

Heidegger, Sociality, and Human Agency  
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## 1. Introduction

What does sociality — the condition of living and understanding oneself amidst social relations to others — have to do with human agency? According to Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, sociality is *constitutive* of the core features of human agency.<sup>1</sup> According to what I will call this “strong conception” of sociality, the core features of human agency cannot obtain in an individual subject independently of social relations to others, and so a theory of human agency that operates with a weak or impoverished conception of sociality is bound to be deficient.

A “weak conception” of sociality assumes that social relations are in principle contingent or extrinsic and that the core features of human agency are built into the mind of each individual subject. Sociality is, on this view, essentially nothing but an aggregation of separately but simultaneously obtaining individuals. According to the strong conception, though, sociality, what Heidegger calls “being-with” [*Mitsein*], is not reducible to an aggregation of individuals. Rather, it has to do with the holistic inter-relational framework in which the identities of individuals make sense and become possible.<sup>2</sup> Heidegger claims that “So far as Dasein *is* at all, it has being-with-one-another as its kind of being. This cannot be conceived as a summative result of the occurrence of several ‘subjects’” (BT 163/125).<sup>3</sup> In this paper I explain and defend this claim.

Heidegger attributes a weak conception of sociality to Kant and Descartes, and he explicitly presents his own conception of agency as a critique of and improvement upon Kant’s.

The weak conception of sociality remains today widely taken for granted, partially as a result of the extremely powerful grip that Kantian philosophy continues to hold on our philosophical outlook. So, in describing Heidegger’s strong conception of sociality, I am going to reconstruct and renew his critique of the Kantian interpretation of human agency. Heidegger’s critique of Kant’s conception of selfhood applies directly to one of the most creative contemporary appropriators of Kant’s practical philosophy, Christine Korsgaard.<sup>4</sup> Korsgaard, like Kant, assumes a weak conception of sociality, and this prevents her from being able to explain a pervasive and important phenomenon she herself recognizes, if only in passing: the way our individual identities are shaped by a socially shared understanding of what is possible and appropriate, an understanding expressed, for example, in phenomena such as gender roles.

The strong conception of sociality is an important aspect of the overall philosophical framework that Heidegger develops in *Being and Time*. At the center of this framework is the phenomenon Heidegger calls “the disclosedness [*Erschlossenheit*] of the world”—in a word, the socially constituted and normatively saturated “space” or “clearing” [*Lichtung*] wherein things can make sense, identities become possible, and courses of action are worthwhile or repugnant. Heidegger himself does not do much explicitly to develop the strong conception of sociality implied by his notion of the disclosedness of the world. However, I will show that Heidegger’s approach is able to give an account both of the pervasive social dimensions of human life and of the major systematic concern behind Korsgaard and Kant’s practical philosophy: the concern with the importance of autonomy and answerability in human life. The Heideggerian notion of the disclosedness of the world implies an account of individual answerability that links it to the social dimensions of identity.

Heidegger’s critique of Kant is initially opaque. He claims that Kant’s conception of agency is “ontologically inappropriate” because Kant remained under the spell of “the ontology of the substantial” (BT 366/318-319). The explanation Heidegger gives of this charge is also at first rather obscure: “Kant did not see the phenomenon of the world” (BT 368/321). Failing to see the phenomenon of the world distorts Kant’s conception of selfhood because, according to Heidegger, “this very phenomenon of the world co-determines the constitution of being of the ‘I’” (BT 368/321). In order to explain this critique of Kant and to use it to explain the distinction between the weak and conceptions of sociality, I need to introduce some further issues.

## **2. Agency, Reflexivity, and Normativity**

Both Heidegger and Korsgaard, following Kant, conceive of human agency in terms of two further phenomena: practical normativity and the reflexive self-relation. First, roughly put, a human agent has the need and ability to act according to practical norms. That is, human agents act in accordance with a sense of what *should* be done and in “the space of normativity,” not merely in accordance with antecedent law-governed chains of events in nature, “the space of factuality.”<sup>5</sup> To say that action transpires in the space of normativity is to say that it transpires in accordance with what Kant and Korsgaard call “conceptions of the law,”<sup>6</sup> or what Heidegger calls the “disclosedness of the world.” Second, human agency involves the phenomenon of the reflexive self-relation. That is, put abstractly, acting according to norms means acting in light of an outside perspective on oneself. But what does that mean?

Traditionally, the reflexive self-relation has been seen in terms of the individual’s reflective self-consciousness. Indeed, according to a still popular view, both the reflexive self-relation and the source of normativity are a feature of a deliberating individual’s reflective

apprehension of his “lower order” inner motivations to act. The primary phenomenon, in Korsgaard’s formulation, is the individual person’s self-conscious “look inward” at his inclinations, a process which makes them into “reified mental items.”<sup>7</sup> This look inward by the individual is seen as an “elementary maneuver” that produces the distinguishing structures of human agency and serves as the source of normativity in the world.<sup>8</sup> On this view, then, both a reflexive self-relation and the ability to act according to norms are assumed to be, in principle, built-in features of each individual mind.<sup>9</sup>

It is not the case, of course, that Korsgaard actually denies that individual subjects stand in relations to others. She herself refers to various social identities in the course of her discussion (see, e.g., SN 101ff). However, given her claim that the source of normativity and reflexivity is the reflective self-consciousness of the individual, social relations and social identities are, structurally speaking, external or “contingent” (as she herself puts it) to the one “fundamental” human identity: the identity of being an individual reflective deliberator. Sociality is thus, in this picture, assumed to be a mere aggregation of individuals. That is what I mean by a *weak* conception of sociality, and it is what Heidegger means by an “ontologically inappropriate” conception of selfhood, one that “fails to see the world.”

The basic elements of Heidegger’s view of human agency and strong conception of sociality are more difficult initially to put on the table. To insist with Heidegger that the “phenomenon of the world co-determines the constitution of being of the ‘I’” (BT 368/321), is to claim that an individual’s reflexive relation to himself is essentially bound up with his relations to *the other people among whom* and to *the useful things with which* he lives his life, where these relations are structured and pervaded by a socially shared form of normativity that is expressed in our more or less inexplicit understanding of the proper and normal way do things and interact

with other people. Thus, not surprisingly, Heidegger explicitly denies that the reflexivity characteristic of human identity (“being towards oneself,” in his words) has the structure

Korsgaard describes:

To be in the mode of a self means to be fundamentally toward oneself. Being towards oneself constitutes the being of Dasein and *is not something like an additional capacity to observe oneself over and above just existing*. Existing is precisely this being towards oneself, only the latter must be understood in its full metaphysical scope and must *not be restricted to some activity or capability or to any mode of apprehension* such as knowledge or apperception.<sup>10</sup>

As Heidegger reiterates the point elsewhere:

The self is there for the Dasein itself without reflection and without inner perception, *before* all reflection. Reflection, in the sense of a turning back, is only a mode of self-*apprehension*, but not the mode of primary self-disclosure.<sup>11</sup>

On Heidegger’s view, then, I do not relate reflexively to myself period, full stop, in a stance of reflective self-apprehension. Rather, I relate reflexively to myself, for example, *as* a philosophy teacher, *as* a projectionist, *as* a drummer in a punk band, and so on.<sup>12</sup> This is so even without my having reflectively to apprehend *that* I occupy these identities, but by just being oriented in my daily environment and activities in light of the tasks, concerns, and requirements characteristic of being a teacher, projectionist, or drummer. As Heidegger puts it, a person is “reflected to himself” just in dealing with things and carrying out the tasks associated with his identities.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, to relate to and understand myself as, say, a philosophy teacher, is to relate to (and to be appropriately oriented amidst) books, chalk, computers, and other things teachers make use of in the course of pursuing their identities, and it is to relate to (and to be appropriately oriented amidst) students, other teachers, TAs, administrators, and the other people among whom teachers do their thing. As Heidegger expresses this point: “as the being which has to do with itself [*um sich selbst geht*], Dasein is with equal originality being-with-others and being-amidst intrawordly

beings” (BP 297, translation modified). Next, as is captured in my parenthetical remark about being “appropriately oriented,” to stand in these relations is to be—again, independent of any particular act of reflective distance—attuned to your situation by way of the web of shared social norms that govern the proper ways for one to teach a class, use chalk to write on the chalkboard, compose an email, report grades, and so on; all the things one *should* do, in order really to *be* a teacher.

On this view, then, the source of normativity is *not* the internal space of a deliberating individual’s reflective self-consciousness—it is *out there*, it is the public space of our shared social world; it is that holistic network of shared norms in terms of which we are oriented in our everyday activities; it is what Heidegger calls *the disclosedness* of the world (see §5.1 below). The reflexive self-relation, in turn, is not a matter of the individual’s quasi-perceptual reflective self-apprehension of himself; it is a structure or “way of being,” to talk like Heidegger, that is part and parcel of our normatively attuned practical orientation amidst things and other people. I provide more details about Heidegger’s conception of reflexivity in §5.2. For now I just wanted to show how the phenomenon of reflexivity is, in the Heideggerian picture, essentially bound up with sociality.

Heidegger does not mean simply to deny the possibility and importance of individual reflective distance from “lower order” motivational states. He does, however, mean to situate and explain the significance of the possibility of an individual’s reflective distance with respect to the social dimensions of agency. In short, Heidegger denies that the individual’s act of reflective distancing is an “elementary maneuver,” and he thereby denies that it is charged with the explanatory power Korsgaard attributes to it, that is, he denies that it is in and of itself the source of normativity and the essence of the reflexive self-relation. In Heidegger’s view, such

reflective distance arises in cases of breakdown of our prior, pre-reflective skillful engagement with the world, and so a proper philosophical theory of agency will start with an account of such “everydayness” rather than a “phenomenology of deliberation” (SC 126). The attempt to build up an account of human agency solely through the analysis of individual reflective distance is a misguided attempt to generalize a condition of breakdown. It results in a distorted picture of human agency.

### **3. Heidegger’s Critique of Kant’s Conception of Selfhood**

#### **3.1 Initial Remarks on Heidegger’s Project in *Being and Time***

In order to get Heidegger’s approach to human agency and selfhood more in focus, we need to notice that the relevant opposing term to “selfhood” is “objecthood.” This distinction, Heidegger contends, is a matter of *ontology*: selves and objects are two categorically different kinds of *entities*, and selfhood and objecthood are, accordingly, two radically different *ways of being*. Hence, the most basic ontological distinction Heidegger makes in *Being and Time* is that between *being a self* and *being a substance or thing*. Heidegger uses the word “existence” [*Existenz*] as a technical term to refer to the way of being characteristic of a human agent (a “Dasein”), and he coins the term “presence-at-hand” [*Vorhandenheit*] to refer to the way of being characteristic of things independent of any reference to our practices (the mode of being focused on by traditional substance ontology).

In *Being and Time* Heidegger undertakes to uncover and spell out the formal ontological structure of human existence in way that safely secures the distinction from what he calls “the ontology of the substantial.” The latter, Heidegger claims, is the way of being that is spelled out in Kant’s table of categories. On Heidegger’s reading, Kant’s table of categories spells out the *ontology* or the mode of being of present-at-hand nature. Accordingly, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger uses the terms “categories” and “categorical” in a technical sense to refer to the mode

of being of present-at-hand things, and he uses “existentials” and “existential” to refer to the ontological structure of Dasein (BT 70/44).

### 3.2 Heidegger on Kant’s Conception of Selfhood

In the section of *Being and Time* devoted explicitly to the ontological structure of selfhood, §64 “Care and Selfhood,” as well as in the much more extended treatment of these issues given in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger explicitly presents his conception of selfhood as an improvement upon Kant’s. It helps to consider two passages in which Heidegger expresses both his high estimation of and his ultimate disappointment in Kant’s own attempt to distinguish the ontological structure of selfhood from that of things of nature:

Kant is wholly right when he declares the categories, as fundamental concepts of nature, unsuitable for determining the ego [*Ich*]. But in that way he has only shown negatively that the categories, which were tailed to fit other beings, nature, break down here. (BP 145)

Kant makes a more rigorous attempt than his predecessors to keep hold of the phenomenal content of saying ‘I’; yet even though in theory he denied that ...the ontology of the substantial applies to the ‘I’, he still slips back into *this same* inappropriate ontology. (BT 366/ 318-319)

When Heidegger mentions Kant’s “progress” over his predecessors, the main philosopher he has in mind is Descartes. Descartes sees the way of being of the ‘I’ (*res cogitans*) and that of objects (*res extensa*), in essentially the same ontological terms; they are both kinds of substance (BT 131/98). Moreover, substance is defined in the same way whether it is qualified as extended or thinking. It is that which underlies as *subjectum* or *hypokeimenon*, and that which remains what it is throughout changes in properties, relations, and contexts. Hence, as Heidegger puts it, according to Descartes, “That which enduringly remains, really *is*” (BT 128/96). When defining



his notion of “presence-at-hand” [*Vorhandenheit*], Heidegger quotes Descartes’ definition of “substance”: “By substance we can understand nothing else than an entity which *is* in such a way that it needs no other entity in order to *be*.”<sup>14</sup>

In Heidegger’s view, then, Kant’s progress over Descartes amounts to his having explicitly recognized that the “ontology of the substantial” as spelled out in the categories does not capture what is distinctive of human selfhood. But Kant doesn’t pull it off. Despite his ground breaking insight, Kant, according to Heidegger, still sees human selfhood in terms of conception of *subjectivity* which remains under the spell of *substantiality*.

[Kant] takes this ‘I’ as subject again, and he does so in a sense which is ontologically inappropriate. For the ontological concept of the subject *characterizes not the selfhood of the ‘I’ qua self, but the selfsameness and steadiness of something that is always present-at-hand*. To define the ‘I’ ontologically as ‘*subject*’ means to regard it as something always present-at-hand [*Vorhandenen*] (BT 367/320).

But, what exactly does it mean to interpret the structure of selfhood in terms of substantiality or presence-at-hand? Given that the essence of the selfhood lies in the phenomenon of the reflexive self-relation, and that this reflexive self-relation is part and parcel of the distinction between the normative and the natural, the question becomes: *what does it mean to conceive of a reflexive self-relation on the model of substantiality?*

Here we have to keep in mind Heidegger’s appeal to the Cartesian conception of substantiality: the ontologically distinguishing feature of substance is its self-sufficiency. Substance is what it is independently of its relations and context which are seen as mere accidents, detachable properties. To conceive of a reflexive self-relation definitive of selfhood in terms of the ontology of the substantial, then, is to see it as a self-sufficient feature of the individual mind, something that obtains without any constitutive relation to others. The

conception of the reflexive self-relation at the basis of Korsgaard’s theory of agency provides a clear example of this.

#### **4. Korsgaard’s Theory of Agency and Weak Conception of Sociality**

##### **4.1 Korsgaard on Agency, Reflexivity, and Normativity**

Korsgaard presents her account of normatively guided human agency by contrasting it to an account of the agency of “lower” animals. She secures the distinction between the two modes of agency by claiming that human agency is characterized by a particular mode of the reflexive self-relation.

The human mind is self-conscious in the sense that it is essentially reflective... A lower animal’s attention is fixed on the world. Its perceptions are its beliefs and its desires are its will. It is engaged in conscious activities, but it is not conscious *of* them. That is, they are not the objects of its attention. Be we human animals turn our attention on to our perceptions and desires themselves, on to our own mental activities, and we are conscious *of* them. (SN 92-93)

What Korsgaard calls “the reflective structure of human consciousness” amounts to a form of self-consciousness construed as an act of reflective self-apprehension. Self-consciousness arises in the gap between an observing subject and an observed object. I take myself – my desires – reflexively as the object of my observation, and this is what gives rise to the distinguishing structures of human action. This comes out even more clearly in *Self-Constitution*. There Korsgaard defines “the reflective structure” of human agency in terms of a “reifying eye of self-consciousness” (SC 123). She claims that “when we are conscious of the fact that an incentive [to act in some way] is working upon us, our self-consciousness of our state does reify it into a kind of mental item” (SC 121). This is what Korsgaard calls “reflective distance.” It is this space of a deliberating individual’s reflective distance that gives rise to the space of normativity

and the possibility of distinctively human action. That is, in Korsgaard’s terms, it “expels” us from the factual realm of *nature*, the garden of “instinctual immediacy” enjoyed by lower animals, and forces us to decide what to do in accordance with a general normative principle.

To clarify this, it is helpful to mention how Korsgaard construes the distinction between the receptive and the active aspects of agency. Receptivity is what she calls, in the animal case, an “incentive,” and in the human case an “inclination” to do something or other. But it doesn’t give rise to action without the cooperation of activity. Activity lies in the application of normative principles, principles that govern the agent’s response to his incentives or inclinations. In the animal case, the application of principles happens automatically or immediately through their natural instincts. But because a human agent supposedly always has reflective distance he has been “expelled from nature,” his instincts don’t function immediately anymore. He has to apply his normative principles himself. These principles derive from (or constitute) what Korsgaard calls a person’s “practical identity,” which is “a description under which you value yourself, a description under which you find your life to be worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking” (SN 101). A practical identity consists in principles in accordance with which we judge whether or not our natural inclinations to act are normative reasons for us to act. Accordingly, Korsgaard claims that “Our rational principles replace our instincts – they will tell us what is an appropriate response to what, what makes what worth doing, what the situation calls for” (SC 116).

Before moving on the topic of sociality, let me sum up briefly what we know so far about the relation between human action, normativity, and reflexivity in Korsgaard’s view. Human actions express the agent’s activity, the reflective application of normative principles. Without this reflective application of principles, a person’s movement is not an expression of *him*, but

rather a mere event in which he is passive; the manifestation of exogenous forces “acting on him or in him.” The application of normative principles happens in the interior space of reflective distance, a space opened by the person’s reflexively relating to himself by taking his own desires as objects of his reflectively distant attention. Thus, on this view, the source of normativity is the deliberating individual’s reflective self-consciousness. “Reasons arise within the space of reflective distance; to that extent an inward glance is essential to generating them” (SC 124).

#### **4.2 How this is a Weak Conception of Sociality**

Again, by a weak conception of sociality, I mean one that sees relations to other people as merely external or contingent, as opposed to being internal or constitutive. A weak conception of sociality involves two related assumptions: first, that the core features of human agency, including a reflexive self-relation and the need and ability to act according to norms, are built-in features of each individual mind; second, that sociality is a mere contingent agglomeration of what are in principle separately obtaining individual subjects.

To have been expelled from the instinctual immediacy of nature because of reflective distance and to have to decide what to do is what it means, according to Korsgaard, to have a *will*. With this we can understand Korsgaard’s claim that “all normativity springs from the will.”<sup>15</sup> Now, she does not make the specification here, but the claim is actually that “all normativity springs from the *individual* will.” Korsgaard assumes this capacity for self-objectification and for normative determination of the will are, in the words of George Herbert Mead, “a native endowment” of the individual mind.<sup>16</sup>

#### **4.3 A Problem in Korsgaard’s View**

But does normativity really spring from the self-conscious reflective distance constitutive of the *individual will*? What about socially defined and shared norms of appropriate behavior that do not necessarily pass through the mediation of reflective self-consciousness, as, for example, the norms associated with gender roles? Korsgaard notices this important issue in passing:

A human being in turn has a “life” in a sense in which a non-human animal does not. For a non-human animal’s life is mapped out for him by his instincts... A human being has a life in a different sense from this, for a human being has, and is capable of choosing what we sometimes call a ‘way of life’ of, following Rawls, a ‘conception of the good’. *Where her way of life is not completely fixed by some sort of cultural regulation, a human being decides* such things as how to earn her living, how to spend her afternoons, who[m] to have for friends, and in general how she will live and what she will live for. She decides what is worth doing for the sake of what. (SC 128, my italics)

This emphasis on the prior partial determination of an individual’s practical identity by “some sort of cultural regulation” is a central aspect of Heidegger’s strong conception of sociality. Early on in *Being and Time* Heidegger writes:

Dasein has brown up both into and in a traditional way of interpreting itself: in terms of this it understands itself proximally and, within a certain range, constantly. By this understanding, the possibilities of its being are disclosed and regulated. (BT 41/20)

Anyway, we see now that Korsgaard recognizes, as one should, a sense in which a human life is also already “mapped out” for the individual, not by natural instinct, but by our shared and largely tacit understanding what is sensible, appropriate, and important to do.

Korsgaard herself is not actually very interested in the issue of what she calls “cultural regulation.” Although it comes up again in passing in her recent exchange with Jonathan Lear (see just below), she does not notice that the phenomenon may involve a problem for her theory of the source of normativity. Not surprisingly, then, she does not provide any sort of sustained discussion of the problem of “cultural regulation” as she does, for example, for other problems

that are associated with her claim that the source of normativity is an individual’s reflective distance from his desires, for example the problem of defective action, or the problem of how moral obligations to others derive from an individual’s reflective relation to himself.<sup>17</sup> However, despite (or perhaps because of) Korsgaard’s own lack of attention to the issue of cultural regulation, it reveals the shortcomings of her conception of agency. Given the weak conception of sociality and associated conceptions of reflexivity and normativity at the basis of her position, Korsgaard is unable to explain this prior partial determination of our practical identities by “cultural regulation.” In other words, Korsgaard cannot explain the specific motivational efficacy of tacitly operative shared social norms.

In noting distinctions among various kinds of motivational efficacy, I mean to focus attention on the different ways, for example, instincts, deliberate choices, skills, habits, social norms or addictions give rise to actions. Korsgaard herself recognizes that there is a distinction among various kinds of motivational efficacy (though she doesn’t give it this label) when she sets out to distinguish the “immediately operative” principles of animal instinct from the operation of the principles of human, which supposedly only operate with the mediation of reflective self-consciousness. To get a grip on the notion of “motivational efficacy,” it helps also to think here of Harry Frankfurt’s concern with the specific way in which love and deep personal commitments motivate people and function as sources of reasons for action.

Deep personal commitments and the associated “reasons of love,” according to Frankfurt, tend to work with motivational immediacy. That is, as opposed to Korsgaard’s view that “Reasons arise within the space of reflective distance” (SC 124), according to Frankfurt, reasons of love do not depend on the mediation of a subject’s self-consciousness. Thus, Frankfurt insists upon the “*immediacy* of the linkage between loving and what counts as a reason for doing

things.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, a lover’s “taking it as a reason for performing the action [to help his beloved, for example] is not the outcome of an inference.”<sup>19</sup> Being motivated by reasons of love does not require an “inward glance” (SC 124) in which one tests a “reified” inclination to act against one’s self-conception. Rather, to be moved by “immediate reasons of love” is to respond “without thinking at all” to your situation which shows up in accordance with your personal commitments and directly calls forth from you a certain course of action.<sup>20</sup> Put in the terms Hubert Dreyfus uses in his related debate with John McDowell about the role of reflective distance in human action, both Frankfurtian reasons of love and taken for granted shared social norms attune a person to a situation so as to directly “solicit” the relevant actions.<sup>21</sup>

The problem Korsgaard has with explaining the motivational efficacy of tacitly operative shared social norms is due to the theoretical limitations imposed by her weak conception of sociality, the assumption that the core features and abilities of human agency (normativity and reflexivity) obtain independently in each separate self-consciousness. If you hold the view that the source of normativity is the reflective self-consciousness of separate individuals, then it is bound to seem mysterious that the individual members of a society share a common normative orientation in the world *prior to* and as a constraint upon the activity of one individual’s reflective self-consciousness.

Korsgaard insists that the distinguishing feature of human agency is the mediation of the individual’s reflective self-consciousness. She thus writes:

When we become conscious of the workings of an incentive within us, the incentive is experienced *not as a force or a necessity but as a proposal*, something we need to make a decision about. Cut loose from the control of instinct, we must formulate principles that will tell us how to deal with the incentives we experience. *And the experience of decision or choice, the work of these principles, is a separate experience from that of the workings of the incentive itself.* (SC 119, my italics)

As becomes evident here, given her way of grounding normativity in the reflective self-consciousness of a deliberating individual, Korsgaard has available three explanatory categories for events that might count as human actions. She has (1) determination by exogenous brute *force* acting “on or in” the person, (2) control and determination by immediate instinctual *necessity*, or (3) the individual’s *self-consciously mediated choice* (the only bona fide kind of human action in her account). The “cultural regulation” of practical identity cannot be properly explained by any of these.

First, the cultural regulation of practical identity cannot be conceived plausibly as a matter of a mere exogenous force “working on me or in me.” Exogenous forces in the sense at stake here are brute forces that operate on a *factual* or causal register: the force of gravity holding me to the earth, the uncontrollable urge of an addiction, the force of someone who pushes me and causes me to hit a switch that turns on the lights and alerts the thief, the brute force of a chain binding me to a wall as a mere physical thing, and so on.

“Cultural regulation” works *not* on the brute factual but on the *normative* register: it shapes a person’s own sense of what he is *able* to do, it structures what it makes sense to do and what seems worthwhile or repugnant to do. Such situations are often dramatized in the juicy and subversive films of Douglas Sirk. For example, the 1955 Technicolor melodrama *All That Heaven Allows* tells the story of a bourgeois woman who, given her self-understanding and the normative expectations of those in her social milieu, is *unable* to be drawn by the possibility of a loving relationship with her “inferior” gardener. Other examples include cases in which a person’s conception of himself or herself as unfit or unable to work at a certain kind of job, have certain kinds of friends, or engage in certain kinds of activity because, for example, of his or her race or gender or sexuality.



Iris Marion Young has compellingly argued along these lines that socially shared and taken for granted gender stereotypes of femininity structure and constrain not only choice and deliberation, but also the way female agents have their own bodies at their disposal for the execution of purposive actions. Women in our culture, from their earliest upbringing, are socialized into a restrained comportment that draws on *less* of their body’s strength. As Young puts it, “The more a girl assumes her status as feminine, the more she takes herself to be fragile and immobile, and the more she enacts her own bodily inhibition.”<sup>22</sup> The result is that certain activities which the person is in fact perfectly capable of performing, like leaping over a small stream while on a walk with friends, to take Young’s own example, immediately strike the person as something she is unable to do, such that the stream repels her and she is instead solicited to walk around it, or to wait for help in crossing over it.<sup>23</sup>

Nor is the “cultural regulation” of our identities properly modeled on the immediacy of natural instinct. The “cultural regulation” of our identities involves a sense, as Korsgaard put it, “of what is worth doing for the sake of what.” Social norms like norms of appropriate gender roles are not immediate natural forces like instincts; they can and often do have an instinct-like immediacy in that their operation often bypasses the mediation of the reflective self-consciousness of the individual, but this is not the hard-wired immediacy of natural instinct. The efficacy of social norms is “mediated” in that they “contain” or imply a claim to worthiness or validity, and, moreover, their motivational efficacy often depends on this claim being tacitly or explicitly accepted as legitimate.<sup>24</sup> When this claim becomes contested or loses legitimacy, the motivational efficacy of even the previously most self-evident and unquestioned social norms can collapse and the norms come up for critique and revision. Hard-wired natural instincts are not like that.<sup>25</sup>

Nor, finally, can “cultural regulation” of our identities be conceived as the outcome of reflective spontaneous choices—either the choices of one individual or the aggregated choices of a group of individuals. The whole point is that such “cultural regulation” normatively regulates such choices, it is already on the scene *before* any individual’s reflective choices between certain courses of action can be made. Indeed, it *is* the scene, so to speak, in which individual choices can make sense and can be made. This cultural regulation cannot just be consciously chosen because, often without our being aware of it as such, it provides the background of what makes sense and what is worthwhile to do against which people can make intelligible choices.

For example, it is given a certain already taken-for-granted understanding of normal gender roles that a woman faces a determinate range of choices among possible careers, lovers, friends, or pastimes.<sup>26</sup> That is exactly why Korsgaard herself, in the passage I have quoted, seems worried about it as a prior constraint upon individual autonomy, and it is connected to how, in her comment on Jonathan Lear’s recent Tanner Lectures, *Irony and Identity*, she recognizes the possibility that a person may be “weirdly enslaved to the banal gender stereotypes.”<sup>27</sup> It makes no sense to claim that such prior determination of the will or “weird enslavement” to culturally shared stereotypes is the result of the individual’s reflective choice; they are the prior normative constraints upon such choice.

To sum up, my claim is that the “cultural regulation” of practical identity by shared social norms, recognized by Korsgaard in passing though not treated by her in any systematic way, is a pervasive phenomenon, one that a plausible theory of human agency needs to be able to account for, and yet it cannot be properly explained within the constraints characteristic Korsgaard’s weak conception of sociality. Before moving on, I will consider two explanatory strategies available to Korsgaard for dealing with the “cultural regulation” of identity.

#### 4.4 Two Possible Responses for Korsgaard

(A) It is not the case that Korsgaard herself explicitly denies that practical identities involve social relations or that she denies that there is such a thing as shared social norms. Moreover, as I’ve said, she herself uses examples of practical identities that are essentially social roles. Why can’t Korsgaard just explain the motivational efficacy of social norms by appeal the fact that, in the terms of her theory, the individual actively “values” himself or herself under the relevant socially defined description? In other words, can’t the fact that a person “identifies” as feminine, that is, in Korsgaard’s language, she “values herself under the description ‘female’,” explain the fact that she is motivated (and not just causally forced or instinctually pushed around) by shared social norms of femininity?

Yet, again, Korsgaard’s grounding of the source of normativity in the reflective distance of the individual forecloses this explanatory strategy. Many of the norms that guide and regulate the identities under which we consciously value ourselves operate tacitly and are not in fact valued *as such*. That is precisely the worry, sketched above, that Young and other feminists have in particular about gendered norms of femininity. A person may in fact value consciously “value herself” as feminine, but that doesn’t mean she has “valued” the full range of norms and “manners” that count as feminine in our culture, because many of them operate “behind the back” of self-consciousness, and show up as guiding forces in our lives only in cases of breakdown, or as the result of a social or philosophical critique, or as the result of great enough temporal distance. To use a Heideggerian expression, such norms are not consciously followed or valued as such, they are *understood*. Charles Taylor crisply explains:

This understanding is not, or only imperfectly, captured in our representations. It is carried in patterns of appropriate action, which conform to a sense of what is fitting and right. Agents with this kind of understanding recognize when they or others have put a

foot wrong. Their actions are responsive throughout to this sense of rightness, but the “norms” may be quite unformulated, or only in fragmentary fashion.<sup>28</sup>

According to Korsgaard’s explanatory framework, though, such unformulated norms count as natural instincts, and, as we have already seen, that is an implausible result.<sup>29</sup>

(B) Above I argued that the motivational efficacy of tacitly operative shared social norms could not be explained as the efficacy of a fact, by which I meant so-called “brute facts.” Brute facts are totally independent of human concerns and activities. They are “exogenous forces acting on my or in me,” such as the way gravity holds me to the earth. Can we give an explanation of the motivational efficacy of gender norms in terms of “social facts”? Korsgaard herself doesn’t appeal to social facts in her own brief discussion of “cultural regulation,” but it is a move that is in principle open to her, so we can still ask: would such an appeal enable her theory to answer my critique? No.

Perhaps it is true, as John Searle argues in his work on “social reality,” that a person’s identity as being masculine or feminine or being a professor or a projectionist can be construed as the “effect” of recognizing certain social facts.<sup>30</sup> In contrast to brute facts, social facts have a normative dimension, what Searle calls “deontology,” and so it is not so easy to dismiss them as irrelevant to the explanation of shared social norms. As Searle puts it, a social fact is a fact that obtains and motivates people to the extent that the people recognize it (“value themselves under it,” in Korsgaard’s Kantian terminology). Yet again, as Searle himself is careful to note, normally, in order for a social fact to have motivational efficacy on a person (“provide reasons for him,” in Searle’s terms), it is enough that “we simply grow up in a culture where we take the institution [or relevant reason-giving/motivating social fact] for granted” without being “consciously aware” of it as such.<sup>31</sup> That is to say, although the ontology and motivational

efficacy of social facts depend upon their being recognized by the relevant people, these people “do not in addition have to recognize that they are recognizing.”<sup>32</sup> They just need to act consistently in the appropriate way. The motivational efficacy of social facts, then, does not depend on the reflective self-consciousness of the individual.

## **5. Heidegger’s Theory of Human Agency and Strong Conception of Sociality**

### **5.1 Heidegger’s “Disclosedness of the World” as the Source of Normativity**

Heidegger does not approach the issues of reflexivity and normativity of human agency from the perspective of someone who is engaged in reflective deliberation about what to do. Rather, Heidegger proceeds through a consideration of the perspective of someone who has an orientation and ability to get around in a familiar everyday world without having to stop and reflect. Recall some claims I made in §2 above: according to the Heideggerian view, I relate reflexively to myself not primarily via a reflective apprehension of my motivational states, but through being directly oriented in my daily activities according to socially available projects and roles, such as being a teacher, being a projectionist, being masculine, being feminine, et cetera. For Heidegger, the reflexive self-relation is not a built in feature of each individual mind, but it is something which obtains in relation to *useful things with which* and in relation to *other selves among whom* a person lives his life, relations structured and mediated by shared social norms. In the course of explaining these claims, I will give a more detailed account of Heidegger’s version of the “source of normativity,” the socially constituted “disclosedness of the world.” My account of disclosedness is heavily indebted to the interpretation given by John Haugeland. According to Haugeland, the best way to understand Heidegger’s conception of disclosedness is through the notion of “normative holism.”<sup>33</sup> I’ll start by explaining the “holism” part.

First, obviously enough, being a cinema projectionist, for example, requires that you *deal* with the tools, equipment, and paraphernalia used by projectionists in concretely carrying out

their tasks. You deal with film strips, film projectors, screens, lights, splicers, and so on. The mode of being characteristic of equipment Heidegger names “readiness-to-hand” [*Zuhandenheit*]. Heidegger distinguishes readiness-to-hand from what he calls “presence-at-hand” [*Vorhandenheit*], the mode of being captured by traditional substance ontology.

According to Heidegger, a ready-to-hand entity is what it is only in a “system of Relations” (BT 121/87), that is, a piece of equipment only is what it is by having a place in an inter-defined “whole” or a “contexture” [*Ganzheit*]. It is important to emphasize again how Heidegger sees this “relational ontology” as differing *essentially* from the traditional conception of substantiality as self-sufficiency.<sup>34</sup> Whatever is embedded in holistic structures cannot be conceived as a self-sufficient substance “which *is* in such a way that it needs no other entity to *be*” (BT 125/92). Thus Heidegger argues: “Taken strictly, there ‘is’ no such thing as *an* equipment. To the being of any equipment there always belongs a whole of equipment, in which it can be this equipment that it is” (BT 97/68). In short, there *is* no such thing as a film strip, a film strip makes no *sense*, without there being a context of other equipment amidst which it has a place, things like projectors, winding benches, screens, and film splicers

Heidegger sometimes calls the context of relations among the concrete pieces of equipment the “thing-contexture” [*Dingzusammenhang*] or tool contexture [*Zuegzusammenhang*] (BP 163). But the holism characteristic of the phenomenon of the disclosedness of the world is at another register. In discussing concrete contexts of particular bits of equipment, we are oriented towards entities, what Heidegger calls the “ontic” level. Once Heidegger gets us to see the holism on this level he leads our view to the “ontological” level, which has to do with the terms in which we experience the equipmental entities as being immediately at our disposal, the terms in which we *understand* and know-how to use the equipment. According to Heidegger, we

understand the *being* of entities. In Heidegger’s terminology the mode of being of equipment is *involvement* [*Bewandtnis*] or, as Hofstadter translates this in *Basic Problems*, “functionality.”

“Involvement” is here a teleological notion. With it, Heidegger means to capture, as John Haugeland puts it, the “functional role” of a piece of equipment, that is, what the equipment is *for*.<sup>35</sup> We understand equipment in terms of what we can *do* with it, in terms of what Heidegger calls its “in-order-to” [*Um-zu*] (BT 97/68). Hammers are for hammering, chalk is for writing on the board, film splicers are for applying splicing tape to broken film strips, movie projectors are for casting light through a moving filmstrip. Now, just as the concrete pieces of equipment come in an interrelated whole, so do their involvements or functions. Accordingly, Heidegger coins the notion of a “whole of involvements” [*Bewandtnisganzheit*].<sup>36</sup>

Pushing this line of thought further, we come up directly against the issue of human identity. Movie Projectors cannot have the function of shining light through moving film strips unless there are people *who watch movies*, and other people who *use* projectors to exhibit movies. The ends to which a piece of equipment is put and the projects in which it is used are the ends and projects of people. A movie projector has the functional role of “projecting light through a moving film strip” because there are people who have the identity of being a projectionist and who do things “for the sake of” carrying out this identity. A “for the sake of which” [*Worumwillen*] is Heidegger’s term for a practical identity. Heidegger thus draws the conclusion that the holistic structure of involvements constitutive of the disclosedness of the world is “tied up with [*festgemacht*] Dasein’s ownmost being ... which is ... that being for the sake of which Dasein itself is as it is”(BT 160/123). As he puts it in *Basic Problems*, the “functionality relations [*Bewandtnisbezüge*] are ontologically rooted [*gründet*] in the for-the-sake-of-which” (BP 295).

We have to do here not just with a holistic context of functional roles of equipment, but also with the identities of the particular people who use the equipment for the sake of carrying out their identities. Being a projectionist only makes sense in the context of theatre managers, audience members, film delivery people, film producers, actors, sound technicians, and so on. Heidegger’s formulation about the holistic inter-definition of bits of equipment can be applied to the analogous inter-definition of the identities of people: taken strictly, there is no such thing as a *Dasein*.

By ‘others’ we do not mean everyone else but me—those over against whom the ‘I’ stands out. They are rather those ... among whom one is too... By reason of this *with-like* [*mithaften*] being-in-the-world, the world is always the one that I share with the others. (BT 154-155/118)

To refer to this phenomenon, Heidegger coins the term “being-with” [*Mitsein*]: “Dasein in itself is essentially being-with” (BT 156/120). And: “So far as Dasein *is* at all, it has being-with-one-another as its kind of being” (BT 163/125).<sup>37</sup>

With this, we have a good enough working sense of the “holism” part of “normative holism.” What about the “normative” part? The transition from Heidegger’s initial reflections on the holistic ontology of equipment to an explicit consideration of the role of normativity in human action and identity comes in his observation that the being of a piece of equipment, its *involvement*, is not a property in the traditional sense of an accident inhering in an independent and self-sufficient substance. The ontology of equipment is not a matter of properties, but of *appropriateness*. Heidegger writes: “Anything ready-to-hand is ... appropriate for some purposes and inappropriate for others; and its ‘properties’ are, as it were, bound up in these ways in which it is appropriate or inappropriate” (BT 115/83).



What gives equipment its appropriate use and defines what it is? Nothing but what *one normally does with it*, that is, nothing but its place in our practices, in our shared understanding of what it is for and how it should be used; in other words, our shared *social norms*. Heidegger coins the substantive term “the One” [*das Man*] in order to refer to the functioning of social normativity in the constitution of the being of equipment, the make-up of the intelligibility of the everyday world, and in the constitution of our very identities.<sup>38</sup> “The One” derives from expressions such “One drives on the right side of the street,” “One eats noodles with a fork,” or “One dims the auditorium lights before one raises the curtain and starts the projector.” The point is to capture the *generality* of norms. They are not for *me* or *you*, but *anyone*.

Heidegger uses the analysis of the proper use of equipment and the proper discharge of the normative requirements associated with quotidian practical identities in order to lead us to see a more pervasive realm of phenomena. In a 1924 lecture course Heidegger explains the role of the One like this:

The *One* is the *genuine how of everydayness, of the average, concrete being-with-one-another*. Out of this ‘one’ grows the way in which man sees the world primarily and usually, how the world matters to man, how he addresses the world.<sup>39</sup>

“The One,” then, is meant to capture how a general shared normative orientation in the world and sense of appropriate modes of behavior pervade and structure the typical behavior of people in their everyday lives, providing the terms in which they understand the world, each other, and themselves. The holistic relations among functions of equipment and identities of people are structured and mediated by the shared norms of the One.

The shared norms of the One, Heidegger emphasizes, operate and orient us, by and large, tacitly in the background, behind the back of the individual’s reflective self-consciousness, or, in

some of Heidegger’s preferred terms, with “inconspicuousness and unascertainability [*Unauffälligkeit und Nichtfeststellbarkeit*]” (BT 164/126). Hence,

From the world [Dasein] takes its possibilities, and it does so first in accordance with the way things have been publicly interpreted by the One. This interpretation has already restricted the possible options of choice to what lies within the range of the familiar, the attainable, the respectable—that which is fitting and proper. (BT 239/194)<sup>40</sup>

Thus, on this account, the source of normativity is not the inner reflective distance of a deliberating individual’s self-consciousness; it is *out there*: it is the public space constituted by the holistic network of the more or less tacitly operative norms concerning the proper way for *one* to use this equipment, carry out this identity. It is this holistic web of normatively structured inter-relationships among the uses of equipment and identities of people that Heidegger calls “the referential context of significance” [*Bedeutsamkeit*] (BT §18). This significance, Heidegger adds, “makes up the structure of the world” (BT 120/87). The world, that is, the “disclosedness of the world,” then, is not the totality of objects or everything that is the case. The disclosedness of the world is the socially constituted “horizon of significance,” the meaningful, normatively saturated, holistic context in which we understand and relate to things, ourselves, and each other.<sup>41</sup> When Heidegger says that Kant “failed to see the phenomenon of the world,” this is what he was talking about.

## 5.2 Reflexivity, Receptive Activity, and Heidegger’s Strong Conception of Sociality

To say that the “phenomenon of the world co-determines the constitution of the being of the ‘I’” is to say that a person only has a reflexive self-relation and the need and ability to act according to norms by being situated in and understanding himself in terms of this socially constituted disclosedness of the world. On the Heideggerian view, the reflexive relation of the

self to itself only arises by the self “having already been thrown into the world,” that is, by the self being socialized into a publically shared, antecedently operative “space of normativity” of what *one* does.<sup>42</sup> This is what I have called a “strong conception” of the sociality of human agency.

Now we can see more easily how the reflexive self-relation, rather than just being an act of the individual’s self-consciousness, is a structural or ontological feature of being a socialized and norm-guided agent. As George Herbert Mead explains in his rich discussions of the relationship between normativity and self-consciousness, to act and understand oneself according to social norms *is* for a person to relate reflexively to himself *from the perspective of the others* among whom he lives; it is to be practically oriented through an anticipation of the others’ (*one’s*) general normative behavior expectations.<sup>43</sup> In this vein Heidegger writes: “In terms of the One and as the One, I am ‘given’ proximally to ‘myself’ [*mir ‘selbst’*]” (BT 167/129).

However, this is not the whole story. Here we have to make a quick (and unavoidably piecemeal) survey of some deeper complexities of Heidegger’s position. It is not the case that Heidegger thinks the reflexive self-relation is *exhausted* by being oriented in the world according to a pre-established network of shared social norms. Heidegger incorporates into his conception of reflexivity Kant’s idea that human experience involves the interplay between receptive and active dimensions, a “receptive activity.”<sup>44</sup> When the latter notion is interpreted, not in terms of a deliberating individual beset with sensuous inclinations, but in terms of an involved individual acting and understanding himself within an inherited framework of by and large tacitly operative shared social norms, it becomes Heidegger’s notion of the “thrown projection” [*geworfene Entwurf*].<sup>45</sup> So far what I have emphasized is the receptive, or “thrown” dimension of the reflexive self-relation: a person’s being related to himself from the perspective of the

generalized normative expectations of others. According to Heidegger’s bigger philosophical picture, his “temporal interpretation” of human existence, the thrown dimension of human agency amounts to Dasein’s relation to its *past*, the way it is *already*.

As we discussed above, being bound by social norms is not something in the face of which people are totally passive; the efficacy of social norms is not that of “lower instinct.” We know this because the efficacy of social norms depends upon their being accepted by the people they bind. As Heidegger shows through his analysis of anxiety [*Angst*], which we will return to shortly, taken for granted social norms can lose their grip if they stop making sense or being worthwhile to people. This dependence shows that the motivational efficacy of shared social norms somehow draws on the activity or, in Heidegger’s word, the “projection” [*Entwurf*] of individual agents. Individuals actively sustain or project the norms, even if this is an activity that is not typically thematized or appropriated as such.<sup>46</sup>

In Heidegger’s temporal story, the active/projective dimension of agency is Dasein’s structural relation to its own *future*; its “being-ahead-of-itself” (BT 236/191-192) and being “constantly ‘more’ than it factually is” (BT 185-186/145; BP 295ff). This is all related to Heidegger’s conception of practical identity, the “for the sake of which” that, as we saw earlier, Heidegger argues is the “ground” of normative space of the disclosedness of the world. Our being bound and oriented by social norms is not independent of our having commitments “for the sake of which” we do things. To act “for the sake of” something, though, is to relate to the future; having a “for the sake of which” is having an end towards which I project myself and which shapes my own experience of my present situation.

It helps here to realize that, with this conception of the projective/futural dimension of the reflective self-relation, Heidegger is taking up a place within a broader tradition of thinking

about subjectivity. With the proper qualifications, we could say that this conception of Dasein’s active/projective relation to itself is Heidegger’s version what German Idealism called the *apperceptive* self-relation.<sup>47</sup> In his recent work on Hegel’s conception of self-consciousness, Robert Pippin develops an interpretation of the apperceptive self-relation can help clarify the issues here at hand. On Pippin’s account, for Hegel, like Heidegger, the apperceptive self-relation is not a particular act of reflection or self-apprehension;<sup>48</sup> it is rather the self-relating that is structurally involved in having a normatively structured orientation and ability to get around pre-reflectively in the everyday world. As Pippin puts it, himself employing Heideggerian terminology of “projection”:

apperceptive self-awareness is not of an object but rather is something like the avowing of a practical commitment of a sort, something like a projecting (if we stay with the project language) of oneself outward into the world and the future; all in the same sense that knowing what I am doing is not observational or introspective. If I have such knowledge, it is *to be knowingly carrying on* in the appropriate way.<sup>49</sup>

For Pippin, to say that there is an active/projective or apperceptive self-relating involved in being oriented by social norms is to say that these norms are in some sense “followed” by the individual agents, even if the “activity” of following is a matter of “second nature,” unreflective habit, or what Heidegger calls “familiarity,” and that shows up, typically in situations of breakdown, when norms “lose their grip.”<sup>50</sup>

To return to the Heideggerian universe of discourse: The idea that there is such an “inconspicuous” exercise of the active dimension of human agency implicated in Dasein’s being oriented in or “bound by” the normative space of the disclosedness of the world comes up in Heidegger’s attempt to differentiate the structures of human agency (“world openness,” “being-in-the-world”) from that of the instinctual determination of “lower” animals. There he expresses the point by claiming that in Dasein’s openness to the world, there is a “letting oneself be

bound.”<sup>51</sup> By contrast, “lower” non-Dasein animals are “captivated” [*benommen*] by their instinctually driven relation to their environment [*Umwelt*].<sup>52</sup>

### 5.3 How Heidegger Avoids the Problem in Korsgaard’s View

One major upshot of Heidegger’s description of the phenomenon he calls the “disclosedness of the world” is the opening up a theoretical space equipped to account for the rich range of human phenomena that do not fit into the categories of either exogenous force, instinctual necessity, or spontaneous reflective choice. Korsgaard’s inability to account for the “cultural regulation” of identity comes from the fact that, given her weak conception of sociality, she is limited to theoretical options which are inappropriate to the phenomena. Heidegger’s notion of the “disclosedness of the world” is custom-made to describe this phenomenon of “cultural regulation,” that is, the way in which a person’s being “thrown” into a historical tradition normatively constrains, without brutally determining, his identity and the possibilities available in everyday life.

The main explanatory terms in Heidegger’s alternative account are associated with his strong conception of sociality, that is, his claims that both normativity and reflexivity are essentially bound up with the social dimensions of human life: first, normativity itself is something that obtains, not in an individual’s mind or in the inner space of his reflective self-consciousness, but between and among the people living out a shared tradition together; and, second, the social normativity of “what one does” tends to operate tacitly, *yet not independently of the activity (“projection”) of individuals*; that is how it is able to do the normative “regulating,” though *not* instinct-like determining, of individual choices and patterns of pre-reflective behavior.

## 6. Conclusion: Answerability, Anxiety, and Sociality

The foregoing appeals to the role of the active dimension of agency in our being oriented by tacitly operative shared social norms bring us straight back to my claim that the Heideggerian account not only avoids the problem that Korsgaard’s weak conception of sociality faces, but it also addresses the concern that is most pressing to Korsgaard from a systematic point of view: the concern to highlight the importance of individual autonomy in human life and to explain our practices of holding each other answerable for how we act. In accordance with his strong conception of sociality, Heidegger gives a “socialized” interpretation of answerability.

Korsgaard writes:

It is because our actions are expressive of principles we ourselves have chosen, principles we have adopted as the laws of our own causality, that it makes sense for use to hold one another answerable in this way: to demand one another’s reasons, and to take it, as we say, *personally*, when we hear what they are. (SC 131, italics in the original).

We have already seen how Korsgaard’s way of explaining answerability is based on an implausible picture of human agency. It is not the case that our actions are just expressive of principles we have reflectively chosen because they are pervasively and tacitly shaped by what Korsgaard calls “cultural regulation” and what Heidegger calls “the One.” By and large, our actions express principles and norms that we have *not* chosen, but rather have just found ourselves saddled with by our tradition. Heidegger accordingly writes that Dasein “falls prey to the tradition of which it has more or less explicitly taken hold [*ausdrücklich ergriffenen*]. This tradition keeps it from providing its own guidance, whether in inquiring or in choosing” (BT 42-43/21). This feature of the way our shared tradition already orients and binds us frames Heidegger’s approach to the issue of personal answerability.

Heidegger worries that, by means of “inconspicuousness and unascertainability” by which the One operates, the “the real dictatorship of the One is unfolded” (BT 164/126). That is, although such inconspicuousness is an inevitable feature of the way the social normativity of our shared tradition functions as a pervasive and taken-for-granted background for everyday activity, it enables, indeed *encourages* the avoidance of a real, *eigentliche*, appropriation of the question and answer of Dasein’s own being, that is, the question of what *I* should do in a particular situation of action. Prior to and as a condition of my own reflective decisions, my relation to self and dispositions to act are already shaped by *what one does*.

By just doing what one normally does, passively taking on the conventional way of conducting oneself and of understanding what is called for and important without being prepared to ask for myself whether or not what *one* generally does is what *I* should do in *this* situation, I have not yet, as Heidegger sees it, got a proper grip on myself, my own self is not “specifically taken hold of” [*eigens ergriffene*]. As such, I am not successfully my “own” [*eigene*] or “authentic” self [*eigentliche Selbst*], but I am acting merely as a “One-self” [*Man-selbst*] (BT 167/129). Heidegger calls this “inauthentic falling”: “Dasein has, in the first instance, fallen away from itself as an authentic ability-to-be its self” (BT 220/175).

The distinction between inauthenticity and authenticity is the distinction between heteronomy and autonomy that follows from Heidegger’s strong conception of sociality. In a word, inauthenticity is a matter of a person having his practical orientation dominated by “outside forces,” not brute causal or instinctual forces, but *social* forces: the tacitly operative normative expectations about how *one* ought properly and normally to behave.<sup>53</sup> Inauthentic Dasein passively lets the question of its identity to be *answered for it*. The One, Heidegger writes, “*supplies the answer* to the question of the ‘*who*’ of everyday Dasein” (BT 165-166/128,



my italics). Hence, “the One deprives the particular Dasein of its answerability” (BT 165/127).

The result is that “the own or authentic ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ has not been taken hold of [*bleibt unergriffen*]; the projection of one’s own ability-to-be has been abandoned to the disposal of the One” (BT 237-238/193). Finally, as Heidegger puts it in the *History of the Concept of Time* lectures:

The public [i.e., the One, B.R.] deprives Dasein of its choice, its formation of judgments, and its estimation of values; it relieves Dasein of *the task* [*Aufgabe*], insofar as it lives in the One, *to be itself by way of itself*. The One takes Dasein's ‘to-be’ away and allows all *answerability* to be foisted onto itself, all the more as the public and the One *have to answer* for nothing, because no one is there who has to answer.<sup>54</sup>

In order to make sense of this claim we need to make a distinction between answerability as an *ontological condition* and answerability as a specific *individual achievement*. That is the difference, to use Heidegger’s technical terminology, between *existential* answerability and *existentiell* answerability. We can say that this is the difference between *being-responsible* and *taking responsibility* (here “responsibility” sounds better than “answerability,” both of which can translate the term Heidegger uses, *Verantwortlichkeit*). In a Heideggerian mode of expression: only that which essentially *is* responsible can *take* or fail to *take* responsibility in a particular circumstance. Thus Heidegger claims near the beginning of *Being and Time*: “Only the particular Dasein decides its existence, whether it does so by taking hold [*Ergreifens*] or neglecting [*Versäumens*]” (BT 33/12).

Being-responsible is a structural feature of having an identity and orientation in the world mediated by normatively charged social relations to others. Having an identity, giving an *answer* to the question of my own being, and abiding by the norms of what one with such an identity does, entails *being answerable* to others for how I fulfill the relevant responsibilities constitutive of the identity.<sup>55</sup> It also means, then, that the particular way I “carry out” my being and relate to

myself is unavoidably susceptible to the pressures of the others’ normative expectations. This is why Heidegger contends that there is an ontologically built-in pull (“falling”) toward heteronomy, or “inauthenticity.” Hence, he claims that “inauthenticity belongs to the essential nature of factual Dasein” (BP 171; BP 288), and that “authentic being one’s-self [*eigentliche Selbstsein*] is an existentiell modification of the One” (BT 168/130).

The One gives, and the One takes away. Dasein, as essentially “being-with,” initially “gets” its existential answerability by being socialized into the shared behavioral norms of the One. In turn, this enables, even encourages, Dasein to act in accordance with them and to avoid *taking* its own (“existentiell”) answerability for how it comports and understands itself. To *be* responsible, then, is to be the kind of agent who has the possibility to *take* responsibility for the socially normative determinants of identity. So far I have been emphasizing the “thrown” or receptive dimension of identity in explaining “existential answerability,” yet both the distinction between “taking hold of” or “neglecting” responsibility and the associated claim that the norms of the One can be “modified” by individuals depend upon the operation of the “projective” or active dimension in our everyday orientation.

We arrive here at the moment of Heidegger’s account that is structurally analogous to Korsgaard’s emphasis on the reflective distance of a deliberating individual. What Heidegger needs in order to corroborate his notion of “being responsible” and to ground the distinction between an individual’s “taking hold of” or “neglecting” his responsibility is some evidence that the norms of the One, despite their typical “immediacy” and “inconspicuousness,” draw upon the activity and self-understanding of individuals. Such evidence would show, in turn, that the shared social norms of the One are, in principle, available for individual “taking hold of,” that is,

appropriation, revision, or critique. Heidegger finds the evidence for this in the mood of *anxiety* [*Angst*].<sup>56</sup>

Anxiety, in Heidegger’s description, is the experience of total disorientation, total “distance” from the everyday shared social normativity. That is, anxiety is the experience in which all the taken-for-granted inconspicuous norms of the One lose their grip: “Everyday familiarity collapses” (BT233/189). It is not that the world becomes an unintelligible blur, but that it becomes normatively inert because nothing matters anymore: nothing in the world “‘says’ anything any longer...The world in which I exist has sunk into insignificance” (BT 393/343). But how does such insignificance show that the functioning of everyday inconspicuous shared social norms depends upon the possibility of an individualized self-relation and distance from them?

According to Heidegger, in anxiety what is revealed is not this or that particular threatening or weird entity, but the very holistic structure (the disclosedness of the world) in the context of which things normally make sense and matter. In anxiety, “entities within-the-world are of so little importance in themselves that on the basis of this *insignificance* of what is within-the-world, the world in its worldhood is all that sill obtrudes itself” (BT 231/187). Of particular interest for us, anxiety makes explicit that the structure of the disclosedness of the world—the holistic structure of “involvements” and identities that we discussed earlier—only works to orient and guide me because there are things that *matter* to me, things “for the sake of which” I live my life. In the terms Heidegger uses when initially explaining the structure of “worldhood,” in anxiety, it becomes obvious that the “functional relations” constitutive of the space of the disclosedness of the world “are ontologically grounded in a for-the-sake-of-which” (BP 295; BT 116-117/84).

The fact that the world can dramatically stop making sense and mattering to me in an experience such as anxiety indicates that the norms in terms of which I usually understand things are *not* fully independent of me and my acceptance of or interest in them. The norms of the One are not a brute or instinctual *vis a tergo*. Even though they do exceed me and make possible my own relation to self and to the world, the One’s norms are not independent of the way things matter *to me*.<sup>57</sup> The realization of this dependence is what Heidegger means to emphasize when he insists that anxiety “individualizes” Dasein. In anxiety, “Dasein has been individualized, but individualized *as* being-in-the-world” (BT 232/187-188). This doesn’t mean that anxiety shows that the individual Dasein, in such a state of “reflective distance,” is somehow ultimately in and of itself responsible for the normativity of the world.<sup>58</sup> To be individualized *as* being-in-the-world means to be individualized *as* the kind of agent who can only have an identity by relating to things and other people, where those relations are structured and mediated by an already constituted web of shared social norms. Nevertheless, the experience of “individualization” in anxiety indicates, according to Heidegger, that my relation to myself, while ontologically intertwined with my orientation in the already established framework of what one normally does, is not fully determined or exhausted by these social dimensions of identity. Instead, the individualization of anxiety shows that the social and individual dimensions of human agency are “equiprimordial” [*gleichursprünglich*] or ontologically co-constitutive. Thus, the possibility of an “individualized” self-relation in anxiety reveals the possibility for the individual to actively “get her own grip on,” that is creatively appropriate, criticize, and revise, the taken for granted social norms that have already shaped her orientation in the world. Thus Heidegger claims:

“Anxiety makes manifest in Dasein its *being towards* its ownmost ability-to-be—that is, its *being-free for* the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself [*Sich-selbstwählens und -ergreifens*] (BT 232/189).

The foregoing account will get clarified if I use it to present a response to Hegel-inspired objections to Heidegger’s account pressed by Robert Pippin (something I want to do anyway since I used Pippin’s Hegel interpretation to elucidate the Heideggerian conception of the active/projective dimension of the reflexive self-relation). Pippin worries that Heidegger’s insistence upon the inconspicuousness and tacit motivational efficacy of social norms prevents him from being able to make the important distinction between acting blindly or accidentally *in accordance with* a norm and acting *in the light of* a norm, “with some possible alteration or rejection of, such a presumed shared sense of appropriateness.”<sup>59</sup> It is the latter that properly captures what is distinctive about human agency according to Pippin (and Hegel).

We are now in position to see that Heidegger’s distinction between “unowned” [*uneigentliche*] conduct and “owned” [*eigentliche*] or “answerable” [*verantwortliche*] conduct aims at exactly this issue. Instead of locating a critical failure of Heidegger’s position, Pippin has identified one of the worries that Heidegger’s conception of identity is built to address. Inauthentic Dasein carries on in blind accordance with social norms. Hence Heidegger’s worry that inauthentic Dasein is “blind to possibilities” (BT 239/195). On the other hand, authentic ways of being carry on “in light of” the One’s norms, “with some possible alteration or rejection of such presumed shared sense of appropriateness.” Hence Heidegger’s notion of the “retrieval” [*Wiederholung*] of possibilities that calls for a “critique of the present” (BT 449/397) which “will disclose the quiet force of the possible” (BT 446/394) and so “loosen up” a “hardened tradition” (BT 44/22).

The fact that the shared norms of the One are always in principle susceptible to being “grasped” or appropriated by the individuals they bind explains an otherwise curious reversal in Heidegger’s account. In Division I, as I mentioned above, Heidegger asserts that “authentic

being one’s-self [*eigentliche Selbstsein*] is an existentiell modification of the One” (BT 168/130), a claim that grants priority to the norms of One over any individual’s ability to get his or her own grip on them. Later in the book, though, Heidegger switches his claim regarding what is a “modification” of what, describing the authentic self as what gets modified (instead of as what does the modifying): “the One-self [*Man-selbst*] is an existentiell modification of the authentic self” (365/317). This claim makes it sound like the One-self – the self in thrall to the One’s norms – is derivative of and dependent upon the ability to be an authentic self. On the interpretation I have presented, this reversal is not a mark of inconsistencies in Heidegger’s account of the One.<sup>60</sup> On the contrary, it is exactly what Heidegger should say: the priority goes both ways, it is an “equi-priority” [*Gleichursprünglichkeit*]. While the activity and self-understanding of any individual is always shaped and constrained by the world into which she is thrown, the structure of this world itself is dependent upon the individual self-understandings of the people who are in it, and so it is, structurally speaking, susceptible to their authentic appropriations. All of that is packed in to Heidegger conception of human agency as a *thrown projection*.

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It is not possible here to provide a full interpretation of Heidegger’s complicated notion of authenticity [*Eigentlichkeit*], the conception of autonomy and answerability that follows from his strong conception of sociality. My hope was to explain how the phenomenon of answerability is framed from Heidegger’s alternative perspective, and to cement my claim for the overall explanatory strength of the Heideggerian theory of agency and strong conception of sociality. Heidegger’s path not only avoids a major problem characteristic of Korsgaard’s weak conception of sociality by giving an explanation of the pervasive phenomenon of “cultural

regulation” of human identity, it does so while capturing the crucial concern that animates her view: the Kantian concern with the importance and centrality of answerability and autonomy in human life.<sup>61</sup>

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I explain what I mean by “core features of human agency” below in §2.

<sup>2</sup> I will use the terms human “agency,” “selfhood,” and “identity” interchangeably. This is justified by the following train of thought: to be a human agent is to *be someone*, or to “have” selfhood. To have selfhood as your way of being (to talk like Heidegger) is to have an *identity* in the sense at stake in the question: “*who* are you?”, where *who* you are is a matter of your practical standpoint, a matter of what you are prepared or disposed *to do*.

<sup>3</sup> In the German philosophical tradition, the strong conception of sociality goes back at least to Hegel’s conception of ethical life [*Sittlichkeit*] and his claim that it cannot be construed “atomistically” as a mere “aggregation” [*Zusammensetzung*] of individuals. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox, rev. S. Houlgate (New York, Oxford University Press: 2008), §156. Hegel explicitly takes the basic thought here from Aristotle’s views regarding the relation between the individual and the polis. Aristotle says an individual outside the polis is like an “isolated checkers piece,” that is, not really a checkers piece at all, since a checkers piece only is what it is in the context of the whole game to which it belongs. See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a6, in *Politica*, ed. D. Ross (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957). On this point, see Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, trans. Joel Anderson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 13-16. See also, Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle: The Desire to Understand* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 200.

In the phenomenological tradition, Max Scheler provides the first systematic exploration of the strong conception of sociality in *The Nature of Sympathy*, trans. Peter Heath (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2010). This work was published first in 1913 as *Phänomenologie und Theorie der Sympathiegefühlen*, with a revised and expanded second edition in 1923, *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*. Following Scheler and Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty also argued for a strong conception of sociality. See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith. Revised Edition (Atlantic Highlands: Routledge & K. Paul, 1981), Part 2, Chapter 4. For Merleau-Ponty’s later treatment of the issue and formulation of the notion of “intercorporeality,” see Merleau-Ponty, “The Philosopher and His Shadow,” trans. R. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964). Finally, see, Merleau-Ponty, “The Child’s Relations with Others,” in *The Primacy of Perception*, trans. J. Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

The views of Scheler, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty are a critical correction to the weak conception of sociality assumed by the pioneer of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl. Beginning especially with his *Ideas* (1913) and down through his own explicit reflections upon intersubjectivity in the *Cartesian Meditations* (1929) and *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936), Husserl granted fundamental priority to what he sometimes called the “sphere of ownness” [*Eigenheitlichkeit*], which is the self-enclosed perspective of the reflecting ‘I’ in its “absolute singularity.” Husserl claimed that relations to and experiences of other subjects are “non-originary” compared to one’s own relation to and experience of oneself, and, accordingly, he attempted to ground sociality in the “the primal ‘I’” with its “personal indeclinability.” See Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern

University Press, 1970), §§54-54b. See also, Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorian Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1970), §56, and Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, First Book, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1983), §1

The claim that Husserl’s conception of the ego is irredeemably and problematically singular was argued by Alfred Schutz in an influential article, “The Problem of Transcendental Intersubjectivity in Husserl,” trans. F. Kersten, in *Collected Papers*, Vol. III, ed. I. Schutz (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966). There Schutz argues that Husserl’s conception of the ego is “a ‘singulare tantum’, that is a term incapable of being put into the plural” (77). See also, Schutz, “Scheler’s Theory of Intersubjectivity and the General Thesis of the Alter Ego,” in *Collected Papers, Vol. I*, ed., M. Natanson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), 167. The general thrust of Schutz’s critique has been recently reiterated by Dermot Moran in his *Husserl: Founder of Phenomenology* (Malden: Polity Press, 2005), especially 227-228. However, the debate about Husserl is not settled. Since the early 1990s Dan Zahavi has been mining Husserl’s huge mound of unpublished writings in an attempt to reconstruct a Husserlian position that answers these criticisms. See, Zahavi, *Husserl and Transcendental Intersubjectivity*, trans. E. Behnke (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001), and more recently, *Husserl’s Phenomenology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), especially 109-124.

<sup>4</sup> Steven Crowell has discussed the relationship between the thinking of Heidegger and Korsgaard and their common grounding in Kantian philosophy in a penetrating article that has influenced my own approach. See Crowell, “Sorge or Selbstbewußtsein? Heidegger and Korsgaard on the Sources of Normativity.” *European Journal of Philosophy* vol.15, no. 3 (2007). For an earlier Heideggerian critique of Korsgaard which helpfully focuses on the issues of reflection and reflexivity, see Mark Okrent, “Heidegger and Korsgaard on Human Reflection,” *Philosophical Topics*, vol. 27, no. 2 (Fall 1999). Neither Crowell nor Okrent zero in on the issue of sociality, which I show to be decisive. I further develop the interpretation of Heidegger and critique of Korsgaard presented in this article in (Rouse 2011).

<sup>5</sup> I’ve adopted the language of two different “spaces” from the Sellarsian distinction between “the logical space of reasons” and “the logical space of (natural) law” as used by John McDowell and Robert Brandom. See, McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), Ch.1, and Robert Brandom, “Freedom and Constraint by Norms,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (July 1, 1979). I use “space of normativity” rather than “space of reasons” because the latter is too restrictive to capture the distinctive phenomena of human agency. Much of a person’s action is normatively guided by factors, such as a pre-reflective familiarity with the norms of his culture, and his embodied skills, that are not properly construed on the model of “reasons,” that is, that are not properly seen as being discursively articulated and applied in practical judgments about how to act and why. For a Merleau-Pontian account of this need for a richer concept than “reason” to explain what is distinctive about human action, see Mark Wrathall, “Motives, Reasons, and Causes,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Taylor Carman and Mark Hansen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> I have in mind Kant’s famous claim that “Everything in nature works according to laws. Only a rational being has the capacity of acting according to the *conception* of laws (i.e., according to principles),” Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), 29.

<sup>7</sup> Christine Korsgaard, *Self-Constitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 116 and 121. I’ll refer to this work parenthetically as “SC” from now on.



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<sup>8</sup> The phrase “elementary maneuver” is from Harry Frankfurt’s description of the reflexive self-relation in his Tanner Lectures, *Taking Ourselves Seriously & Getting It Right*, ed. Debra Satz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006). Korsgaard, in her commentary on those lectures, endorses Frankfurt’s description of reflexivity which, indeed, is the same as her own. See Korsgaard, “Morality and the Logic of Caring: A Comment on Harry Frankfurt,” in *Taking Ourselves Seriously & Getting It Right*, 55.

<sup>9</sup> David Velleman, another important contemporary philosopher who has defended this conception of reflexivity, has explicitly denied the relevance of social relations. He claims that this reflexive self-relation is “inherent in the structure of the individual will.” See Velleman, “The Genesis of Shame,” in *Self to Self: Selected Essays* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 52-53.

<sup>10</sup> Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 189, my italics. Besides “being toward oneself,” Heidegger has other innovative expressions referring to the reflexive self-relation, including: “Dasein is the entity whose own being is *an issue* or *at stake* for it [*geht um sein Sein*]” and Dasein “comports itself [or “relates itself,” *verhält sich*] towards its own being.”

<sup>11</sup> Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter. Revised Edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 159. (I’ll refer to this text as “BP” from now on.) Mark Okrent discusses this passage and the one quoted in the next note in “Heidegger and Korsgaard on Human Reflection,” 65-66. However, as I mentioned, to the extent that Okrent’s reading overlooks the connection of reflexivity to sociality in Heidegger’s position, Okrent fails to give an adequate rendering of Heidegger’s view and its contrast to Korsgaard’s.

<sup>12</sup> According to Heidegger, in certain extreme moods like anxiety or profound boredom, Dasein does not relate to itself in terms of its usual identities. I explain the significance of this in §6 below.

<sup>13</sup> As Heidegger puts it: “Each one of us is what he pursues and cares for. In everyday terms, we understand ourselves and our existence by way of the activities we pursue and the things we take care of. We understand ourselves by starting from them because the Dasein finds itself primarily in things [*Sachen*]. The Dasein does not need a special kind of observation, nor does it need to conduct a sort of espionage on the ego in order to have the self; rather, as the Dasein gives itself over immediately and passionately to the world itself, its own self is reflected to it from things [*Sachen*]” (BP 159).

<sup>14</sup> Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, trans. Valentine Rodger Miller and Reese Miller (Boston: Reidel, 1984), I, Pr. 51. Cited by Heidegger at *Being and Time*, p. 125.

<sup>15</sup> Christine Korsgaard, “Morality and the Logic of Caring: A Comment on Harry Frankfurt,” in Frankfurt, *Taking Ourselves Seriously & Getting It Right*, 55.

<sup>16</sup> George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self & Society from the Stand-Point of a Social Behaviorist*, ed. Charles Morris (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 224.

<sup>17</sup> For Korsgaard’s discussion of the problem of defective action, see *Self-Constitution*, chapter 8. For the problem of moral normativity, see the second half of *Sources*.

<sup>18</sup> Frankfurt, “On Caring,” in *Necessity, Volition and Love* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 176.

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<sup>19</sup> Frankfurt, “On Caring,” 176. See also Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 37. Unfortunately, Frankfurt himself does not manage to distinguish the motivational efficacy of personal reasons of love from the efficacy of natural instinct. In fact, in working out his position, he explicitly appeals to the model of (supposedly) instinctually embedded commitments such as a parent’s love for her children and an individual’s “love of living” (instinct for self-preservation) as paradigm cases of the motivational immediacy of reasons of love. See Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*, 30, 48, and *Taking Ourselves Seriously, Getting it Right* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 37. I have argued elsewhere that Frankfurt’s ultimately implausible appeal to the model of natural instinct for explaining the motivational immediacy of personal reasons of love is a consequence of the fact that he too assumes a weak conception of sociality (see n.8, above), and so his view is caught up in the same theoretical impasse between the reflective choice of an individual and the immediate determination of natural instinct.

<sup>20</sup> “Without thinking at all” is Frankfurt’s riff of Bernard Williams’s example of the man who stops to reflectively endorse his impulse to save his drowning wife instead of a stranger. Williams famously says that such a man would have “one thought to many.” Frankfurt quips that the “the strictly correct number of thoughts for this man is zero.” See Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*, 36, n.2. See also Bernard Williams, “Persons, Character, and Morality,” in *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers, 1973-1980* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 18.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Dreyfus, “The Return of the Myth of the Mental,” *Inquiry* 50 (August 2007): 352-365. In his most recent contribution to his debate with McDowell, Dreyfus also appeals to tacitly operative shared cultural norms as a phenomenon McDowell, given his own emphasis on reflective self-consciousness, is unable properly to explain. See Dreyfus, “The Myth of the Pervasiveness of the Mental,” in *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-World: The McDowell–Dreyfus Debate*, ed. Joseph Schear, Routledge [ref].

<sup>22</sup> Iris Marion Young, “Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Female Body Comportment, Motility, and Spatiality,” in *On Female Body Experience “Throwing Like a Girl” and Other Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 43-44.

<sup>23</sup> In the next sub-section I consider whether or not the efficacy of social norms can be understood in terms of the efficacy of a normatively charged *social* fact, as opposed to a brute fact.

<sup>24</sup> The issue is treated in an insightful (but uncharitable to Heidegger) way by Tugendhat, “‘Wir sind nicht fest verdrahtet’: Heideggers ‘Man’ und die Tiefendimensionen der Gründe,” in *Aufsätze 1992-2000* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001).

<sup>25</sup> It is important to make it explicit here that the critical distance from and loss of acceptance of the claim to worthiness or validity of an inherited social norm only opens the *possibility* of the loosening of its motivational grip. People caught up in the “cultural regulation” of their identities can remain, despite its discrediting and distancing, attached to understanding themselves in its terms. This issue is important for feminists and critical theorists. See the discussion in Amy Allen, *The Politics of Ourselves: Power, Autonomy, and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), Chapter 4.

<sup>26</sup> Thus, it is not a surprise that important aspects of my criticism of Korsgaard for failing to give adequate attention to the phenomenon of “cultural regulation” were prefigured in a potent feminist critique of “hierarchical” theories of the self (like Korsgaard’s), a critique given by Marilyn Friedman in “Autonomy and the Split-Level Self,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 24, no. 1 (March 1, 1986): 19-35. As

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Friedman also points out, these theories do not adequately take into account the fact that an individual’s own higher-order reflection is shaped by the social and cultural patterns of interpretation into which he or she is socialized.

<sup>27</sup> Korsgaard, “Self-Constitution and Irony: A Commentary on Jonathan Lear’s Tanner Lectures,” 13.

<sup>28</sup> Charles Taylor, “To Follow a Rule,” in *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 171.

<sup>29</sup> Crowell makes a parallel argument about the status of motivations in “non-deliberated action” in Korsgaard’s philosophy. See Crowell, “*Sorge* or *Selbstbewußte*in?,” 327-328.

<sup>30</sup> See John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), and more recently, Searle, *Making the Social World: The Structure of Human Civilization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>31</sup> John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, 47. Searle explicitly includes “gender” as part of social/institutional reality in “The Phenomenological Illusion,” in *Experience and Analysis*, ed. M. E. Reicher and J. C. Marek (Vienna: öbvahpt, 2005), 334.

<sup>32</sup> Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, 47.

<sup>33</sup> John Haugeland, “Dasein’s Disclosedness,” in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Harrison Hall (Cambridge: B. Blackwell, 1992).

<sup>34</sup> On Heidegger’s relational ontology, see Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, 45-49.

<sup>35</sup> See John Haugeland, “Dasein’s Disclosedness,” 31.

<sup>36</sup> On the importance of the distinction between the whole of tools [*Zeugzusammenhang*] and the whole of involvements [*Bewandtniszusammenhang*], see Haugeland, “Dasein’s Disclosedness,” n. 20.

<sup>37</sup> The other concept in this family is what Heidegger calls Dasein-with [*Mitdasein*]. On my interpretation, whole being-with describes the general holistic structure of identities available to Dasein, Dasein-with is Heidegger’s term for describing our immediate experience of particular other of people. We don’t experience them as neutral objects which we infer to have minds. We experience another directly as another Dasein with whom we share the world.

<sup>38</sup> Macquarrie and Robinson translate *das Man* as “the they.” Dreyfus suggests “the One” and, though it is not ideal, I follow this practice. See Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991), Ch. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelean Philosophy*, trans. Robert Metcalf and Mark Tanzer. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 45.

<sup>40</sup> There is a big interpretive controversy over Heidegger’s conceptions of sociality and the functioning of social norms. As Dreyfus points out, Heidegger himself confusingly attributes to “the One” both a positive (constitutive) and negative (leveling) function. Contrary to my Dreyfus-inspired interpretation that emphasizes these positive functions of the One as constitutive for everyday practices, Olafson argues that the One is merely a “deformation of *Mitsein* [being-with],” and like many critics, especially in

Germany, Olafson sees it as a concept that is simply derogatory of the “dictatorship” of common sense and every day ways of doing things. See Frederick Olafson, “Heidegger à la Wittgenstein or ‘Coping’ with Professor Dreyfus,” *Inquiry* 37 (June 1994): 45-64. See also, Taylor Carman, “On Being Social: A Reply to Olafson,” *Inquiry* 37 (June 1994): 203-223, and Hubert Dreyfus, “Interpreting Heidegger on ‘Das Man’,” *Inquiry* 37 (June 1994): 203-223. The debate is well-summarized and cogently treated by Edgar Boedeker, “Individual and Community in Early Heidegger: Situating *das Man*, the *Man-selbst*, and Self-ownership in Dasein’s Ontological Structure,” *Inquiry* 44 (March 2001): 63-99. For a very recent contribution to this debate that does a helpful and clear job explaining how Dasein has a structure that is irreducibly *both* social and individual, see David Egan, “Das Man and Distantiality in *Being and Time*,” *Inquiry* 55:3 (June 2012): 289-306.

In Germany, criticisms of Heidegger’s conception of *das Man* and *Mitsein* go back to a very early (1928) critique by Karl Löwith, *Das Individuum in der Rolle des Mitmenschen* (Munich: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1928). More recently, criticisms have been vigorously, but tendentiously, pressed by Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), Lecture 6, §IV, and Axel Honneth, “On the Destructive Power of the Third: Gadamer and Heidegger’s Conception of Intersubjectivity,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 29, no. 1 (January 1, 2003): 5-21. Honneth gives a much more sympathetic treatment of Heidegger in *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Nicolas Kompridis’s discussion of Heidegger’s conception of selfhood provides a compelling rejoinder to the Habermasian criticisms. See Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure: Critical Theory between Past and Future* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), Part II.

<sup>41</sup> See Cristina Lafont, “Hermeneutics,” in *A Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Mark Wrathall (Cambridge: B. Blackwell, 2007).

<sup>42</sup> In order to streamline my presentation of Heidegger’s view, I’ve had to go roughshod over a number of subtle issues. First, Heidegger’s notion of “being thrown into the world” involves considerably more than being socialized into a pre-existing normative framework. For a thoughtful working-out of Heidegger’s terse remarks on thrownness, see Katherine Withy, “Situation and Limitation: Making Sense of Heidegger on Thrownness,” *European Journal of Philosophy*, 2011 [REF]. Second, Heidegger’s conception of thrownness is intimately involved with his notions of disposedness [*Befindlichkeit*] and mood or attunement [*Stimmung*], notions which attempt to describe the way a person relates to himself in terms of how things *matter to him*, which possibilities show up to him as important or worthwhile. On these points, see Ernst Tugendhat, *Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination*, trans. Paul Stern (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 168ff, William Blattner, *Heidegger’s Being and Time: A Reader’s Guide* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 79ff, and Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991), 168-169.

<sup>43</sup> See Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*, Part II. Tugendhat was the first to note the systematic similarities between Heidegger’s *das Man* and Mead’s “generalized other.” See Ernst Tugendhat, *Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination*, trans. Paul Stern (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), Lectures 11-12.

<sup>44</sup> On Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant and the unity of the receptive and active (or “spontaneous”) dimensions of human experience, see Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans Richard Taft, 5th Edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), especially 107-112. In that book, Heidegger is concerned with interpreting the question of the unity of the Kantian epistemological faculties of intuition and understanding, not directly with the more practical versions of receptivity and activity we are dealing with here. To appreciate the analogy to “thrown projection,” it is helpful to note Heidegger’s remark later in the book that “All projection—and consequently, even man’s “creative” activity— is

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thrown, i.e., determined by the dependency of Dasein on the being already in the whole, a dependency over which Dasein itself does not have control” (165).

<sup>45</sup> That Heidegger theorizes both receptive (or “affective”) and active aspects of the reflexive self-relation is another important point first suggested by Ernst Tugendhat. See Tugendhat, *Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination*, 169.

<sup>46</sup> By claiming that being bound by norms draws on an *activity* that is not itself tended to as a particular *action*, I am following a distinction made by Robert Pippin in his discussion of Hegel’s view of these matters. See Robert Pippin, *Hegel on Self-Consciousness: Desire and Death in the Phenomenology of Spirit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 8. In the course of his discussion of Hegel, Pippin refers twice to Heidegger’s views for help (25, 36), noting the “deep similarities” between the two philosophers on this set of issues. Heidegger, for his part, refers favorably to Hegel as perhaps the only philosopher before him to develop an adequate sense of reflexivity and self-reflection (BP 159). In earlier writing on Hegel and Heidegger, though, Pippin uses Hegel to criticize Heidegger’s conception of the way Dasein acts according to taken for granted social norms. See Pippin, “On Being Anti-Cartesian: Heidegger, Hegel, Subjectivity and Sociality,” in *Idealism as Modernism: Hegelian Variations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). I will address Pippin’s concerns towards the end of §6 below.

<sup>47</sup> See Mark Okrent, “The ‘I Think’ and the For the Sake of Which,” in *Transcendental Heidegger*, ed. Steven Crowell and Jeff Malpas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007). In one of the quotations I gave above in §2, Heidegger explicitly rejects the applicability of the concept of “apperception” to the phenomenon of reflexivity (“being towards oneself”) he attempts to present. But in doing so, he was in fact rejecting a particular interpretation of apperception, one according to which it is a kind “self-observation” or “mode of self-apprehension” (BP 158). On this, See Okrent, “Heidegger and Korsgaard on Human Reflection,” 65-66.

<sup>48</sup> Pippin, *Hegel on Self-Consciousness*, 9.

<sup>49</sup> Pippin, *Hegel on Self-Consciousness*, 65.

<sup>50</sup> Pippin, *Hegel on Self-Consciousness*, 22-23, 24-25, 38, 55, 59.

<sup>51</sup> See Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeil and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 342-343. In this lecture course from 1929-1930, Heidegger does not provide a discussion of the One in particular, but he does discuss the related notion of normal “everydayness” (e.g., pp. 274-276), and the overall shape of the position he defends plainly supports the interpretation I am pressing.

<sup>52</sup> Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, §§ 58-61 (pp.236-267).

<sup>53</sup> “With Dasein’s lostness in the One, that factual ability-to-be which is closest to it (the tasks, rules, and standards, the urgency and extent, of concerned and solicitous being-in-the-world), has already been decided upon. The One has already kept Dasein from taking hold [*Ergreifen*] these possibilities of being” (BT 312/268).

<sup>54</sup> Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, trans. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 247.

<sup>55</sup> See John Haugeland’s insightful description of Dasein as a “locus of accountability,” “Dasein’s Disclosedness,” 35-38.

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<sup>56</sup> Crowell makes this point about anxiety too. See Crowell, “*Sorge* or *Selbstbewußtein?*,” 322. In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger analyzes “profound boredom” as a mood with analogous ontological significance.

<sup>57</sup> This interpretation of the significance of anxiety is also suggested by Steven Crowell. See Crowell, “Facticity and Transcendental Philosophy,” in *From Kant to Davidson: Philosophy and the Idea of the Transcendental*, ed. Jeff Malpas (New York: Routledge, 2003), 115-116.

<sup>58</sup> Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 149-150

<sup>59</sup> Robert Pippin, “On Being Anti-Cartesian: Hegel, Heidegger, Subjectivity, and Sociality,” 387.

<sup>60</sup> David Egan, for example, sees the reversal as the mark of inconsistencies in Heidegger’s position (inconsistencies at stake in the original debate between Olafson, Dreyfus, and Carman; see n. 40 above). However, Egan contends that the inconsistencies can be mostly smoothed out with the proper understanding of Heidegger’s underdeveloped notion of “distantiality” and his distinction between the One [*das Man*] and the One-self [*das Man-selbst*]. See Egan, “Das Man and *Distantiality* in Being and Time,” 293-294 and 301.

<sup>61</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented during a 2009 SIAS/Wissenschaftskolleg Summer Institute on “Action Theory in Philosophy and the Social Sciences,” convened by Robert Pippin and Hans Joas. I am grateful to Pippin and Joas and the other participants of the summer institute for many extremely fruitful discussions. I also received helpful feedback when I presented a version of the paper during the APA Eastern Division meeting in Baltimore. Finally, I am grateful for conversations and exchanges with Hubert Dreyfus, Kyla Ebels-Duggan, Axel Honneth, Cristina Lafont, Andrew Poe, Komarine Romdenh-Romluc, and an anonymous referee for this journal.

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