

Heidegger's explication of Being-with forms part of his overall phenomenological investigation into Dasein – defined as the only entity that questions its own being. Being-with is Heidegger's attempt to account for an “intersubjective” relationship between Dasein.<sup>1</sup> Heidegger's Being-with includes our connectedness to ourselves

By “Others” we do not mean everyone else but me – those over against whom the “I” stands out. They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself – those among whom one is too. (Heidegger, *Being and Time* p117)

It is an account of how we are ontologically “intimate” with *any* other. He describes two states of being-with; authentic and inauthentic. These two states determine how we behave towards other Dasein, as well as how we project ourselves into the future and ultimately our sense of self.

Heidegger describes Being-with as one of the primordial structures of Dasein, on the same level (equiprimordial) as Being-in-the-world. Being-with is in fact involved in being-in-the-world, as other Dasein are involved in our dealings with the world. For example, making a shoe *for* someone, or buying a paper *from* someone. Heidegger wants to make it clear that Dasein does not see others as ready-at-hand or present-at-hand. Meaning is attributed through the for-the-sake-of-which use of ready-to-hand entities, which is always for the sake of Dasein.

Heidegger explains that the character of Dasein towards others is different from towards entities ready-to-hand and present-at-hand, and calls this character “caring for” or “solicitude”. Solicitude has various modes ranging from indifference (or Deficient) to active (Positive). Inauthentic solicitude involves “leaping in for the other”, taking away the other's responsibility and reducing the other's capacity to achieve authenticity. Conversely, authentic solicitude – “when I leap ahead” of the other person – involves seeking to help that person become transparent to him/her self, thus allowing a freeing of the other and their possibilities.

For Heidegger, leaping ahead constitutes an authentic relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> Heidegger would argue against calling it “intersubjective”, as it would be posit Dasein as an isolated subject.

Empathy is our primary method of interaction with others, however while it is intuitive it is not a primordial structure. Heidegger believes that solicitude is the aspect of Dasein's constitution that allows us to feel empathy.

In explicating Dasein's being-with, Heidegger first starts by examining the "who" of Dasein. Similarly to being-in-the-world, the structure of Being-with does not allow separation of Dasein from others; Dasein *is* always in relation to others, never isolated. Even when ontically alone, Dasein still has this existential structure. Thus Heidegger explores the "who" of Dasein not as "I" – a discrete essential substance – but in terms of Mineness.<sup>2</sup>

While it is important to not that this is an account from Phenomenology, and so the perception of mineness is necessarily taken as valid, it is up to Heidegger to identify it as an ontic or ontological (structural) feature. Heidegger forwards Mineness as an existential feature of Dasein, and describes three ways in which Dasein is "mine". These are each rendered problematic by the Inauthentic mode, which shall be described afterwards. Firstly, Dasein is mine in the sense that my Being belongs exclusively to me, and that I am responsible for it. Secondly, in the sense that I exist as a caring being, i.e. I am caught up in the world, and cannot help but have an interest in my Dasein. And lastly, in the sense that I choose my projects, and thus realise Dasein through its possibilities.

As mentioned earlier, Dasein has two modes of Being-with; the Authentic and Inauthentic. On the basis of its Mineness, Dasein has a choice of modes: it can either live authentically or inauthentically. It can immerse itself in the world of the "they", or it can stand as an "individual" Dasein. Heidegger explains that the usual mode of existence of Dasein, in the "everyday", is inauthentic – falling away from oneself, and existing for the "they". It may seem paradoxical that Dasein can be mine in the sense

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<sup>2</sup> At this point Heidegger could be in danger of recreating a Cartesian separation between the Dasein, and the Me or Myself to which Mineness refers. It is not clear if Heidegger has any way out of this, as the position in his account in which a Self can be found are both post-Dasein, i.e. in the mood of the Dasein, or in interpretation of Dasein through its possibilities. However, it is possible that Heidegger considers understanding, a pre-reflective knowledge of the world, to be his point of Mineness. Heidegger does consider the Dasein to *be* understanding, though since understanding itself (as opposed to interpretation) does not seem to be formed with respect to the Dasein's facticity it is unclear how any individualisation can come from it.

that it is not mine – and this is where Heidegger’s account of the mineness of Dasein can become problematic – however Heidegger sees this as part of the structural nature of Dasein. Also, while it may seem that there is an evaluative nature to authentic and inauthentic, Heidegger denies this, and points out that Dasein must start out as Inauthentic before it can become Authentic.

The “they” of Heidegger’s everyday Being-with (they-self of Dasein) is referred to as *Das Man*. This is an anonymous “they” that is comparable with the use of “one” in the statement “One doesn’t do that sort of thing here”, i.e. it is a homogenous, hegemonic group that takes away Dasein’s responsibility for thinking, by offering the world ready-understood. *Das Man* is characterised by its three forms of inauthentic discourse and behaviour; Idle talk, Curiosity, and Ambiguity. These three forms are intertwined and dependent on each other to produce the gestalt effect of inauthentic discourse.

Idle talk, or gossiping, “spreads in wider circles and takes on an authoritative character”. As it is something that anyone can come up with, and because of its authoritative nature, it “releases one from the task of genuinely understanding”. It is through idle talk that *Das Man* levels out our possibilities and interpretation of the world and ourselves.

Heidegger describes curiosity as “seeing, not in order to understand what is seen... but *just* in order to see”. (Heidegger, *Being and Time* p 172) Curiosity is seen as Heidegger as a wistful, non-engaging, view of the world, which places Dasein in a constant state of distraction and gives the impression of constant fun, interest and excitement. As Heidegger puts it, the “essential characteristic of this phenomenon ... we call the character of ‘*never dwelling anywhere*’”, and it is this that allows Dasein to hold back the effects of existential angst.

Ambiguity can be seen as the natural result of Idle Talk and Curiosity;

When, in our everyday Being-with-one-another, we encounter the sort of thing which is accessible to everyone, and about which anyone can say anything, it soon

becomes impossible to decide what is disclosed in a genuine understanding, and what is not. (Heidegger, *Being and Time* p 172)

It is this conjugation of Idle talk, Curiosity, and Ambiguity within *Das Man* that holds Dasein in an inauthentic existence. Heidegger expresses the effect of *Das Man* – What he calls “publicness” – as a distancing from ourselves in which we are caught up in our difference from others and how they think of us (Distantiality), a hegemonic maintenance of the status-quo and suppression of the ontologically primordial such that “Every kind of priority gets noiselessly suppressed” (Heidegger, *Being and Time* p127) (Averageness), and a “levelling down” of all possibilities of Being.

Above all, Dasein’s Inauthentic existence is a state of what Heidegger calls “Falleness”; a state where we are moving away from ourselves.

Dasein has, in the first instance, fallen away from itself as an authentic potentiality for Being its self, and has fallen into the ‘world’. ‘Falleness’ into the world means an absorption in Being-with-one-another, in so far as the latter is guided by idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity. Through the Interpretation of falling, what we have called the ‘inauthenticity’ of Dasein may now be defined more precisely. (Heidegger, *Being and Time* p175)

The consequences of Inauthentic being-with come about via Dasein’s publicness. Dasein does not come to understand; rather, understanding is something that it is. Heidegger describes an ontic understanding of the world coming about through an interpretative action on the ontological, primordial understanding. Publicness controls how Dasein interprets itself and the world by circumscribing Dasein’s possibilities for existence (through inauthentic discourse and a lack of genuine-understanding of the world). It takes away Dasein’s responsibility for its existence and its actions by forcing Dasein to appeal to an anonymous “they”, of which it itself has become part.

Possibly the closest Heidegger gets to an idea of self is in the concept of mood. Heidegger understands Dasein as absorbed in social intercourse, practical tasks and its own interests. He takes as evidence for this absorption the fact that Dasein always finds itself caught up in a mood – that is, ‘tuned in’ to a given set of concerns. He

does not consider moods to be transient emotion, but instead the point from which we project ourselves into the future; Dasein's interpretation of primordial understanding is determined by mood. While moods form our connection with other Dasein as a whole, they can conceal from us the ontological nature of our existence and compound authenticity, such as in publicness. The possibility of engaging in authentic existence comes through mood however.

While mood in general follows Intentionality (always directed towards something), Anxiety is different. It is not a disclosure of anything in particular; it is the tension experienced between being tranquillised by *Das Man* and alienated from the world. Anxiety is the mood/mode of attunement in which our inauthentic being is disclosed to us. Heidegger offers Anxiety as the catalyst to authentic existence:

Anxiety throws Dasein back upon that which it is anxious about – its authentic potentiality for being in the world. Anxiety individualises Dasein for its own most Being-in-the-world, which as something that understands, projects itself essentially upon possibilities. (Heidegger, *Being and Time* p232)

Anxiety functions to shake Dasein out of its they-self and forces it to realise its being-towards-death. Dasein reinterprets its projects and possibilities as its own, within the contingency of its existence (Thrownness):

If Dasein discovers the world in its own way and brings it close, if it discloses to itself its own authentic Being, then this discovery of the 'world' and this disclosure of Dasein are always accomplished as a clearing-away of concealments and obscurities, as a breaking up of the disguises with which Dasein bars its own way. (Heidegger, *Being and Time* p129)

Heidegger does not suggest that Dasein's involvement and existence in relationship to other Dasein (Being-with) ceases, but rather that its nature changes. Dasein gains ontic awareness of the ontological nature of Dasein's existence with respect to others, with which Dasein can reintegrate itself into the Being-with relationship.

For Heidegger, ontological understanding is not necessarily echoed in an ontic understanding, so by understanding the other through our being-with – which does not take into consideration background, hobbies, interests, ethnicity, gender, etc. – we gain no everyday insight into the other, simply a recognition of another Dasein. Similarly, our ontological care for other Dasein is not mirrored ontically!

It is also not obvious whether it is possible to have an Authentic self. Heidegger argues that the they-self exists for *Das Man*, and so has its possibilities reduced. However, Dasein's facticity alone can quite easily do this. How much freedom is there for Dasein to choose? Even after angst has individualised Dasein, Heidegger suggests that not much changes, but that Dasein re-integrates with the they under a modified relationship. It is not obvious from the structural nature of Being-with, how it can allow two totally distinct modes of relation, while keeping the fundamental relationship between Dasein and other fixed.

Criticism of Heidegger regarding the possibility of authentic existence and the validity of choice when determined by facticity can easily be rebuffed by pointing out that his is a Phenomenological account; A perceived sense of choice that is all that is important. However, Heidegger's failure to define the extent to which facticity restricts Dasein's projects, or any account of effects of embodiment within *Being and Time* leaves it open to the attack that it is a totally subjective account only applying to Heidegger himself.

### **Bibliography**

Heidegger M., *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (trans.), Blackwell: Oxford, 1962.