Heidegger returns to the concept of community through his focus on history and where he gives us
a more concrete account of community.

1.1) The Formal Theory of Community: i) Being-in-the-World

In this section I set forth the fundamental existential structures that Heidegger identifies in Division I upon which the theory of community rests. It will be necessary first to introduce Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein as Being-in-the-world so that we can highlight the shared nature of the world from which the existentiale¹ of Being-with arises.

For Heidegger, Dasein is to be distinguished from other beings because unlike the rest, its Being is an issue for it. Dasein always already has a pre-ontological understanding of Being, although this idea may be vague and inarticulate. Nonetheless, Dasein makes use of its understanding of Being in all its dealings with entities in the world. Because Dasein has this pre-ontological understanding of Being, it encounters within the world entities in their respective states of Being: things as present-to-hand, equipment as ready-to-hand, and other Dasein as Dasein. Furthermore, “Dasein is an entity which, in its very Being, comports itself understandingly towards that Being” (BT 78 [35]). As Heidegger says, its Being is said to be its own. It is because Dasein’s Being is its own that the modes of Being known as authenticity and inauthenticity are possible.

¹It is appropriate to note here that I take Heidegger’s term “existential” to refer to the ontological analysis of Dasein. Thus, an “existentiale” would be an element of Dasein’s Being. “Existentiell” signifies an element of Dasein’s ontic existence. That is to say, by the “ontic” I mean the historically situated tactical “life” of an individual Dasein.
Heidegger’s first characterization of Dasein is that of Being-in-the-world. In this context the world is not a celestial body spinning in the void of space, nor can it be adequately represented by a globe or map. Most fundamentally for Heidegger, the world is “that ‘wherein’ a factual Dasein as such can be said to ‘live’” (BT 93 [65]). This “wherein” which Heidegger claims constitutes the world of Dasein does not merely signify a factual “space.” Rather, the “wherein” points to the “there” of Dasein, its location in the midst of the totality of significance which constitutes the world. The there of Dasein is its clearing of the surrounding environment. This clearing frees up entities encountered within it as a consequence of Dasein’s understanding of Being. In its everyday activities, Dasein makes use of equipment which has been freed in its clearing with an eye toward the completion of various projects which are significant for Dasein. It is this system of references to projects which is constitutive for the Being of equipment, and the totality of these references, which Heidegger calls significance, is the world. The significance of projects is ultimately related to possibilities of Dasein’s Being. For instance, Dasein uses a hammer to fix a shingle to the roof in order to be dry. However, for the most part, Heidegger claims that Dasein is absorbed in its projects and in the entities within the world with which it pursues its projects.

Heidegger’s ultimate definition of the world is “the totality of significance” (BT 120 [87]). The world in which we live is not to be thought of as a collection of entities,
but rather a coherent ensemble of projects and functions which are freed by circumstantial Dasein for its purposes. Since the ready-to-hand is always to be understood primarily in terms of its involvements, and since Heidegger believes that the circumstantial “doing one’s task” is the primary mode of comportment in the world, the world must be conceived as being fundamentally related to the daily activities of Dasein. However, Heidegger goes further, trying to show the unitary nature of the world, as when he claims that “an involvement is itself discovered only on the basis of the prior discovery of a totality of involvements” ($BT$ 118 [85]). What Heidegger means is that the discovery of a particular involvement presupposes the already prior discovery of the totality of involvements. This claim is a corollary of the assertion that Dasein has a pre-understanding of Being. If Dasein understands Being, then the world is revealed to it prior to any thematic engagement with an entity in the world. Because the world’s significance leads back to Dasein, and because the world constitutes the possibilities of Being toward which Dasein always comports itself, the world is itself an existential structure. It is only through this existential structure which animates the Being of Dasein in accordance with its understanding of Being that any possible encounter and freeing of entities within the world can be possible.

It is important here to focus upon Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein’s self-understanding in terms of its possibilities of Being. Dasein always understands itself in
terms of its possibilities of Being. Its possibilities are indexed to the world in a context of possible actions. Heidegger cautions his reader that the term “possibility” is not meant to be understood logico-categorically. Heidegger claims that the existential conception of possibility underlies the abstract logical conception of possibility. The existential meaning of possibility is the “most primordial and ultimate positive way in which Dasein is characterized ontologically” (BT 183 [143-144]). Possibility is always a possibility of Dasein’s Being. Dasein always has definite possibilities which are defined by the actual situation in which it finds itself. This existential characterization of possibility is “the most primordial” because Dasein, through its concern for its Being, is care. In caring for its Being, Dasein pushes ahead of itself into its possibilities of Being-in-the-world. Consequently, while the world was initially described as a totality of involvements with the ready-to-hand (significance), in existence it is revealed as “the categorical whole of a possible interconnection of the ready-to-hand” (BT 184 [144]).

1.1) The Formal Theory of Community: ii) Being-with-Others

The picture drawn of the world thus far is rather solitary and artificial. In everyday existence Dasein can and does encounter equipment that is not “its own”. A strange car parked at the side of the road indicates the existence of others, even if there are no others in sight. Furthermore, Dasein’s projects are often done in reference to or for others. Dasein can be building a house for someone else, or perhaps Dasein has
purchased some bread from the baker. Thus, the assertion that the significance of the world leads back to Dasein is somewhat misleading, since it appears to say that all significance leads back to an individual Dasein. However, the examples above indicate that this is incorrect. Heidegger claims that Being-with [Mitsein] is a fundamental existentialie of Dasein. Dasein never encounters other Dasein as entities which are merely present-at-hand. Rather, the “Other is encountered in his Dasein-with in the world” (BT 156 [120]). Dasein-with indicates the “Being-there-with” of others, since Dasein itself is always Being-with. Dasein is always encountered as Dasein by virtue of the pre-ontological understanding of Being which is constitutive for the Being of Dasein, and Dasein comportes itself toward others in the form of what Heidegger calls solicitude (cf. BT 157-158 [121]).

When Dasein encounters others in the world they are encountered in terms of Dasein’s orientation toward its own Being (BT 154 [118]). Continuing with the anti-Cartesian impulse that informs Being and Time, Heidegger notes that Dasein does not encounter Others as those who stand over against its ego or “I”. Rather, “they are ... those from whom one does not distinguish oneself” (BT 154 [118]).2 Dasein is with

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2This is only the beginning of the wealth of textual evidence against the solipsistic interpretation of Being and Time. For the most part, this interpretation focuses on the phenomenon of anxiety and the function of “radical individualization” that both anxiety and death play. But this interpretation fails to recognize that authenticity is guaranteed by anticipation, but is constituted by resoluteness. Cf.
others existentially and as such the world of Dasein is always one which is shared with others. "Being-in", Heidegger explains, "is Being-with Others. Their Being-in-themselves within-the-world is Dasein-with" (BT 155 [118]). Heidegger elaborates this claim by arguing that others are not encountered through an intellectualist operation of empathy nor through an empiricist subsumption of data under categories. The others are always encountered from out of the world. What Heidegger wishes to secure through the expression "Dasein-with" is the sense that while Others retain their Otherness when encountered by Dasein, they are also equally with Dasein. The shared nature of the world arises from the shared nature of significance. Others are encountered within the world as Dasein-with for an entity which is Being-in-the-world (BT 156 [120]). The Being of the Others does not have to be built up through an intellectual operation of empathy because any such operation presupposes Being-with and Dasein's fundamental openness to the world.

The picture of the world that Heidegger draws at the beginning of Being and Time implicitly announces the necessity of a conception of community. This is, however, a restatement of the phenomenology of Husserl which secures the objectivity of the object.

Heidegger's assertion that in authentic resoluteness one is pushed "into solicitous Being-with-Others" (BT 344 [298]). See also François Raffoul's superb article "Otherness and Individuation in Heidegger", Man and World 28 (1995): 341-358, which offers a clear analysis of the complex notions of individuality and alterity in Being and Time.
Husserl argues that the object itself announces that it must have other "sides" or perspectives which are not yet in view of the observing subject. The object announces its own objectivity by curtailing the claims of the subjective point of view. He goes on to argue that the object announces its intersubjective objectivity since by announcing other perspectives; we can become aware of how another person can see the object from a different point of view and yet make the intelligible claim to be seeing the same object that we are. Similarly, for Heidegger, there can be no priority assigned to any particular Dasein in determining the Being of the world. The possibilities of action given by the world are given anonymously since no Dasein has priority over significance. The disclosedness of others in Being-in-the-world goes into the significance of the world (cf. BT 160 [123]).

Indeed, the communal significance of the world is attested to by the encounter of others. While others appear to me as Dasein-with, I appear to them in the same mode of Being. The very existential structure of the world excludes the possibility of a private world by dissolving any claim of any individual to have a privileged point of view on significance. Here, however, Heidegger diverges from Husserl. Whereas for Husserl, meaning arises through the functioning of a transcendental ego, Heidegger does not wish to inject this much idealism into his account of the world. He locates the meaning-function Husserl assigns to the transcendental ego in an anonymous world-structure.
Since the Dasein to whom the world refers is anonymous, is this not another way of saying that the world is a communal structure? It would seem plausible to make this assertion. Significance, as the determinant factor in the constitution of possibilities of Being, is anonymous but not unfamiliar. Dasein does "have" significance in some way, but it is shared with the others in the world. We do not yet know, however, what sort of community is being set forth here. Our next step is to determine what the significance of the world refers to. If the world is a communal structure, this point of reference will be a community of some sort. In order to accomplish this I shall turn my attention to Heidegger's consideration of the "who" of Dasein in his account of authenticity. We shall see that authenticity, far from being an mode of radical individualism, serves to bind Heidegger's account of Dasein ever more strongly to an account of community.

1.2) From the Individual to the Community: The Paradoxical Role of Authenticity

To what degree is the self of Dasein bound to the world which we have argued is a communal structure? We shall see in this section that the radically individualistic interpretation of authenticity misses the fundamental communal structure of this mode of being. While Heidegger's authentic individual has recovered his self from the They, this recovery is nothing more than a re-appropriation of the "they-self." What this points to is the significance of the collective in Heidegger's thought. If in authentic existence Dasein does not break away from the crowd but actually embraces it, this strengthens our
contention that Being and Time is to be seen as a strongly communitarian work. What we intend to explore in this section is the basis that the idea of authenticity lays for Heidegger’s binding of the individual to both her past and the past of her “people or community.”

I have already suggested that Dasein always already exists in a community and that communal living is engrained in the Being of Dasein. Dasein takes “constant care as to the way one differs from [others], whether that difference is merely one that is to be evened out, whether one’s own Dasein has lagged behind the others and wants to catch up in relationship to them, or whether one’s Dasein already has some priority over them and sets out to keep them suppressed” (BT 163-164 [126]). Dasein is constantly engaged in a form of “self-surveillance” in order to determine its conformity to the manner in which others are “doing things”. Dasein does not compare itself to specific others, rather, the others in question are a general “public”. This public is not a mere collectivity of individual Dasein, nor is it the sum of any people. Rather, the public prescribes how one does things: one does things as “they” (das Man) do them. In Dasein’s self-surveillance of its Being-with others, Dasein is constantly searching for the average manner which They are comporting themselves toward their possibilities of Being. In this sense, Dasein in its everydayness seeks to exist as the they do, in order to “fit in” (BT 164 [126-127]).

Because the they presents the judgements, decisions, and comportments of
everydayness to Dasein, Heidegger claims that Dasein has been relieved of the burden of its Being since it no longer has to choose its possibilities in terms of its Being. Rather, Dasein is able to carry on as everyone else does and does not have to face, Heidegger claims, the groundlessness of its authentic Being. Heidegger writes that “the Self of everyday Dasein is the They-self, which we distinguish from the authentic Self --that is from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way. As They-Self, the particular Dasein has been dispersed into the ‘They’, and must first find itself” (BT 167 [129]).

Thus, for the most part, Dasein exists in the mode of Being which Heidegger terms inauthenticity, characterized by the self of Dasein being determined by the They.

The they is characterized by “averageness”. What Heidegger is seeking to capture with this term is the sense that the they cannot be found anywhere because it only exists as the levelled down possibilities of action which are given to everyday inauthentic

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3Despite Heidegger’s protests (e.g. BT 210-211 [167]), it is difficult to see how this account of inauthenticity is not pejorative. Why “must” Dasein find its own self? This use of the word “must” implies some sort of imperative. While this imperative is not necessarily an ethical, aesthetic, or other axiological claim, it is difficult to understand how it can have any meaning without reference to an underlying ethic. If there is no value to being authentic, why must one become so? An answer to this problem lies in Heidegger’s conception of history and its role in defining communities. If our contention that authenticity entails a binding of oneself to one’s history then the “must” becomes perhaps a political imperative, although, to be sure, if this was the case, Heidegger would gloss it as an imperative which arises not from politics but rather from the fundamental structure of Being-in-the-world. This interpretation is supported by Heidegger’s remarks on BT 358 [310] regarding the “factual ideal” which guides the ontological interpretation of Dasein.
Dasein. Dasein dissolves its self into that of the they in the everyday public environment which is “closest” to Dasein (BT 164ff. [126]). The possibilities of action which are available in the communal world are levelled down by the they because it controls the everyday manner in which the world is interpreted. This ordinary interpretation comes from the “indifference” of the they to “every difference of level and of genuineness and thus [its opinions] ‘never [get] to the heart of the matter’” (BT 165 [127]).

What the authentic self of Dasein is has not yet been made clear. However, we must bear in mind that the English term “authenticity” is used to translate the German Eigentlichkeit, which is cognate with the word eigen, signifying “own.” Eigentlichkeit speaks of a state of Being in which Dasein’s Being is taken as its own. Thus, the authentic Self is Dasein’s “own” Self. In the authentic mode of Being, Dasein’s Being is its own rather than lost in the they. As inauthentic, Dasein is disburdened of its Being by the they, who prescribe the normal course of action, rather than forcing Dasein to choose its own course. Yet how does this characterization authenticity mesh with our account of the anonymity of the world and our claim that authenticity entailed a binding oneself to the collective? The they-self seems to indicate a self which is bound to the collective through unreflective subservience to a public conception of what “one does”. If I am to wrench my self from out of the they, does this not imply an escape from the norms of the collective and a recovery of my individuality? We know, however, that
Heidegger claims that the understanding functions authentically or inauthentically:

"Understanding is either authentic, arising out of one’s self as such, or inauthentic. The ‘in-’ of ‘inauthentic’ does not mean that Dasein cuts itself off from its self and understands ‘only’ the world" (BT 186 [146]). As such, we are thrown once again into the question of authenticity.

Heidegger repeatedly tells his reader that authenticity is not a state of Being which is “above” or “superior” to that of everydayness -- inauthenticity. He writes that “authentic existence is not something which floats above falling everydayness; existentially, it is only a modified way in which everydayness is seized upon” (BT 224 [179] my emphasis). This seems to imply the primacy of inauthenticity in that one must first be inauthentic before one can become authentic. But this appears to clash with Heidegger’s statement that authenticity underlies the possibility of inauthenticity. However much this may appear to be a contradiction, it is not a problem when it is approached in the correct manner. Factically speaking, inauthenticity is prior to authenticity since authenticity is a modification of the they-self through the openness of Dasein’s being in resoluteness (Entschlossenheit)4. However, the possibility of such a

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4Heidegger’s use of this German word plays upon the “openness” of Dasein to the world in authenticity which is its primordial meaning. In authenticity, Dasein recovers this openness from the average interpretations of the They which themselves also ultimately arise from the fundamental openness of Dasein to the world. However, in inauthenticity, this openness has been stunted and blinded by the
modification rests on the basic structure of existence. Existentially speaking, Dasein has a self and it is constituted by “mineness” through its care for its Being. In terms of its existential structure, the self of Dasien is its own. Only because Dasein has a self can it be said to have lost it.

Authenticity is not a state which overcomes the groundlessness of everydayness by transcending it. On the contrary, authenticity is an engagement with the community. We have already seen that Dasein is always itself in terms of its possibilities. Yet since these possibilities are the possibilities of Dasein’s Being, they are its own. In authenticity, when Dasein takes its Being as its own, it understands itself in terms of the possibilities which are its own, those of its Being. In inauthenticity, these possibilities are made the possession of the they, and must thus be “won” back from the they as an overcoming of the average everydayness which constitutes inauthenticity. Consequently, the engagement with its community in authenticity is not simply a following of the crowd. Because Dasein takes over the possibilities of the they-self in authenticity, it must be seen as remaining engaged in its community. However, the taking over of these possibilities somehow liberates them from the average everyday manner in which the

they interprets them.

However, in at least one crucial passage, Heidegger seems to intimate that there are not just two modes of Being—authenticity and inauthenticity—but three. This third mode is, apparently, an undifferentiated mode, neither authentic nor inauthentic. For instance, Heidegger writes that “potentiality for Being, as one which is in each case mine, is free either for authenticity or for inauthenticity or for a mode in which neither of these has been differentiated” (BT 275 [232]). Michael Zimmerman has extrapolated on Heidegger’s claim of an undifferentiated self, and marshalled textual evidence from throughout Being and Time which, he claims, demonstrates the existence of this third mode of Being as one distinct from the other two (and somehow prior to it).\(^5\)

Inauthenticity and the undifferentiated (or everyday) self are, for Zimmerman, distinguished in the following way: “Inauthenticity involves a deliberate choice to conceal the truth, while everydayness is to a large extent unavoidable and necessary.”\(^6\)

Zimmerman seems to accord ontological primordiality neither to authentic nor inauthentic Being, but rather to this third category of undifferentiated Being: “Everydayness is the undifferentiated (average) kind of existence which can be modified

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\(^6\)Zimmerman, p. 46.
inauthentically or authentically ... everydayness is the horizon for both authenticity and inauthenticity.” The problem with such a view, however, is as follows: how are we to understand the claim that factically inauthenticity precedes authenticity while existentially authenticity precedes inauthenticity? Since each constitutes the other, the introduction of this third element confuses the issue. If we accept Zimmerman’s contention, then the equiprimordiality of inauthenticity and authenticity -- a point on which Heidegger insists -- must be overlooked. Consequently, the everyday or undifferentiated mode of Being must be understood as inauthentic and not as a third mode. By claiming that inauthenticity entails a deliberate choice to conceal the truth, Zimmerman falls into the Sartrian voluntarism which Heidegger expressly wishes to avoid.

The above quote from Heidegger which seemed to indicate that a third mode of Being is possible for Dasein is a programmatic statement at the beginning of Division II. Heidegger claims that the analysis in Division I has only characterized Dasein as potentiality-for-Being. But this characterization is fundamentally insecure since by “existence” he means something “authentic” (BT 276 [233]). The analysis of existence given in Division I is insufficiently primordial because it is too formal, thus allowing for an undifferentiated account of the various existentialia, and is focused on inauthentic

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Zimmerman, p. 45.
existence. Although his conclusions are wrong, Zimmerman’s intuitions are correct. Heidegger does seem to speak of inauthenticity in two different ways. Sometimes inauthenticity is presented as a fundamental facet of the Being of Dasein. At other times Heidegger allows a pejorative element into his language, implying that inauthenticity is a deliberate choice of untruth. But one cannot conclude from this -- which is perhaps only carelessness on the part of Heidegger -- that there are two modes of Being other than authenticity. In both cases, the mode of Being in question is without a doubt, inauthenticity.

Heidegger’s formal definition of authenticity is “a modified manner in which the They-self is seized upon”, but this does not tell us what this modification accomplishes. It is clear that authenticity is not to be thought of as a state of Being which can be brought about through the “will”. Dasein cannot will itself to be authentic: Heidegger seems to indicate that it can only prepare itself for the possibility of authenticity. Light is cast on this problem by Heidegger’s account of anticipation and resolution, which gives not only an account of how one becomes authentic but also explains what authenticity is. At the beginning of the second Division of Being and Time, Heidegger notes that in order to grasp the phenomenal meaning of an entity, “we must see it in such a way as not to miss the unity of those structural items which belong to it and are possible. Only then can the question of the meaning of the unity which belongs to the whole entity’s totality of
Being, be formulated and answered with any phenomenal assurance” (*BT* 275 [232]).

Thus, he must endeavour to take *all* of Dasein into the picture he is drawing of existence. However, his account of the Being of Dasein seems to presuppose the impossibility of such a picture of existence. Having interpreted Dasein as always ahead of itself, Heidegger has denied himself the possibility of taking the entirety of its Being into grasp, since its Being is thrown ahead of itself. So long as Dasein is existing, it is incomplete because one exists only in terms of possibilities. “As long as Dasein is, there is in every case something still outstanding which Dasein can be and will be” (*BT* 276 [233]). Unless he reverts to a notion of a human-substance it would seem to be difficult to accomplish what he wants to do. Heidegger escapes this conundrum by finding within the structure of existence the possibility of Dasein being a whole.

The ultimate possibility of Being for Dasein is its “end”, the termination of Being-in-the-world, in other words, death. Death is the ultimate possibility of Dasein; it can never be escaped and is certain for any Dasein. Death is certain yet indefinite; normally one never knows when one will die, yet one knows that death is inevitable and inescapable. Thus, even inauthentic Dasein is Being-toward-death, as exhibited by its dissembling and diverting thoughts of death. In Being-towards-death, Heidegger argues, Dasein exhibits its potentiality for Being-a-whole. From the moment of birth, one is old enough to die. Death lurks as the ultimate possibility of Being: the inescapable
possibility of Dasein’s impossibility. Death calls Dasein before itself and shows existence to be finite and at the same time always one’s own (BT 307-[262-263]).

In the mode of Being of inauthentic everydayness, however, Dasein understands death as “one dies too, sometime, but not right away.” (BT 299 [255]). “Everydayness confines itself to conceding the ‘certainty’ of death in this ambiguous manner just in order to weaken that certainty by covering up dying still more and to alleviate its own thrownness into death” (BT 299-300 [255-256]). Because death is a possibility of Dasein’s Being, albeit one which has “not-yet” been fulfilled, it is part of its existence. This allows Dasein to be a whole in terms of its existence whether it is inauthentically or authentically interpreted. Authentically understood, the possibility of death is not to be ignored or covered over, or tranquilized. Authentic Dasein must exist as Being-towards-death, not in the sense of bringing about its own death, but rather by (somehow) taking over this possibility as its own (BT 305 [261]). “Being towards this possibility … is so to comport ourselves towards death that in this Being, and for it, death reveals itself as a possibility” (BT 306 [262-263]). Heidegger calls this Being toward the possibility of one’s death anticipation. In anticipation, one understands death as “the possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all” (BT 307 [262] modified). Heidegger claims that the anticipation of the possibility of death, a possibility which is always one’s own, makes authenticity possible for Dasein since in anticipation one projects oneself understandingly
upon one’s own existence. Heidegger sums up the authentic stance towards death as follows:

Anticipation reveals to Dasein its lostness in the they-self, and brings it face to face with the possibility of being itself, primarily unsupported by concernful solicitude, but of being itself, rather, in an impassioned freedom towards death—a freedom which has been released from the Illusions of the “they”, and which is factual, certain of itself, and anxious. (BT 311 [266] modified)

Yet the analysis of death given this far as an authentic possibility of Dasein’s Being, is only an analysis of death as an existential structure. Heidegger wants to show that there exists existentiel demands which push Dasein toward authenticity. For the most part, “I” am not the self of Dasein; rather it is the “they”. Because Dasein is lost in the they, it cannot simply make up its mind to be free of the they. Heidegger claims that Dasein is brought back to itself through the voice of conscience. Conscience discloses Dasein to itself such that it can be summoned towards its potentiality-for-Being-itself.

In the chatter of idle talk, Dasein cannot hear its own self. Dasein’s self must break itself away from the average possibilities of the They if it is to become authentic. Conscience reaches towards Dasein in a call which cuts through the hubbub of idle talk. The call of conscience appeals to the self of Dasein; it passes over the They and the manner of public interpretation of Dasein in order to push these into insignificance (BT
317 [273]). By pushing the They and publicness away, the Self is robbed of its hiding places and is summoned back to itself. The call of conscience comes from Dasein to itself, but it comes from "beyond me and over me" (BT 320 [275]). Understood properly, the caller of conscience “is Dasein, which, in its thrownness, is anxious about its potentiality-for-Being. The one to whom the appeal is made is this very same Dasein, summoned to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being (ahead of itself ...). Dasein is falling into the ‘they’ (in Being-already-alongside the world of its concern), and it is summoned out of this falling by the appeal” (BT 322 [277-278]). The call of conscience is the call of care: conscience has its possibility in that Dasein’s Being is care.

In order to explicate the phenomenon of conscience, Heidegger turns to a phenomenological analysis of guilt, a theme of traditional interpretations of conscience. Being-guilty is interpreted by Heidegger as a “lacking in some way” (BT 328 [282]). But this lack must not be thought of in terms of something present-at-hand being missing or no longer present-at-hand, since conscience comes from Dasein itself and attests to a “lack” in Dasein. The essential existential-phenomenological component of guilt lies in the “not”. What conscience reveals to Dasein is that it exists as thrown into the world, and that its thrownness is never of Dasein’s own accord.

As long as Dasein is, Dasein, as care, is constantly its ‘that-it-is’. To this entity it has been delivered over, and as such it can exist solely as the entity which it is; and as
*this entity* to which it has been thus delivered over, it *is, in its existing*, the basis of its potentiality-for-Being. Although it has *not* laid that basis *itself*, it reposes in the weight of it, which is made manifest to it as a burden by Dasein’s mood … And how *is* Dasein this thrown basis? Only in that it projects itself upon possibilities into which it has been thrown. The Self, which as such has to lay the basis for itself, can *never* get that basis into its power; and yet as existing, it must take over Being-a-basis. To be its own thrown basis is that potentiality-for-Being which is an issue for care. *(BT 330 [284])*

When properly understood, conscience discloses to Dasein its thrownness into the world and the groundlessness of its self. Dasein is permeated throughout by this groundlessness. There is no “place” in Dasein (i.e. a soul, or “reason” etc.) which gives Dasein a basis for its Being. Heidegger claims that “hearing the appeal [of conscience] correctly is thus tantamount to having an understanding of oneself in one’s ownmost potentiality-for-Being — that is, to projecting oneself upon one’s ownmost authentic potentiality for becoming guilty” *(BT 333-334 [287])*. This potential for becoming guilty is found in the anticipation of death and the potentiality-for-Being-authentic which emerges Dasein’s radical individuation in the face of its own certain death. This understanding of death forces Dasein to choose its self and denies it the possibility of an escape into the they.
In understanding the call of conscience, Dasein is made aware of its individuality and the anonymous world into which it has been thrown. Consequently, in this mode of self-disclosure, Dasein brings itself before its self, and at the same time projects itself upon its own thrownness. This disclosedness of Dasein in self-projection, anxiety and reticence is characterized by Heidegger as resoluteness. However, it would be a mistake to interpret resoluteness as being a detachment of the individual from the community. It is important to distinguish between the community and the they-self. When resolved, Dasein recovers its authentic self from the they, but this recovery is not an escape from its community. Rather, “resoluteness brings the Self right into its current concernful Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being-with-Others” (BT 344 [298]). Because resoluteness is the disclosure of Dasein’s authentic Being, that is as Being-in-the-world, its ownmost possibilities are disclosed along with its ownmost existentiality, including Being-with-Others.

Fundamentally, resoluteness signifies the openness of Dasein to the realm of Being and openness to beings. The difficult, yet central §69 (c) of Being and Time on the problem of the temporal transcendence of the world, is instructive in grasping this notion. The presupposition of the world by all of Dasein’s comportments has its ground in the unity of horizons in the ecstases of Dasein’s temporality (BT 417 [365-366]). Heidegger cautions against the interpretation of the ecstases as a “rapture” which carries away
Dasein from itself. Rather, each ecstasis has a "whither" which Heidegger calls its "horizontal schema". The horizontal schema is an existential index of temporality. For instance, the schema of the future (both authentic and inauthentic) is the "for-the-sake-of-itself" of Dasein which is simultaneously disclosed in the projective nature of the understanding and in the significance of the relational structure of the world (BT 417 [365]). The schema of the past is the "in the face of which" of Dasein's moods and the "to which" of thrownnes, both of which are indexes of the past of Dasein as "having-been”. Dasein is fundamentally open to the world of beings but only in authenticity is this openness extracted from the levelled down interpretations of the they.

Resoluteness can only exist in the form of a factual resolution. "The resolution is precisely the disclosive projection and determination of what is factically possible at the time. To resoluteness, the indefiniteness characteristic of every potentiality-for-Being into which Dasein has been factically thrown, is something that necessarily belongs” (BT 345 [298]). In resoluteness, Dasein is made aware of the possibilities of action which are available to it at the time. We have already seen that Dasein's possibilities of Being are always derived from the traditions of its community. Consequently, my claim that authenticity is not an escape from the community has been confirmed. The community always remains at the centre of the world.

I have sought in this section to unfold the structure of authenticity in order to
explicate the fundamental importance of the concept of community. Authenticity, which some have thought to indicate detachment from the community, is in fact a recognition on the part of Dasein of its fundamental integration into community. When in resoluteness Dasein takes its factual existence into its self-understanding, the communal aspect of its existence cannot but become obvious. What we still lack is an idea of what sort of community Heidegger envisions.

1.3) Historicity and Community: The Call of Destiny

My analysis of authenticity has shown that rather than being a Sartrian escape from the collective, Heideggerian authenticity entails a recovery of a proper sense of collectivity. The they-self is not dispelled in authenticity but rather we have seen that the authentic self is a modification of the they-self through a resolution taken in the face of death. Heidegger's consideration of history in Division II sheds considerable light on this need for resolution. It also helps answer the question which dogged us from the beginning of this chapter. Always at the back of our mind during the account of the anonymity of the world was the desire to understand the origin of significance. A plausible hypothesis is that the origins of significance lie in history, since, it is through the concept of history that Heidegger elaborates the ideal of community that I claim is the ultimate source of significance. In this section I consider Heidegger's thoughts on the nature of history and its role in constituting communities and peoples; including his idea
of "destiny", a term whose ultra-nationalist connotations will prove difficult to ignore.

Heidegger begins the fifth chapter of Being and Time's Second Division by observing that to this point he has not yet brought the totality of Dasein's Being into view. Death, notes Heidegger, is only one of the ends of Dasein's Being, the other being birth (BT 425 [373]). As such the so-called connectedness of life has been overlooked. Chapter Five seeks to remedy this defect, and it is here that Heidegger introduces his difficult but important hermeneutics of history.

What Heidegger means by "connectedness-of-life" is the notion that the existence of Dasein is somehow constant throughout its movement between the limit-points of birth and death. However, Heidegger wants to avoid the usual idea that would account for this continuity by positing a continuous substance. Heidegger rejects this approach because it treats Dasein as if it were a present-at-hand entity, contrary to the whole drift of Heidegger's existential analytic. However, in keeping with his general philosophical stance, Heidegger believes that there must be a kernel of truth in the traditional account, and finding it leads us into Heidegger's theory of existential temporality, which I will now summarize.

Heidegger rejects the usual account of time because it relies upon an independent now as its fundamental index of meaning. Heidegger argues that the existential present is constituted by the future which Dasein expects and the past which is retained in
existence. Temporality, as Heidegger conceives it, receives its meaning from Being-in-the-world. Consequently, any theory of temporality must be able to account for Being-in-the-world. For the sake of brevity, we will make use of the elaboration of temporality given in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology.* Heidegger argues that time is understood in a more original sense as "an expecting, retaining, and enpresenting" (*BPP* 260). Time cannot be understood as a sequence of nows because such a description cannot account for Dasein’s experience of temporality. Dasein understands itself in terms of its possibilities of Being which, as *possibilities*, entail an outlook upon the future. Thus, Heidegger describes Dasein as "ahead of itself" because in "expecting its ability to be [it] comes toward itself" (*BPP* 265 modified). The existential meaning of the future is coming toward one’s possibilities of Being. But just as Dasein is always oriented to the future in coming toward itself, "it is only ... in such a way that it has in each instance already been the being that it is. The condition of any retaining and forgetting is that Dasein retains its own self as what it already has been. Dasein has already been such that

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8Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Revised Edition), trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indianna University Press, 1982). This text will be cited as *BPP*. This text contains the lecture notes from Heidegger’s lectures at the University of Freiburg from the Summer Semester of 1927. Many commentators see it as a preparatory work for the unwritten Third Division of *Being and Time* which Heidegger still envisioned completing at the time. The account of temporality found therein is more succinct than that of *Being and Time*, since that of the latter work seeks to recapture the entire previous analysis in terms of temporality while the former seeks a simple exposition of temporality.
in each instance “its past [as] having-been-ness belongs concomitantly to its future” (*BPP* 265 [modified]). The past runs into, and constitutes the possibilities which are the future. The present is the expectation of a possibility by Dasein such that it comes back to itself and its having-been which constitutes its future.

Heidegger is trying to express the fundamental importance of facticity to his existential analytic. He remarks that “in every sense and in every case everything we have been is an essential determination of our existence” (*BPP* 265). Heidegger is searching for a language which can express the condition placed upon existence by the past. The hermeneutical concept of the understanding which underlies *Being and Time* follows this model. Heidegger explicitly claims in the Introduction that fundamental ontology is a historical science, and that Dasein is a historical being. Consequently, Heidegger argues that we must see the connectedness of life in terms as a problem of temporality and ultimately of history. As he puts it, “The specific movement in which Dasein is stretched along and stretches itself along [between its birth and its death], we call its ‘historizing’” (*BT* 427 [375]). This historical way of Dasein’s Being is “the basic phenomenon of history, which is prior to any possible thematizing by historiology and [which] underlies it” (*BT* 427 [375]).

To make the connection between this idea of Dasein’s historicality and the idea of authenticity, note Heidegger’s remark that “the resoluteness in which Dasein comes back
to itself, discloses current factual possibilities of authentic existing, and discloses them in terms of the heritage which that resoluteness, as thrown, takes over. In one’s coming back resolutely to one’s thrownes, there is hidden a handing down to oneself of the possibilities that have come down to one, but not necessarily as having thus come down” (BT 435 [383]). Here we find the beginnings of an answer to our question: “Whence do Dasein’s possibilities of Being come?”

As thrown, Dasein finds itself enmeshed within an inescapable web of possibilities, but as authentic Dasein takes over these possibilities as its own for the first time. Dasein lives within a range of traditional interpretations of itself and this traditional interpretation discloses and regulates the possibilities of its Being (BT 41-42 [20-21]). Far from the past being something which is dragged along by Dasein into the future, Heidegger argues that it must be thought of as something which has gone ahead of Dasein into the future and has thus determined it, by which I think he means that the past of Dasein’s community dictates the possibilities of action which will be available to the members of the community in the future. The manner in which the community has interpreted the world and the entities within the world limits the possibilities which will be open to future generations. The future is inhabited by the past because the past determines the possibilities which constitute the future. We know that in authenticity Dasein does not escape the world of everydayness. Heidegger re-affirms his earlier
statements when he argues that in any resolution the way of interpreting Dasein which has come down to us is what determines the possibility chosen by Dasein in any such resolution (cf. BT 435 [383]). Authenticity is not merely a voluntaristic or jingoistic adoption of the “present way of seeing things”. Heidegger’s damming critique of the life of the They makes this position impossible to hold.

It is important to grasp the fundamental distinction Heidegger makes between tradition and heritage in order to see how the authentic individual is different from the they.⁹ Heidegger claims that heritage is what is concealed beneath the sedimnented meaning of tradition. This heritage is the having-Being-there of Dasein which has been thrown into a world and in which it exists (BT 41-42 [20-21]). In other words, heritage is the authentic possibilities which have constituted the world in which Dasein finds itself. But these possibilities are covered over by the everyday interpretations of the they.

In the Second Introduction, Heidegger remarks:

Our preparatory Interpretation of the fundamental structures of Dasein with regard to the average kind of Being which is closest to it (a kind of Being in which it is therefore proximally historical as well), will make manifest, however, not only that Dasein simultaneously falls prey to the tradition of which it has more or less explicitly taken hold. This tradition keeps it from providing its own guidance, whether in inquiring or choosing. This holds true --and by no means least-- for that understanding which is

rooted in Dasein's ownmost Being, and for the possibility of developing it--namely, for ontological understanding. (BT 42-43 [21])

Clearly, Heidegger is consigning tradition to the level of inauthentic everyday existence. Even detailed understanding of history is seemingly insufficient to prevent the sedimentation of tradition. Heidegger's rejects history as a means for recovering heritage because history is itself constituted by the average interpretations of the they. Because history operates as "world-history", it understands the past in terms of things and events in the world rather than as possibilities of Dasein's Being (BT 440 [388]). In other words, history operates on the basis of the everyday assumptions of the they and consequently cannot penetrate the crust of tradition. Following the passage quoted above, Heidegger remarks that "when tradition becomes master, it does so in such a way that what it 'transmits' is made so inaccessible ... that it ... becomes concealed" (BT 43 [21]). The mastery of tradition over existence arises when it becomes self-evident. However, when this mastery arises, Dasein's access to the sources of its tradition are cut off.

Heidegger associates tradition with Dasein's being "uprooted" from its authentic heritage. Consequently, tradition is part of the They.

Dasein has had its historicality so thoroughly uprooted by tradition that it confines its interest to the multiformity of possible types, directions and standpoints of philosophical activity in the most exotic and alien of cultures; and by this very interest it seeks to veil
the fact that it has no ground to stand on. Consequently, despite all its historiographical interests and all its zeal for an Interpretation which is philologically ‘objective’, Dasein no longer understands the most elementary conditions which would alone make it productively its own. (BT 43 [21])

However, he thinks that in authenticity, through its radical openness to possibilities, Dasein breaks through the crust of tradition to its heritage, which it then makes its own as its fate.

What does Heidegger mean by “fate”? He says that fate is the handing of oneself down in anticipation to the “there” of the moment of vision (BT 438 [386]). What this means is that Dasein recovers the possibilities of acting which constitute its Being-in-the-world by becoming radically individualized in the face of its own death. The “there” of the moment of vision is constituted by heritage and thus “[fate] can be disclosed explicitly as bound up with the heritage which has come down to us” (BT 438 [386]). Only one who is resolute, and thus authentic, can “have a fate”. This is not to say that Dasein becomes explicitly aware of the origins of its possibilities of Being. Rather, in its resolute choice of a possibility, Dasein takes hold of the possibilities of action which are available to it in the present. Since these possibilities are constituted by the past,

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10This passage seems to betray Heidegger’s belief that his time was becoming increasingly decadent and uprooted from its authentic ground. This is supported by Heidegger’s assertion that “the extent to which the dominion of the they becomes compelling and explicit may change in the course of history” (BT 167 [129]). Despite Heidegger’s contention that fallenness is inevitable, he seems to think that the extent to which we fall, or the “depth” to which we fall, is not fixed.
Dasein becomes authentically anchored in the “past”. This anchoring is not a binding of oneself to an archaic tradition. Dasein binds itself to the authentic possibilities contained within the tradition which Heidegger has called heritage. When Dasein anticipates death authentically Heidegger claims that it chooses its possibility unequivocally:

Once one has grasped the finitude of one’s existence, it snatches one back from the endless multiplicity of possibilities which offer themselves as closest to one --- those of comfortableness, shirking, and taking things lightly--- and brings Dasein into the simplicity of its fate (BT 435 [384]).

Dasein’s fate is the retrieval of heritage and the free choice of a possibility for action in the moment of vision.

However, the shared nature of the world, which I explained in Section 1.1, has been neglected. In coming to understand itself and its unavoidable Being-with, Dasein realizes that “our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities” (BT 436 [384]). We have seen that the definite possibilities for which one resolves arise from the traditional interpretation of Dasein which becomes its heritage. Heidegger is now arguing that the historizing of Dasein is always a co-historizing. Dasein is always part of a historical community. The possibilities of action given to Dasein arise out of the
historical world which it shares with the Others as its destiny.\textsuperscript{11} In the Introduction to \textit{Being and Time}, he wrote that destiny is the shared heritage of interpretation into which all members of a “generation”\textsuperscript{12} are thrown. (cf. \textit{BT} 41 [20]) Heidegger’s use of this term is meant to indicate the shared nature of the possibilities which constitute the world in which members of a community find themselves. A generation is constituted by a common task or set of tasks. Dasein always finds itself in a communal world with definite possibilities open to it, and “Dasein’s fateful destiny in and with its ‘generation’ goes to make up the full authentic historizing of Dasein” (\textit{BT} 436 [384-385]).

We have seen time and time again that the central themes of the existential analytic are bound up with some concept of community. It is becoming clear that there is more to this theory of community than a formal analysis of Being-with others. Furthermore, Heidegger’s reference to “destiny” is not meant as an empty phrase.

\textsuperscript{11}Tom Rockmore harshly criticizes Heidegger’s notion of destiny in his \textit{On Heidegger’s Nazism and Philosophy} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 35-49. Rockmore claims that it is an overtly fascist concept. However, his analysis tends toward speculation and interpretation of obscure passages from \textit{Being and Time} in the light of Heidegger’s later activities as Rector.

Heidegger claims that “only in communicating and struggling does the power of destiny become free” (*BT* 436 [384]). The power of destiny is its capacity to bring forth an authentic sense of Being—with such that in its solicitude with others, Dasein makes use of the authentic form of solicitude described earlier in *Being and Time* as leaping-ahead. In his description of solicitude, Heidegger sets out two extreme possibilities: leaping in and leaping ahead. One can leap in and disburden another of his care, of his concerns and projects, by taking them over, leaving the other to await their completion. But since care, when authentically expressed, is anticipatory resoluteness, leaping-in also has the character of closing of the possibility of authenticity for the Other. At the opposite extreme, solicitude can take the form of leaping ahead of the Other. Here one strives not “to take away his ‘care’ but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time. This kind of solicitude pertains essentially to authentic care -- that is, to the existence of the Other, not to a ‘what’ with which he is concerned; it helps the Other to become transparent to himself in his care and to become free for it” (*BT* 159 [122]). To make the Other’s care transparent to herself brings her into an authentic understanding of her own possibilities in terms of her Being, and the heritage which has conditioned these possibilities. I believe this suggests that Heidegger envisions a community in which the individual members are authentically bound together through each having their unique resolute pursuit of common projects, inherited from their common historical
heritage.

From the perspective of the late twentieth century, Heidegger's language in this chapter is unsettling. Whatever exactly the difference is between heritage and tradition, it would be incorrect to imagine this doctrine as an arch-conservatism which seeks to recover the "authentic" line of history which can be traced back to an unequivocal point of origin. Heidegger explicitly claims that this does not happen. In fact, conservatism thrives upon inauthenticity which does not seek to overturn everyday assumptions about the world. Heidegger argues that in fateful resoluteness, Dasein takes over its heritage through the repetition of a possibility of existence that has "come down to it". In repetition, Dasein does not "re-do" the past, but rather "makes a reciprocal rejoinder to the possibility of that existence which has-been-there" (BT 438 [386]). This rejoinder brings Dasein back to its stretchedness between birth and death, and as such to its authentic ecstatical temporality, while at the same time disavowing the present as a mere working out of the past: "Repetition does not abandon itself to that which is past, nor does it aim at progress." (BT 438 [386])

Repetition signifies the choosing of one's possibilities in terms of Dasein's whole Being and in terms of the factual situation in which one finds oneself. It entails, to use William James' terminology, being "twice-born". In repetition,

the Dasein that has-been-there is not disclosed in order to be actualized over again. The repeating of that which is
possible does not bring again something that is ‘past’, nor does it bind the ‘Present’ back to that which has already been ‘outstripped’. Arising, as it does, from a resolute projection of oneself, repetition does not let itself be persuaded of something by what is ‘past’, just in order that this, as something which was formerly actual, may recur. [...] The rejoinder of resolution is made in a moment of vision; and as such it is at the same time a disavowal of that which in the ‘today’, is working itself out as the ‘past’. (BT 437-438 [386])

The resolution which discloses one’s heritage is one which does so hermeneutically, meaning that the appropriation of tradition is mediated and thus there can be no question of an absolute return to a point of origin. Repetition is a disavowal of that in today which is a working out of the past because in resoluteness one breaks through that which is a working out of the past. Repetition entails a rejection of the everyday interpretation of possibilities of action and a recovery of their meaning in terms of the present. This is why Heidegger writes that Dasein’s primordial historizing “lies in authentic resoluteness ... in which Dasein hands itself down to itself, free for death, in a possibility which it has inherited and yet has chosen” (BT 435 [384]). We saw above that “authentic existence is not something which floats above falling everydayness; existentially, it is only a modified way in which everydayness is seized upon (BT 224 [179] modified, my emphasis). As a consequence of authenticity, one no longer does something habitually or because it is “the way things are done,” instead, one chooses the possibility offered by the past and makes it new by applying it to the present. Thus there is here no immediate
justification for the charge of conservatism. Heidegger's comment that the repetition is
"the possibility that Dasein may choose its hero" (BT 437 [387]) must be interpreted in
the light of this. Heidegger wishes to say that the choice of a hero is only possible in
authentic resolution. One can only be free to follow a possibility when one has freed
herself for death and authenticity.

This interpretation is confirmed by Heidegger's appropriation of Nietzsche in this
section. He embraces Nietzsche's notion of the "Use and Abuse of History for Life"\(^\text{13}\),
when he says that "the threefold character of historiology (monumental, antiquarian,
critical) is adumbrated in the historicality of Dasein. At the same time, this historicality
enables us to understand to what extent these three possibilities must be united factically
and concretely in any historiology which is authentic" (BT 448 [396] modified).
Nietzsche argued that history was not of any absolute worth, but ought to be applied to
existence for the purpose of giving strength to life. He remarks that "the unhistorical and
the historical are necessary in equal measure for the health of an individual, of a people
and of a culture."\(^\text{14}\) What Nietzsche wishes to overthrow is the absolute faith in the
cultivation of historical research, since this offers no advantage for life. Rather, history

\(^{13}\)Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Use and Abuse of History for Life" in Untimely
Meditations, trans. by R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

must be “used” in the service of life. Part of such a use entails a forgetting or obliteration of parts of the past. Heidegger’s critique of tradition seeks the same goal; an overthrow of the everyday chauvinism about the past and a re-invigoration of what has been transmitted to the present by destroying the hardened shell of sedimented interpretations.

1.5) Conclusion: The Theory of Community in Being and Time

It is important to note that destiny and community are not merely superfluous elements of the existential analytic. Clearly they are enmeshed in the ontological structure of the Being of Dasein. The discussion of Heidegger’s concept of destiny re-affirms my contention that a theory of community underlies the existential analysis of Being and Time. It is tempting to interpret this idea of destiny, as I myself once did, as meaning that authenticity discloses a universal standpoint and community from which existence is understood as a universal struggle. However, this interpretation is rendered untenable by the fact that destiny is what Heidegger uses to designate the “historizing of the community, of a people. Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another can be conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects” (BT 436 [384]). The inclusion of the term “people” would seem to imply a non-universality of destiny. Indeed, it is impossible to interpret this passage otherwise. “A people” is an exclusionary turn of phrase. While our contention that there is a theory of community underlying Being and Time has been
established, the nature of this community has not. It does not, however, appear to be one which is universal or which encompasses all Dasein.

In the Second Introduction, Heidegger has already brought the concept of historicality into play and positioned it terms of the question of Being:

The ownmost meaning of Being which belongs to the inquiry into Being as an historical inquiry, gives us the assignment of inquiring into the history of that inquiry itself, that is, of becoming historiological. In working out the question of Being, we must heed this assignment, so that by positively making the past our own, we may bring ourselves into the full possession of the ownmost possibilities of such inquiry. \((BT\ 42\ [20-21])\)

Ontology is a historical exercise. This raises the question of the supposed universality or particularity of Being. At one point Heidegger remarks, “an entity ‘within-the-world’ has Being-in-the-world in such a way that it can understand itself as bound up in its ‘destiny’ with the Being of those entities which it encounters within its own world” \((BT\ 82\ [56])\). What this seems to say is that the Being of all entities encountered within the world is bound up with the destiny of some historical community. Thus Being must be a historical category and one which is peculiar to some form of community, and this brings us back to the question: what sort of community are we speaking of?

The section on World-History (\(\uparrow 75\)) is instructive. Just as Dasein is historical not on the basis of its subjectivity but its Being-in-the-world, so the world is historical. “Dasein’s historicality is essentially the historicality of the world” \((BT\ 440\ [388])\). If the
historicality of Dasein is bound up with the historicality of a community, that means that the very Being of the world is bound up with that of a historical community. And indeed, Heidegger wants there to be the possibility of many worlds. However, all worlds share in the ontological concept of “worldhood” which is the existential structure of Dasein which makes possible all Being-in-the-world.

A community is made up of individuals who share a common tradition. When authentic, this tradition is constantly being broken up and its core revitalized as a living, present heritage. A community is sustained by its history and the shared interpretations which define its world. History is instrumental in constituting the identity of its members through these interpretations because it gives its members the means by which they comport themselves in the world and understand themselves. However, it is unclear just how exclusive these communities are. Heidegger does not give us a sufficient account of destiny to allow for a definitive conclusion on this matter. It is plausible that the community of which he speaks is something like “the West.” However it is equally plausible that Heidegger imagined his community as “the Germans”. Western ontology has become part of German tradition, and must therefore be overcome in order to bring about authentic German Being-with-one-another.
Part 2: Critical Assessment of Heidegger’s Theory of Community

In this part of the essay I will endeavour to present a critical analysis of the theory of community that I drew out of *Being and Time* in Part 1. The purpose of this part is to answer the following questions: 1) How rigorous a theory has Heidegger put forth in these texts? In the light of his much documented affiliation with the National Socialist movement, Heidegger’s seemingly uncritical use of terms such as “people” or “community” should raise some suspicions. Has Heidegger not perhaps adopted a theory of community which is unacceptable to those of us who endorse a “liberal” or pluralistic vision of society? 2) Has his account of destiny given a robust basis from which we can understand politics or societies? That is to say, can Heidegger’s theory of community serve as a point of departure for a meaningful study of modern society?

In order to prepare the ground for a critique of this theory of community, I will first examine the theory of community which is elaborated in the so-called Rector’s Address. It is my contention that the theory of community deployed by Heidegger in this speech is analogous to that of *Being and Time*. By exhibiting this similarity, I open the door to a critical analysis of Heidegger’s theory of community. It is obvious that Heidegger’s address is an enthusiastic embrace of the new regime. From his celebration of the new law which re-organizes the universities under the Nazi *Führerprinzip* (SGU
475), to the almost laughable celebration of combat¹, and the repeated theme of the German *Volk* and its "mission", Heidegger's speech oozes Nazi ideology and rhetoric. If his theory can accommodate support for National Socialism, then what are we to make of it?

Heidegger delivered his speech, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," on the occasion of being named Rector of the University of Freiburg on the 21st of April 1933. This short speech has attracted enormous attention from scholars due to its dramatic rhetoric and radical content, which is closely aligned with the rhetoric and ideology of the Nazi Party. In this speech, Heidegger sought to mobilize the members of his university in service of the German people and their state through the pursuit of a "new" task. I will not concern myself here with a detailed inventory of the similarities between Heidegger's language and concepts and the programme of the Nazi Party.² It is widely acknowledged that this speech, even if it was made by a political novice, is bound up with the fervour which accompanied Hitler's rise to power. Even though

¹Heidegger's war service consisted of working in a postal censorship unit in Freiburg from the autumn of 1915 until January 1918, when he was transferred to the frontline meteorological service. Much of his extolation of battle come from his reading of the novels of Ernst Jünger. See Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. Ewald Osers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 55-88.

Heidegger could not have known what was to happen as Hitler consolidated his power and plunged the world into war, it is extremely troubling that his theory of community was incapable of dissuading him from supporting the new regime.

2.1) The Theory of Community of the Rector’s Address

The main focus of the Rector’s Address is the essence of the German University and the need for the members of the university to adhere to this essence. Heidegger thinks that the university has lost its way and has become distracted by idle academic chatter and sclerotic concepts. Yet, this essence cannot be simply retrieved from under the sedimentation of the ages. Heidegger dismisses those who would recover the essence of the university through an acquaintance with its history. Instead, Heidegger thinks that the retrieval of the essence of the university must take the form of an ontological inquiry: “Neither an awareness of the present conditions of the university, nor an acquaintance with its earlier history are enough to guarantee a sufficient knowledge of its essence -- unless we first delimit what this essence is to be, clearly and unsparingly; and having thus delimited, will it, and in such will, assert ourselves” (SGU 470-471). History cannot reveal what the authentic essence of the university is because history is not concerned with the delineation of essences. Thus, Heidegger quickly identifies science as an element of this essence which is to be asserted. Yet he dismisses the idea that science alone is the essence of the university: “The will to the essence of the German university
is the will to science as the will to the historical mission of the German people as a people that knows itself in its state. *Together,* science and German fate must come to power in this will to essence" (SGU 471). The university is to recover science as its essence, and in so doing, science is to be understood as the historical mission of the Germans.

Thus the question is, what is the nature of science? To find the answer to this question, Heidegger argues that a return to the Greeks -- "the beginning of our spiritual-historical being (Dasein)," where human beings first rose above the everyday and confronted the "totality of what is" (SGU 471) -- is necessary. Heidegger interprets Greek science as "the innermost determining centre of all that binds human being to people and state. Science ... [is] the power that hones and embraces being-there (Dasein) in its entirety" (SGU 473). Heidegger means that science, in his enlarged sense as philosophy, and hence as ontology, is what gives meaning both to the world and to individual existence. Furthermore, science, as the "questioning holding of one's ground in the midst of the ever self-concealing totality of what is" (SGU 473), "stamps" the existence of every individual according to Heidegger. If we recall that earlier Heidegger called science the spiritual mission of the Germans, this last quote means that science

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3When "Dasein" appears in brackets it has been inserted by the translator of SGU. He argues that the use of "Dasein" might prejudice a reader since "one should not assume that in the Rectoral Address *Dasein* means just what it does in *Being and Time*" (SGU 473, note 5).
determines the existence of all Germans as the destiny which has given the possibilities to their people.

Heidegger claims that the "greatness" of the Greek beginning in science towers over the science of modernity, which merely "empties and uses up" the Greek beginning. The beginning of science still holds modernity in its sway because this beginning does not lie buried in the past, but rather dominates the future by setting forth the possibilities of action. Heidegger believes that when properly thought through, the Greek origin of science commands the Germans to "submit" to their destiny. In so doing, science becomes the "fundamental happening of our spiritual being as part of a people" (SGU 474). Greek science is the destiny of the Germans. It is what constitutes their community at the core, but this heritage has been levelled down by the average understanding of science in modernity. In order to return to greatness the Germans must recover what the Greeks initiated. "For the Greeks, science is not a 'cultural good,' but the innermost determining centre of all that binds human being to people and state" (SGU 473). When the German university asserts its essence and sees that its essence is bound up with that of the German people, the recovery of the ground of science will have begun. This will allow for the formation of the spiritual world of the Germans, which will bring them to fulfill their historical mission.

Heidegger follows this claim with a discussion of the meaning of "spirit". It is not
to be thought of as a world-spirit or any of the other tired forms of modern philosophy: “Spirit is primordially attuned, knowing resoluteness toward the essence of Being” (SGU 474). By resoluteness, Heidegger wants to indicate a stance which Dasein takes toward Being. This resoluteness is the “questioning unguarded holding of one’s ground in the midst of the uncertainty of the totality of what-is” (SGU 474 modified). Heidegger claims that resoluteness in the face of Being is science in the Greek sense. Dasein understands in science the uncertainty of the world and the elusiveness of Being. By resolutely confronting the uncertainty of Being, German Dasein takes hold of the world of its people and understands its historical mission. Heidegger believes that the will to the essence of science will create “for our people” its spiritual world. Confronting the uncertainty of Being will bring about a world of “danger” which is the spiritual world of the Germans. By danger, Heidegger is seeking to capture a sense of anxiety, discomfort, and determination which he feels is necessary for the “greatness” of the German people. The uncertainty of Being threatens the Germans by exposing them to the overwhelming power of Being. By threatening them, Being causes the Germans to ask the question of Being. Consequently, Heidegger thinks that this threat is a good thing. By being threatened, the Germans take shelter in their spiritual world which is constituted by their historical mission. Their mission is to recover the Greek questioning of Being in the face of its elusive and overwhelming facticity. This is why Heidegger claims that the spiritual
world preserves the strengths of the people and binds them to “earth and blood” (SGU 475). True science is the stuff which makes up the world of the Germans and thrusting them into the uncertainty of what is keeps them bound to this world and to their historical mission. The questionableness of Being “compels the people to work and fight and forces it into its state (Staat)” (SGU 477). The uncertainty and elusiveness of Being thrusts the individual back into his historical community which provides shelter and meaning for its members. The members of the university, whose own essence is science, are to become the leaders of the people. Because the university is the place where science happens, it is the role of the members of the university to watch over the people and maintain their spiritual world which brings the Germans into their essence.

However, the assumption of this spiritual mission and the creation of the spiritual world requires that the Germans become united as a people. The German people must take hold of what it is to be German. Heidegger enumerates three “services” which should bind students to what is essential about the university, and which will allow for the spiritual mission of the Germans to be approached: 1) “Labour Service,” which binds the student to the “community of the people” (SGU 476); 2) “Armed Service,” which binds the individual to the “honour and destiny of the nation in the midst of other peoples” (SGU 476 [my italics]); and 3) “Knowledge Service,” which binds the students to the “spiritual mission of the German people” (SGU 476). These three bonds will bring
every individual into contact with the essence of the German people, and will allow for
the fulfilment of their historical mission. Heidegger argues that it is imperative that every
member of the community become bound to it authentically. He claims that "every
individual participates in this decision [to will the historical mission of the Germans],
even he, and especially he, who evades it" (SGU 480).

In the Rector’s Address, Heidegger puts forth a conception of community as an
organic unity which is defined by a historical mission. The role of the individual is to
ensure that this mission is fulfilled. Heidegger advances, without any discussion, the
assumption that the German people are united and that they form a single distinct
community. The university is to provide leadership for the Germans so they can achieve
their historical goal, which was set for them by the Greeks. This goal is the simple
questioning of Being by authentic science.

2.2) Being and Time and the Rector’s Address Compared

The most obvious similarity between the theory of community in Being and Time
and that of the Rector’s Address is Heidegger’s equation of the community with a people.
This is tied to his belief that a community is defined by its history, and that this history
imparts a destiny or mission which determines the possibilities of action that are open to
the members of the community. Heidegger argues in both texts that this destiny or
mission is hidden under a sediment of tradition which must be de-constructed if the
community is to live authentically. Living authentically, a people realizes its unity in terms of its historical mission.

Another shared theme is the notion that in authentic living, the individual member is bound to the community. In the Rector’s Address, though, Heidegger endorses methods which will supposedly achieve this goal. The bonds that bind the students to the community, honour, destiny, and spiritual mission of the German people should assist in the preservation and strengthening of the German people. The students, the future leaders of Germany, must become grounded in the essence of their people through labour, armed service, and knowledge. This will bring them into the spiritual world of the Germans. In Being and Time, the only point close to these ideas is a quotation from Count Yorek which endorses the use of state power to break up the inauthentic life of the everyday.4

However, the concept of spirit which Heidegger uses in the Rector’s Address is very close to the notion of authenticity that he puts forth in Being and Time. Both are functions of resoluteness. In Part 1 I showed that in Being and Time resolutions are made on the basis of the destiny of the community. In the Rector’s Address, the same appeal is made to the German people. They must recover the essence of science in order to

4See Section 2.3) for an analysis of Heidegger’s theory of the state and this quote in particular.
“the West” -- is not necessarily true. Instead, the Rector’s Address identifies the Germans as the inheritors of the heritage of the West, the science of the Greeks. Heidegger clearly wants to delimit the German people from other Westerners. He sees Germans as being somehow closest to the Greeks. “The will to the essence of the German university is the will to science as the will to the historical mission of the German people” (SGU 471). Germans have the peculiar historical task of overcoming the tendency in Western civilization to cover over the Greek origin of science. When science is taken out of the nourishing soil of the Greeks, it becomes abstract and falls away from the greatness of its origin. Heidegger claims that “the Christian-theological interpretation of the world ... as well as the later mathematical-technological thinking of the modern age, have separated science both in time and its concerns from its beginning” (SGU 473) by pulling science away from the Greeks. The task falls to the Germans -- the new Greeks -- to renew this historical mission.

2.3) Critique of Heidegger’s Theory of Community

Given that fundamental ontology sweeps away transhistorical and transcultural values and meanings, can Heidegger legitimately ascribe a destiny to “the” community or “a” people? Has he not fatally undermined the position from which one can confidently say the name “people” and know that it represents a discrete community? To answer this question I shall look at three problematic aspects of Heidegger’s theory of
community: 1) Authentic historicality and problem of self-critical historical appropriation; 2) Heidegger's equation of community with people (Volk); and 3) his theory of the relation between the state and community.

Heidegger’s rejection of all “philosophies of value” presents a problem for fundamental ontology. Since the appeal to foundational or transcultural values is repudiated, how is Dasein able to distinguish between what is good and bad in the heritage which is retrieved in resoluteness? In other words, how can Heidegger be sure that what is recovered as the heritage of a community is worth recovering? Heidegger does not think that this is a problem. In fact, he thinks that the act of recovery is sufficient to justify what is recovered. Lawrence Vogel's concern, which I share, is that Heidegger fails to support his insistence that authentic historicality requires a critical re-appropriation of one’s heritage with an account of how such criticism is possible ...

There is no basis on which the evaluative criteria necessary for substantive criticism can be derived from the ontological conditions of historicality.\(^5\)

Heidegger does not question what is retrieved in resoluteness. But this is because he thinks that such a question is misguided. He remarks that “if everything ‘good’ is a heritage, and the character of ‘goodness’ lies in making authentic existence possible, then the handing down of a heritage constitutes itself in resoluteness” (BT 435 [383-384]).

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But what this means is that there can be no question of what is retrieved. The act of retrieval itself is the criterion of "goodness".

The act of retrieval is the criterion of goodness because Heidegger believes that in authenticity the individual obtains a special insight into the possibilities which are offered by history and chooses one on the basis of this insight. This insight is not a slavish obedience to the past but is instead a critical confrontation. Through the repetition of the past, the authentic individual takes hold of his communal history in such a way that its worthy content -- the heritage -- is shaken free from the tradition, which is then repudiated. The confrontation with death which makes authenticity possible allows Dasein to somehow shake off the average understanding of the they and somehow makes what it appropriates good or right. Heidegger seems to imply that death has the power to open Dasein's eyes to that which must be chosen:

The more authentically Dasein resolves -- and this means that in anticipating death it understands itself unambiguously in terms of its ownmost distinctive possibility -- the more unequivocally does it choose and find the possibility of its existence, and the less it does so by accident. Only by the anticipation of death is every accidental and provisional possibility driven out. (BT 435 [384])

Death banishes the they and uncertainty. It brings Dasein before its fate which, when seen, demands to be chosen.
This last quotation must be read in the light of the remark Heidegger makes at the end of ¶62 of *Being and Time*:

> Is there not, however, a definite ontical way of taking authentic existence, a factical ideal of Dasein, underlying our ontological Interpretation of Dasein’s existence? *That is so indeed.* But not only is this Fact one which must not be denied and which we are forced to grant; it must also be conceived in its *positive necessity*, in terms of the object which we have taken as the theme of our investigation. (*BT* 358 [310])

Here Heidegger admits that his hermeneutics of authenticity must necessarily be guided by an “ontical” or non-ontological idea. What he means is that he has a picture of authenticity in mind which he is using to guide his investigation into authenticity. What becomes questionable at this juncture is the idea of authenticity which Heidegger is using as his guide.

The problem with his idea of death is that it cannot give us any reason to believe that it can in fact do what he thinks it can. Heidegger simply asserts this power of death as if it were a self-evident fact. How does radical individualization take over a possibility as *the* possibility upon which Dasein *must* act? We are left with two unsatisfying conclusions: 1) Heidegger believes that when seen in the moment of vision, a community’s heritage admits of only one possibility, which is to be chosen for the individual and by extension the community; and 2) consequently, Heidegger’s theory of
community offers no real basis for critique of its traditions. The first point implies that differences among members of the community are insignificant, and the second point thrusts Heidegger’s theory of community into nihilism or relativism.

I have accused Heidegger of constructing a theory of community which is incompatible with the modern liberal conception of society. His theory of community does not acknowledge the existence of significant differences among members of a community. This idea is fundamentally opposed to the liberal notion of tolerance and respect for differences. Clearly, Heidegger does not share my positive appraisal of liberal society. In fact, his theory of community seeks to overcomes the divisions and differences among members of a society, which are celebrated by liberal visions of society, by founding the community on a specific vision of history. Moreover, he thinks that an individual must become reconciled to his community and its history. Heidegger’s emphasis on the necessity of Dasein recovering its ground in its culture shows that he categorically rejects the notion that the possibilities open to Dasein can be augmented through an engagement with other cultures. His scathing remarks about those who would seek philosophical renewal in the traditions of “alien cultures” bear witness to this (BT 43 [21]).

Charles Guignon attempts to provide an account of the “transhistorical gleanings” which he claims underlie Heidegger’s conception of history (and consequently
community). Guignon argues that Heidegger’s theory of historicality allows for the overcoming of communal chauvinism. In a lecture given in 1915, Heidegger sought to show that the understanding of history was possible only on the assumption of a telos of “certain basic values” which ensure that the narrative of history is both unified and meaningful.\(^6\) Guignon thinks that this argument of Heidegger’s can be used to understand the concept of heritage in *Being and Time*. Citing Heidegger’s use of the words “loyalty”, “reverence”, and “authority” in *Being and Time* (*BT* 442-443 [391]), Guignon claims that Heidegger is seeking a “‘foundational historicism’ according to which there are enduring, transhistorical values and meanings underlying Western history”\(^7\) These meanings Guignon speaks of are the ancient Greek words which structured the ontology of the Greeks. Guignon’s position is strengthened when we recall that Heidegger frequently describes the origin of philosophy as if it towers over the degenerate philosophy of modernity. On Guignon’s interpretation, authenticity entails a deconstruction of history in order to recover the fundamental relationship between

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\(^7\)Guignon, “Saving Heidegger”, p. 405.
Dasein and Being which originated in Greek philosophy.  

However, Guignon's account is ultimately unsatisfying because he fails to do justice to the concept of repetition. If authentic historicality is simply the recovery of transhistorical values, then repetition is simply retrieval. But Heidegger denies that this is the case when he says that authentic historicality is a rejection of what in the present is a mere continuation of the past (BT 438 [386]). Guignon's account of history fails to recognize that in Being and Time Heidegger saw the past, even the Greek past of philosophy, not as a source of transhistorical validity and meaning, but instead as a storehouse of possibilities. Consequently, the destruction of the history of ontology is not simply a retrieval of a fundamental relationship to Being, but it is instead an awakening of the possibilities contained in the past in terms of the unique situation of the present. To speak of a transhistorical or foundational unity in history is incorrect on Heidegger's terms because history only becomes a unity when its possibilities are brought into the present through repetition.

Without a doubt, Heidegger's theory of community is inextricably bound up with his theory of historicality. In §6 of Being and Time, when he is introducing the notion of the destruction of the history of ontology, he explicitly makes this point. A community derives its identity and its possibilities from its history. There can be no

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question of a universal, or a priori source of destiny. Only through the repetition of the heritage of the community can the community become authentic. However, because Heidegger thinks that death has the power to retrieve the “good” heritage of the community, and because “goodness” for Heidegger is simply authenticity, his theory of community lacks the capability to critically assess its identity, possibilities, and history. Heidegger does not think that this is a problem though, because of his rejection of a pluralistic conception of society. The lack of a critical stance towards the history of the community takes on a more sinister look when Heidegger’s identification of the community with a people is considered.

Unlike the major concepts that Heidegger sets forth in Being and Time, “people” receives no justification. In Heidegger’s language, we are never told what the Being of “people” is. I think that this indicates that Heidegger thought that this concept was self-evident. He does not explain whether a “people” is meant to signify a race, cultural group, or linguistic group. I think that he would not have attributed the notion of a people to a race, given that his concept of community is so strongly linked with history. “People” (Volk) is introduced in connection with the concept of destiny. Destiny is initially introduced as the logical outcome of the analytic of Dasein’s historicality. Because Dasein is Being-with, its historizing must be, in some sense, a co-historizing (BT 436 [384]). However, immediately after making this remark, Heidegger notes that
destiny “is how we designate the historizing of the community, of a people” (*BT* 436 [384]). Destiny is thus defined as the constitutive element of a *Gemeinschaft* which is equated with a *Volk*. Heidegger does not tell us why he equates these two concepts or on what basis he thinks that this equation is made. Heidegger seems to have transgressed the boundaries which he himself drew around the project of fundamental ontology. That is to say, Heidegger gives no indication that a “people” is ontologically significant until he simply states that it is. Unless he admits “people” as an ontological concept, it does not belong in *Being and Time*. As Graeme Nicholson argues:

> the presupposition of Sec. 74 is that the nation is the subject of history, the entity which first and foremost represents the continuity or identity prevailing throughout time ... The conception of history as a continuity, and of the nation as its subject, contradicts the existential theory of Heidegger ... and is the reappearance of the idea of identity of a subject throughout time which was shown to be an ontological confusion in the case of the self.\(^9\)

John Caputo argues that the inclusion of this concept in *Being and Time* begs several questions, none of which seems to interest Heidegger: “Why should the collective *Geschick* -- even granting that there is such a thing -- be the *Geschick* of a people? ... Indeed, what is a ‘people’? Is it defined by race, blood, and ethnicity? By the unity of

a single language? Or by legal citizenship in a state?" Heidegger’s adoption of the nation as the bearer of history indicates that he was blind to the lack of self-evidence this concept has.

Heidegger’s use of the term “people” has been interpreted by some commentators as evidence that he has simply taken over the concept of Volks from the German Romantic tradition without critically evaluating its merits and defects. Sonya Sikka argues that Heidegger’s concept of Volks and the manner in which it is deployed in the Rector’s Address indicate his (perhaps unwitting) participation in a long German tradition. Part of the baggage of this tradition is the belief that a historical tradition is an autarky, meaning that communities do not evolve through interaction with other communities, but rather through the repetition and renewal of their pasts. The historical transformation of a community “can only take place from within the unity of the particular presentation of being which is formulated by tradition.”

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11 Sikka argues that Heidegger’s “belief that the unity and self-sufficiency of the Germans is the best means for obtaining their salvation and thereby the salvation of Europe,” is closest to the ideas of Fichte who articulated the same idea although in much different circumstances. Furthermore, Fichte was making use of a tradition which can be traced back to Herder’s conception of peoples and their identities. “Heidegger’s Concept of Volks”, p. 104.

12 Sikka, “Heidegger’s Concept of Volks”, p. 121.
Similarly, Caputo claims that Heidegger’s concept of a people comes from a vision of unitary cultures. He “has in mind a multiplicity of unitary peoples in strife who maintain their national vitality by an ongoing Kampf, a struggle and contest, both ab intra, within their own national community, and also ad extra, with other national communities”. It is important to highlight the emphasis Heidegger places on the constitutive struggle -- polemos -- among the members of a community. Heidegger claims that “only in communicating and struggling does the power of destiny become free” (BT 436 [384]). Gregory Schufreider has argued that polemos is the fundamental conception underlying Heidegger’s theory of community. He believes that to conceive of the community as following a single leader who has a grasp of the destiny of the community is misguided. Schufreider’s concept of struggle is drawn from Heidegger’s later works, notably Introduction to Metaphysics and On The Origin of the Work of Art. Following the model of struggle from these texts, Schufreider argues that the community must be seen as the intersection of divergent and competing interests, yet in their very competition these interests create a community by keeping its members open to the possibilities given to it by its history. He argues that this is the intent of the Rector’s

\[\text{13} \text{Caputo, Demythologizing Heidegger, p. 82.}\]


\[\text{15} \text{Schufreider, “Heidegger on Community”, pp. 46-47.}\]
Address: Heidegger wants to force the university to assume the leadership of the community while at the same time ensuring that it remains a distinct institution within the community.

Without a doubt, the motif of struggle is central to Heidegger’s conception of community. But it is important to bear in mind that in Being and Time destiny is only achieved through authenticity. Only one who is resolute can have a fate. Similarly, destiny only exists “in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities” (BT 436 [384]). Only when it is resolute can Dasein have its fate. Only in being open to the possibilities which are given in a situation can the destiny of Dasein’s community be guiding Dasein’s fate. In inauthenticity, Dasein is uprooted from its historical community and drifts in the average everyday world. Consequently in Being and Time, Heidegger envisions “communication and struggle” as an antidote to the everyday average interpretations of the they, which cut Dasein off from the wellspring of its historical possibilities. By struggling with one another, the members of the community free the power of destiny to guide their existence and to combat the seductive averageness of the they.

The struggle Heidegger envisions between students and teachers in the Rector’s Address should help the university avoid decadence. “The battle community of teachers and students, however, will only transform the German university into a place of spiritual
legislation and establish in it the centre of the most disciplined and focussed preparation for the highest service to the people in its state” (SGU 479). Why does this battle arise? It comes about when “the body of teachers and the student body, each in its own way [is] seized and [remains] seized by the concept of science” (SGU 478). When this comes about, the faculties will be asking the essential and simple questions of their science, and simultaneously the “teachers and students are already encompassed by the same final necessities and pressing concerns, inseparable from the being (Dasein) of people and state” (SGU 478). Remaining rooted in the destiny of the Germans while providing spiritual leadership through science to the people is the essence of the university. The destiny or spiritual mission of the Germans remains the guide to understanding the essence of the German university. Ultimately, the constituent members of the community are subsumed under the unity which is their destiny.

John Caputo argues that the shift in Heidegger’s thought from the programme of a “transcendental hermeneutics of facticity” in Being and Time to the “myth of Being” which marks his later work, is already underway in the Rector’s Address.\(^\text{16}\) This certainly seems true. The fundamental place Heidegger accords to the question of Being in German destiny in the Rector’s Address confirms this conclusion. In Being and Time, the question of Being did not yet play the part of a spiritual task which had fallen to the

\(^{16}\text{Caputo, Demythologizing Heidegger, p. 4.}\)
Germans, whose destiny it is to become the new Greeks. Rather, it stood as a sentinel at the close of Western metaphysics, awaiting renewal in a new ontology. However, in *Being and Time* Heidegger has grown comfortable with the language of *Volk* and destiny. To see a community as defined by its destiny entails a reluctance to acknowledge any differences between the members of a community; a reluctance to accept a pluralistic vision of society; a neglect of the marginal elements in a society. Difference, margins, and pluralism are inescapable elements of any human community according to the liberal point of view which dominates Western political theory. Heidegger's appeal to the destiny of a community is part of an effort to overcome these. His desire is to find a communal ground upon which the disparate members of society could reconcile themselves to one another. Unlike Hegel, who sought the unity of the modern community in philosophy, Heidegger seeks the unity of the modern community in its own history. The recovery of the proper sense of one's history will allow for a recovery of the organic unity of that history and hence, that of one's community.

It is through this notion of a community as an organic unity that Heidegger establishes his undeveloped theory of the state. The state is the final outgrowth of his theory of community. Nowhere does Heidegger discuss practical questions of statecraft, nor is there any discussion of the usual elements of a political state -- sovereignty, legislative power, executive power, and so on. In *Being and Time*, the state (*Staat*) is
mentioned only once in a quote from Count Yorck. In the Rector’s Address, on the other hand, Heidegger is very interested in the idea of the state, which is to be seen, he thinks, as the manner by which a people knows itself (SGU 471).

A central theme of the Rector’s Address is the unity between the German people and their state. The German people are said to be a people which knows itself in its state (SGU 471). Authentic science, “compels the people to work and fight and forces it into its state (Staat)” (SGU 477). In the Rector’s Address, Heidegger conceives of the state as the natural outgrowth of the organic unity of the people. The function of the state is to instantiate the people by leading them toward their spiritual mission. As such, the state charged with the leadership of the people. To understand this conception of the state, a survey of Heidegger’s discussion of leadership in the Rector’s Address is helpful. Leadership should “give the body of the followers strength” (SGU 479) to continue on with their mission. The followers are to “bear resistance within” themselves (SGU 479). This opposition between the leaders and the followers which Heidegger claims to be central to the phenomenon of leading/following, recalls the central place of struggle in the constitution of an authentic community. Thus, we are to see the state as the leader of the people toward their historical mission, but the people have a duty to resist the state in order to force it to remain true to the historical mission of the people.

One might object that this theme applies only to the Rector’s Address and other
texts from this period. However, Heidegger does briefly mention the state in *Being and Time* at the end of Chapter 5 of Division II, where he favourably quotes the work of Count Yorck:

> To dissolve elemental public opinion, and, as far as possible, to make possible the moulding of individuality in seeing and looking, would be a pedagogical task for the *state*. Then, instead of a so-called public conscience -- instead of this radical externalization -- individual consciences -- that is to say consciences -- would again become powerful. (*BT* 454-455 [403] my italics)

The quote from Yorck indicates that even as early as *Being and Time*, Heidegger endorsed the idea of a state which acts in conformity with the destiny of the society which it instantiates. To be sure, he has not aligned the state as closely with the destiny of a specific community as he would in the Rector’s Address. But if, on Heidegger’s account, individuality arises only in the face of death and the assumption of an authentic mode of existence, then the state, through its *pedagogical* task, is to help the people achieve authenticity and understand themselves as determined by their destiny. In other words, the state should lead the people toward the destiny of their community.

On the one hand then, a state should preserve the heritage of its people. On the other hand, that heritage is the only authentic basis for a state. Yet, there is no account of how this link between the state and the heritage of a people is to be conceived, yet alone made to work in practice. Sikka argues that this lacuna is simply a product of
Heidegger’s adoption of conservative German Romantic nationalism. Heidegger’s transposition of this theory in the Rector’s Address indicates that he did not think that there was any problem with this conception. However, if the state is to assume the role of leader to the people, then Vogel’s critique returns with vengeance. Heidegger leaves the state as the handmaiden to the history of the people it represents. Consequently, only if a conception of justice is part of a people’s heritage can it be brought into use.

There is nothing in Heidegger’s admittedly undeveloped political philosophy which could be the beginnings of a discussion of justice or rights. Such talk is swept away as the baggage of Western metaphysics. Bernard Dauenhauer points out that Heidegger’s Dasein analysis undermines many of the fundamental tenets of Western political theory such as the doctrine of radical autonomy. Dauenhauer argues that Heidegger’s work means that “there can be no responsible politics which either assumes the existence of fundamentally uniform politics among all men, peoples, and nations, or proposes the desirability of such uniformity.” Consequently, Dauenhauer advocates the rejection of a Kantian humanism, claiming that its abstraction from the facticity of

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17Sikka, “Heidegger’s Concept of Volk” pp. 102-103.


existence means that "man is ultimately responsible to himself [and] hence he is responsible to no one." Kant's ethics are ultimately meaningless because of his rejection of the specific situation, which, according to Heidegger, defines the place of action in terms of a community's history. Instead, the specific situation should be the fundamental ground of ethics. While this may be the appropriate Heideggerian response to Kant's ethics, it is not clear that such a response is itself appropriate. While he is certainly correct in pointing out the inadmissibility of a purely deontological ethics, Dauenhauer's Heideggerian politics sweeps away the deontological idea of justice but does not replace it with an existential conception of justice. In fact, justice would only exist on Dauenhauer's terms if it was part of the heritage of a people. But this would mean that a people would be only responsible to itself and hence no one. This proposition is totally incompatible with a pluralist vision of justice. The danger of this relegation of responsibility to a people is that Heidegger's conception of a people is itself blind to the differences between the members of a community and there is no obligation to act toward another people in any manner other than the self-assertion of one's identity.

2.4) Conclusion

To sum up the criticism I offer, Heidegger's theory of community in *Being and

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Time contains three distinct implications which should be troubling for anyone who accepts the liberal-pluralist vision of society commonly held in the West. First, there is no justification given for his equation of community with a people. There is nothing to suggest that this transposition is obvious or intuitive. It serves, rather, to bring elements of a latent social and political agenda into Being and Time. Second, Heidegger’s association of the community with a people leaves him dangerously underequipped to deal with conflict. Heidegger never gives us an account of how a conflict between two competing visions of a community’s destiny could be resolved. Lying behind his idea of community is the notion that a healthy community is a unitary and organic grouping of individuals and conflict would thus represent the failure of the community to remain united or secure in its understanding of its history. Finally, Heidegger couples a conceptually undeveloped theory of the state to these first two points. The function of the state is directly tied to the destiny of its community. Therefore, there can be no recourse to the state to adjudicate disputes. Instead, the state is to be thought of as an authoritarian leader of the masses in pursuit of the destiny of the community.

Even if we were to grant to Heidegger his conception of community, it would still be flawed due to his insistence on autarky. Heidegger is unable to account for the influence one culture can have on another. He does not even think that this is a significant factor in history. Yet there is nothing in the existential analytic which would
endorse this point of view. Dasein embraces all humanity; existence is the existence of all human beings. There is nothing in his analysis of existence which necessitates the exclusion of one people from the world of another. Only a contempt for everyday life coupled with a vision of a people united around a single goal can bring him to this conclusion. While this conception in no way necessitates a commitment to Nazism, it does not in any way prevent someone from making such a commitment.

My critique of Heidegger's theory of community should not be construed as a rejection of his entire philosophy. I think that his work opens the way to a new understanding of ethics. However much Heidegger might have disagreed with this statement, *Being and Time* contains within it the seeds of an ethical outlook upon life. His account of the extremes of solicitude is the most obvious example. Dasein can "leap-in" on other or it can "leap-ahead" (*BT* 158 [122]). What Heidegger means by these terms is that one can either dominate the other and take away her existence by making decisions for her or giving her the easy option of following the crowd, which is what he calls "leaping-in". "Leaping-ahead" respects the integrity of the other person by refusing to take away his freedom. Leaping-ahead strikes me as a fundamentally ethical claim. It implies a respect for difference and an acknowledgement of the value of the differences among people. However, when interpreted in the light of Heidegger's theory of community, this concept of solicitude no longer carries this liberal connotation.
Heidegger' writes that "when [Dasein] devote themselves to the same affair in common, their doing so is determined by the manner in which their Dasein, each in its own way, has been taken hold of. They thus become authentically bound together" (BT 159 [122]). Although the individual Dasein take hold of their existence as individuals, this existence is determined, of course, by the destiny of their community. Furthermore, Heidegger seems to imply that Dasein only become authentically bound together, that is to say, that they only achieve a real sense of community, when they pursue the same task. Thus, leaping-ahead, which appeared as a liberal concept when abstracted from Heidegger's theory of community, is transformed when re-integrated with the theory.

However, other commentators have seen this mode of solicitude as a point of departure for a Heideggerian ethics. For instance, Lawrence Vogel concludes his book The Fragile "We" by turning Heidegger's work against his own theory of community. Vogel argues that elements of Being and Time can provide a standpoint from which to critique Heidegger's theory of community. Specifically, Vogel claims that "Heidegger's mistake in Being and Time is to conceive of moral conscience in too limited a fashion. According to Heidegger, the voice of moral conscience is an ontic, not an ontological phenomenon because it does not open the individual to existence as a whole but rather orients him toward specific possibilities in the everyday world."21 In a similar vein,

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Frederick Olafson has tried to show that the structure of *Mitsein* can be re-interpreted as an ground of ethics.\textsuperscript{22} I believe that if thought through, Heidegger’s ontological analysis of *Mitsein* and solicitude could provide a notion of justice which would allow for an integration of liberal values into his theory of community without returning to a foundationalist view of ethics.

More directly related to the content of this thesis, though, is the possibility of rehabilitating Heidegger’s theory of community. I think he is right to say that there are groups that share a common identity and that this identity is constitutive of individual identity.\textsuperscript{23} The importance of the community in the construction of one’s identity cannot be denied. However, Heidegger’s elitism and his non-liberal social philosophy means that his theory of community would be an unsatisfactory basis for a sensitive analysis of the dynamics of social relationships and identities in a pluralistic society. Heidegger thought that he needed nothing but his understanding of the true history of his community in order to plunge into political action. Hans-Georg Gadamer has argued that “hermeneutics teaches us is to see through the dogmatism of asserting an opposition and


separation between ongoing, natural ‘tradition’ and the reflective appropriation of it.\textsuperscript{24} Heidegger’s theory of community asserts this opposition and blinds him to this teaching of hermeneutics.

I have tried to show in this thesis that \textit{Being and Time} has a theory of community and that this theory has several implications which are unacceptable to those with a liberal view of society. I have refrained from drawing a conclusion about the status of the debate about Heidegger’s Nazism for the reasons I stated in my Introduction. The obvious continuation of this thesis would be an investigation of the extent to which Heidegger’s theory of community guided his alignment with National Socialism. To imagine that this was the only reason he did so would be rather simplistic. However, given its \textit{prima facie} similarity to the fascist conception of community, it is likely that it played a part in Heidegger’s affiliation. However, many patriotic and nationalist Germans did not support the regime. Thus the question remains open. Nevertheless, the task falls to those of us who wish to uphold the liberal-pluralist vision of society to integrate it into post-Heideggerian theories of the subject and her place in history and the community.

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