

Thrownness, Attunement, Attention:  
A Heideggerian Account of Responsibility

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Abstract:

This thesis argues that Heidegger's existential analytic of human existence challenges the traditional understanding of responsibility as lying in the power or mastery of the subject. In contrast to secondary literature that attempts to read Heidegger as showing that we take responsibility through some kind of self-determination or control, I argue that Heidegger's account of our thrownness, and its first-personal manifestation in our attunement, contests such understandings and points to an account of responsibility that does not find its locus in the power of the subject. In light of this, I argue that taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world should be understood as becoming attentive.

By emphasizing the 'movement' of thrownness and the meaning of this as finding ourselves always already gripped by way of being attuned, my analysis demonstrates the pervasive power of that which is beyond the subject. I show that we must always already find ourselves submitted to particular possibilities and, more fundamentally, to the enigma of being Dasein. From this analysis, and via the work of Harry Frankfurt, I demonstrate how our thrownness speaks against seeing responsibility for our being-in-the-world in terms of choice, rational judgement, or wholeheartedness. A further analysis of anxiety, contrasting with accounts which read it as manifesting a privileged space for freedom and self-determination, emphasizes the revelation of the 'I' as essentially bound to what is beyond it. I then argue that a Heideggerian account of responsibility should be understood in terms of attention or attentiveness, a notion that is developed through phenomenological analysis, and in dialogue with the work of Iris Murdoch. Through the use of examples, I propose that attentiveness, with its accent on that which is beyond the subject, is a more appropriate way of conceiving responsibility on a Heideggerian account.<sup>1</sup>

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## Abbreviations for Works by Heidegger

With the exception of *Being and Time* where the German abbreviation and pagination will be used (as is customary), all other references to works by Heidegger will use the English pagination.

BCAP - *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, trans. R. Metcalf & M. Tanzer, Indiana University Press 2009

BPP - *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter, Indiana University Press 1982

CT (D) - *The Concept of Time*, trans. I. Farin, Continuum International Publishing 2011

CT (T) - *The Concept of Time*, trans. W. McNeill, Blackwell Publishing Ltd 1992

ET - *The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theatetus*, trans. T. Sadler, Continuum 2002

FCM - *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. W. McNeill & N. Walker, Indiana University Press 1995

HCT - *History of the Concept of Time*, trans. T. Kisiel, Indiana University Press 1985

LH - 'Letter on Humanism' in *Basic Writings*, Ed. D.F. Krell, Harper Perennial Modern Thought 2008

MFL - *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. M. Heim, Indiana University Press 1984

PIA - *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*, trans. R. Rojcewicz, Indiana University Press 2001

PRL - *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. M. Fritsch & J.A. Gosetti-Ferencei, Indiana University Press 2004

SZ - *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Blackwell Publishing 1962

TE – *The Event*, trans. R. Rojcewicz, Indiana University Press 2012





For a little longer they waited, until the Forest had become so still that it almost frightened them, and then Rabbit got up and stretched himself. [...]

"Come on," said Rabbit. "I know it's this way."

They went on. Ten minutes later they stopped again.

"It's very silly," said Rabbit, "but just for the moment I-- Ah, of course. Come on." . . .

"Here we are," said Rabbit ten minutes later. "No, we're not." . . .

"Now," said Rabbit ten minutes later, "I think we ought to be getting--or are we a little bit more to the right than I thought?" . . .

"It's a funny thing," said Rabbit ten minutes later, "how everything looks the same in a mist. Have you noticed it, Pooh?"

Pooh said that he had.

"Lucky we know the Forest so well, or we might get lost," said Rabbit half an hour later, and he gave the careless laugh which you give when you know the Forest so well that you can't get lost.

- A.A. Milne, *The House at Pooh Corner*



## Introduction

### Aim of the Thesis

Responsibility has long been identified with that which is ‘up to us’ in some sense. As Raffoul (2010) shows in his study *The Origins of Responsibility*, Western thought has been dominated by this conception from its origins in a certain reading of Aristotle, where ‘[r]esponsibility becomes understood in terms of both voluntariness and reason (through the notions of decision and deliberation) and as the indication of power over our actions’ (Raffoul 2010 p26). Since its emergence in Aristotle and influential development in Kant, responsibility has been associated with concepts of control, power, and sovereignty.

The idea that we are responsible for that which we have control over, whether this control is conceived in terms of being able to deliberate, judge, choose, or decide upon, is a familiar one both within philosophy and in our everyday lives. Notwithstanding the Strawsonian ‘turn’ that sought to move away from identifying moral responsibility with free will in the face of the threat of determinism, the so-called ‘analytic’ debate about moral responsibility remains largely centred on some idea of control or power.<sup>1</sup> Within the continental tradition, we can think of Sartre’s equation of our radical freedom with an equally radical responsibility.<sup>2</sup> In our everyday lives, we can think of the way someone whose life is ‘out of control’ might be called irresponsible, or the way that children are deemed responsible depending on their ability to judge (or ‘know better’) and their powers to act accordingly.

With his existential analytic of human being in *Being and Time*, Heidegger can be seen to challenge this traditional model by challenging the ontology it relies upon. The use of the term ‘Dasein’ to designate human existence signals immediately Heidegger’s departure from previous understandings of our being as ‘subject’,

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<sup>1</sup> This is true of those arguing against the idea of responsibility on this basis (e.g. Galen Strawson’s critique of ‘Freedom and Resentment’ in McKenna & Russell 2008), or those seeking to nuance the way this control or power is understood (e.g. not as volitional control or choice, but through evaluative judgements e.g. Smith 2005). For an overview of such debates see McKenna & Russell 2008, and the introduction to Shoemaker 2013.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. ‘Thus, the first effect of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders.’ ‘Existentialism is a Humanism p349 in Kaufman 1956)

‘consciousness’ or ‘rational animal’ for example. Heidegger’s phenomenological analysis attempts to characterize the constitutive features of Dasein, asking what it means to be Dasein as a step towards the more general question of the meaning of being. The radicalism of Heidegger’s analysis results in a discourse far removed from traditional analyses that sought the ‘essence’ of man in consciousness or rationality. For example, the hyphenated expression ‘being-in-the-world’ seeks to illustrate the fundamental idea that rather than being two discrete entities that simply causally interact with and affect each other, Dasein and the world instead constitute an original ontological unity that ultimately cannot be separated (SZ e.g. §12).

One particularly important aspect of Heidegger’s account of human existence in relation to this traditional model of responsibility is what he calls our ‘thrownness’ (*Geworfenheit*). This is one of three central aspects of human being for Heidegger, one of three fundamental existential structures of Dasein (SZ 284). By saying that we are ‘thrown’, Heidegger is attempting to capture something essential and important about the human condition. From the term itself, we can begin to get some sense of what he might be attempting to bring to light. To say that we are ‘thrown into existence’ (SZ 276) seems to point some kind of passivity at the heart or foundation of our lives. This ‘throw’ is not something that we have done but something that we find done to us; we are not the agents but the recipients, those affected by it; it is something that has ‘already’ happened in some sense, something we did not choose and *could* not choose. A throw suggests a momentum to our lives that we did not engender and perhaps are unable to stop.

With this general sense of the idea of finding oneself ‘thrown’ into existence, we can begin to see the concept’s relevance for the question of responsibility. If the concept of responsibility is identified with being able to control or determine, then we can see how some kind of essential lack of control or power indicated by our ‘thrownness’ is particularly relevant as potentially threatening this traditional model of responsibility.

However the idea of responsibility seems nonetheless to be found within Heidegger’s analysis. In his analysis of our existence, Heidegger puts forward the idea that we can exist as Dasein authentically as well as inauthentically (e.g. SZ 53)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> As well as at times suggesting we can also exist in neither way, but rather as ‘undifferentiated’ (e.g. SZ 232)

Inauthentic existence for Heidegger means existing in a way that forgets, conceals, or covers over certain features of the being of Dasein (e.g. SZ 44). This can happen in a number of ways. On Heidegger's analysis, a tendency to fall away from our existence is in fact constitutive of our being, and is one of the aforementioned three key structural features that Heidegger calls 'falling'. This can take the form of a tendency to 'forget' in some sense; the more 'active' sounding 'fleeing of Dasein in the face of itself' (SZ 184); as well as other varieties of 'concealing', obscuring, and 'disguising' its being from itself (SZ 129). This 'falling' from our own being for Heidegger can often take the form of falling into '*das Man*'<sup>4</sup>, a way of existing as 'the crowd' that facilitates this turning away from our own being in its various forms. Importantly, this way of losing touch with our being is described by Heidegger as *taking away our responsibility* (translated here by Macquarrie and Robinson as 'answerability'): 'because the "they" presents every judgement and decision as its own, it deprives the particular Dasein of its answerability [*Verantwortlichkeit*]' (SZ 127). This suggests that authentic Dasein, in contrast, at least has the possibility of being responsible.

While existing inauthentically involves some kind of concealing or turning away from our own being, authenticity for Heidegger involves something like the opposite. This is sometimes characterized as 'transparency' with respect to our own being in its various structural moments (SZ 297, 299). We can relate to the human condition by 'authentically revealing it or inauthentically covering it up' (SZ 340). Exactly what this means, unsurprisingly, is subject to a wide number of interpretations of Heidegger's work. But there seems to be widespread agreement that whatever this authentic existence amounts to, it includes something like being responsible, or taking responsibility.

Beyond describing falling as a loss of responsibility, Heidegger himself rarely explicitly characterizes authenticity in terms of responsibility – although noteworthy here is the discussion of the call of conscience (e.g. SZ 288), and an apparent identification of authenticity (and then resoluteness) with responsibility in *The Concept of Time* p45-47.<sup>5</sup> Yet such is the nature of Heidegger's discussion of

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<sup>4</sup> I will hereafter follow the increasingly common practice of leaving *das Man* untranslated, given the difficulty of capturing its 'everyone, anyone, and no-one' character with a single English term.

<sup>5</sup> In *The Concept of Time* (Dilthey Review) authenticity is distinguished from inauthenticity by an assumption of responsibility in the former:

topics related to authenticity such as death, anxiety, the call of conscience, guilt etc. that seeing authenticity as being equivalent to, or including, some idea of responsibility is ubiquitous among the secondary literature.<sup>6</sup> Whether as a necessary or sufficient condition, what it means to be authentic means to be responsible.

Given that Heidegger's aim is explicitly ontological, aiming at the mode of being of human existence as such, any Heideggerian understanding of responsibility is not conceived in any specific moral or legal sense, which would seek to understand the particular conditions for attributing praise or blame, or allocating punishments. Rather, it is responsibility as a way of being-in-the-world, as a general way of relating to one's life and possibilities. This responsibility is identified with our being authentic and not just our being as such, and therefore being responsible is understood here in the sense of something that one becomes, not simply what one is. Becoming authentic is seen as what might be called 'taking responsibility', a way of becoming responsible for our existence.

While Heidegger's existential analytic, and in particular the concept of thrownness, looked as if it might threaten the idea of responsibility by threatening

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'[T]hat which may be chosen: Dasein in the form of its ownmost possibility: either to be itself through the 'How' of assuming its self-responsibility [*Selbstverantwortung*], or to be in the form of being lived by whatever it happens to be occupied with.' (CT(D) p45)

Two pages after, a subsequent note made by Heidegger to the idea of Dasein's authentic disclosure as 'resoluteness' (translated as 'resolve' there) begins simply with 'responsibility' - see p47

<sup>6</sup> For just a small sample:

'conscience *calls upon* dasein in each case to *take over responsibility* for its whole life' (Haugeland 2013 p209)

'the ability to take responsibility for choosing our own way to be, that is, the ability to be authentic' (Wrathall 2005 p61)

'the issue of its ownmost Being is its own responsibility' (Mulhall 1996 p119)

'The retrieved self now lives as personally responsible for its own engagement with meaning in light of its mortality and thus lives authentically as the "author" of its actions.' (Sheehan 2014 p168)

'It does not have to become but to come to be in the very act of taking the responsibility for an essential non-essence whose meaning is the being-ahead-of-itself, the being-exposed, and hence at issue.' (Nancy 2008 p114)

'One has rightfully seen in these passages [about thrownness] the basis for a Heideggerian ethics of responsibility.' (Visker 2008 p180)

'Dasein must take over "ground", must take over the project of normativity and self-responsibility' (Golob 2016 p243-244)

'We will see how Heidegger's [sic] characterizes Dasein's authenticity in terms of responsibility.' (Raffoul 2010 p224)

the control or power we have over our existence, the consensus seems to be that with the idea of authenticity, responsibility is restored. Denis McManus' recent introduction to *Heidegger, Authenticity and the Self* captures this well.

Acknowledging that this thrown aspect of our existence, which seems to capture in part the way we find ourselves 'thrown' into a particular socio-historic situation, comes into conflict with the type of power and control of responsibility, McManus asks:

What can self-possession and self-determination be for the essentially socially, historically and culturally embedded creature that Division One has convinced us we ourselves are?' (McManus 2015 p6)

Our thrownness poses a question about the kind of self-possession and self-determination that are possible. Yet with the idea of authenticity, which McManus translates below as 'owned-ness', it is taken that such self-determination and therefore taking responsibility *are* possible, as several essays in the collection attest:

Heidegger's 'owned-ness' points us to the possibility of owning oneself and one's life in the sense of taking responsibility for oneself and one's life. In many of the chapters that follow, we see the exploration of ways in which taking responsibility for oneself and one's thoughts, feelings and actions might be understood.' (McManus 2015 p5-6)

As this recent collection illustrates, the consensus in the secondary literature is that while our thrownness might appear to raise an issue for the kind of self-determination constitutive of taking responsibility as traditionally understood, the concept of authenticity shows how some such self-determination or 'ownership', and therefore taking responsibility, is nonetheless possible for the thrown beings that we are.

In this thesis, I will agree with the vast secondary literature on Heidegger's existential analytic that sees the possibility of authenticity as the possibility of taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world. However, against this literature that views responsibility as some kind 'self-possession and self-determination' as

per the traditional model, I will argue that with the concept of thrownness, Heidegger's analytic shows that taking responsibility cannot be conceived on this traditional model. Through an analysis of thrownness and its first-personal manifestation in attunement, I will argue that this lack of control and power is so pervasive as to prohibit the kind of mastery that responsibility is thought to consist in, and thus taking responsibility should not be understood to lie in the power, control, or self-determination of the subject.

Unlike accounts of responsibility like the one that Raffoul (2010) himself goes on to develop after identifying this traditional model of responsibility, however, I will not challenge this model by abandoning the first-person perspective of Dasein, the 'mineness' of existence. In reading Heidegger as breaking with 'subject-based metaphysics' and 'an anthropological way of thinking' (Raffoul 2010 p239), for Raffoul responsibility is not 'a human characteristic, but is instead a phenomenon that belongs to being itself' (*ibid.* p238-239) - responsibility is 'that event by which being "enowns" humans' (p36). By following Heidegger's analysis of Dasein and its commitment to arise from and return to the level of existence, I shall retain a focus on the question of taking responsibility for our lives, a question which must also arise and return to first-personal existence. I will propose that in light of the challenges that our thrownness poses to the traditional model of responsibility, taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world should be understood in terms of *being attentive*.

## **Methodology**

Given that I will be analyzing this kind of first-personal responsibility for our being-in-the-world in the light of our thrownness, my investigation will focus on Heidegger's analysis of Dasein as found in *Being and Time*, with support at times taken from relevant lecture courses in the 1920s.

In order to show how thrownness challenges the traditional conception of responsibility, it will first be necessary to provide a picture of our thrownness which will be taken from Heidegger's analysis in *Being and Time* and related texts. This will involve looking at what Heidegger calls our 'attunement', the affective dimension of



our lives, through which our thrownness is revealed to us in a privileged way, as well as analyzing the ‘fundamental’ attunement of anxiety. Heidegger’s analysis of these aspects of our being are chiefly to be found in Division One of *Being and Time*. But while this text will be foundational for our explication of Heidegger’s analysis of our thrownness and our attunement that will undermine the traditional account, the case is less straightforward when looking to put forward a new account of responsibility in the light of this.

As mentioned, it is in Heidegger’s analysis of authenticity in Division II that the possibility of such an account of responsibility seems to lie. The story of this Division’s rushed composition that seems to result in a ‘less polished text’ than Division One (McManus 2015 p3) means that extracting an account of authenticity, and from this an account of responsibility, from Division Two is an extremely difficult task. In addition, Heidegger’s analysis of authenticity comprises a huge number of moments – death, guilt, conscience, resoluteness, the ‘moment of vision’, repetition, fate, destiny, reticence, etc. Due to their number alone, the possibility of an adequate analysis of each of these moments is precluded by the size of this study. But there are also methodological reasons to be wary of Heidegger’s analysis in Division Two for the purposes of this study. Certain aspects of authenticity that might be particularly relevant to a Heideggerian conception of responsibility are analyzed in a way that seems importantly out of keeping with the analysis that led to that point. For example, while understanding thrownness arises from a phenomenological analysis of the experience of attunement, the characterization of ‘taking over’ (SZ 284) that thrownness as manifest in guilt arises not from a phenomenological analysis of the feeling of guilt as might be expected, but from a formal analysis of the meaning of the concept.

As a result of these issues, my construction of a positive interpretation of taking responsibility will not be based primarily on an interpretation of Division Two of *Being and Time*. Instead, my account will be based on the phenomenological analysis of thrownness, attunement, and anxiety that I will develop from Heidegger, along with the idea that authenticity – and so responsibility – must be in some way ‘expressive’ of or transparent with respect to our being. Thus, my positive account of responsibility aims to be not so much an account of what Heidegger himself says but *Heideggerian*: a compelling story that emerges from the most important aspect of

Heidegger's thought with respect to the question of responsibility – namely, our thrownness.

This positive account will also importantly appeal to our everyday intimations of what being responsible means. This relation to everyday appearances will be an important methodological principle throughout. At first sight, this is perhaps controversial. Heidegger's strange new terms and apparently radical use of familiar terms seems to suggest that our everyday understanding is of no consequence to Heidegger's thought. Some of Heidegger's own statements suggest his stance to be even stronger than this, and imply that our everyday understanding is not only irrelevant to an appropriate philosophical understanding, but is positively detrimental to such understanding. A philosophical (that is, for Heidegger, an ontological) understanding:

*should capture the being of this entity, in spite of this entity's own tendency to cover things up. Existential analysis, therefore, constantly has the character of doing violence, whether to the claims of the everyday interpretation, or to its complacency and its tranquillized obviousness.'* (SZ 311)

The tendency mentioned for Dasein to fall away from its being in its various ways (which is typical of our 'everyday' existing for Heidegger) means that our mode of being is generally covered over or obscured by this fallen way of existing. Any appeal at all to this everyday understanding for insight seems completely misguided for an account that aims to be 'Heideggerian'.

However, I take it to be fundamental to Heidegger's phenomenological approach that despite this tendency to cover over our own being, this being is nonetheless manifest even in the fallen way of existing typical of everydayness. While the 'phenomena' of Heideggerian phenomenology is the being of entities - the ontological structures constitutive of what it is to 'be' a certain kind of entity - this being is not something distinct from the way the entity 'appears' to us. It is 'that which already shows itself in the appearance [...] as it is ordinarily understood and as accompanying it in every case' (SZ 31), with the task of phenomenology being to make these ontological structures explicit and thematic (*ibid.*).

Heidegger's own procedure bears this out as his analysis begins precisely from this everyday, fallen way of existing. The existential analytic begins by

analyzing Dasein in its ‘average *everydayness*’ (SZ 16). Heidegger isolates moments of our everyday experience, before attempting to show how these experiences contain within themselves insight into the kind of beings that we are. What is of ontological significance is always visible within our everyday experience, belonging to everyday appearance ‘so essentially as to constitute its meaning and its ground’ (SZ 35). But with this, we can see everyday experience not only as a starting point but as a touchstone for Heidegger’s account, insofar as the analysis at the ontological level should be shown to constitute the sense of our everyday understanding:

*If existential analysis has laid bare the phenomenon [...] in its ontological roots, then precisely in terms of this analysis the ordinary interpretations must become intelligible. (SZ 290)*<sup>7</sup>

I take it to be in accordance with Heidegger’s methodology then to use our everyday understanding of taking responsibility as a criterion in this sense: if an account is to ‘lay bare the phenomenon’ of taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world, then precisely in terms of this account our everyday understanding of taking responsibility ‘*must* become intelligible’. If an account of taking responsibility at the level of our being cannot be shown to constitute the sense of our everyday understanding, it should be rejected. As well as arguing on the basis of the phenomenological analyses of thrownness and attunement then, my positive account will be demonstrated by its explanatory power to capture examples of what would, on our everyday understanding, show up to us as examples of taking responsibility.

## **Outline of the Thesis**

In chapter one, I will begin my interpretation of thrownness by first looking at the closely related concept with which it is often identified, the concept of ‘facticity’ as the ‘fact’ of our existence. While it may appear that this fact captures the specific, concrete particulars of our existence, I shall argue that facticity pertains more

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<sup>7</sup> This quote is taken specifically with reference to the phenomenon of conscience, but equally applies to Heidegger’s whole analysis given the phenomenological principles outlined above.

fundamentally to the ‘fact’ of our being Dasein, the ‘fact’ of our existence as such. This captures the fact of existing in some way as an ‘I’ in relation to a world and others, and importantly captures the ‘enigma’ of being that lies beyond our grasp at the bottom of this existence. I will then show how thrownness, while also capturing in some sense this ‘fact’ of our existence, importantly adds to this the idea of a ‘movement’. This will be explicated in terms of the way the ‘throw’ into existence shapes possibilities into which we project, whilst also imparting the momentum with which they are taken up. Thus, the passivity and entanglement of our existence will be emphasized, and I will begin to show specifically how this ‘movement’ threatens the traditional model. While this thrownness is into particular concrete possibilities, as with facticity it will be shown that more fundamentally thrownness captures the throw into our being as such. The enigma revealed ‘beneath’ this existence will be shown to lie ‘ahead’ of this existence as that which we ineluctably aim at.

Chapter two will flesh out this picture of thrownness by turning to its privileged first-personal manifestation in what Heidegger calls our ‘attunement’. I will begin by arguing that attunement captures a wide range of affective phenomena, from explicit emotions to the important, largely inexplicit way we find that things ‘matter to us’. I will explain how attunement discloses our thrownness, typically pre-reflectively, through the way we find ourselves solicited and summoned by possibilities. I will show how this attunement, importantly shaped by *das Man*, is constitutive for our particular identities, thus revealing our thrownness into a particular world as a particular person. I will interpret how our thrownness into Dasein as such can also be seen in our attunement, before showing how the enigma of our thrownness is revealed in the way we are gripped by that which always remains beyond us. I will suggest that this is experienced as the grip of what’s meaningful, good, or true.

In chapter three, I will turn to the question of responsibility in the face of thrownness, by looking to how we might be considered responsible in relation to our attunement. I will show how the model of gaining control through choice and decision (based in rational judgement or otherwise) cannot be the right way of conceiving of responsibility in light of our thrownness. In elucidating this point I will turn to Harry Frankfurt, whose later work bears a strong resemblance to important aspects of Heidegger’s thought bearing on this question of taking responsibility. After

using Frankfurt to draw out certain implications of our Heideggerian account, we will then look to Frankfurt's own answer to the issue of taking responsibility. For Frankfurt, this amounts to a kind of wholeheartedness that he describes as 'clarity and confidence' with respect to what we care about. In showing the problems with Frankfurt's account, certain objections to interpretations of Heidegger's thought itself as pointing to something like 'wholeheartedness' will be foreshadowed. Ultimately, the attunement of anxiety will come to the fore as disrupting Frankfurt's account from within, which will point to the importance of Heidegger's ontology in understanding responsibility. In so doing, the distinctive and compelling nature of Heidegger's account will be shown.

In chapter four, I will focus on the attunement of anxiety. I will criticize Heidegger's presentation of the idea on the basis of his own methodological commitments, showing that contrary to Heidegger's exposition, there is a kind of continuity between the everyday understanding of anxiety and his own ontological analysis. In bringing out this continuity through the idea of the 'threatening', I will argue that the experience of anxiety does not represent a kind of 'space' in which the 'I' can gain power to choose or determine itself, as some accounts suggest. Instead, I argue that retaining fidelity to the experience of anxiety reveals the grip of thrownness - into a particular world as a particular person, but more importantly bringing us face to face with our thrownness into Dasein as such as this has been characterized in the preceding analysis.

In chapter five, I will look to four interpretations of taking responsibility in the secondary literature on Heidegger that I take to be representative of the traditional understanding of responsibility. Using the foregoing analysis and with appeal to our everyday understanding of responsibility, I will show that while each captures something important, accounts that explain responsibility with an appeal to reflective judgement (Crowell), choice (Han-Pile), wholeheartedness (McManus), or independence from *das Man* (Withy) fall short. I will argue that Blattner's account of 'responsiveness' is most promising, yet is underdeveloped and crucially misses an important aspect of our thrownness.

In chapter six, I will propose that taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world is to be understood as being attentive, an account I will develop in dialogue with Iris Murdoch's work on the idea of attention. After showing the important

connections between Heidegger's and Murdoch's work that allow for such an undertaking, I will engage in a phenomenology of attention to show that it is a kind of comportment that is sensitive to our thrownness and that therefore avoids the problems of the accounts seen in the previous chapter. I will argue that attention in fact explains and underlies the appearances captured by the traditional accounts of responsibility examined in the previous chapter. I will argue that responsibility specifically means attending to that to which we're attuned most deeply, which means attending to the solicitation from the enigmatic beyond that we shall show can be called what is good, true, or meaningful. Finally, I will show how it is this attentiveness that is able to make intelligible the ways in which the protagonists of the film *Locke* and the novel *Disgrace* appear to take responsibility or not.

## Chapter One - Moved by an Enigma: Facticity and Thrownness

As discussed in the introduction, I will argue that Heidegger's concept of thrownness challenges the concept of responsibility as traditionally understood: namely, the idea that responsibility is to be identified with the power or mastery of the subject. This chapter will explicate this distinctive Heideggerian concept with the ultimate aim of showing how Heidegger's compelling analysis challenges the traditional model of responsibility.

Beginning with the closely related concept of facticity, and arguing that it primarily points to the fact of existence as such and not the particularities of my existence, I will highlight that it is the idea of 'movement' that is definitive of our thrownness. I will begin to show how this movement is important to challenging the traditional mode of responsibility, before showing how this movement of thrownness pertains to the particular world I find myself in as a particular person, and to the level of our being Dasein as such.

### The Fact That I am

The concept of thrownness, first appearing in *Being and Time*, is closely related in that work to the concept of facticity, which had featured in Heidegger's thought since the early 1920s.<sup>1</sup> The terms are frequently used in the same passages, apparently interchangeably (e.g. SZ 179, 348), and both seem to capture the same moment of the tripartite care structure: 'Dasein's Being is care. It comprises in itself facticity (thrownness), existence (projection), and falling.' (SZ 284) As we shall see, this is the aspect of care indexed to the temporal moment of the past, the 'having-been'. As a result, facticity and thrownness are generally not distinguished in the secondary

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<sup>1</sup> As Kisiel (2008) points out, the philosophical imagination as concretized in philosophical language dictionaries commonly credits Heidegger with the introduction of the term into philosophical parlance. Against this misconception, Kisiel (1993, 2008), Raffoul & Nelson (2008), and Carvalho (2010) among others have made clear that the concept plays an important role in the middle and late Fichte, and had also come back into use in the neo-Kantian circles in which Heidegger worked. Interestingly, the concept of facticity fades from Heidegger's work at the end of the 1920s, while the concept of thrownness persists into his later thought. As we shall see, it is hoped that the picture of responsibility given by focusing on the concept of thrownness is more consonant with Heidegger's later thought than is the traditional picture of responsibility.

literature.<sup>2</sup> While there is obviously an important affinity between these two terms, I think that our grasp of thrownness will benefit by delineating between the two concepts and taking each in turn, enabling us to see what is distinctive about thrownness.

The concept of facticity is introduced as we are told: “Whenever Dasein is, it is as a Fact; and the factuality of such a Fact is what we shall call Dasein’s ‘facticity’.” (SZ 56) The facticity of Dasein is meant to capture the ‘fact’ of our existence: ‘that’ we are. What exactly this means is not immediately clear. And for Heidegger, precisely this lack of clarity can be seen as expressive of the concerns motivating the project of *Being and Time*. When we say that something is a ‘fact’, we typically mean that it is actually the case, that it ‘obtains’, that it is true, or simply that it ‘is’. But this ‘is’ is the very question that *Being and Time* is trying to raise and that Heidegger believes has been forgotten or covered over in Western thought since antiquity.<sup>3</sup>

For Heidegger, what it means for something to be, what it means to say that something ‘is’, has been dominated in Western thought by the conception derived from a particular way of seeing objects in the world. That something ‘is’, including that human existence ‘is’, has been understood to mean that it is present-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*). To say that a human ‘is’ has, according to Heidegger, wrongly been conceived in the same way as we might say a stone ‘is’. With his existential analytic of Dasein, Heidegger seeks to show that what it means to say that human existence ‘is’ is in fact radically different to saying that a stone ‘is’. Heidegger aims to give an account of the unique being of Dasein as ‘existence’ in contrast to the modes of being of presence-at-hand and ready-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*) of objects within the world. I take the question of what it means for Dasein to ‘be’ as a fact – Dasein’s facticity – to be central to Heidegger’s project of explicating the particular mode of being of Dasein,

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<sup>2</sup> For a small sample, see: ‘To be thrown (facticity) means to be called’ (Raffoul & Nelson 2008, p9); ‘[T]his is the [...] phenomenon of facticity or thrownness’ (Blattner 1999 p76); ‘[T]he facticity of Dasein, its being thrown into the world (*Geworfenheit*) in some way’ (Padui 2013, p53)

<sup>3</sup> The term ‘fact’ comes from the Latin *factum* meaning ‘an act’, the neuter past participle of the verb *facere* meaning to do, to make.’ (OED Online, accessed January 2014). The general application of the term to all things that ‘are’ stems from the medieval period in which all that ‘is’ was understood to be made, created by God. The ubiquity of the use of the term ‘fact’ in everyday discourse can be seen to not only conceal our current understanding of being, but that understanding of being as *ens creatum* from which we departed (SZ 24-25)



the particular way that humans ‘are’ or exist in contrast to other things. The facticity of Dasein then, is to be contrasted with the fact of other entities, as shown by Heidegger’s use of *Faktizität* (translated as ‘facticity’) to capture the fact of Dasein, while using ‘*Tatsächlichkeit*’ (translated as ‘factuality’) to refer to the fact of non-Dasein entities (SZ 56).

As we saw in the introduction, what it means to be Dasein is constituted by ‘mineness’ – to exist as Dasein is to be as an ‘I’. Accordingly, the fact of being Dasein is a fact that *I am* (and importantly, in the sense of ‘I am in a world’ cf. SZ 211<sup>4</sup>). As put in *The Concept of Time*, “Let us call this presence, possessed by each individual Dasein –one is it, or *I am it* –*facticity*.’ (CT(D) p 35) That is, human existence is first-personal, and the fact of Dasein is disclosed to us – our ‘presence’ is revealed - first-personally, as we shall explore in greater detail shortly.

Given that this fact is a fact that ‘I am’, that it involves a presence to myself, facticity is not something extraneous to my existence:

*Facticity is not the factuality of the factum brutum of something present-at-hand, but a characteristic of Dasein’s being – one which has been taken up into existence* (SZ 135, emphasis mine)

In contrast to occurrent objects like stones, this fact that I am is taken up into my existence in one way or another. As we shall see, this will not just be as an ‘event’ in the past in which I came into being, but rather throughout my entire existence. Part of what it is to be Dasein is to relate to its own ‘thatness’ in one way or another. In further characterizing the way that the fact that ‘I am’ is disclosed through affective experience, we shall see that I cannot be indifferent to the fact that I am. My facticity cannot fail to matter to me.

We have seen that facticity captures the fact that I am, a fact that is to be qualitatively distinguished from the ‘fact’ that other things are. Additionally, we have seen that this fact that I am must be taken up into existence in some way or other. But what it is that is to be taken up into existence is not clear.

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<sup>4</sup> As the section title in which ‘facticity’ is introduced makes clear: ‘Being-in-the-world in General as the Basic State of Dasein’ (SZ 52)

### **The particular fact of who I am and the fact of a 'who' as such**

What is this fact of my existence? Given the distinction between the fact of my existence and the fact of the existence of things in the world, we might legitimately phrase the question as 'who' is it that I am:

*Existentialia* and categories are the two basic possibilities for characters of Being. The entities which correspond to them require different kinds of primary interrogation respectively: any entity is either a "who" (existence) or a "what" (presence-at-hand in the broadest sense). (SZ 45)

If asked about the 'fact' of who I am, it might perhaps be natural to think of those particular aspects of my identity that I find myself with, perhaps aspects that I have found myself with since birth. We might think of our gender, or our race. We might think of our physical characteristics: it is a fact that I am so tall, or that I look a certain way, have a certain hereditary medical condition perhaps. We might think of certain dispositions or character traits – it is a fact that I am a quiet person, or I am an extrovert. We might think of the things that begin to go beyond the confines of the self as narrowly conceived but that nonetheless might be part of the fact of who we are: I am one of a certain number of siblings, I am adopted. I was raised in a family of a certain class, I had a privileged upbringing or otherwise. I was born in this country, or I am a certain nationality. I am of a certain cultural era, of a certain time and place in history, with all the significance that might bring. These, we might intuitively say, are the facts of who I am.

There are perhaps good reasons to think that Heidegger is aiming primarily to capture these particularities of our existence with the idea of 'facticity' in *Being and Time*.<sup>5</sup> The first is the identification of facticity with the aspect of Dasein's temporality associated with the 'past', or with the 'already': 'The primary existential meaning of facticity lies in the character of "having been" [*Gewesenheit*].' (SZ 328)

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<sup>5</sup> There are reasons to think that Heidegger's use of the term changes from its earliest occurrences in his work, so this analysis will apply only to *Being and Time* and its so called 'drafts' (Kisiel 1993), namely those lecture courses on time from the two years preceding *Being and Time*.

This might make one think that ‘facticity’ captures those things that chronologically pre-exist us but nonetheless shape us. This seems to map on nicely to those particular aspects of who we are suggested above. Facticity captures the particularities of my body, disposition, socio-cultural and historical situation, as these can all be seen to constitute me in a way that is chronologically prior to finding myself in existence. This is the fact of me that I find determined before me, but which is nonetheless constitutive of the fact that I am.

Additionally, we might think that such an identification of facticity with the particularities of our existence can clearly be seen in the text. Based on Macquarrie and Robinson’s identification of *faktisch* with *Faktizität* (footnote ii to SZ 7), if the ‘factual’ aims at the particularities of our existence then this is what ‘facticity’ is trying primarily to capture. And it seems that the factual very clearly does aim at the particularities of existence. We are told, for example, that Dasein ‘can project itself only upon definite factual possibilities.’ (SZ 299) and that Heidegger starts from the ‘concretion’ of factually thrown existence (SZ 495). In further support the factual is often contrasted with the ontological level of analysis, which aims not at capturing particularities of individuals but at the mode of being of Dasein as such. For example, we are told that Heidegger’s analysis cannot, in virtue of its ontological aim, prescribe particular, definite possibilities: ‘In the existential analysis we cannot, in principle, discuss what Dasein *factually* resolves in any particular case.’ (SZ 384, emphasis Heidegger’s) In contrast with the ontological, the factual is variously linked with the ontical (SZ 65) and the ‘existentiell’ (SZ 395). Both the existentiell and the ontical on Heidegger’s analysis capture the particular, in contrast to the existential and the ontological which aim at the essential being of types of entities. With the ‘factual’, and so it seems with ‘facticity’, Heidegger himself seems to confirm the intuition that the fact of who I am is constituted by the particularities of my existence, as suggested above.

And indeed, these particular features have been taken by some in the literature to be what Heidegger was aiming to capture with the idea of ‘facticity’.<sup>6</sup> This

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, ‘Dasein, as my Dasein and this Dasein, is already in a definite world and amidst a definite range of definite intraworldly entities’ [SZ 221]. This content constitutes Dasein’s *facticity*.’ (Dreyfus 1991 p300) ‘Of course, as we shall see, what it means to *be* a concrete particular differs fundamentally for human and nonhuman entities. So, for example, Dasein is *concrete* not by being usable or objective but by finding itself in its “facticity” (*Faktizität*), that is, in a given, externally determined practical situation.’ (Carman 2003 p36)

particularity is the fact that I am, it is primarily this that must be ‘taken up’ in some way or another into existence. Ultimately as we shall see, it is in some way of relating to this fact of existence that authenticity (and by inclusion responsibility) is to be understood. Therefore what authenticity and responsibility mean can depend on how this fact is understood. However, in seeing this ‘fact’ as capturing primarily the particularities of existence, I believe this reading misses what Heidegger is expressing with the idea of facticity.

As we saw above, one reason to think that facticity captures these particular aspects of our existence is the identification of facticity with our ‘having been’. It captures those things in the past that go to constitute what or who we are. This surely refers to those particular determinants given above, such as those of our social situation or those arising from our parentage. It must be remembered, however, that a significant aspect of Heidegger’s project in *Being and Time* is to challenge the idea that time is only (or primarily) to be understood as a sequence of ‘past, present, future’ as a linear series of ‘now’ points<sup>7</sup>. For Heidegger, originary temporality (from which our everyday engagement with time and time as conceptually understood derive) is not to be understood as a ‘succession’: ‘The future is *not later* than having been, and having been is *not earlier* than the Present.’ (SZ 350) In accordance with Heidegger’s analysis of temporality then, the ‘having been’ of facticity is not to be understood as that which is chronologically prior. As Sheehan (1996) convincingly argues through semantic analysis, ‘having been’ in Heidegger’s meaning of the term is designed not to pick out a tense in a linear temporal sense, as modern languages suggest. Influenced by the ancient Greek sense, the ‘already’ for Heidegger is intended to capture the idea of the *a priori* of Dasein’s being. As we shall see in greater detail, this is prior in the sense of being a constitutive condition of the possibility of. Facticity is the ‘having been’ in the sense that it must necessarily always ‘already’ be there to allow our experience to be as it is.<sup>8</sup> While conceiving facticity as the chronologically prior seems to point exclusively to the particularities

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‘Facticity is intimately tied to thrownness, and especially to the determinateness of being situated.’ (Withy 2011 footnote 9, p80).

<sup>7</sup> See Blattner (1999) for extensive analysis of this idea. My understanding of temporality here will largely follow that proposed by Blattner.

<sup>8</sup> A similar argument against reading facticity as capturing history as the ‘prior’ in a chronological sense can be found in Crowell 2002, specifically in arguing against a narrativist reading of Heidegger.

of our existence, by seeing that Heidegger instead means an *a priori*, a different reading of facticity is suggested:

[I]t is the existentially apriori [...], that which in each case is always already ontologically operative in Dasein: *das schon voraus Wesende*, as he says, and “*nicht ein ontisch Vergangenes*” (SZ 85, marginalium).’ (Sheehan 1996 p28)

Here, using Heidegger’s own marginal notes for support, Sheehan points to this *a priori* as capturing the essential being of Dasein – its mode of being. And while we might think that perhaps Heidegger is attempting to shift our conception of the *a priori* to include the particularities of our situation, it seems clear that, in contrast to the reading of facticity above, at least part of what Heidegger is attempting to capture is the being of Dasein<sup>10</sup>. We are told that ‘the structure of existentiality lies *a priori*’ (SZ 44), that ‘this structure is something ‘*a priori*’ (SZ 41), and that Dasein’s ‘primordial structural totality, lies ‘before’ every factual ‘attitude’ and ‘situation’ of Dasein, and it does so existentially *a priori*’ (SZ 193 This suggests that with the concept of facticity Heidegger is primarily interested in capturing the fact of our mode of being, rather than aiming at the particularity of our chronological past.

But we also saw clearly that the factual captured the particular, concrete aspects of our existence, which further suggested that the fact that I am aims only at the particularities of my existence. This conclusion, however, depends upon an identification of the ‘factual’ with ‘facticity’ that I believe is questionable. While Macquarrie and Robinson are keen to preserve the connection between the ‘factual’ and ‘facticity’ as distinct from the ‘factuality’ (or actuality, *Wirklichkeit*) of non-Dasein entities (footnote ii, SZ 7), this connection is not an identification. While both ideas pertain to Dasein as opposed to non-Dasein entities, just like the distinction between existential and existentiell (which both also apply only to Dasein), ‘facticity’ aims primarily at the mode of being of human existence and the structures that are constitutive of this, while ‘factual’ applies to the particular, concrete ways in which

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<sup>9</sup> This translates roughly to an already ‘essencing’, not an ontical past. *Vergangen* is the word that Heidegger uses for the sequential past, in contrast to the ‘having been’ of originary temporality: ‘As long as’ Dasein factically exists, it is never past [*vergangen*], but it always is indeed as already having *been*, in the sense of the “I am-as-having-been” [*ich bin gewesen*]. (SZ 328)

<sup>10</sup> See Carmen 2003 footnote 8, p214 for this view.

this is. This is attested to in various places throughout the text, perhaps most clearly in the following:

Is it not an attribute of the *a priori* character of the factual subject (that is, an attribute of Dasein's facticity) that it is in the truth and in untruth equiprimordially? (SZ 229)<sup>11</sup>

While the factual captures those particularities that are constitutive of what I am, facticity can be seen to refer to the mode of being of Dasein.

If we were in any doubt, confirmation that facticity aims at this structural, ontological level is found in the *History of the Concept of Time* lecture course of 1925. Anxiety, which as we shall see reveals the being of Dasein, is described as an experience in which 'being-in-the-world as such discloses itself, and that not as this definite fact but in its *facticity*.' (HCT p290-291) And this idea is perhaps given its clearest expression of all as Heidegger uses the term to characterize the *structure* of existence:

The authentic correlation of world and Dasein (if we can speak here of correlation at all, which is not my opinion) is *care and meaningfulness*.<sup>12</sup> This correlation is the basic structure of life, a structure which I also call *facticity*. (HCT p221)

This is not to say that the particularities we initially began with are not, in an important sense, constitutive of what or who I am. Just as the existential and the existentiell are both part of existence, so too facticity and the factual are both part of the fact that I am. But the existentiell is to be understood on the basis of the existential. The ontical is to be understood on the basis of the ontological. So too with

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<sup>11</sup>The way that factual and facticity track the distinction between existentiell and existential is also clear in the following:

'is it not quite appropriate to the phenomenon to leave unasked the question of what the caller [of conscience] is? Yes indeed, when it comes to listening to the *factual* call of conscience in an *existentiell* way, but not when it comes to analyzing *existentially* the *facticity* of the calling' (SZ 274-275)

See also SZ 120 where the factual and facticity come apart, as differences at the level of the 'factual' have no bearing on Dasein's 'facticity' with respect to 'Being-with'

<sup>12</sup>'*Bedeutsamkeit*.' This is translated as 'significance' in *Being and Time*.

the ideas of temporality, conscience, guilt, understanding: Heidegger's analyses capture in some sense our everyday, 'ontical' interpretations of them, but he aims to show that they must ultimately be understood on their ontological basis, that which constitutes the meaning and the ground of these everyday understandings (SZ 35). While the fact of 'who' I am might naturally be answered by the particular aspects of our identity, this fact is to be understood through the idea that I am a being that is capable of being a 'who' in the first place. My particularities must be understood through the fact that I am a 'who' at all. To understand our facticity, and through this our thrownness, it is with reference to this foundational level that we must look if we are to benefit from Heidegger's insight. In thinking through our facticity (and as we shall see, our thrownness) in relation to responsibility, this fundamental sense must perpetually be borne in mind.

### **The fact of the enigma of being Dasein**

What is this basic structure of life that is constitutive of the fact that I am? What is it that enables me to be a 'who' at all? These questions are in some sense the questions of the whole existential analytic – however for our purposes here, I shall focus on some key features. One 'plane' on which to view this structure concerns the way that Dasein is fundamentally being-in-the-world and being-with others. In characterizing the idea of our 'transparency' with respect to the mode of being of Dasein, Heidegger tells us that entities with the mode of being of Dasein 'see' themselves:

only in so far as they have become transparent to themselves with equal primordially in those items which are constitutive for their existence: their Being-alongside the world and their Being-with Others. (SZ 146)

Here, recognizing the world and other people as constitutive of this self's existence is essential to the self becoming transparent.

The idea that the 'I' exists essentially as a relation to that which is beyond it, which allows anything that 'is' to appear, is essential to Heidegger's entire

philosophical project.<sup>13</sup> While human existence is necessary as the ‘site’ or ‘clearing’ of what ‘is’, being does not come from human existence. Only with human existence ‘is there’ [*gibt es*] being, but, as the translation note to SZ 212 points out, it is necessary that being ‘gives’ [*gibt*] itself to human existence. Human existence is an openness to being that is in some way beyond it. Being, what ‘is’, is simultaneously revealed and concealed in the face of human existence<sup>14</sup>. In the existential analytic of *Being and Time*, this relation of the human to being that is beyond it is captured by Heidegger’s characterization of Dasein as fundamentally being-in-the-world. Our existence is constitutively bound to that which is beyond us.

As we saw, to exist as Dasein is to exist as an ‘I’, to exist first-personally. However, in contrast to Cartesian philosophies that start with the certainty of the ‘I’ before then establishing a relation to that which is beyond the ‘I’, as Dasein we are fundamentally connected to the world and other people. Existence can never be understood to be emerging from one ‘pole,’ the subject. The ‘subject’ is always and essentially already related to the ‘poles’ of the world and other people – to be the entity that I am is to necessarily have some relation to the world and other people. This is constitutive for being a ‘who’ at all, and is therefore constitutive of the fact that I am.

While these ‘poles’ of existence constitute one aspect of Dasein’s being, there is another aspect to this structure that tells us more about the kind of being we are, about what it means to exist as an ‘I’ in relation to a world and others. We have already noted that Dasein is constituted by its facticity, projection (sometimes ‘existence’ or ‘existentiality’ (e.g. SZ 191)), and falling. In the introduction, prior to our analysis of facticity, falling was briefly outlined. A short explanation of ‘existence’ as projection remains, however. Our understanding of this aspect of our being, like the others, should improve as the analysis proceeds.

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<sup>13</sup>See, for example, the descriptions of the ‘necessary correlation of being and man’ Sheehan (2014 p133) and ‘the co-belonging of being and Dasein’ (Raffoul 2010 p239), or the ‘interplay between being and beings (specifically human beings)’ O’Brien (2011 p2) that are shown to characterize Heidegger’s thought in these investigations that seek to examine Heidegger’s thought as a whole.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Being-in-the-world is characterized by ‘truth’ and ‘untruth’ (SZ 223)



For Heidegger, what it means to be Dasein is different to being another type of object in the world as we saw. This can be captured in the following way:

we cannot define Dasein's essence by citing a "what" of the kind that pertains to a subject-matter, [...] its essence lies rather in the fact that in each case it has its being to be, and has it as its own. (SZ 12)

Importantly, while other entities can be characterized by a current state of 'what' they are, for Dasein 'the essence of this entity is existence' (SZ 133). What we are is in some sense what we do. Dasein is not to be thought of as a kind of substance with properties, but rather as an 'ability to be' that is constituted by taking up possibilities. This taking up of possibilities is constitutive of our self-understanding, and thus Dasein is what (or who) it understands itself to be by taking up possibilities<sup>15</sup>.

On the everyday sense of temporality, this existing through possibilities can be seen as the way we are always oriented to the future – we exist as taking up particular projects, aims, goals. Just as my particular day is constituted by the particular things I aim to do within it, so more broadly I am what I understand myself to be aiming towards<sup>16</sup>. And just like my particular day, what I aim towards is just one possible thing I might aim towards. It is by aiming or 'projecting' into these possible ways to be that human existence is: 'The 'essence' of this entity lies in its "to be". (SZ 42) Just like the temporality of facticity as 'having been' was revealed to not be the sequential temporality we are used to, so fundamentally this projection 'ahead' of ourselves is not simply in order to 'achieve' a state that we currently are not. This 'to be' is not something that is not yet actual but will be in the future. For example, to say that I project into the possibility of being a medical doctor, or a socialist, or a friend to someone is not to say that I aim at something that I am currently not but that one day I will achieve and so can stop aiming toward, but rather it is to say that being a doctor, for example, is something that shapes the things I do and that constitutes my self-understanding. It is the point on the horizon that gives me the particular direction I take. But just like the point on the horizon, we never 'reach' it. Being a doctor, or a socialist, or a friend, is not

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<sup>15</sup> 'Understands' here is not to be equated with explicit cognitive awareness, as we shall see.

<sup>16</sup> Again, this 'aiming' is not to be understood as a kind of consciously directing oneself towards.

something I can ‘complete’, but is that point on the horizon at which I aim that makes sense of what stands before me.

That at which I aim is always only a possibility that I am projecting into, a possible way to be. I may stop projecting into that possibility; I may no longer understand myself as being a doctor or a socialist or a friend to someone. For Heidegger, our entire existence has this character of possibility – everything that we are is only a possible way to be: ‘Dasein is in every case what it can be, and in the way in which it is its possibility.’ (SZ 143) This means that there is no fixed, predetermined essence that tells us what, or who, we are. Our being is possibility, a constant journey aimed at a point on a horizon that can always change.

To say that Dasein is an ‘I’ that must relate to the world and others must be understood through this lens of Dasein’s being as existence. While I must relate to the world and others, the particular way I do this is not determined by any kind of essence. Any relation is only a possible way of relating, a possible way of being. Some such relation is necessary however. While I need not aim at being a doctor who relates to medical science and to people as patients, I do need to aim at being someone, relating to something, and to people somehow.

So the fact that I am, that which enables me to be a who, is to be a being that projects into possibilities and, as we saw in the introduction, has a tendency to conceal or fall away from its own being. To be a ‘who’ is also necessarily to project and fall in relation to the world and others. This is the ‘fact that I am’, and it must in some way be taken up into existence.

One more crucial aspect of facticity (and we shall see, of thrownness too) is yet to be raised. We have seen that facticity captures the *a priori* mode of being of Dasein that in some sense, we might think, stands as the ‘ground’ underlying the particularities of my existence. Yet there is something important about this ‘ground’ that is Dasein’s facticity. The fact that I am is ultimately an enigma for Heidegger: ‘the “that-it-is” [...] stares it [Dasein] in the face with the inexorability of an enigma.’ (SZ 136) While it is revealed that I am as a projection into possibilities in relation to the world and others, there is something enigmatic about this ‘who’ that I am. Importantly, this enigma is not just something contingently mysterious that might one

day relent in its enigmatic character: ‘It is by no means just a kind of ignorance factually subsisting; it is constitutive for Dasein’s facticity.’ (SZ 348)

At this stage, we might start to think of a kind of enigma when asking the question of why I am this particular person, in this particular socio-historical situation, in this particular time. Or perhaps, in thinking about the fundamental level of facticity, why I am at all, or what it means that I am at all. Why is it that there is something rather than nothing, in the form of an ‘I’ and being that is manifest to it?

What it means for the fact that ‘I am’ to be an enigma is something that will become clearer as we proceed. The quote in which this enigma is introduced above importantly involves the idea of thrownness and attunement, and an explication of these will be required to give some elucidation to this idea of an enigma. For now, we can think that it is that which is in some way resistant to being ‘solved’ – something that in some way remains beyond our grasp.

We have seen how facticity, while in some sense capturing those particular facts that are constitutive of who I am, must be understood as fundamentally capturing the being of Dasein that constitutes what it is to be a ‘who’ in the first place. The particular ‘facts’ constitutive of who I am must be understood in light of the ontological structure that grounds them and gives them meaning. This ‘fact’ of finding oneself as a ‘who’ at all can be characterized as finding oneself as a being that projects into possibilities in relation to a world and others, with a tendency to fall away from or cover over this very fact. Importantly, this fact that I am is ultimately enigmatic in some sense; what it means to be a who is in some sense beyond our grasp.

In briefly stepping back to the issue of taking responsibility, we can see how Dasein’s facticity might bear on the traditional model. As the ‘already’ conceived as the *a priori* of Dasein, facticity in the strict sense seems to lie outside or ‘before’ its power or control. I find myself always ‘already’ as a ‘who’, and taking control or power requires already finding myself as a who; that is, as Dasein. I do not have control or power over being Dasein, as such power or control presupposes being Dasein. Thus, it seems we might not be able to be responsible in the traditional sense for the fact of our being. We might think though, that in seeing that part of the ultimate ‘fact’ of Dasein’s being is its existence as possibility, there is room for us to

have power or control over these particular facts that constitute who we are. Given that I ‘am’ something only insofar as I project into the possibility of being it, room is in principle left for us to change the possibility into which we project. I might be able to change, and thus have power and responsibility in a traditional sense, over being a certain gender, nationality, class etc. if ‘being’ this is just projecting into it as a possibility. If this is just a possible self-understanding, there seems to be room to have responsibility, in the sense of power to change, who we are, even if being a ‘who’ at all is beyond our power and thus not something we can take responsibility with respect to.

However, I will argue that by understanding thrownness, we can see why this traditional sense of responsibility over who we are cannot hold. We will now turn to look to what thrownness as a concept adds to the idea of facticity that so threatens the traditional concept of responsibility.

## **Thrownness**

### **Facilitating the traditional model of responsibility**

As the close linking of the ideas in *Being and Time* show, and their identification in the literature suggests, facticity and thrownness are intimately connected ideas.

Thrownness, like facticity, captures ‘that’ I am, or Dasein’s ‘that it is’: ‘the pure “that-it-is” of one’s ownmost individualized thrownness.’(SZ 343)<sup>17</sup>

As with facticity, thrownness is also identified with that aspect of the temporal structure of Dasein of the ‘having been’. Thrownness captures the ‘already’ of Dasein, as the conjugation of the concept attests: the throw has already happened, we are already ‘thrown’. But just as we saw with facticity, thrownness as this ‘already’ is not to be conceived on the everyday temporal model as something which happened sequentially before:

Thrownness, however, does not lie behind it as some event which has happened to Dasein, which has factually befallen and fallen loose from Dasein again; on

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<sup>17</sup> See also SZ 134, 276 etc.

the contrary, as long as Dasein is, *Dasein* as care, *is* constantly its ‘that-it-is.’  
(SZ 284)

That ‘fact’ of Dasein, its ‘that-it-is’, has been shown to pertain most fundamentally to the ontological mode of being of Dasein. Given that thrownness also captures this ‘that it is’, it will presumably also capture our thrownness into human existence, into being a ‘who’, as such. Thus ‘taking over thrownness’ as a constitutive aspect of authenticity, and thus responsibility, will mean existing in a way that is expressive of the ontological mode of being of Dasein, given that ‘taking over thrownness signifies *being* Dasein authentically *as it already was*’ (SZ 325). The fact that I am, while fundamentally capturing the fact that I am Dasein, is also to be understood as capturing the particulars of who I am (the factual), albeit these particulars understood in the light of the fundamental fact of being a ‘who’ at all. So too thrownness will also capture the particular aspects of my existence that I am thrown into, however these must be understood on the basis of my being thrown into existence as such. Additionally, as we saw through our analysis of facticity, this ‘fact’ that I am is one that is not extraneous to the way I exist, but must be taken up one way or another: ‘But neither does thrownness adhere to Dasein as an inaccessible characteristic which is of no importance for its existence.’ (SZ 276)

But if facticity and thrownness are united in capturing all of the above, we might question what differentiates them, and ask what thrownness ‘adds’ to facticity to warrant its introduction into Heidegger’s thought. The text alone is not immediately helpful in this regard. Of the relation between the two concepts, we are told only that: ‘The expression “thrownness” is meant to suggest the *facticity of its being delivered over.*’ (SZ 135), and that thrownness is that ‘in which facticity lets itself be seen phenomenally.’ (SZ 179)<sup>18</sup>

To understand that which thrownness ‘adds’ to the concept of facticity, it is more helpful to look to its close relation to the idea of projection, seen in the way that care is described as ‘a *single* basic state in its essentially twofold structure of thrown projection.’ (SZ 199) The connection between these two aspects of Dasein,

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<sup>18</sup> As the following chapter will demonstrate, this does not mean that thrownness is the way in which facticity is experienced – thrownness is not a mode of disclosure. In *Being and Time* and the lectures around it, facticity and thrownness are experienced through the mode of disclosure of *Befindlichkeit*.

corresponding to the originary past and originary future, is emphasized in German by the common root of *werfen* (to throw) in *Geworfenheit* (thrownness) and *Entwurf* (projection). In the latter case we might think of something being thrown ahead of us, namely the possibility we aim at by projecting into.

As a first pass, we might say that this means that what I aim at is aimed at on the basis of what I already am. My projection into future possibilities depends upon what or who I already am (if we remember that this ‘I am’ must be understood as being-in-the-world). Projection is not ‘free-floating’ but ‘its character is determined by thrownness’ (SZ 276). In contrast to this ‘free-floating’ idea, we might say that our thrownness limits our projection, in that our project remains tied to or grounded in it. We already find ourselves in a particular way, and this in some way determines the possibilities we project into, the possibilities that we are. We can understand this with reference to the double meaning of the English word ‘before’. Thrownness, as capturing the fact that I am, can be seen as that which is ‘before’ in the sense of prior to us. Yet it also ‘before’ in the sense of that which ‘stands before me’, that which is ahead or in front of me, as if a light from behind us were to illuminate that which is in front of us. Who we find ourselves to be shapes the possible paths open to us.

One way in which thrownness ‘adds’ to facticity then is it brings out the idea that the fact that we ‘already’ are in some way determines that which is ahead of us, determines in some way the possibilities that we project into. In one of very few articles which takes ‘thrownness’ as its explicit theme, Withy (2011) interprets this in a way that I take to be typical. Withy identifies two ‘levels’ of thrownness which we can see as corresponding to the distinction revealed above between the factual and facticity: thrownness into the particular aspects of our existence (which she calls our ‘situatedness’) and our thrownness into being Dasein as such (which she characterizes as thrownness into ‘sense-making’). In Withy’s first sense of thrownness as ‘situatedness’, which I shall focus on for now, thrownness is depicted as providing the determinate content of Dasein’s projection. Thrownness is presented as being the material content that both constrains and opens possibilities, just as the content of a cook’s larder both constrains and allows which possible meals could be made (Withy 2011 p65). So while I exist by projecting into possibilities, the scope of these possibilities is limited by the particular facts I already find as constituting my self and

my world. My projection is ‘thrown’ in that the possibilities I project into are limited by the particular facts about my body, race, gender, class, socio-historical situation.

Here, thrownness is presented as determining the scope or range of the possibilities ahead of me. Just like the cook’s larder, only a limited range of possibilities are open to me in virtue of the particularities of who I am and the world I find myself in. The larder analogy suggests, however, a certain way of ‘relating’ to these. Cooks stand at a remove from the contents of the larder: they are able to step back and survey the contents, before choosing which to take up. The contents themselves stand ahead of us, but they do so as inert, as brute givens.

A similar understanding of our thrownness (and facticity) can be found in Sartre’s work. In a section in *Being and Nothingness* entitled ‘The Facticity of the For-itself’ we read that this for-itself, consciousness, is:

in so far as it appears in a condition which it has not chosen, as Pierre is a French bourgeois in 1942, as Schmitt was a Berlin worker in 1870; it is in so far as it is thrown into a world and abandoned in a “situation” (Sartre 2003 p103)

As Raffoul notes (2010 p138), Sartre seems to understand (and perhaps even translates) thrownness in terms of ‘abandonment’ (*déréliction*)<sup>19</sup>. This might be understood to capture one resonance the idea of being ‘thrown’ has. To find oneself thrown might suggest a lack of orientation, perhaps a lack of any guidance – in contrast to finding oneself ‘placed in’ or even ‘given’ to the world, ‘thrown’ perhaps suggests a lack of any guiding hand, any structure, plan, or answers to that with which we’re confronted. This might be taken, as it is by Sartre, to mean a lack of connection to that into which we’re thrown, as the nothingness between the for-itself and the in-itself, the radical discontinuity between consciousness and the world, suggests.

This ‘remove’ from the particularities into which we’re thrown that is suggested by our ‘abandonment’, resembles the interpretation of thrownness given by Withy through the larder example. And famously for Sartre, this ‘abandonment’ is no threat to our responsibility. This distance of the ‘I’ from all particularities of its

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<sup>19</sup> ‘And when we speak of “abandonment” – a favourite word of Heidegger’ (Sartre 1975 p352)

situation means it is radically free to choose between them, because it is not bound to any of them: “‘abandonment’” implies, that we ourselves decide our being (Sartre 1975 p357). For Sartre, this radical ability to decide our being, in line with the traditional identification of responsibility with control or power, results in radical responsibility. Thrownness, so conceived, remains consistent with the traditional model of responsibility and, in this Sartrean interpretation, pushes it to a radical extreme.

Following the above quote, we read: ‘And with this abandonment goes anguish.’ (*ibid.*) Sartre here links abandonment and the subsequent choice of our own being to the experience of anguish, in which he argues our radical freedom is shown. This kind of reading of thrownness and a certain kind of ‘distance’ from that into which we’re thrown could be seen to follow from Heidegger’s own treatment of the same experience, translated as ‘anxiety’. Here, it is revealed that Dasein:

has in each case already been thrown *into a world*. The abandonment [*Überlassenheit*] of Dasein to itself is shown with primordial concreteness in anxiety. (SZ 192)

In anxiety a certain kind of ‘distancing’ from the particularities of our existence occurs, which in fact reveals our being to be possibility, as ‘ability-to-be [*Seinkönnen*]’ (SZ 188). With Heidegger’s linking of thrownness and abandonment in connection with an experience of anxiety that distances us from particularities and shows our way of being fundamentally to be possibility, a reading of thrownness like that illustrated by Withy’s seems reasonable.<sup>20</sup> While thrownness determines projection by constituting the scope of the possibilities that lie ahead of us, we can nonetheless step back from these possibilities. Here, the space of freedom, of self-determination, and hence of responsibility on the traditional model can be found.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Arguably, Sartre’s own work derives from reading Heidegger in this way.

<sup>21</sup> We can see how thrownness into Dasein as such, the other ‘level’ of thrownness Withy identified, might also fit this model: these particularities get their meaning from the structure of Dasein insofar as they are particularities of a self that must relate to the world and others in some undetermined way. Crucially, they are particularities that are only possibilities for us, given Dasein’s being as projection.



I think that thrownness does shape the scope of possibilities ahead of us. However, something important is missing from the kind of account of thrownness represented by Withy. The particularities of our thrownness, the possibilities we are thrown into, I shall argue, are not like ingredients of a larder that we stand at a remove from, that we are able to survey. We don't stand before that into which we're thrown as before brute, inert givens. We are thrown into a world but do not then find ourselves set apart from it, with room to breathe. We always already find ourselves in the midst of existence, always underway and entangled in particular possibilities of existence.

The key to beginning to understand this lies in seeing what I will call the movement of thrownness. As the reference to anxiety above shows, this will also mean a reading of this experience that differs importantly from the kind of analysis that sees such a radical disconnect from our particular possibilities. This will be presented in chapter four. Now, though, I will turn to the 'movement' of thrownness that I take to be important in differentiating my account from those like Withy's, and for ultimately challenging the traditional understanding of responsibility.

## **Movement**

As discussed in the introduction, to say that we are 'thrown' suggests a passivity. It is something that has already been done, and something of which we are the recipients, rather than the agents. However, in contrast to the idea of a 'fact', it also suggests a movement. To be thrown into existence suggests a momentum or a force that is beyond our control because it comes before our doing, before our being.<sup>22</sup>

We might take being thrown into existence to mean that 'existence' is where we land, where we have to take stock and try and orient ourselves. This would be to take

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<sup>22</sup> The idea of 'movement' (*die Bewegung*) or 'movedness' (*die Bewegtheit*) arises explicitly as a central idea in Heidegger's engagement with Aristotle in the twenties. See, for example:

'It is therefore a matter of pressing on interpretively to a movement which constitutes a *genuine movedness of life*, in which and *through* which life *exists*, and from which, accordingly, life is determinable in its own sense of Being.' (PIA p 87)

Or: 'movement itself is a *mode of the being-there of the world*. (BCAP p206)

the ‘already’ of thrownness, the ‘already’ of its force and movement, on the everyday sense of ‘already’ as something that has previously happened, that once was but now is no longer. The throw has happened, and we must now deal with the consequences – the particular cupboard of possibilities ahead of us. But as we have seen, this ‘already’ of thrownness ‘does not lie behind it as some event which has happened to Dasein’ (SZ 284):

the “throw” of Dasein’s Being-thrown into the world is one that does not authentically get “caught”. The ‘movement’ which such a “throw” implies does not come to ‘a stop’ because Dasein now ‘is there’. (SZ 348)

Rather, our thrownness continues to affect us. And as the quote shows, it does so as a *movement*:

[T]he thrownness which can obtrude itself upon Dasein in its *Befindlichkeit*, has the character of throwing and of movement. Thrownness is neither a ‘fact that is finished’ nor a Fact that is settled. Dasein’s facticity is such that *as long as* it is what it is, Dasein remains in the throw. (SZ 179)

Thrownness adds to facticity the idea that what we are shapes that which lies ahead of us; that our ‘whence’ is constitutive for our ‘whither’ (and that both are constitutive for what I am). But it also crucially captures the idea of the *movement* or momentum that always already takes us toward that which lies ahead.<sup>23</sup> It suggests that there is no ‘time’ to stop and survey those possibilities that lie ahead, as we are always already moving into them, always already underway in taking them up.<sup>24</sup>

We can see this movement that comes ‘before’ us, whose momentum carries us into possibilities, as something like the way possibilities have a hold on us, that we

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<sup>23</sup> The introduction of ‘thrownness’ into Heidegger’s work is not to say that this was a ‘new’ idea, but rather that which brings out clearly what was perhaps already contained implicitly within Heidegger’s thinking of facticity, as statements like the following seem to show: ‘Facticity (sense of Being of life) is also determined in terms of movements’ (PIA p85)

<sup>24</sup> In accordance with the larger reading given above, Withy posits in a footnote that ‘movement’ is a metaphor to merely reflect that thrownness is a dative term, capturing the idea that thrownness has a ‘whence’ and ‘whither’ (2011 footnote 5, p80). I hope the discussion above will show why this is not the case.

are taken by them. Heidegger characterizes our being thrown as finding ourselves ‘submitted [*angewiesenen*] to a ‘world’’ (SZ 161), as existing in a way that is not ‘indifferent’ but ‘absorbed [*aufgegangen*] in the world of its concern’ (SZ 192), ‘surrendered [*ausgeliefert*] to the world of its concern (thrownness)’ (SZ 199).

To be thrown is to already find oneself moved by different possibilities, to be already taking up possibilities that have a hold on us. It is worth remembering here that thrownness, as the quotes above suggest, captures the same ‘that I am’ as facticity; it is an ‘I’ that always is in relation to a world and others. Our submission is experienced as a submission to the world and others, to the possibilities that relate to them:

As thrown, Dasein has indeed been delivered over to itself and to its ability-to-be, *but as Being-in-the-world*. As thrown, it has been submitted to a ‘world’ and exists factically with Others (SZ 384)

I take it that this idea of the ‘movement’ of thrownness, the force of the throw into possibilities such that we are ‘submitted’ or ‘surrendered’ to them, is part of what makes this Heideggerian category so compelling. As long as I am at all, I always find myself in the grip of certain possibilities, I always already find myself moved by existence in various ways. Part of finding ourselves ‘thrown’ into existence captures the way that we don’t just find ourselves in existence, but find ourselves embroiled in existence, absorbed in a situation. We are always already entangled and bound up with particular aims, people, and things in the world. But as I shall argue, it is this submission to existence that this category brings out so well that will force us to rethink the traditional model of responsibility.

### **Moved in a Particular Way *as* Dasein**

Just as the fact of what I am might be thought to include the particularities of my self and my world – the ‘factual’ – so too does thrownness. We always find ourselves thrown into particular possibilities: ‘as something thrown, [Dasein] can project itself only upon definite factual possibilities.’ (SZ 299) More explicitly than with facticity,

we are told that being thrown into particular possibilities is constitutive of the meaning of thrownness:

Dasein is [...] in such a manner that it understands itself in terms of possibilities, and, as so understanding itself, is that entity which has been thrown. But this implies that as ability-to-be it always stands in one possibility or another: it constantly is not other possibilities, and it has waived these in its existentiell projection (SZ 285, translation modified)<sup>25</sup>

I take this to be an important and compelling part of Heidegger's account of what it means to be thrown. I always find myself as a particular self in relation to particular people in particular circumstances, already with certain commitments and values that I am tied to. And the fact that I am this and not that, this way and not another, is of striking importance. To find myself as male or female, white or non-white, able-bodied or not, in economic deprivation or with assured affluence, in our current society makes a huge difference to the person I am able to be. Equally, this is true for one's socio-historical situation, and that in conjunction with the self (as Dasein is being-in-the-world). Whether I find myself as a black woman born into slavery in 19<sup>th</sup> century USA, a Russian proletariat at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or a member of the nobility of the Ottoman empire in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, makes a decisive difference to who I am, conceived as the possibilities I am caught up in and moved by. More locally, whether I had an abusive upbringing, whether I find myself with a chronic illness, whether I am a twin, along with the socio-historical situation that are constitutive of the meaning of these, all make a huge difference to who I am.

And it is here that the question of responsibility for our being-in-the-world typically arises for us. How can I be responsible when so much that is constitutive of what I am is beyond my control? Sometimes we might look to others and see how thoroughly it can seem that their path through life is set by their upbringing,

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<sup>25</sup> This is one aspect of the 'not' or the 'nullity' that Heidegger says 'belongs to the existential meaning of "thrownness"'. (SZ 285) As well as having to project into this and 'not that', this nullity also captures Dasein's 'not' having power over our own being from the ground up. While the thesis will engage with both of these important aspects of thrownness, I will not do so through the lens of 'nullity'. This nullity, and Dasein's thrownness in general, could also be pursued through the lens of 'finitude' but again, while this can be seen as implicit in the thesis, I will not approach thrownness from this conceptual angle.

their physical constitution, their social context. Their values, goals, aims, relationships that take them through life can seem to arise wholly from where they happen to have found themselves thrown into the world. There but for the grace of God go I. If it is the enigmatic hand of something beyond that seems to determine who we are so thoroughly, how can I possibly become responsible in the face of this? If my own movement through life is shaped so pervasively by that which lies outside of my power, what could it mean to take responsibility for my existence?

Our thrownness is commonly identified with this thrownness into the particularity: the particular ‘who’ that we are, which is inextricably linked to a particular world and particular others. I take Wrathall’s definition to be paradigmatic of this understanding:

‘Thrownness’ is Heidegger’s name for the way that we always find ourselves ‘thrown’ into or ‘delivered over’ to circumstances that are beyond our control [...]who our parents are, where and when we live, what colour our skin or our eyes are, what kind of natural resources or other people are to be found in our environs. We also find ourselves submitted to a certain set of possible ways to live our lives – today we can be auto mechanics or journalists, but we can’t be druids or pharaohs. (Wrathall 2005 p35-36)

And while we find the word ‘submitted’, I take the general tenor of the description with its talk of circumstances, with the limitation pertaining to the scope of all the possibilities ahead of me in such an extreme way, to point to a reading like that represented by Withy which sees thrownness only as limiting the range of possible options ahead of me.

But, as Withy recognizes, and as our analysis of facticity as the fact of Dasein shows, we are thrown at the more fundamental level of being Dasein, at the level of being a ‘who’, as such:

This belongs to Dasein’s essential thrownness into the world. *Has Dasein as itself ever decided freely whether it wants to come into ‘Dasein’ or not, and will it ever be able to much such a decision?* ‘In itself’ it is quite incomprehensible why entities are to be *uncovered*, why *truth* and *Dasein* must be. (SZ 228)

We find ourselves ‘thrown into existence’ (SZ 276), the very mode of being of Dasein.

As we saw, the idea that we are ‘thrown’ adds to facticity the idea that the ‘already’ determines that into which we project ‘ahead’. Not only that, but thrownness adds the movement of this projection: the way we find ourselves moved by possibilities, already in their grip. We have seen that with regards to the particularities of the fact that I am, the ‘already’ determines in some way the particular possibilities that I find myself submitted to. We have seen however, that ‘beneath’ these particular facts as their condition of their possibility lays the fact of being a who as such, the fact of being Dasein. Part of the structure of Dasein is to be an I in relation to a world and others. To be *thrown* into Dasein in this sense means then that this fact of being Dasein determines the possibilities ahead of me and also moves us with respect to them – we are already submitted as an I to the world and others. In some way or other, we must be gripped by, absorbed in, or submitted to the world and others. The meaning of the particular possibilities we project into find their constitutive basis in our fundamentally being moved by possibilities of an I existing in relation to the world and others as such.

Crucially though, we saw that the fact of Dasein was in some important, essential sense an ‘enigma’. This captures something about the ‘already’ of Dasein that is beyond our grasp, something that is resistant to being ‘solved’. With the introduction of thrownness, this can be grasped in a new light.

This enigma that is outside of our grasp at our basis, in accordance with the structure of thrownness, is determinative of that towards which we project. If, ultimately, our ‘already’ or our ‘whence’ is beyond our grasp, then the ‘ahead’ or the ‘whither’ too will be beyond our grasp. That towards which we project must remain beyond us, as an open question. Heidegger tells us that the structure of Dasein, the fact of being a ‘who’ can present itself. However, ultimately the question of what it means to be this ‘who’ remains enigmatic:

the Being of Dasein can burst forth as a naked ‘that it is and has to be’. The pure ‘that it is’ shows itself, but the “whence” and the “whither” remain in darkness. (SZ 134)

Lying ‘beneath’ the particularities of who I am, and thus ‘beyond’ the particular possibilities I project into, this enigma can be seen to be constitutive in some way of these possibilities we are gripped by. We shall explore this in more detail in the next chapter. For now, however, we can see in some sense how this enigma can be understood to be constitutive of the way that Dasein ‘is’. Given the structure of the ‘already’ as determining the ‘ahead’ of Dasein, this enigma constitutive of the ‘already’ at the deepest level will also be constitutive of the ‘ahead’. This ahead is that which Dasein projects into, or ‘aims at’. But as we saw, given that Dasein ‘is’ existence, this projection is always only a projection into a possibility. That which we ‘are’ is only ever a possibility that we project into, and not a fixed property. Given that they are only possibilities, they essentially remain open to change. While we must be Dasein in some particular way or other, it remains open which particular possibility we will be and how we will be it: ‘It is essential to the basic constitution of Dasein that there is *constantly something still to be settled* [eine ständige Unabgeschlossenheit].’ (SZ 236) Given that we exist as possibilities, that which we project into is never settled. Who I am is never completed, but always remains open (as the word *Unabgeschlossenheit* suggests)<sup>26</sup>, and thus this ‘ahead’ is never fully to be grasped by us given that it is a possibility that can always change. This never being settled, this never being able to be decided, completed, and so never fully grasped, is that which characterizes an enigma.

However, we have seen that thrownness does not just throw something ‘ahead’ of us, but already moves us towards it – we are already submitted to that which is ahead of us. This movement, as I have argued, is crucial to understanding our thrownness as distinct from facticity. And this movement contributes significantly to understanding this enigma. To really be an enigma, and not just a curiosity for example, is not only for something to be beyond us, or remaining open. For something to be enigmatic for us, we need to be drawn to trying to grasp it, trying to comprehend it. It needs to matter to us, it needs to be an issue for us; it needs to *move* us. The movement of thrownness means we are *submitted* to this enigma, absorbed in this enigma, surrendered to this enigma. We are already moved by it, in its grip

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<sup>26</sup> Further evidence for the link between the enigma and this openness can be seen in the way that Heidegger describes the enigma that is constitutive of our thrownness as being ‘determinative for the *ecstatic* character’ of existence (SZ 348).

This enigma of the ‘I am’ can be understood as a question that is posed to us that we are drawn to trying to answer – the question of who I am, or what it means to be, or how should I exist. Through my thrownness, I find myself submitted to this question of my existence as such. It grips me, it matters to me in one way or another. And here we can begin to see how we ‘aim’ at this enigma, and how this enigma at the base of our existence is that which is constitutive of the meaning of the particular possibilities we are moved by and take up. The question is posed to me such that the particular possibilities I take up can be seen as attempts to answer it. Their meaning and sense comes from their character as attempts to answer this question that will always remain open to us.

Put another way, for Heidegger, all our particular possibilities are taken up ‘for-the-sake-of’ something. Just as the meaning of a particular tool comes from the particular task it is aimed at completing, so particular possibilities ultimately get their meaning from that for-the sake-of-which they aim at. Heidegger is clear that fundamentally possibilities are taken up for the sake of Dasein (SZ 123). But if ultimately Dasein is an enigma, then possibilities are taken up for the sake of this enigma – ultimately, particular possibilities get their meaning from aiming at this for-the-sake-of-which that is the enigma of Dasein. As Heidegger puts it, ‘everything is haunted by the *enigma of Being*, and, as has now been made plain, by that of *motion*.’ (SZ 392)

To be thrown into existence then, is to find ourselves, as an I in relation to the world and others, submitted to this enigma. This enigma, this question of our existence, is a question that once opened, cannot be closed, and thus always keeps us in the pursuit of a response. We find ourselves submitted already to this question that we have to answer, and the particular possibilities we project into are constitutive of this response we are always making. I am submitted to this question, and to be Dasein is to fundamentally find myself moved by it.

## **The Movement of Falling**

So far in our examination of thrownness, we have seen in various ways how it relates to other aspects of Dasein’s mode of being. We have seen that we are thrown as an I



that must relate to a world and others, and this as a projection into possibilities by which we are always already moved. However, we have not yet seen how thrownness relates to falling, that other fundamental aspect of Dasein constitutive of the care structure.

We saw briefly in the introduction that ‘falling’ captures Dasein’s tendency to fall away from its own being in some sense, whether by covering it over, forgetting it, or fleeing from it. In *Being and Time*, the chief way this happens is through our falling into ‘the crowd’ or ‘the public’, covering over our being through *das Man*. Part of what it means to exist as being-in-the-world and being-with-others is to find oneself existing as *das Man*. *Das Man* is characterized by its ‘averageness’ (SZ 127), a kind of existing where we do ‘as they do’ and ‘act as one acts’. This averageness characteristic of the neuter, impersonal *das Man*, while dangerous as Heidegger shows, is vitally important. Such averageness allows the shared societal meaning through which we understand ourselves, the world, and other people, as well as other entities within the world. Our actions, discourse, and understanding all depend on a shared intelligibility of existence. In using words, roads, clocks we depend on doing it as ‘they’ do it – a shared, publicly availability is necessary in each case. And this kind of realm of shared intelligibility is that in which all particular meaning arises. Even a narrowly conceived self-understanding is mediated by finding shared norms, values, or roles with which I identify, and requires a kind of recognition from others that I embody these norms or values. Finding myself as a certain race, gender, class, disposition etc. depends upon these categories existing and having a certain meaning in my society, and it depends upon my society recognizing me as being this race, gender, class, character in various ways.

Given that we are thrown into being Dasein, and that part of being Dasein means finding oneself as *das Man*, part of being thrown is being thrown into *das Man*: ‘Is not Dasein, as thrown Being-in-the-world, thrown proximally right into the publicness of the *das Man*?’ (SZ 167) To be thrown into *das Man* means that this shared intelligibility stands as constitutive of the ‘already’, which shapes that which is ‘ahead’. At the level of particulars, this is to say that we find ourselves already within a particular society, with particular meanings, practices, and values, that shape the possibilities that lie ahead of us. More than this, as we have seen with the movement of thrownness, we are already submitted to these societal meanings, and

find ourselves moved by them. They are constitutive of the particular self-understanding that I project into, as for example what it means to be a doctor, socialist, or friend is constituted by the shared intelligibility of what it means to be in this particular way. However, we might also think that above and beyond these, we are submitted to societal possibilities that extend beyond us as individuals to the societal level itself – moved by possibilities that in some way aim at justice, or rationality, or perhaps profit, in our modern Western society for example. At the level of our being as such, to be thrown into *das Man* is to say that in some way or another, we must have some kind of shared understanding with others that is constitutive of the significance of the world, and that we are drawn and moved to the possibilities that this shared understanding makes manifest.

In *Being and Time* Heidegger chiefly associates falling from our being with falling into *das Man*, where this latter aspect of our existence provokes, facilitates, or accelerates our tendency to fall. This falling in relation to *das Man* is explicitly linked with thrownness as §38's title, 'Falling and Thrownness', suggests. It seems that the idea of 'movement' is common to both as the terms, and Heidegger's description of the 'movement of falling' (SZ 180) and its conception 'ontologically as a kind of motion' (*ibid.*), attest.<sup>27</sup> It is reasonable to suppose then, that it is in the motion of thrownness that its relation to falling is to be found.

As we saw, this motion can be seen in the way that we find ourselves already moved by or submitted to possibilities. And it is in this 'submission' to *das Man* that falling finds its hold, as we get 'sucked' into the crowd in an 'inauthentic' way: 'as long as it is what it is, Dasein remains in the throw, and is sucked into the turbulence of the *das Man*'s inauthenticity.' (SZ 179) While the shared, public understanding of *das Man* is constitutive for the meaning of possibilities, falling into *das Man* can be conceived as being submitted to this public understanding in a way that covers or avoids some other aspect of Dasein's being. Like falling in general, this can take many forms and has many different aspects, as Heidegger's analysis of phenomena like curiosity, idle talk, and ambiguity make clear. But whether it is Dasein's 'mineness' that is lost as we simply do as 'they' do; whether

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<sup>27</sup> This has led to their apparent identification by some in the secondary literature i.e. Padui (2013): 'The manner in which Dasein "falls" into the world (*Geworfenheit, Verfallenheit*) is not the manner in which stones fall (*Zufälligkeit*).'(Padui 2013 p53)

our being as possibility is covered over by seeing the self-understandings or ‘roles’ that are publicly available as essential to who we are; or whether the enigma of our being is concealed as publicly available understandings are treated as complete and final, falling into *das Man* involves being moved by *das Man* at the expense of other constitutive aspects of Dasein’s being.

While falling into *das Man* is one way in which we can fall away from our being, there are surely many more. Heidegger himself briefly links several others directly with our thrownness, as addiction [*Hang*] and urge [*Drang*] are described as being possibilities ‘rooted in the thrownness of Dasein’ (SZ 196), and wishing and ‘hankering [*Nachhängen*]’ (in which possibilities are closed off) are described as having ‘fallen forfeit to thrownness’ (SZ 195). A full analysis of these ways of being would take us too far afield from our question. However, I take it that understanding thrownness through the idea of finding ourselves moved into possibilities allows us to understand this connection with these varieties of falling, where perhaps mere wishing and hankering point to a deficiency of this movement into possibilities, and addiction and urge to an excess (or excessively focused) force to a possibility. I take this to further support my interpretation of thrownness.

### Conclusion

This interpretation began by analyzing the concept of facticity with which thrownness is intimately linked. I attempted to show how facticity, while in some sense capturing the particularities of myself and my situation that constitute ‘who I am’, more fundamentally captures the fact of being a who at all. This fact of my mode of being, the ‘already’ of Dasein, is that which serves as the ‘meaning and ground’ of the particularities of who I am. I showed how this ‘already’ is to find oneself as a being that projects into possibilities as an I in relation to a world and other people, but that this ‘already’ is importantly enigmatic and remains beyond our grasp. Having analyzed facticity, I showed that the concept of thrownness builds on this ‘already’ of Dasein by making manifest that this ‘already’ determines the ‘ahead’, conceived as that which we ‘aim at’ in projection. I contended that while this is part of what is meant by thrownness, the concept importantly involves the idea of ‘movement’, conceived as finding oneself submitted to, in the grip of, i.e. moved by possibilities.

Crucially, in contrast to accounts that present thrownness as determining only the *scope* of possibilities, acknowledging this *movement* of existence emphasizes that we are always already thoroughly entangled and bound up with particular aims, people, and things in the world. There is no ‘space’ to step back from that into which we’re thrown, which the traditional model of responsibility can use as the site of control or self-determination. There is no disconnect: the ‘givens’ are not inert but rather already take and move us. We saw that while we are thrown and submitted to particular possibilities, ultimately we are submitted to the enigma of Dasein. We are submitted to the enigma of being, and this constitutes the meaning and ground of particular possibilities insofar as particular possibilities that are taken up are attempted answers to this question that moves us. Ultimately, we aim at that which is beyond our grasp, as the answer is always ‘beyond’ us, and is never settled. Nonetheless, as thrown into Dasein, we are always moved by this beyond.

In the next chapter, we shall look to the way in which thrownness is disclosed in the affective dimension of our existence. This will reveal the nature of this movement more clearly, and will further exemplify and intensify the challenge that Heidegger’s account poses to the traditional picture of responsibility.

## Chapter Two - Finding Ourselves Moved: Thrownness as Attunement

In the Western philosophical traditional, affective experiences have often been treated as accompanying phenomena that at best irrelevantly adorn, and at worst obscure and confuse, the important issues of epistemology, ethics, and ontology. Given the prevailing assumption that what we know, what is good, and what 'is' at all are to be realized through our powers of rationality or judgement, affective experiences have been seen to be things to ignore, suppress, or dismiss. For Heidegger, as we shall see, affective experience is an essential aspect of our being, and an essential way that being is manifest to us. Far from being irrelevant, affective experience makes existence what it is, and reveals to us the meaning of existence – it reveals what it means to be. In particular, affective experiences reveal our being as thrown.

In the previous chapter, we began to see how thrownness threatens the traditional picture of responsibility. In particular, we started to see how the 'movement' of thrownness deprives us of a significant kind of space or distance from that into which we're thrown, a space where the possibility of power, control, or self-determination might lie. In this chapter, we will see how this condition is disclosed to us in our affective experience. In doing so, our grasp of thrownness, and our understanding of the threat to the traditional idea of responsibility will be deepened. If we are to understand what it means for Dasein to *be* thrown, and ultimately to understand what it would mean for Dasein to *be* responsible in the face of this, our being thrown (and ultimately our being responsible) should be looked at first-personally given that what it means for Dasein to *be* as such is to be as an 'I' who experiences itself as such. In what follows, we shall examine how thrownness – when experienced first-personally as Dasein – means to be affected, or as Heidegger has it, to be 'attuned'.

I will begin by very briefly outlining some important aspects of Heidegger's notion of disclosure, in particular the way that disclosure can be, and for the most part is, pre-reflective. We will then look to the affective mode of disclosure. I will argue in contrast to some interpretations, that Heidegger's understanding of attunement captures our everyday feelings, moods, and emotions, before showing how these feelings, moods, and emotions are just particularly intense and explicit forms of our

constant attunement. I will show that the passivity characteristic of our attunement reveals our submission to a particular world as a particular self, and how ultimately our attunement reveals our submission to the world and others as such, and to the enigma of being Dasein. In showing how thrownness is that which always already grips and moves us first-personally, the nature and extent of its hold on us will be made manifest, and in so doing, the pressure placed on the traditional concept of responsibility will increase.

## Disclosure

For Heidegger, Dasein is distinctive in that its being is an issue for it (SZ 12). We have some kind of relationship to our own existence, some grasp of what it means to be. Heidegger calls this relationship to being ‘disclosure’, and it is constitutive of Dasein that being is disclosed to it: *Dasein is its disclosedness*’ (SZ 133). Existence is always manifest to us in some sense, it always has ‘the character of having been laid open’ (SZ 75) to Dasein, as Heidegger describes disclosure. If we think back to the characterization of our facticity and thrownness, this element of disclosure was already included – ‘I find myself’ as thrown into a certain race, gender, in a certain social historical situation etc.; ‘I find myself’ as Dasein. Our existence is always manifest to us in some sense. While the idea of disclosure is a lens through which Heidegger’s whole thought could be discussed and debated at length, for the purposes of this investigation it is sufficient to note three key features of disclosure.

Firstly, as we saw earlier, Dasein is a being that is characterized by ‘mineness’, it is the being that ‘I am’. As the examples of finding oneself thrown above show in keeping with this, disclosure is first-personal. Being is an issue for me, it is as an ‘I’ that I have a relationship to being. ‘Dasein is revealed to itself’ (SZ 307), existence is manifest to me first-personally.

As we also saw previously, this ‘I’ is not a self-subsisting subject, but is being-in-the-world and being-with-others. The world and my place within it, is an issue for me. The existence of the ‘I’ cannot be manifest without the manifestation of a world and others that the ‘I’ must necessarily find itself amongst. It might seem that our existence is only manifest to us in a piecemeal fashion – that what is manifest to

me at any particular moment depends upon what I am doing, where at times perhaps a particular entity is manifest to me, at other times a particular person, at others a particular project. For Heidegger however, disclosure always applies to the whole. Dasein ‘has already disclosed, in every case, Being-in-the-world as a whole, and makes it possible first of all to direct oneself towards something.’ (SZ 137) In order for a particular thing to show up to us, in order for it to ‘be’ for us in this particular way, we need some sense or grasp of how it relates to being as a whole. Particular things, people, projects, show up on the basis of our sense of ‘what it all means’, a general sense of what it means to exist. The possibility of existence we project into in relation to a world and others, our understanding of what it means to be, we saw serves as the horizon for any particular thing to show up.

A third feature of disclosure can be seen in the way that the whole is disclosed despite our typically only being explicitly aware of some specific part of existence. On our everyday understanding, we might take something’s being ‘disclosed’ as meaning that it has become known, or seen, or in some way become the subject of explicit awareness. For Heidegger though, disclosure is not limited to what we are explicitly aware of. A fundamental and groundbreaking aspect of Heidegger’s existential analytic is that the way being is manifest to us need not be, and typically isn’t, in the form of explicit awareness. Famously for Heidegger, being is manifest to us through our existing more broadly conceived, such as in our unreflective practical engagement in the world.

In *Being and Time*, there are (up to) four different ways in which being is disclosed to us, in which existence is made manifest for Heidegger: understanding, attunement, falling, and discourse.<sup>1</sup> With the exception of falling which does not tend to figure in our everyday language, these modes of disclosure all include the explicit, reflective forms that we normally understand these terms to capture. Understanding, for example, does capture the everyday meaning of a kind of reflective, cognitive activity. Yet for Heidegger, this explicit kind of disclosure is ‘founded’ (SZ 71) on a

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<sup>1</sup> There is some ambiguity as to whether discourse should be included here, and Heidegger is inconsistent. At times discourse is included in the list of modes of disclosure (e.g. SZ 335), and some commentators (e.g. Crowell, McMullin) take it to have a central role in Heidegger’s analytic. At other times discourse does not feature in the list of modes of disclosure, and other commentators (e.g. Blattner) see its failure to factor in any significant way into the discussion of temporality (given its tripartite nature) as reason to see it was not of central importance for Heidegger’s analytic.

more basic type. Understanding at a more basic level captures the typically unreflective way we project into possibilities, the sense we have for things, for others, for the world that is shown in the way we go about our lives, for example in navigating our daily practical tasks. As we will see in looking specifically at the mode of disclosure of attunement, Heidegger is quite clear on this point:

Phenomenally, we would wholly fail to recognize both *what* attunement discloses and *how* it discloses, if that which is disclosed were to be compared with what Dasein is acquainted with, knows, and believes ‘at the same time’ when it is attuned. (SZ 135-136)

While the disclosure of existence is not to be acquainted with any kind of explicit knowledge or awareness, this is not to say it is a kind of ‘unconscious’ activity that remains closed off to us; after all, it is still in some sense disclosed, it has been ‘laid open’. This points to a kind of awareness of being that can be designated as ‘pre-reflective’<sup>2</sup>.

Pre-reflective awareness is a kind of awareness that doesn’t involve explicit, conscious, or thematic apprehension at the moment of awareness – one does not need to be ‘thinking about’ something to be pre-reflectively aware of that thing. However, there is a kind of awareness or ‘grasp’ there that is in principle open to being made explicit retrospectively. As Sartre’s famous example has it (Sartre 2003 p9), we may be counting cigarettes while our mind wanders to think about any number of other things. But even if we are not reflectively aware of our activity of counting cigarettes at the time, if we were asked what we were doing, we would immediately be able to reply that we were counting cigarettes. This is taken to display that a kind of self-awareness was always there that was not reflective, but ‘pre-reflective’.

Unlike Sartre, Heidegger himself does not use the term ‘pre-reflective’ to describe awareness or understanding of being. However, his description of our understanding of being as typically ‘*pre-ontological* – that is to say, not conceived theoretically or thematically’ (SZ 312) seems to fit this model, which importantly

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<sup>2</sup> See Zahavi (2008) for a much fuller discussion and justification of the idea of pre-reflective self-awareness. See also Hatzimoyisis 2010, Elkholy 2011, Kompridis 2011, A. Elpidorou & L. Freeman 2015, Han-Pile 2013, as a sample of others who specifically characterize Heideggerian disclosure as pre-reflective.



explains how being (as a whole) is always disclosed to us without our being explicitly aware of it. As we typically navigate existence unreflectively, existence is nonetheless still manifest to us pre-reflectively. The way we exist, our understanding of our selves, the world, and others, is open in principle to being made explicit, even if for the most part it is not the object of our explicit awareness. But to say that disclosure is not to be equated with our explicit awareness, and even to say that such explicit awareness is ‘founded’ upon the unreflective way we typically exist, is not to say that disclosure *cannot* be explicit and reflective.

Typically, our relation to our own being remains at the existentiell level, the level of the factic, as our being that is an issue for us is typically conceived in the way we care about our particular lives. Our awareness of our existence is at the level of the particular ‘who’ that I am and the particular world in which I find myself. While for the most part remaining pre-reflective, it seems clear that this way my particular being is an issue - my self-understanding as bound up with an understanding of the world and others - can at times be explicit, and reflective, as in a ‘deep’ conversation with a friend perhaps. It might require work to unearth, but it seems that it is in principle open to being made explicit. It seems that the same must true for the disclosure of our being as such, the disclosure of existence as the mode of being of Dasein, given Heidegger’s work itself.

Through the phenomenological analysis of our experience, Heidegger shows how our mode of being is always already manifest to us in that experience:

Like any ontological Interpretation whatsoever, this analytic can only, so to speak, “listen in” to some previously disclosed entity as regards its being. [...]Phenomenological Interpretation must make it possible for Dasein itself to disclose things primordially; it must, as it were, let Dasein interpret itself. Such Interpretation takes part in this disclosure only in order to raise to a conceptual level the phenomenal content of what has been disclosed, and to do so existentially. (SZ 139-140)

Most of us are surely not constantly aware of our mode of being of Dasein, and so the disclosure of our existence as such is surely nearly always pre-reflective. Yet this is manifest ‘explicitly or not’. Phenomenology raises ‘to a conceptual level’, and so to explicit reflective awareness, what is disclosed. Thus it seems that Heidegger’s

project relies on the idea that disclosure can in some sense take an explicit, reflective form because the project of the existential analytic is precisely to make manifest explicitly and conceptually our being that we typically grasp pre-reflectively and unthematically.<sup>3</sup>

Disclosure for Heidegger then is first-personal, pertains to existence as a whole, and is typically pre-reflective, however can also be explicit and reflective. Given that disclosure applies to existence as a whole, each mode of disclosure reveals the structure of Dasein in its entirety. However it is the affective mode of disclosure, which we shall see Heidegger captures with *Befindlichkeit* or ‘attunement’, that has a privileged relation to thrownness:

Being attuned brings Dasein *face to face* with its thrownness [...] Existentially, “being-thrown” means<sup>4</sup> finding oneself in one way or other [*sich so oder so befinden*]. One’s *Befindlichkeit* is therefore based upon thrownness. My attunement represents whatever may be the way in which I am primarily the entity that has been thrown. (SZ 340)<sup>5</sup>

For Heidegger what it ‘means’ to be thrown ‘existentially’ (SZ 340), from the first-person point of view of existence, just is to be affected. To understand exactly what being thrown means, and subsequently what it means to be responsible first-personally in the light of this, will mean looking to how we are affected and what it means to take responsibility in the face of finding ourselves so affected.

Before we can understand how our thrownness is disclosed in our affective experience, it is necessary to understand what is meant by affective experience for Heidegger. In the next section, I will outline my interpretation of affective experience in Heidegger’s existential analytic.

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<sup>3</sup> On this particular point I follow Golob (2013). However, in exactly what sense explicit, reflective work discloses being, is a question I must leave. Whether pre-reflective disclosure is in some sense better, and so whether explicit reflection and conceptualization are only partial, stunted, or skewed versions of this more ‘primordial disclosure’, is a question that cannot be discussed here.

<sup>4</sup> ‘besagt’

<sup>5</sup> As we see elsewhere, ‘Because [*auf Grund*] Dasein essentially has *Befindlichkeit* belonging to it, Dasein has a kind of Being in which it is brought before itself and becomes disclosed to itself in its thrownness.’ (SZ 181)

## Attunement

Heidegger can be seen to use two terms in *Being and Time* to capture something like the affective aspect of our existence: *Befindlichkeit* and *Stimmung*<sup>6</sup>. The term *Stimmung* captures the particular ontical form that the mode of disclosure of *Befindlichkeit* must take. The import of this distinction is difficult to grasp however. Both are said to disclose our thrownness (e.g. SZ 136, 270), and shortly after *Being and Time* Heidegger replaces instances where he once used *Befindlichkeit* with the term *Stimmung* with no apparent change of meaning.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, for simplicity I will hereafter use only *Stimmung* (which I translate as ‘attunement’), unless quoting from the text, in which case I will leave *Befindlichkeit* untranslated as has become commonplace due to difficulties with finding an adequate translation.<sup>8</sup>

The translation chosen for the term *Stimmung*, is obviously bound up with the scope of what one thinks Heidegger is attempting to capture. *Stimmung*’s meaning in everyday German is something like our ‘mood’, as in the ‘mood’ of a party or being in a good mood. And this is how many commentators, and Macquarrie & Robinson, translate the term, delineating this in more or less strict ways. The most common is to characterize ‘Heideggerian moods’ in contrast to emotions, feelings, and even what we capture with the term ‘mood’ in our everyday usage: for example, Ratcliffe (2013) claims that a ‘bad mood’ is not a mood in Heidegger’s sense, but is an ‘emotional

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<sup>6</sup> Along with variants of *Stimmung* e.g. ‘*das Gestimmtsein*’ (SZ 270).

<sup>7</sup> For example, where Heidegger talked of anxiety as a ‘*Grundbefindlichkeit*’ (SZ 182) in *Being and Time*, he talks of it as a ‘*Grundstimmung*’ in *What is Metaphysics?* (1929), and in a similar vein talks about boredom as a ‘*Grundstimmung*’ in *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1929). Staehler (2007) sees this as one reason not to give too much heed to the distinction between the two terms (see footnote 14). Cf. also Cf. Elpidorou & Freeman (2015) who assess the terms as pertaining to the same phenomena.

<sup>8</sup> The Macquarrie and Robinson translation ‘state-of-mind’, with seemingly unanimous agreement in the secondary literature, is misleading insofar as Heidegger is aiming not at a ‘state’ but a way to be, and not something ‘internal’ or cognitive that the term ‘mind’ narrowly suggests today. ‘Situatedness’ and ‘findingness’ capture the element of finding and orienting oneself, but I think fail to capture the crucial way that this is specifically affective. Conversely, ‘affectedness’ capture this, but not the idea of finding oneself and orienting oneself. I think that while the links ‘disposedness’ has to the idea of ‘a disposition’ or a ‘pre-disposition’ are not wrong, as a translation it risks becoming too subject-centered and losing the important receptive element of finding oneself. Here my discussion is indebted too, but departs from, Elpidorou & Freeman (2015), footnote 4.

state' (2013 p159). Moods in Heidegger's sense are to be distinguished from 'occurrent emotions' (Elpidorou & Freeman 2015 p13), or 'object specific emotions' (Weberman 1996 p386). A mood for Heidegger, these commentators contend, is rather that which makes such emotions or states possible. Heideggerian moods do not have specific intentional objects like feelings or some emotions, nor are they transient or intense in the manner of feelings, emotions, or our more everyday use of 'moods'. Rather, they are the constant affective background which reveals the world in such a way that makes these specific intentional states possible.

However, such a reading of '*Stimmung*' as capturing only this background revelation of the world, in contrast to more specific feelings or emotions, runs into problems. Firstly, Heidegger makes no such distinction between '*Stimmung*' and 'emotions' or 'object-specific emotions', a fact that both Ratcliffe and Weberman concede. Secondly, this distinction does not seem to fit some of Heidegger's descriptions or examples of *Stimmung*, such as fear and some varieties of fear (SZ 142), 'elation' (SZ 135) and 'joy' (SZ 310) which seem to be fleeting states with intentional objects.<sup>9</sup> Thirdly, as Ratcliffe acknowledges, there seem to be emotions directed at specific objects that come to take on the background world-disclosing character of *Stimmung*, thus questioning any kind of hard separation between them – for example, grief or despair can be transient emotional states intentionally directed at specific entities in the world that are also, or become, background *Stimmung* that reveal the whole world to us in a new way. Finally, and importantly, this conception of 'Heideggerian moods' that excludes occurrent affective states such as emotions or being in a 'bad mood' seems to fall foul of the only explicit descriptive guidance we get on what exactly *Stimmungen* are: 'What we indicate *ontologically* by the term *Befindlichkeit* is *ontically* the most familiar and everyday sort of thing: *die Stimmung, das Gestimmtsein.*' (SZ 134) To specify Heideggerian moods to be only a kind of general, constant, background state that allows things to appear, in which specific

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<sup>9</sup>The same is true of FCM where a mixture of feelings, moods, and emotions like grief (p66), joy (p68) love (p89), and boredom are all characterized as '*Stimmung*' or ways of finding oneself (*sich befinde*). See also Heidegger's via Aristotle in BCAP, in which the same '*pathé*' that are described as 'affects' such as anxiety and joy, are also that which determine being-in-the-world and being-with-others (p82-83), that are the basis of *logos* (p119) : as '*the ground out of which speaking arises, and which what is expressed grows back into, the pathé, for their part, are the basic possibilities in which being-there itself is primarily oriented toward itself, finds itself.*' (p176)

feelings such as ‘fear’ are excluded (on the basis of a distinction that Heidegger himself doesn’t make), appears to stand in problematic contrast to *Stimmung* as ‘the most familiar and everyday sort of thing’.

In addition, I think there is strong textual support to show positively that Heidegger doesn’t want to limit his thought to a kind of affective background, but instead wants to include affective states that have specific intentional objects. In the early stages of his discussion on *Befindlichkeit*, Heidegger highlights the question of the different modes of *Befindlichkeit* and their interconnection, before saying that ‘the phenomena have long been well-known ontically and the terms “affects” and “feelings” [*Affekte und Gefühle*]’ (SZ 138). The connection of feelings and emotions with his understanding of affective disclosure is affirmed more positively in the *History of the Concept of Time* lecture course, as Heidegger describes what he’s doing as ‘coordinating the phenomena of feelings and emotions [*Gefühle and Affekten*] to the structure of *Befindlichkeit*’ (HCT p256), and pronounces that ‘emotions and ways of feeling in fact have the possibility of uncovering Dasein itself in its being.’ (ibid.)<sup>10</sup> I think that with *Stimmung* then, we can see Heidegger as capturing a very broad range of affective phenomena that includes our everyday understanding of feelings, moods, and emotions.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Further support for the connection between disposedness and emotions can be found in CT(D):

‘What one thinks of as affects [*Affekte*] [...] must be understood via discoveriture as *Befindlichkeit*. When analyzing affects our primary and consistent source of direction must come from our exploration of Dasein with respect to its being.’ (p27)

<sup>11</sup> The question of whether bodily ‘feelings’ are included, and the role of the body in general in Heidegger’s understanding of attunement, is one that exceeds the boundaries of this dissertation. Freeman (2015) argues that Heidegger works on an incorrect assumption that the existential situation can be separated and understood independently from our lived bodies. My sense is that our lived bodies can be seen to be included in the scope of Heidegger’s analysis, as his discussion of affects in relation to Aristotle (where, as usual, Heidegger appears to be expounding his own thought, or thinking as such, through a figure from the tradition, rather than expounding this figure’s views in the way we might normally think of this). See, for example:

‘Insofar as [*noesis*] is the highest possibility for the being of human beings, the entire being of human beings is determined so that I must be apprehended as the *bodily being-in-the-world* of human beings.

What was, here, provided by Aristotle, is still not taken advantage of today. Only in *phenomenology* has this begun. No division between “psychic” and “bodily acts”! [...] *One must note that the primary being-there-function of bodiliness secures the ground for the full being of human beings.*’ (BCAP p134)

‘There is nothing like a pure fear in the sense of an abstract comporting-oneself toward something. In itself, it is a comporting of the full human being in its corporeality.’ (BCAP p139)

This broad range is one reason why I reject the translation ‘mood’. The reasons why I take ‘attunement’ to be more fitting should become clearer as we go on. For now though, two points can be made. The first is that the word *Stimmung* contains within itself this resonance of tuning: it is etymologically connected to the verb *stimmen* – to tune or attune. The second is that attunement consists necessarily of a relation between two ‘poles’: to tune or attune requires a relation between something that is attempting to respond to and bring itself in harmony with something else, as one attempts to bring a musical instrument into harmony with a certain note. I take it that in this respect ‘attunement’ ensures that our existence as fundamentally being-in-the-world remains in focus, in contrast to thinking of a Cartesian subject with affects as an ‘interior’ mental occurrence.

With an eye to grasping our thrownness more clearly, we have looked to the way that this thrownness is manifest or ‘disclosed’ through our affective experience. We have seen that this disclosure is first-personal, applies to existence as a whole, and is typically pre-reflective while admitting of a reflective, explicit form. In contrast to some interpretations in the secondary literature, it has become clear that with the mode disclosure of ‘attunement’, part of what Heidegger aims to capture is our feelings, moods, and emotions. Given that these are the most familiar (and as we shall see, most explicit) kinds of affective experience, we shall begin by outlining how thrownness is disclosed in this kind of attunement that we can see most clearly.

### **Making Thrownness Manifest (i) - Feelings, Moods, and Emotions**

In this section we will begin to see how our thrownness is disclosed through our attunement by looking to how it is disclosed in our everyday feelings, moods, and emotions. Given their intense, explicit nature, the phenomenological features that also apply to our constant, background attunement, can be seen more clearly in our feelings, moods, and emotions. In conformity with the elucidation of disclosure given above, the features picked out are, I take it, features that are available within the experience itself. While we are typically not explicitly or consciously aware of them,

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We might criticize this as being insufficient, saying that our bodily being has distinctive features that can’t be subsumed in Heidegger’s general analysis, however it seems that Heidegger does understand the body to be included in his account.

they are nonetheless always already available to us. I take this to conform to the way that disclosure for Heidegger is typically pre-reflective. By paying explicit attention to these features of the experience of attunement here, they can be raised to the conceptual level of the structural aspect of our being that is ‘thrownness’. Before looking at how the structural aspect of our being is revealed, I will begin by looking to the feature of affective experience that I think singles it out as the privileged mode of disclosure of our thrownness specifically. Affective experience discloses our thrownness because it is an experience of passivity.

### **Passivity**

As the etymology of the word ‘passion’ suggests, affective experience is a kind of experience that is synonymous with the idea of ‘passivity - in Heidegger’s words, ‘attunement assails us’<sup>12</sup> (SZ 136). Thrownness is experienced primordially through a kind of passivity before the world; to talk of an ‘affect’ here is to talk of our being affected, not our act of affecting. Our language about this kind of experience is replete with this sort of characterization: moods ‘take hold of’ us, feelings ‘come over us’, and emotions ‘grip’ us. We are moved by them; we do not move them.

These ways of talking about affective experiences all point to an important feature that they share, namely a certain kind of passivity that characterizes our experience of them. This is not something that we ‘do’ but in some way feels like it comes to us - in the accusative and not the nominative voice. This is typically manifest in the way that affective experiences often lie beyond our control. They arrive without invitation, refuse to leave when asked, and fail to appear when we want them most. We may know that nerves will negatively affect a job interview, but cannot help feel them. We may know that our grief hurts those we love, but we cannot conjure good cheer through sheer will.

It might be objected that while this is true for the most part, there do seem to be occasions where we can exert control over our affective experience. Perhaps we are not so passive with respect to them as I have suggested. If I’m feeling down, there might be things that are within my power that I can do to cheer myself up – I can visit

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<sup>12</sup> *‘Die Stimmung überfällt’*

a friend and my low mood might be replaced with contentedness or even positive good cheer. In some cases, this is no doubt possible. However, I would suggest that in these cases an important passivity of the affect still remains. While we may have some agency with respect to it, feeling affected itself remains a feeling of passivity. If our agency succeeds in bringing about a change of affect, the new attunement nonetheless is experienced as coming to us. This essentially passive element can be seen in the familiar way that our attempts to control our attunement often fail. While seeing a particular friend or watching a particular film might have worked in controlling our low mood every time in the past, a time will surely come when it will not. Upon feeling low, I may go and visit a friend yet a good mood may nevertheless evade me. My melancholy remains unmoved. I may be able to create inviting conditions for a good mood to appear but the ability to wholly determine it eludes me; I can beckon it but I cannot make it come.

Bearing out the analysis of thrownness, we can begin to see a kind of ‘already’ character to feelings, moods, and emotions that is connected with this kind of passivity. Initially, we might think about the way that feelings, moods, and emotions - unlike actions or judgements – seem to already have been there by the time we become aware of them. A feeling has the character of having already been upon us by the time we notice it, as opposed to being brought about as an action of ours. We ‘find’ ourselves in a mood and there’s a sense in which ‘finding’ requires that something is already there. Even in those experiences where we do manage to exert a kind of control over an affective experience, I would suggest that we do not witness the leaving of the old or the arrival of the new affect. If our manipulation of our feelings has been successful, we learn of this retrospectively. At some moment we find that our bad mood has gone, or that we are now in good spirits. The new mood is always experienced, if and when it is experienced, as already there, even if it has come about in some way via our agency. This ‘already’ character of the experience of attunement shall be analyzed in greater detail below to reveal that it captures the way that attunement is a condition of the possibility of projection.

This passivity of our everyday affective experiences, linked to the ‘already’ character shown above, reveals the passivity and lack of control that Heidegger is capturing with the idea of ‘thrownness’. The passivity of our thrownness is experienced first-personally in the way that we find ourselves gripped by affective



experience – *it is the way we find ourselves 'submitted' to attunement (SZ 137) that captures the way we are 'submitted' (SZ 161) in our thrownness.* As we proceed, it is this passivity and this 'already' of affective experience, in conjunction with the character of movement, that will challenge traditional conceptions of being responsible, and that will have to be taken up into my own positive account. As we see how these experiences reveal our thrownness into Dasein as such, and into being Dasein in a particular way, it should be borne in mind that these aspects of thrownness all grip us, all already hold us, in a way that we are in an important sense passive with respect to. This is no less true for the experience of the movement of thrownness.

## **Movement**

The relation between affective experience and the idea of 'motion' is not unfamiliar to us. The etymological connection between the English words 'emotion' and 'motion' indicates a connection between the two ideas that is borne out further in our everyday way of speaking, as we describe undergoing certain affective experiences as being 'moved', or talk of being 'carried away' by our feelings. We should see this as more than just a quirk of language – these expressions capture the way that affective experiences lead us to 'do' something, to be moved to 'action'.

Take a case of extreme anger. We might imagine that we enter a situation to find an act of violence being committed against a loved one. As soon as we enter the scene and realize what is happening, rage rushes up inside of us. The abuser is the sole object of our attention. We might rush towards them and drag them from our loved one, perhaps violently tackling them or shouting at them. Everything, and everyone, else in the room becomes irrelevant in the wake of this event, as might our usual standards of propriety. Or, for another example, we might imagine finding ourselves enthralled romantically with someone who is unaware of our affection. In such a case, the beloved dominates our thoughts. Everything reminds us of them, and we are constantly thinking how we can spend more time with them, how we can show our affection, how this affection might be reciprocated. The world shows up in terms of possible activities to be done together, possible gestures to be made, and possible models of relationships as other couples show up in ways of relating to be emulated

or avoided. Perhaps after a particularly nice evening spent with the object of our affection, being able to take it no longer, we might find ourselves compelled to make manifest our affection in some way or other.

In thinking through what such an experience is like, our thrownness can be seen. Such intense affective experiences circumscribe the field of possibilities open to us – how we find ourselves feeling already shapes the landscape ahead of us. In our intense anger, only the abuser shows up to us, as the rest of the room or anyone else who is present recedes from our focus. The situation is transformed, as the only possibilities that show up are ones that involve tackling the abuser. The field of possibilities open to us is determined by this intense anger. Similarly in our ardent affection, our experience shows up in the light of this feeling, as the world and others show up as possibilities pertaining to romance. The feeling we find ourselves with shapes the possibilities ahead of us. With this character of our everyday affective experience, we can see the feature of thrownness in which the ‘already’ that we are determines the landscape ahead by shaping the range of possibilities.

However, as I argued in the previous chapter, thrownness importantly also ‘moves’ us, and it is in our affective experience that this can be seen, and its pervasive power grasped. In our affective experience, these possibilities do not stand there ahead of us like ingredients in a larder. They already touch us; they grip us and move us. It is through these affective experiences that this can be seen so dramatically. In the case of anger, the possibility of grappling and striking the abuser does not just stand inert as a logical possibility in front of me. I am already gripped by it, I am already submitted to it. I find myself drawn almost irresistibly to the possibility. ‘Before I know it’, I am already taking it up; I am in its grip, running at the assailant. The same is true in the case of one who is smitten. The beloved and the romantic possibilities that subsequently show up have already gripped the subject – in the grip of such a feeling, my thoughts return to the object of my affection irresistibly, my gaze is ‘caught’ by the acts of other couples, and as I walk I am drawn this way and that to investigate possible meeting locations, food venues etc. I am moved to take up these possibilities of thinking, seeing, and acting by my affective experience. After the wonderful evening spent with the beloved, I might feel compelled to blurt out my feelings – I find myself doing it, perhaps in spite of all other considerations that this one possibility has overshadowed. Our everyday affective experiences, the

way we find ourselves feeling, shape the possibilities ahead by gripping and touching us to varying degrees. As these examples show, affective experiences give a certain texture to existence that gives us orientation and impetus. Affective experiences ‘move’ us insofar as they grip us, impel us, or in the intense cases above, compel us, to take up possibilities, such that we often find ourselves already taking them up before any reflection, decision, or even awareness.

Here we can begin to better understand how our affective experience manifests the ‘already’ of thrownness, which shapes the horizon ahead, first-personally. We saw that the ‘already’ can be seen in the experience of the intense feeling itself, in the sense that the feeling seems to be there before we are aware of it, as a condition of ‘finding’ ourselves with such a feeling. However this character of the ‘already’, which we saw in the analysis of facticity was not to be considered as chronologically prior but as a condition of the possibility of, can be seen more clearly in this movement into possibilities. Our affective experiences as characterized above can be seen to be a condition of the possibility of projection into the particular possibilities of attacking the assailant or declaring our feelings. It is on the basis of the feeling of anger that the possibilities of attacking the assailant showed up to us and impelled us to take them up. Our experience was the way it was because of our anger. Had we not been angry the same possibilities wouldn’t have gripped and moved us in the same way –this can be seen in the way that one might point to the affective experience as the ‘ground’ of the action by using anger to explain ‘why’ we attacked. Equally, the world’s salience is conditioned by the feelings of love, and projection into the possibility of spending time with and confessing to the beloved wouldn’t have showed up and moved the subject without this affective experience. The affect in these cases clearly govern the texture of salience of experience that allows that experience to be what it is, that provides orientation and impetus for the taking up of possibilities. Like an affective lens that is necessary for this experience, these everyday feelings, moods, and emotions are a necessary condition for certain possibilities showing up and drawing us to them.

Importantly, the ‘movement’ of thrownness has also been shown in a way that begins to make manifest how pervasive and powerful thrownness is. In contrast to placing a range of possibilities ahead of us that we can stand back from and assess, by seeing how affective experience moves us we can see how we are *submitted to*, and moved

by, these possibilities already. They grip us, and as these intense examples show, this grip can be so tight that there is no room to stop, decide, and deliberate about these possibilities. We may only become aware of even taking them up retrospectively, as we find ourselves lashing or blurting out ‘before we knew it’

### **Being-in-the-world and Being-with-others**

While making clear this passivity and movement characteristic of our thrownness, our explicit affective experiences might appear to cover over an aspect of our thrownness. As we saw, at the most fundamental level we are thrown into human existence – we find ourselves as a human being, as a ‘who’. As we also saw, an integral part of Heidegger’s philosophical project is to show that a human being is essentially and fundamentally related to that which is beyond the bounds of the ‘I’. It is not the case that the ‘I’ comes first as a kind of basis of being, from which then comes an external world. Rather, we are fundamentally and essentially being-in-the-world and being-with-others.

In contrast to this picture, for Heidegger the way our feelings, moods, and emotions are typically theorized by disciplines like psychology endorses the Cartesian picture of an isolable ‘I’ for whom the world and others are in some way secondary. On such theoretical models, feelings, moods, and emotions are ‘inner’ mental states. These inner mental states can then be projected onto the world, but their origin and meaning are to be found ‘in our head’ in some sense. For Heidegger such theorizing distorts the phenomena and as a result goes hand in hand with a mischaracterization of human existence as such. In his discussion of attunement in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* lecture course, he declares that we need to free ourselves from these psychological kinds of theories of consciousness, and instead give ‘releasement’ [*Gelassenheit*] (FCM p91) to our everyday perspective. Reaffirming the methodological commitment I have outlined, in which our being can be gleaned within the everyday perspective, Heidegger declares we must listen to this everyday voice. And this voice, rather than seeing affective experiences as being inner mental states that can then be projected onto things, rather sees the meaning of the affective as arising from the world. In his analysis of boredom, this is made plain for Heidegger:

Strange – ungraspable though this is at first, we must follow what *everyday* speaking, comportment, and judgement actually expresses: that things themselves, people themselves, events and places themselves are *boring*.’  
(FCM p83)

In our experience of affects like boredom, the affect is felt as arising from the world. As Heidegger describes boredom, it is ‘seated in what is boring, and creeps into us from the outside.’ (*ibid.*) The way we often talk about affective experiences is to treat them as coming from the world or other people: it is the crowd that is terrifying, the situation that is awkward, and the computer that is frustrating. Such ways of talking, for Heidegger, reveal how the phenomena are really experienced. This is what shows itself if we bracket ill-fitting conceptual models and look ‘to the things themselves’. In our experience, affects arise from objects, people, situations, words, events. For Heidegger, all feelings, moods, and emotions contain this affective connection with the world and others, and this reveals our thrownness into Dasein as being-in-the-world and being-with-others.

We might grant that affective experiences do often have the character of grabbing us from without. But while this may be true when words hurt us, when tools enrage us, or when love brings us joy, we might think there are cases of feelings, moods, or emotions that don’t obviously find their ‘origin’ or meaning in the world or other people. We might even think that some affective experiences have precisely the character of arising within the ‘I’ before then being projected onto the world and others. Consider a feeling of irritability or anger that might seem to arise wholly within the subject, perhaps due to a bad night’s sleep. It seems that after getting up on the wrong side of bed, the subject then subsequently imposes this feeling onto everything and everyone they encounter. Or we might consider a feeling of intense melancholy. Even if all around are in a good mood, even if the situation is one that generally (and previously for the subject) evokes good cheer, this melancholy that has arisen within the subject seems to then be projected onto the world and other people, making grey that which once had colour and life. This might seem then, to suggest a primacy of the subject with respect to affective experience, which in turn phenomenologically might question Heidegger’s account of the being of human existence.

However, while it might initially appear that these emotions or moods arise within the subject to subsequently create a world in accordance with its hue, a closer look to the experience reveals this not to be the case. In the actual experience, it is not the case that we feel like a mood has arisen in us then goes outwards *from us to* something or someone else. Rather, with such a mood, I and the world are transformed equally, at one and the same instance, or ‘equiprimordially’ in Heidegger’s parlance. Co-constitutive of finding myself ‘already’ in a particular mood, I encounter a world already altered. We might see this expressed by the way we might say in our irritability that ‘I have had a bad day’ or ‘things aren’t going well’ - the scope of such utterances reflect that the attunement is not experienced as something that primarily resides within my head.

Additionally, our mood does not simply retain a constant colour as we might expect if it were a mere projection, like a blanket which I have thrown on the world. It does not apply to anything and everything, but something about ‘the things themselves’ draws the feeling<sup>13</sup>. Even if I am already irritable, my anger will not be solicited by someone quietly passing me by on the street, but rather by certain objects, qualities, actions, people etc. that I generally find to be objectionable or bad. Melancholy won’t appear as a uniformity, but will vary depending on the characteristics of what it is I’m experiencing – a certain facial expression, a particular wording of a sentence from a loved one, and not others, will deflate me. An affect is not something that is in my head that I project onto a world and others. Rather, it arises in relation to, and feeds off of, the world and others.

Thus what it means to have an affective experience is to be struck by the world and others in a certain way. However, this is not to say that ‘boring’ or ‘fearful’ is a property of people or things that is ‘objective’ in the sense of pertaining independently of the subject. A book’s boringness or a crowd’s fearfulness ‘*concerns us in such and such a way* and therefore stands in such and such a relation to us as subjects, to our subjectivity’ (FCM p84). The world cannot appear as irritating, sad, boring etc. unless it is to a subject that is open to being affected in such a way. While all affective experience has the character of being in some way beyond the confines of the subject, this same affective experience is undeniably our own. If anger is felt, it is distinctly ‘I’ who feel it. It is not the case that melancholy ‘is’, but always

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<sup>13</sup> See FCM p85 for a mention of this particular point by Heidegger.

specifically that some ‘I’ is melancholic – the melancholy is inescapably mine from the moment it is felt. This is borne out in the common everyday way that first-person authority and ownership are given to attunement; I cannot be told how I feel, only I can know this. Nor can another take my feelings from me - a mood shared is a mood doubled, not halved.

This last point reminds us importantly that to say that an attunement is mine is not to say that it is mine alone. The fact that ‘I’ am nervous is all too consistent with a whole room full of nervous interviewees, whose nerves fill the room and feed off of one another. We can unwillingly share in the infectious euphoria of a large crowd, solely in virtue of our accidentally sharing a train carriage. We can even share a society-wide affect like ‘fear’ that has been created by a political discourse<sup>14</sup>. Yet in all of these cases, it is nevertheless and unmistakably still me who feels nervous, me who feels euphoric, and me who feels scared, even if the feeling leaves as I leave the other people.

Thus, the ‘I’ too is a necessary constitutive element for affective experience. This, combined with the way that the world and others are seen to be necessary to our affective experience as a kind of ‘object’ pole, leads Heidegger to declare that ‘ultimately every attunement – is a hybrid, partly objective, partly subjective.’ (FCM p88) But this is just to say in other words that in attunement we can see Dasein as being-in-the-world, a fundamental interrelation of an I with a world and others. Attunement reveals that *Dasein is the being of this ‘between’* (SZ 132) of subject and object. Conceived as this ‘between’, we can see clearly why the term ‘attunement’ is appropriate in characterizing our affective experience, given that an attunement corresponds to a relation, a ‘between’ multiple poles: in attunement, ‘the world, Dasein-with, and existence are *equiprimordially disclosed*’ (SZ 137).

In this section as a whole, I have shown how the passivity and movement of thrownness are manifest in our explicit everyday affective experiences, and how contrary to some appearances, our thrownness into being an ‘I’ in relation to the world and others is also made manifest in these experiences. In doing so, I have

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Publicness, as the kind of being which belongs to *das Man*, not only has in general its own way of being attuned, but needs attunements and ‘makes’ them for itself. It is into such attunement and out of such attunement that the orator speaks. He must understand the possibilities of attunement in order to rouse them and guide them aright.’ (SZ 138-139)  
This shared societal attunement will be important as we see that attunement goes beyond our everyday understanding of affective experience.

attempted to show how powerful the grip of our thrownness is, in particular by showing the way we find ourselves moved by the power of these affective experiences. But if I have shown the power of our thrownness, I have done so only for specific, intense affective moments that come and go.

Perhaps this powerful grip and movement of thrownness only holds in these moments of being overcome by feelings. After such moments, one might argue, we regain the typical space for thought, reflection, deliberation, decision, and therefore the space for responsibility traditionally understood. If thrownness is experienced first-personally through our affective experience, on the analysis given so far there is no reason so far to think that thrownness is anything more than an occasional force that comes over us, but which for the most part is subdued or absent.

However. We have seen that attunement is one of the fundamental modes of disclosure of being to Dasein. We have also seen that ‘Dasein is its disclosedness’ (SZ 133). So long as we are Dasein, we are disclosing being. This suggests, given that attunement is a fundamental mode of this disclosure, that Dasein is constantly attuned and thus constantly disclosing our thrownness. This, in fact, is Heidegger’s position. As we see, Dasein:

finds itself [*sich befindet*] in its thrownness. In *Befindlichkeit* Dasein is *always* brought before itself, and has *always* found itself, [...] in the attunement that it has. (SZ 135, emphasis mine)

We will now turn to examine the way that affective experience, and thus the grip and power of thrownness, is not limited to our explicit feelings, moods, and emotions but is rather a constant and pervasive force of our existence.

### **Making Thrownness Manifest (ii) - Constant Implicit Attunement**

As we saw, the kind of affective experiences that are ‘ontically the most familiar sort of thing’ are those discrete, affective states that we generally call feelings, moods, and emotions. These are a constitutive part of what we have called our attunement. Beyond these, we might think of attunement as potentially capturing certain kinds of experiences which we could call ‘affective’ yet which don’t quite fit into these



categories. Finding a place or person eerie, a room tense or awkward, or a vague feeling that something was ‘off’ about a person or place might put us at the fringes of our understanding of affective experience. Yet for Heidegger, even when we are aware of no particular affective experience at all, we are nonetheless attuned. We are always and constantly attuned: ‘In every case, Dasein always has some attunement.’ (SZ 134)

Heidegger claims that this affective dimension of experience, our attunement, is constant. Yet we are only aware of this affective element of experience in those explicit, discrete cases mentioned above. This means that our attunement must, for the most part, go unnoticed by us. However, this is not to say that for the most part it is unavailable to us. If, as we have seen, our thrownness is pre-reflectively available at all times, our constant attunement through which this thrownness is disclosed, should also be available at all times. Therefore, it should be the subject of pre-reflective awareness when it is not explicitly grasped by us.<sup>15</sup>

For Heidegger, in line with our analysis so far, it is by looking to those explicit attunements that we must notice that we can understand attunement as such, and become explicitly aware of this constant attunement that normally remains in the background:

we initially grasp the essence of attunement in terms of what confronts us at first, namely the extreme tendencies of attunement, those which irrupt then disappear. (FCM p68)

Those everyday attunements like nerves, pity, anger, and love, can be seen as more intense or ‘extreme’ manifestations of this constant attunement that we are generally unaware of.<sup>16</sup> While the former press on us so intensely that we must

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<sup>15</sup> See Heidegger’s ‘deepening’ of his discussion of boredom in FCM where he moves from boredom that we are explicitly aware of to a kind of boredom that seems precisely to be pre-reflective as set out earlier:

‘It has now become completely clear to us – **albeit in retrospect – that we were bored after all with the evening.** We now quite clearly remember a repeated, though suppressed yawning. This was not some reactive symptom of being tired or relaxed. We were bored.’ (FCM p110, emphasis mine)

<sup>16</sup> See also:

‘At first and for the most part we are affected only by particular attunements that tend toward ‘extremes’, like joy or grief. A faint apprehensiveness or a buoyant contentment are less

notice them, for Heidegger they are of a kind with this unnoticed, implicit attunement. We can look to the features manifest in the explicit cases then, to help bring to light that which typically goes unnoticed in this constant affective background. I shall look to this way we find ourselves moved in our explicit attunements first, given its important to the understanding of thrownness that I have proposed. The passivity of this experience should be implicit throughout, however will be raised again briefly in what follows.

As we saw, when in the grip of an intense attunement the scope of possibilities ahead of us is determined by that attunement. It is so determined by the way that possibilities grip us, and move us to take them up. The situation I experience is determined by the particular mood I am in. It determines the things I am drawn to and take up. The world looks different in accordance with my mood, and whether, how, and to what extent I am drawn to different things varies accordingly. However, it is not only in the grip of an intense affective experience that the world has a texture of salience - we are not only moved when we are angry, particular possibilities don't only show up and grip us when we are smitten. Rather, we are always and constantly absorbed and engaged by particular possibilities in the world. Particular objects, tasks, people – and not others – show up as we go about our day. We engage with these and not others. Certain newspapers show up as to be read or ignored; I find myself stopping to talk to certain people while others pass me by. As Heidegger puts it:

The world solicits concern: This means that, as it is discovered in concern, the world does not meet with a mere looking and staring at something on hand; **[...]In all preoccupation with the world, Dasein as in-being is in some way solicited and summoned (way of *Befindlichkeit*<sup>17</sup>);** this may only be in the form of an undisturbed performance, the soothing uniformity of an unthreatened employment, the indifference of the everyday handling of what is placed under care. ' (HCT p254, emphasis mine)

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noticeable. Apparently not there at all, and yet there, is precisely that *lack of attunement* in which we are neither out of sorts nor in a 'good' mood. Yet even in this 'neither/nor' we are never without an attunement.' (FCM p68)

<sup>17</sup> Translated as 'way of *being disposed*' with italics in original.

In the same way as in explicit cases of affective experiences, we find ourselves oriented to certain possibilities and moved – ‘solicited and summoned’ - to take them up. For the most part, this soliciting is not explicit. We do not notice being drawn to certain objects, people, jobs etc. For the most part, we unreflectively go about our daily routines, performing particular tasks, making certain journeys, engaging with certain people without thinking about it. We are already moved by them ‘before we know it’, just as in the extreme cases of affective experience mentioned. Even in cases where we ‘step back’ and become aware, perhaps thinking about which direction to walk, where the item we need for work is, or whether it would be awkward to stop and talk to this person, we do so *on the basis of already being drawn* to the destination we need to get to, the task we need to complete at work, and the other person as someone we already ‘know’ and so could talk to. Just as in our explicit affective experience, our everyday practical engagement with the world is a taking up of possibilities on the basis of finding ourselves attuned in certain ways.

As seen in the section on disclosure above, understanding for Heidegger includes its everyday sense as an explicit, reflective grasping of something through thought. This is only part of the meaning however (SZ 336). Understanding for Heidegger more fundamentally captures a pre-reflective projection into possibilities that makes such cognitive activity possible. What it means to understand something is not just to cognize it explicitly, but to have a grasp of it in a sense that covers engaging with it in the broadest way, which includes things like walking to work or stopping to talk to someone as outlined above. Ultimately, our understanding of particular possibilities in the world is dependent upon a broader understanding of who we are, what it means to be. Understanding an ECG machine or the way to the hospital is dependent upon my understanding myself as a doctor, upon projecting into that possibility. In the same way, our being solicited and summoned to engage with particular items, people, directions then depends upon our being *drawn* to certain ways of being more generally. It depends upon being drawn to a possibility of existence that makes the world solicit me in a particular way. For particular objects and people to show up as drawing us in the ways that they do, Dasein must have always:

already submitted itself to having entities within-the-world “matter” to it in a way which its attunements have outlined in advance. *Existentially,*

Befindlichkeit *implies a disclosive submission to the world, out of which we can encounter something that matters to us.* (SZ 137-138)

I can only be solicited and drawn by an ECG machine if I am drawn in some sense to being a doctor. I am moved to pick up a certain paper, or attend a certain protest, on the basis that I am drawn to socialism. I am moved to offer a helping hand with a house move or arrange to meet for a drink on the basis that I am drawn to a certain friendship. As the quote above says, practicing medicine, socialism, or my friend must already ‘matter’ [*angehen*] to me for the world to solicit me as it does. It is with this idea of finding things ‘mattering’, what we might in other everyday language describe as caring about something, that I think our constant attunement can helpfully be articulated<sup>18</sup>.

It is through this idea of feeling that something *matters* that I think we can helpfully understand what it means to be constantly attuned. Finding something mattering can be seen as the constant, typically implicit, affective feature of our experience that Heidegger is capturing with ‘attunement’. While our explicit feelings, moods, and emotions are particularly intense ways of finding things matter to us that we must notice, things nonetheless always matter to us. And our experience couldn’t be as it is if they didn’t. My life, the world, and others must always show up affectively as mattering if they are to show up at all.

Here, in the way that we find ourselves drawn to taking up possibilities, our implicit attunement and its passivity can easily be overlooked, and can be difficult to distinguish from the understanding (as projection) it underlies and makes possible. As we saw, Heidegger describes thrownness and projection as a ‘single basic state’ (SZ 199). It can seem like I’m not being affected at all in taking up a possibility, and perhaps even as if the whole thing is my ‘doing’ something. Nonetheless this affective aspect is necessarily always there – the structure of this single basic state is ‘essentially twofold’ (*ibid.*). While this may only become explicit in the intense attunements where our being gripped by possibilities is overwhelming, this grip and ‘submission’ to possibilities is nonetheless already there. This intense explicit attunement only makes manifest what is always already the case.

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<sup>18</sup> When I will use ‘care’ in this section, I do so as a synonym for mattering, and not in the technical sense that captures the totality of the being of Dasein.

As with our intense attunements, this background attunement is still importantly characterized by passivity. To be summoned by a possibility is not something that we 'do'. We do not decide what matters to us. We just find ourselves already gripped, already caring about certain things, which shape our experience. And here the character of the 'already' that was linked to this passivity in the case of explicit affective experience can be seen more clearly. As we saw in our analysis of thrownness, this 'already' is not primarily to be seen as chronologically prior, but rather prior in the sense of a condition of the possibility of. Finding that things matter – attunement – is a condition of the possibility of 'seeing' possibilities in terms of which I understand myself and the world:

By way of being attuned, Dasein 'sees' possibilities, in terms of which it is. In the projective disclosure of such possibilities, it is already attuned in every case. (SZ 148)

Just as our intense affective experiences shaped the possibilities that showed up, solicited us, and moved us in anger or love, so too is this affective element necessary in grounding the projection that we are. It is only on the basis of being gripped affectively by possibilities, by feeling that they matter, that possibilities show up to me, solicit and move me.

But the fact that this affective grip, the way we are oriented and moved, typically does not reach the intensity of explicit feelings, moods, or emotions, is not to say they are any less powerful. For Heidegger in fact, the converse is true:

precisely *those* attunements to which we pay no heed at all, the attunements we least observe, those attunements which attune us in such a way that we feel as though there is no attunement there at all, as though we were not attuned in any way at all – these attunements are the most powerful. (FCM p68)

The way we find ourselves caring about something, the way something matters, grips us so deeply, so thoroughly, that it shapes the whole of existence. As in the example above, the beginnings of romance might manifest in an explicit affective experience that we must notice. But in contrast to this, we can think of a deep love for another that shapes our whole lives and is constitutive of our self-understanding. It seems

clear to me that the latter grips us more powerfully, that we are submitted to it more thoroughly, despite the fact that this attunement is typically not explicitly felt. While such core attunements are typically implicit, disruption or ‘breakdown’ can cause these implicit background attunements to become explicit and make their power felt – we can think of the extreme and overwhelming grief at the death of loved one as a prime example of this. In relation to our earlier examples, we might think of the sadness or emptiness I feel at no longer being allowed to practice medicine upon a forced move to a new country, the anger I feel at a government’s deliberate shrinking or distorting of the space for socialist action, or the guilt I feel if I fail my friend in a time of need. In these cases, that attunement that was implicitly gripping, shaping, and moving me, becomes explicit, and the passivity that reveals our ‘submission’ to it is made clear.

### **Thrown into a particular world as particular ‘who’**

As we saw in our analysis of thrownness, we always find ourselves as a particular ‘who’ in a particular world; we aren’t just thrown into being Dasein but into being *this* Dasein. Part of what it means to be thrown into such specificity is to find oneself in a particular social context; captured by the idea that we are thrown into ‘the publicness of *das Man*’ (SZ 167). First-personally this means that what matters to us, that which touches and moves us, is shaped by this publicness of *das Man*:

The dominance of the public way in which things have been interpreted has already been decisive even for the possibilities of being attuned – that is, for the basic way in which Dasein lets the world “matter” to it. *Das Man* prescribes one’s *Befindlichkeit*, and determines what and how one ‘sees’. (SZ 169-170)

We are always attuned to the specific society in which we find ourselves - the specific social, cultural, historical environment in which we grow up. We find ourselves moved in accordance with the particular society in which we find ourselves, which determines what can matter, what must matter, and how. Certain values, ideals, people, qualities matter to us in virtue of our specific social context, and these move and grip us accordingly. The values of individual freedom and

equality, the threat of nuclear war, the possibility of poverty, the aspiration to celebrity, are all things that can matter to us, here and now in the West, that could not have mattered at other times and places. Conversely, the values of a warrior, the threat that the gods will withhold the rain or keep the sun from the sky, or the aspiration to symmetry of scarring on our bodies, cannot grip us in the way they might in societies in other places and times.<sup>19</sup>

We might think of the fact that gender matters, and the particular way it does so, as being a good example of our societal attunement. In our society, gender is something that must matter to us in some way. We are moved in some way by an attunement to gender – it determines which possibilities show up and solicit us. For the most part this is implicit (and, as suggested, more powerful for this) – we are moved to sit in a certain way, to buy certain clothes and not others. From an early age, we are gripped by certain ‘gendered’ activities and values implicitly – outdoor physical activity or indoor craft; strength or beauty. We are moved to laugh at certain jokes, turn our heads at certain people, talk in a certain manner. Even the particular emotions we have or don’t have are guided by the way gender implicitly matters.

At times this attunement to gender itself becomes slightly more explicit, as we feel ‘uncomfortable’ because of certain gendered situations, or at being asked to perform certain gendered actions or tasks – sitting or crossing my legs in this way or that might feel ‘weird’ or ‘unnatural’. This normally implicit attunement can be raised to the intensity of an explicit feeling or emotion, perhaps in the form of anger or embarrassment at having our gender mistaken, or pride or happiness at being told that one embodies a certain gendered attribute. For others, whose gender does not conform to general societal standards, the way that gender matters may be as an almost constant feeling of anxiety, stress, or sadness that grips them and moves them to avoid situations where gender is made manifest in some way. While still others may claim that the idea of gender, and thus their own gender, does not matter to them at all, this is something that they must be moved to assert, defend, or resolve upon in

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<sup>19</sup> This last point should be qualified, for *what* can matter is tied up with the *way* in which things can matter. Things such as the values of a warrior do not typically matter to us in Western society, but they are things that could minimally matter as objects of curiosity, or of educational interest. However, it cannot matter in the more significant way that it once did, or still does in other societies. For a discussion of the way our attunement is tied up with our specific society, and with its language in particular, see Mulhall (2002). His insights relate specifically to our explicit feelings, moods, and emotions, however I think they hold more broadly.

a way that one does not have to with the colour of our eyes or whether we're right or left handed. Negatively or otherwise, our particular societal attunement is one in which gender must matter to us in some particular way. We might think of things like race and class, as well as countless other aspects of our lives from the mundane to the profound, as all being things that matter to us in some particular way, shaping the way in which we're moved, in virtue of our particular socio-cultural situation here in the West.

The 'who' of Dasein, while being constituted by the publicness of *das Man*, obviously also captures what constitutes me as a specific individual (which is part of what sustains and comprises this societal being). In our analysis of thrownness, we saw that this might be my particular race, gender, class, nationality. It might be our particular bodies, the state of health we find ourselves with. And it might include our upbringing – the particular values we grow up with, the practices and interests we are raised on, the particular people we are close to. As with our thrownness into a particular social context, these too can be seen in the way that we find things matter to us, the different things that touch and move us. We may find we are moved by particular values and not others - modesty, creativity, victory, meekness, toughness - that we might wish to explain through our upbringing, or just as a kind of 'disposition' or style of character that we find ourselves with. This societal attunement is no less important in the kinds of self-understanding we characterized earlier – finding that medicine, socialism, and friendship matter to me depends upon the way that these things can matter in our particular society. Thus, as an 'I' in particular social world, I find myself gripped and moved in a wide variety of ways that are constitutive of who I am.

All of these intensely varied and complicated societal and personal factors combine in order to produce an attunement to a certain self-understanding, a certain shape to what matters to me, that we might call our identity. Given the being of Dasein, we must remember that this identity is not a fixed substance, but is projection into a possibility, an ability-to-be (*Seinkönnen*) a certain way. It is that in the light of which existence shows up to us, that point on the horizon that we are drawn towards that determines the path before us. It is that which gives a certain direction to life, '*an ability-to-be for the sake of which any Dasein exists.*' (SZ 336) in Heidegger's words, which finds its basis in being moved to take up this possible way of being. We are



gripped and moved by a certain picture of life – it strikes us as important, valuable, worthwhile. As Taylor (1989) describes it, the answer to the question of who we are is provided by ‘an understanding of what is of crucial importance to us.’ (p27), *what matters to us most* – the particular relationships, activities, values, ways of life etc. that constantly grip me and shape the way existence appears to me. Existence shows up, grips, summons, and moves me on the basis of the way we are attuned most deeply that we can call our identity.

### **Thrown into existence as such**

We have seen above in the analysis of our explicit feelings and emotions how our attunement makes manifest our existence as an ‘I’ in relation to a world and others. Myself, the world, and others always show up as mattering to me in particular ways, typically in line with our particular identities and the particular world that we find ourselves in. Thus it is hard to demonstrate how they must grip me ‘as such’ in a way that isolates our thrownness into Dasein as a condition of the possibility of being a particular ‘who’ at all. Again we can think to Heidegger’s invocation that the most powerful attunements are those that are typically less visible when thinking of the difficulty here. But we might here also think of certain situations where an attunement potentially appears to arise with no relation to, or against the grain of, our identities or societal attunements – awe and wonder at nature, or a feeling of ethical obligation that ‘breaks in on us’ as analyzed by phenomenological ethicists like Levinas or Løgstrup<sup>20</sup> for example. Importantly, apart from these situations as I shall show in chapter four, certain ‘fundamental attunements’ for Heidegger like anxiety or boredom make this affective relation of an I to a world and others as such starkly clear.

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<sup>20</sup> It is clear that Heidegger thinks others must matter to us in some way or another, even when they apparently ‘don’t matter’: ‘ontologically there is an essential distinction between the ‘indifferent’ way in which Things at random occur together and the way in which entities who are with one another do not “matter” to one another.’ (SZ 121) The extent to which Heidegger’s thought itself points to a kind of ‘ethical’ attunement to others is contentious. I follow the work of McMullin (2013) in thinking that Heidegger’s account contains within itself this ethical possibility, even if it was undeveloped by Heidegger himself. See also Raffoul & Pettigrew (2002) for a wide variety of further support (in particular the essay on our ethical attunement to others, ‘Heidegger and the Question of Empathy’ by L. Hatab), and also Raffoul (2010).

While discussion of anxiety will wait until this fourth chapter, one further aspect of our thrownness has yet to be discussed and illustrated in our analysis of attunement at all. In my analysis of how thrownness is manifest first-personally in our attunement, I have yet to mention the important idea of the enigma of Dasein – the basis that Dasein ‘is’ that shapes what is ahead, which is always in some way beyond us, never to be grasped or captured. We might think that there is something enigmatic about our intense, explicit attunements. When we feel anger, or romantic love, we might think that there is something enigmatic about the feeling in that it never seems to be fully captured by our descriptions or our actions. In so far as we are in the grip of the feeling, there is a kind of inexhaustibility to it. As the annals of poetry attest, our feelings, moods, and emotions seem to admit of endless interpretation, elucidation, and description. Despite the richness or clarity of expression that attempts to capture it, the feeling or mood is never exhausted – only further enriched. And it is something like this enigmatic character, we might think, that leads emotions to be described as ‘magical’, as in Sartre’s *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions*. However, to understand more clearly how this enigmatic character of our thrownness is manifest in attunement, we need to look to the particular way we find that things matter.

As we have shown, the world shows up to us, grips and touches us, in a particular way that is constitutive of our identity. Particular things matter to us in a particular way that makes us who we are. However, we can see that beyond the particular way things matter, something else matters to us: it matters whether our lives are meaningful in a certain way. We care about having a meaningful existence. It matters to us that we don’t live in falsehood<sup>21</sup>, it matters to us that our lives are good. In some sense we care about what is meaningful, what is true, what is good. Yet what exactly is meaningful, what is true, what is good, is never settled. We need only think of Socrates and the *aporia* with which his discussions end for another perspective on the essentially enigmatic nature of what is true or what is good. The question is never resolved. Yet as Socrates’ relentless pursuit of the questions of truth and goodness also show, what is really meaningful, what is really good or true, is something that we are drawn to, something that moves us, in virtue of our being

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<sup>21</sup> Thought experiments like Nozick’s ‘experience machine’ and films like the Matrix or the Truman show rely on something like our caring about ‘truth’ for their effect.

human beings as such, notwithstanding our propensity to fall away from facing this enigma. I will now try and show provisionally, pending further discussion in chapter 6, how we are fundamentally attuned to this enigma that we are always gripped and moved by, which in fact constitutes the meaning and ground of the particular things that grip us, as per the analysis of the enigma in the previous chapter. This ‘enigma’ is that which we might variously call the meaningful, the true, the good, and this polysemy is in fact further indication of the ultimately enigmatic nature of that towards which we are drawn.<sup>22</sup>

As we saw in the first chapter, our lives, as projection into possibilities through and through, can be seen as the always provisional answer to the question of ‘who I am’, or perhaps ‘how to live’. Our particular identity, our self-understanding, can be seen as the answer we are already giving to this question. Given that being (as Dasein) always means to be an ‘I’, the question of who I am can also be phrased as the question of ‘what it means to be’. If our projection into a particular identity can be seen to be an answer to this question, this must be on the basis of a kind of attunement to the question. We must be gripped by the question of who I am, what it means to be, to give a kind of answer. It must move us. But not just any answer will do. To spend our lives on an assembly line, in the grip of deception by the state, or abusing other human beings, would not be acceptable answers for most. It matters that my answer to the question of who I am is a meaningful one, a true one, a good one<sup>23</sup>. Just as our identity allows us to take a stance on particular questions of what is right, what is good, what is meaningful, so too then our identity itself can be seen as a provisional answer to the question of what is good, what is true, what is meaningful. To be drawn to this question, we must be attuned to it.

Our attunement to this enigma of what is meaningful, what is good, what is true, can be seen to be the ‘meaning and ground’ of our particular attunements, allowing our particular attunements to be what they are, in a way that can be seen in the way these particular attunements grip us. By this, I mean that when something grips and moves us, it does so *as* ‘good’, *as* ‘right’, *as* meaningful. A possible

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<sup>22</sup> As Plato showed, the relation between these ideas, and which has ‘priority’ and is that in light of which the others are understood, is a hugely difficult question. More will be said about this in chapter five.

<sup>23</sup> Here and in what comes I follow Crowell (2013) in seeing Dasein as aiming at something like the Good which, again, will be discussed further in chapter five

project, or understanding of the world, or way of relating to others solicits and summons me in virtue of its showing up as ‘good’, or ‘right’ and it is in virtue of not appearing meaningful, good, or true, that other possibilities don’t grip us or don’t show up as affecting us at all.

This attunement is perhaps more visible as the possibilities that matter to us become subject to change. It is in virtue of our constant draw to this ‘beyond’ that what matters, and thus possible ways to be, come and go. For example, if we are gripped and solicited by two particular possibilities that conflict such that they raise an explicit question to us, we ask which possibility is ‘best’. What is the ‘right’ thing to do? Equally, our attunement to this idea of what is good or true as that in the light of which particular attunements have their hold can be seen when we think about cases when what matters to us at the fundamental level of our identity changes. It is our attunement to this enigmatic beyond that remains, as particular attunements are put in question and alter. We might think of our younger selves here, and how what mattered then is substantially different to what matters to us now. Who we are, or what it means to be, is very different now. And these different possible ways of being show up in the light of our attunement to the good, or the meaningful – what matters now shows up and draws us as ‘better’, as ‘more meaningful’, or at least ‘more true’ than what mattered to our younger self which fails to move us any longer. Through all the particular possibilities that matter to us, it is ultimately this enigma of what is meaningful, what is true, what is good, that grips and moves us. The attempt to answer the question of who I am, what it means to be, or how to live, is that basis that we remain oriented towards, in the light of which the particular way we are attuned changes.

The grip of this enigma itself, as with our grip as an I in relation to others and a world as such, is difficult to see in isolation, as it is always instantiated in some particular way that existence matters. As I will argue in chapter four, as with the other aspects of Dasein’s being as such, the power of the grip of this enigma beyond us can be felt in breakdown situations like anxiety. But despite its difficulty to isolate, it is nonetheless this grip by the enigmatic beyond which gives power to the grip of all the particular things that matter to me. The particular way the world matters to me matters as true, as meaningful, as good, and this is what gives the particular shape its power and hold on me. It is in virtue of the submission to this that other things have

their grip on me. It would be easy to change what matters to me if it didn't have the character of being meaningful, good, or true. This gives it its force. This is even more apparent if we imagine trying to change the way someone else is gripped and moved – it is because racist ideologies or acts of violence, for example, grip and move the other *as* true, as meaningful, as good, that they are so intransigent. And it is from this enigmatic beyond that the power of our thrownness comes.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I have illustrated phenomenologically how our thrownness is disclosed to us first-personally through the passivity of attunement. We saw how disclosure for Heidegger was first-personal, applies to the whole of existence, and admits of both pre-reflective and reflective forms. In contrast to a prevalent interpretation in the secondary literature, I showed how attunement for Heidegger includes our everyday feelings, moods, and emotions. I showed how the movement of thrownness is manifest in the way that affects grip us and move us to take up certain possibilities – the 'submission' felt in attunement reveals the 'submission' of thrownness. Here, the way the world and our engagement with it are so thoroughly shaped by the grip of our affects revealed starkly how pervasive and powerful our thrownness is. The grip and power of thrownness is of a kind with our most intense feelings, moods, and emotions. The thorough grip of our thrownness was realized as I showed how this attunement is in fact constant, doing its work for the most part without our being explicitly aware of it. The features displayed in our explicit affective experiences in fact underlie our entire being-in-the-world, despite these features being less visible.

We saw that as a necessary condition of our existence as projection into particular possibilities, existence must always already matter to us in particular ways that are shaped by our society, our upbringing, and various other factors. As long as we exist, we find ourselves already moved by possibilities, already gripped by certain people, values, projects etc. that shape and are shaped by the world we find ourselves in. Here, the pervasive power of our thrownness can be seen starkly. We always already find ourselves gripped by a certain shape of existence that has a hold on us, in the light of which all possibilities show up to us – we 'see' the world in a way determined by our thrownness, as the possibilities that show up to us are determined

by our attunement. Our society, our bodies, and our upbringing, for example, all shape the possibilities we already find ourselves gripped by. I argued that the particular way I find that existence matters gains its meaning as a provisional answer to the question of what it means to be meaningful, good, or true. This is the enigma that, as an I in relation to a world and others, I am always attuned to. To find ourselves thrown then, is to always already find ourselves gripped by a certain vision of what is meaningful, what is good, what is true. It is through the power of this attunement that all particular possibilities matter to me as they do. I always already find myself moved down a particular path that strikes me as the right one.

Having seen how our thrownness is experienced first-personally in the way that I am always already gripped and moved by affective experience, we can now look to the possibility of becoming responsible in light of this. Having seen through our examination of affective experience how tightly and pervasively this thrownness grips us, the next chapter will examine in more detail how the traditional model of responsibility – which centres on the power and agency of the subject – is threatened by this picture.

### Chapter Three - Clarity, Confidence, and Covering Over Anxiety

As Francois Raffoul's *The Origins of Responsibility* shows, in the Western philosophical tradition the idea of responsibility has been 'identified with the position of a power, of a sovereign agency' (2010 p6). Responsibility is identified with what is 'up to us', what comes under my 'sphere of control and power' (2010 p23). I am responsible for my conduct and not yours, for pushing someone but not falling into them, for the way I dress but not for how tall I am, because the former in each case is within my power, while the latter is not. It is because I made my bed, so the saying goes, that I must sleep in it.

As Raffoul goes on to show, this idea can be seen to have its origins in Aristotle's identification of responsibility with the 'voluntary [*hekōn*]' (2010 p39-40). What is up to us is what we do voluntarily. This voluntary - that which is within our power or control - is understood in Aristotle's work through the idea of decision or choice ('*prohairesis*'). The idea of responsibility thus becomes identified with that which the subject can control through free choice (with 'freedom' typically construed as the ability to do otherwise). Proponents of such a view might argue that those moments we all face in our lives of having to choose, to decide which path to take, are in fact the decisive moments in our lives. These moments are where we take control, and shape the direction our lives go in. It is through these moments of choice that we take responsibility for our being-in-the-world. As in this view's zenith in Sartre, one might suggest that in fact our whole lives are constantly open to such choosing. The emotions we have, the relationships we engage in, the projects we pursue, are subject to our choosing, and so are 'up to us'. We are responsible for every aspect of our lives because we can control each aspect through choice. Rather than drifting along wherever the wind takes us, taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world requires taking command of our lives by exercising our control through free choice to the greatest degree possible.

Moreover, this appears to find support from Heidegger specifically with respect to attunement, which initially seemed like a threat to our mastery. For Heidegger, it appears, we are able and in fact obliged to master our attunement:

Factically, Dasein can, should, and must, through knowledge and will, become master of its attunement; in certain possible ways of existing, this may signify a priority of volition and cognition.(SZ 136)

Heidegger's talk of Dasein's 'freedom for choosing itself' (SZ 188) and 'deciding for a potentiality-for-Being' (SZ 268), if these terms are understood in the same way that they are taken up by Sartre, can appear to lend support for reading Heidegger in this way.

Heidegger's refinement of these terms in *Being and Time* and other works speaks against such a Sartrean understanding<sup>1</sup>. But what we have already seen about attunement shows that this cannot be Heidegger's position. Sure enough, as the quote about mastery continues:

we must not be misled by this into denying that ontologically attunement is a primordial kind of Being for Dasein [...] And furthermore, when we master attunement, we do so by way of a counter-attunement [*je aus einer Gegenstimmung*]; we are never free of attunement. (SZ 136)

For Heidegger, any control over the affective aspect of our existence must come from another affective aspect. Control is not simply something one exercises over against attunement; rather, any control is itself dependent upon and bound up with attunement.<sup>2</sup>

As proposed through the phenomenological analysis of the last chapter, thrownness is manifest in the affective aspect of our first-personal experience, our

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Heidegger's disavowal of freedom conceived as 'liberty of indifference' (SZ 144) and his endorsement of freedom as really being inclined to something to the greatest degree (such as the good, following Descartes and ultimately Augustine): GA 17 as referenced in Han-Pile 2013. This will be discussed again in chapter six.

<sup>2</sup>I think it is reasonable to suppose that the attunement that we are factually obliged to master is our explicit feelings, moods, and emotions, given that it seems unlikely to have a 'factual', i.e. ontic, obligation with respect to that implicit, background attunement that we are generally not conscious of (see Crowell 2015 for agreement on this point).

It makes more sense to read the 'counter-attunement' as this implicit background attunement, with its background nature allowing it to appear to us that cognition and volition have priority. Additionally, it seems phenomenologically infelicitous to suppose we master one explicit feeling, mood, or emotion on the basis of another.

This lends further support to reading attunement as capturing our everyday feelings, moods, and emotions as well as this implicit affective background. If only an implicit background was meant, this passage would be very difficult to make any sense of.



attunement. There, I suggested that the pervasive power of our attunement was a threat to the traditional model of responsibility conceived as the mastery and control of the subject, as outlined above. In this chapter, I will aim to show how and why this is the case by showing how any ‘mastery’ in fact finds its basis in attunement, and ultimately showing how our attunement undermines seeing the subject as site of control or mastery. In order to help do this, I will appeal to the later work of Harry Frankfurt, which I will show converges with Heidegger’s account in important respects. In spelling out more explicitly what appears to be implicit in Heidegger’s work, Frankfurt’s work will be utilized to show how control, conceived as choosing alone or as choice guided by rational deliberation, cannot be the model for taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world.

Next, I will look to Frankfurt’s own alternative proposal given the similarities with Heidegger’s view. Initially this fit with Heidegger’s work seems all the more promising, given that Frankfurt’s suggested model of a kind of wholeheartedness might be thought to mirror Heidegger’s own idea of ‘resoluteness’ with which taking responsibility can be identified. But by looking to Frankfurt’s account, I will argue that this model too is unsuccessful. As well as failing by our everyday understanding of what taking responsibility looks like, I will begin to show – through the idea of anxiety - how Frankfurt’s account undermines itself, pointing to the importance of Heidegger’s distinctive ontology for understanding responsibility

## **Frankfurt Contra Choice and Rational Deliberation**

We shall primarily be looking at two works from Frankfurt: his 1988 essay ‘The Importance of What We Care About’ and his 2004 book ‘The Reasons of Love’. While their aims, styles, and philosophical backgrounds differ markedly, the convergence between Frankfurt’s work and elements of Heidegger’s analysis is pronounced. The key point of overlap for our purposes here involves Heideggerian attunement, as outlined above, with Frankfurt’s analysis of caring. Note that hereafter when talking of care, I will not be talking about Heidegger’s use of ‘*Sorge*’ to designate the structural totality of Dasein, but rather Frankfurt’s idea of care which is more in keeping with our everyday understanding of the term.

Frankfurt's idea of care overlaps with attunement conceived in terms of 'mattering'. In the 'The Importance of What We Care About,' Frankfurt characterizes the domain of his investigation as concerning 'what is implied by the fact that we are creatures to whom things matter' (1988 p80).<sup>3</sup> The overlap with attunement is seen further as Frankfurt goes on to explore 'love' as an 'especially notable variant of caring' (2004 p11). In keeping with our characterization of attunement as including, yet going beyond, explicit feelings, moods, and emotions, for Frankfurt 'it is not among the defining features of love that it must be hot rather than cool.' (2004 p42) That is, while love is often experienced as an intense feeling or emotion, this is not necessary for it to be love.

In fact, again in keeping with our picture of Heideggerian attunement, what is characteristic for love, and for caring in general, is the way that it orients and moves us: it is 'that with reference to which the person guides himself in what he does with his life and conduct' (1988 p82). What someone cares about is 'that by which he moves himself' (1988 p84), and caring 'consists in guiding oneself along a distinctive course or in a particular manner' (1988 p83).

Moreover, just as for Heidegger having some kind of attunement is a necessary condition of meaningful experience, so in Frankfurt we find a picture of caring that is surprisingly akin to this phenomenological transcendental kind of explanation. Caring is an 'indispensable condition' for our engaging in worthwhile activity in the way that we do (2004 p58)<sup>4</sup>. Caring (in this instance, loving) 'makes possible' our having meaning in our lives (2004 p90). Most strikingly, caring about something for Frankfurt:

bears not just upon the individual specificity of a person's life, but upon its basic structure. Caring is indispensably foundational [...] Regardless of how suitable or unsuitable the various things we care about may be, caring about something is essential to our being creatures of the kind that human beings are. (2004 p17)

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<sup>3</sup> For other uses of this term, see also Frankfurt 1988 p86, Frankfurt 2004 p22-23

<sup>4</sup> See also Frankfurt 2004 p54, where, through a discussion of boredom, caring about things is said to be necessary for differences to be noticed and distinctions to be made.

Thus, we can see the deep affinity between attunement as previously described and the idea of caring in Frankfurt. Given that Frankfurt sees, at least in part, his project as considering the implications of being creatures for whom things matter, it seems promising to turn to his work for elucidation of Heidegger's claim that willing and thinking ('volition and cognition' above), as means of control, are always based in an attunement. In what follows, I shall generally use mattering, caring, and loving (as a specific type of caring for Frankfurt) interchangeably. Beginning with the idea of choice as control, with the help of Frankfurt I shall show how the idea of controlling the way we're attuned is not the right way to understand taking responsibility.

Before turning to the details of Frankfurt's account, it is worth remembering that we have already seen how we must be attuned to possibilities for them to show up to us. They must matter to us, we must care about them, if they are to solicit us as possibilities to be taken up at all. We are always already drawn to particular possibilities that we are taking up, and typically this is not something we are aware of. The unthinking way we go about our daily tasks exemplifies this. However there are times when two or more possibilities pull on us in differing directions. In light of this, we might think that the pull of both possibilities on us becomes explicit, as we must make a choice or decision as to which to take up. Both the possibilities must matter and solicit us to some degree for the need for a decision or choice to arise in the first place. They must both already matter to us in a particular way for a decision to need to be made, in the way that no such need for decision shows up when a competing possibility doesn't solicit us at all.

But perhaps we might think that given the minimal condition of a possibility soliciting us to the degree that it shows up as a possibility in my world, we can *then* exercise our free choice among these possibilities to change the shape of our lives. As long as a possibility matters minimally enough to show up at all, I can then take control through my choosing.

For Frankfurt, such a reading is misguided: 'an exaggerated significance is sometimes ascribed to decisions, as well as to choices and to other similar "acts of will."'(Frankfurt 1988 p84) Frankfurt uses a paradigmatic example of such 'exaggerated significance' to show how. By using the famous Sartrean example of the student torn between staying to help his mother and fighting with the

Resistance, Frankfurt wishes to show that an act of will, a decision, is impotent unless it accords with what the agent really cares about, what matters to the agent.

In accordance with the analysis given above, we might say that both possibilities must matter to the young man if the dilemma is to occur – if his mother or the revolution didn't matter, no choice or decision would arise or be needed. The grip of what matters extends beyond this however. Attunement is more pervasive, and its movement doesn't suddenly stop to open a neutral space for choice or decision. As Frankfurt explains it, if the young man in the example, asserting his freedom, declares that he is going to stay and help his mother, this act of choosing is not enough on its own to gain control of the situation. 'When the chips are down' for Frankfurt, the young man may find that he cannot bring himself to stay and look after his mother. He may find that instead, despite his 'deciding', he is drawn to the opposite course of action. In such case, to say that a 'decision' is made at all would be to reduce the act of deciding to a 'merely verbal or intellectual event' (Frankfurt 1988 p181). Actually staying and looking after his mother is only possible if it matters to him sufficiently, regardless of an 'act of choosing' to the contrary. In Frankfurt's words:

the resolution of the young man's dilemma does not merely require, then, that he decide what to do. It requires that *he really care more* about one of the alternatives confronting him than about the other. (1988 p85 emphasis mine)

Control with respect to the alternatives is not possible with an act of choosing or decision alone, and any power or mastery that a decision wields gains its weight from finding ourselves already caring about one possibility more than another.

Or does it? We may say that what is missing from the Sartrean picture above is not mattering but reasons. The act of choosing or deciding is possible and is effective in gaining control because it is supported by reasons that I can deliberate on and judge between. Control is constituted by our reflective evaluation of the course of action to be taken; it comes from our ability to consider and evaluate potential reasons. It might be argued that the young man in the Sartrean example gains control of the situation by assessing the reasons in favour of the options available. It is assessing reasons that allows him to make a choice of one possibility over another and for this choice to be effective. It is in virtue of

reasons that I can make a choice, and therefore in virtue of reasons that I can take control and take responsibility for my being-in-the-world.

The issue of what a reason is exactly is a vexed question with a deep history, and one that can hardly be treated adequately here. However, it is worth noting the following points, which I take to bear significantly on the suggestion that appealing to reasons is what allows choice, control, and so responsibility.

The notion of a reason is conventionally linked with reason conceived as our faculty of rationality, our ability to think and judge rationally. So taken, it is rationality that sits as the basis of our control. It is from this that traction is gained to motivate and make effective control, including control of our attunement. We can take this to be at least part of what Heidegger is alluding to when he cites ‘cognition’ as the apparent basis of mastering an attunement. On the basis of his analysis of care, Frankfurt can be seen to flesh out the Heideggerian claim – that this cognition itself finds its basis in attunement – in two ways.

If one understands rationality as a pure faculty in contrast to, and separate from, anything like attunement – in the Humean vein, for example, as the ability to judge consistency of thought with itself and with other facts – then reason alone cannot serve as the ground of control, as it is too empty. In order to have any purchase, it must connect with something that I care about. Reason can appear to act as a basis for controlling my anger by showing that this anger is inconsistent with taking up my projects well. For example, by showing me that anger is detrimental to attending to my patients as a doctor, or that desiring the latest technology flies in the face of a commitment to social justice. But this can only act as a ground of control if being a doctor or social justice are things that matters to me, are things that I care about – and this because of caring about who I am more generally. The question of ‘why’ in relation to control, like the relentlessly inquisitive child, cannot be satisfied with appeal to pure formal reason but must sooner or later bottom out in finding something mattering to us:

We need to understand, [...] that the ambition to provide an exhaustively rational warrant for the way in which we are to conduct our lives is misconceived. The pan-rationalist fantasy of demonstrating – from the ground

up – how we have most reason to live is incoherent and must be abandoned.  
(Frankfurt 2004 p28)

Pure rationality so conceived is not sufficient for control for Frankfurt. Moreover, it is not what we tend to mean by talk of rationality and reasons in our everyday lives. In accordance with Heidegger's methodology, this everyday understanding reveals something important. While it is common to think of reasons in relation to this purely formal idea, our normal talk of rationality in fact conceals within it implicit reference to what we care about. Frankfurt demonstrates this with reference to Hume's famous claim that it's not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger (2004 p45)<sup>5</sup>. Frankfurt claims that in our ordinary language, we would precisely import language of rationality to rebuke such a person, calling them 'insane' or 'unreasonable'. We would precisely say they *lacked* reason and were out of their mind. But here there is no inconsistency, no affront to rationality in its purely formal conception. The real issue here is that they are failing to care about something: the destruction of the world is failing to matter to them in the way that we believe that it should.

This is indicative of the way that, for Frankfurt, reasons are in fact grounded in what we care about and not in a pure, disinterested rationality. A reason would not show up as a reason unless it connected in some way to what matters to me. For Frankfurt, this reflective process of deliberating and assessing that we identify with reasoning, with 'having a reason' to do something, is itself bound up with what we care about. Reasoning must 'latch on to' what matters if it is to gain any traction. Caring is a necessary condition of possibilities showing up to us; there is no ground for thinking that possible reasons for acting are any different, and our everyday experience seems to support this view. Going beyond Frankfurt now, here I think this can be seen in three ways.

The first is considering what shows up as a reason for us when we consult our own experience. In cases where we stop and reflect about our reasons for acting, certain things show up as reasons and not others, and those that show up as reasons do so because they have a foothold in what really matters to us. A natural

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<sup>5</sup> See also the discussion in 'Rationality and the Unthinkable' in Frankfurt 1988

disaster might show up as a reason for me to go to work on my day off if I am a doctor, but not otherwise. The birthday of a close friend may show up as a reason to try and leave work early, while the birthday of a stranger will not. The former and not the latter show up as reasons for me because being a doctor matters to me, and because I care about my friend. It is only in virtue of this that they are reasons for me. Even the ‘coldest’ form of practical rationality, the kind espoused by ‘game theory’, relies on self-interest as a kind of affective connection to one’s own life, the idea that one’s own (economic) gains and losses matter.

The second type of case where this can be seen, perhaps even more starkly, is when trying to persuade another in some way. It is through appeal to what the other has an affective connection to, what matters to them, that this is done. If trying to persuade someone to vote for a political party, one might do so on the assumption that their own lives and their own children matter to them, and so appeal to ways in which these would be affected by certain parties. Alternatively, in trying to convince someone about an issue that doesn’t affect them directly, such as the plight of refugees, one might try and relate it to something that does matter to them – the ideal of fairness or justice perhaps. If this doesn’t matter at least sufficiently for it to become a reason, one might try and connect to what matters to the other through imagination: ‘how would you feel if it were you, or someone you were close to?’ Even the reasoning employed in a court of law in an attempt to sway a judge or jury can only hold in virtue of the law mattering to the judge or jury as something to be adhered to and upheld (whether this matters to them as such or only insofar as it comes from their particular role).

Here we can see how reasons are grounded in our implicit attunements, that which matters. But we can how reasons are bound up with attunement more clearly when reasons are grounded in our explicit attunements, our feelings, moods and emotions. We can think of lawyers who might try and induce explicit attunements of sympathy, embarrassment, or pride for persuasion. In the same vein, we can think of the tactics used by a state to try and persuade a populace – it is commonly through appeal to the way our own safety and security matters to us explicitly in the form of fear. Here, we find support in Heidegger’s own discussion of oratory in Aristotle, which we are told involves bringing the listeners into a certain *Befindlichkeit* (BCAP p82-83): ‘Aristotle offers a clue regarding this, that

all judgements are not made in the same manner, for example, “when we are sad or are happy.” (ibid.)<sup>6</sup> And this is the third way in which the way reasons find their basis in attunement can be seen – not in the implicit, background way that things matter as in Frankfurt, but in the explicit manifestation of this in our feelings, moods, and emotions. In these intense attunements where the feeling of what matters is magnified or intensified, so too are potential reasons. In such intense affective states, we are all surely familiar with how reasons can present themselves to us as such only to dissipate along with the feeling that brought them, as our reason to strike someone might fade with the anger it was grounded in, for example. We can see that with these intense attunements we bring to the surface that which holds true of those less intense background attunements – that reasons always depend on, and are bound up with, attunement. Our failure to recognise this can be attributed to the fact that attunement is normally of this less sharp, background type. We typically do not even notice it at all, and thus it is difficult to see our reasons as grounded in it. Relatedly, this background attunement is generally much more stable than fleeting feelings and emotions, the changing nature of which allows us to see our reasons coming and going accordingly.

None of this is to say that deliberative reasons are mere adornments to work that’s all done by our attunement, or that reasons are only a kind of post-hoc label that do no work at all. Our practical reasoning is not reducible to attunement, but nonetheless depends upon an attunement necessarily. All control depends upon and is already caught up with attunement, with what matters.<sup>7</sup>

We might take further support for this point by looking to Crowell’s work on Heidegger. Crowell is particularly relevant here because more than any other, his work has sought to place the idea of reasons and practical rationality in a Kantian spirit into Heidegger’s thought. In spite of his commitment to thinking Heidegger through the lens of reasons (in particular, as we shall see in chapter six, through the idea of reason giving), Crowell nonetheless recognizes that reasons

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<sup>6</sup> See also, with reference to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*: ‘It is into such attunement and out of attunement that the orator speaks. He must understand the possibilities of attunement in order to rouse them and guide them aright’. (SZ 138-139)

<sup>7</sup> In chapter six I will present my positive account, which will begin to fill the explanatory space that reasons and reason giving might be thought to hold exclusively, but in which reasons can nonetheless find their place.



can only show up in virtue of our attunement, how we are disposed (as *Befindlichkeit* is often translated). Even in cases where ‘reasons’ apparently master (explicit) attunements, these reasons must themselves be grounded in an attunement:

If I am finally moved to act “in spite of” the way I feel about things “because” it is what reason demands, this is possible only if I am so disposed that I can feel the weight of the reasons brought forward. (Crowell 2013 p202)

Thought about in another way, as Crowell shows in various places (e.g. 2013, 2013), reasons (as a type of understanding) are always only possible reasons. They are reasons in light of projection into a possibility. Yet, as we have seen, all projection finds its basis in attunement. A reason, as a possibility, must too find its basis in attunement as stated earlier. Practical rationality and the kind of control through choosing that it appears to give, finds its basis in our attunement, in what matters.<sup>8</sup>

In looking to how our choice, decision, and practical rationality find their ground in attunement, I hope to have shown how any control, including control over our explicit attunements, must find its ground in that which we already find mattering to us. As Frankfurt puts it, the things someone cares about:

guide and limit his agency. They determine what he may be willing to do, what he cannot help doing, and what he cannot bring himself to do. They determine [...] what he may be willing to accept as a reason for acting, what he cannot help considering to be a reason for acting, and what he cannot bring himself to count as a reason for acting. In these ways, they set the boundaries of his

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<sup>8</sup> It follows that it is not just practical rationality that finds its basis in attunement. All rationality, and all thought for Heidegger, as a possibility, must find its basis in attunement:

‘Yet even the purest *theoria* has not left all attunement behind it; [...] Any cognitive determining has its existential-ontological Constitution in the *Befindlichkeit* of Being-in-the-world; but pointing this out is not to be confused with attempting to surrender science ontically to ‘feeling’. (SZ 138)

This is even true for something like formal logic. Here, Heidegger’s texts on Aristotle are particularly relevant as part of Heidegger’s work here, as Caputo puts it, is to show how Aristotle’s theoretical philosophy is grounded in his practical philosophy (Caputo 1994).

practical life; and thus they fix and shape his shape as an active being. (2004 p50)

What matters to us, what we care about, shapes all that we can be said to ‘do’. The particular possibilities of reasoning, choosing, and deciding all gain their impetus and weight from the way we are attuned. Attunement is pervasive. It is not something that stands over and against our faculty for thought, choice, or decision that can be dominated, but rather is constitutive of such thought, choice or action. In Heidegger’s words, the way we find ourselves attuned:

is not – is never – simply a consequence or side-effect of our thinking, doing, and acting. It is – to put it crudely – the presupposition for such things, the ‘medium’ within which they first happen.’ (FCM p67-68)

But where does this leave us in our investigation of how it is possible to take responsibility for our being-in-the-world? We turn now to consider Frankfurt’s idea of ‘clarity and confidence’ as a model of responsibility in light of these considerations.<sup>9</sup>

### **Clarity and Confidence**

If all control is dependent upon what we care about, dependent upon a particular attunement, how do we stand in relation to what we care about? For Frankfurt, we can have some control over what we care about, over this deeper background attunement:

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<sup>9</sup> Frankfurt does not talk explicitly in terms of responsibility or taking responsibility here, however Frankfurt’s discussion fits naturally into our debate, and his purported solution, as we shall see, seems to capture some interpretations of authenticity in Heidegger which are taken to express what we would call taking responsibility. In addition, Frankfurt’s own positive contribution seems to be an extension of the idea of responsibility expounded in his early work. There, responsibility concerned particular actions, and an agent is responsible if their grounds for acting accord with their own will, regardless of whether they could have acted otherwise (as argued for by Frankfurt through so called cases of ‘over determination’). It is a sort of identification with the action that makes one responsible, the fact that the act is an expression of will, not the ability to have done otherwise. Here, what is required is equally a kind of identification with oneself, a kind of expression of this ‘deep self’ throughout one’s existence.

What a person cares about, and how much he cares about it, may under certain conditions be up to him. It may at times be possible for him to bring it about that he cares about something, or that he does not care about it, just by making up his mind one way or the other. (2004 p45)

That is, at times, we can choose to care about something, we can in some sense decide that something matters to us. While coming to care about something need not happen instantly in the manner in which we typically control our actions, it nonetheless seems to be something that we can sometimes do. For example, politics might be something that doesn't really matter to me. However, in some thoughtful moment, perhaps after being provoked by a particular incident, through a process of consideration I conclude that I should care about politics; I might reason that I care about the suffering of other people and that my political involvement directly impacts upon that. The process is typically slow and gradual, as we steer ourselves by degrees towards something – I might start reading political posts on the internet, start watching the news, and in so doing come to develop a deep care about politics. In a more or less immediate and dramatic sense, then, it seems that I can control what I care about.

Importantly however, this deeper level of control (deeper in the sense that what we care about is the condition of the possibility of particular acts and decisions) is itself only possible on the basis of already caring about something else. I can only come to care about politics on the basis that I already care about the suffering of others for example, or perhaps because I care about the opinions of my politically minded social circle. Control at this deeper level also requires a basis in a different way of caring, in another way of being attuned.

And while this kind of control of what matters to us is sometimes possible, for Frankfurt we reach a point, a depth at which this is no longer the case:

With regard to certain things, however, a person may discover that he cannot affect whether or how much he cares about them merely by his own decision.  
*This issue is not up to him at all.* (2004 p45, emphasis mine)

For Frankfurt, while we can exert some influence over what we care about, we reach a kind of bedrock of caring, sometimes characterized by Frankfurt as the

particular variety of caring that we call love, which we cannot control. This is the foundation upon which all ultimately rests, the ground from which, and in the light of which, all else gets its meaning and import.

So what is this bedrock of care and how does it come about?<sup>10</sup> We find that we care about certain projects, people, values etc. in this way. This corresponds to what we earlier described as our identity, who we are – the foundational way in which I find existence matters to me that is constitutive of my self-understanding. We care about these things through no choosing of our own, but rather in virtue of the ‘exigencies of life’ (2004 p47) - ‘biological, psychological and environmental facts’ (2004 p27), here endorsing in some sense the relationship I have outlined between our thrownness (which might include such ‘facts’) and its manifestation in attunement (or what we care about, in Frankfurt’s terms). Despite their coming into being in this contingent way, it is these aspects of our lives that are most central to our identity. These ways of caring shape our experience of the world, and are that on the basis of which everything else we care about gets its significance and import: they are foundational to who we are. Corresponding to the way that our identity can be seen as our answer to the question of who I am or what it means to be, for Frankfurt what we care about at this fundamental level amounts to nothing less than our answer to the question of ‘how to live’ (2004 p23).

While we can exert some control over what we care about then, this control itself gains traction on the basis of some deeper way of being attuned. At this fundamental level, the way we are attuned shapes all that shows up to us. There is nothing outside of this attunement from which to gain traction to exert control over it. What we care about at the fundamental level is not within our power to change or control, since all possibilities of change or control show up in terms of what we already care about. So while we could gain control of some attunements by appeal to something that mattered to us more, there is nothing that matters more to us than these fundamental things we care about. The model of controlling our attunements through choice, then, and so taking responsibility with respect to them, cannot

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<sup>10</sup> Frankfurt at times seems to equate this bedrock with things that we care about in virtue of our being natural evolved organisms – we care about our lives, our health, our offspring, for example (and even about whether we relate to other people) (2004 p40, 45) However, he admits that it is possible for people not to care about these things in the way biology might appear to dictate (footnote to p45). It is noteworthy to remember in this respect that Heidegger conducts his ontological analysis under the rubric of ‘life’ in *The Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*.

function at this most important level of who we are: our answer to the question of what it means to be is not subject to our choosing. Taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world then, cannot be seen in terms of taking control or mastery of this through choice, because this control is always dependent upon the way we are already attuned at the fundamental level. This grips me, and anything else that grips me must do so in terms of this. There is no ground, or reason, to try and change who we are or our answer to the question of how to live, since everything shows up in its terms. Choice, control, is only an expression of, and has no power with respect to, the answer to ‘what it means to be’ that we find ourselves thrown into. If responsibility is only to be understood as taking control through choosing and deciding, then we cannot be responsible for our being-in-the-world since we can exert no control over this at the foundational level from which our lives are shaped.

For Frankfurt then, what is decisive for us is not having control with respect to the things we care about at the deepest level. This is not possible. What is required is not control, then, but rather ‘clarity and confidence’ (2004 p28). The essential task is ‘simply to understand what it is that we ourselves really care about, and to be decisively and robustly confident in caring about it.’ (*ibid.*) What is required of us in relation to this deepest level of attunement is to be ‘wholehearted’ (2004 p95) in relation to it. As he puts it elsewhere, the task is to be ‘satisfied’ (2004 p94) or ‘relaxed’ (2008 p105) with ourselves at this deepest level. Thus taking responsibility will not consist in being able to control who I am, but in being confident in who I am, in affirming my real or true self. It is to identify with all that I am and presumably to accept what that entails.

This idea of ‘wholeheartedness’ is how authenticity, and in particular the idea of ‘resoluteness [*Entschlossenheit*], is often read. And a Heideggerian account of taking responsibility is often thought to be constituted by, or to include, this idea of resoluteness, which is in fact pointed to by Heidegger’s own reading of Aristotle. In contrast to Raffoul’s translation of *prohairesis* as ‘decision’ from which the idea of responsibility as choice or control derives, Heidegger reads Aristotle’s *prohairesis* as a ‘taking hold [*Zugriff*]’ (BCAP p73), as being ‘resolved [*entschlossen*] that a matter be done thus and so’ (BCAP p97). So understood, taking responsibility in the face of our thrownness requires, for Heidegger, this

same idea of wholeheartedness, clarity, and confidence that can be found in Frankfurt, as commentators like Carman suggest:

Resoluteness means knowing confidently what one is about, which is a kind of certainty, or more precisely a noncognitive being-certain (*Gewißsein*) about oneself,[...] being fully resolved to oneself and one's situation ultimately means projecting wholeheartedly. (Carman 2003)<sup>11</sup>

This account of resoluteness still conforms to the traditional idea of responsibility as mastery and power of the subject (and on Heidegger's reading, still conforms to Raffoul's narrative of this idea's origin in Aristotle), but does so in a way that differs from the idea that responsibility is to be found in control or choice. On this model, taking responsibility can still be seen as a kind of self-determination of the subject, but this no longer thought on the model of choosing and controlling. Rather, it is characterized in terms of the idea of being determined by one's self (or 'true self' or 'deep self' as it could be called) in contrast to being determined by 'outside' forces such as other people and desires that aren't part of one's true-self. Responsibility as Heideggerian resoluteness is taking oneself as the standard or the law, having autonomy in this sense<sup>12</sup>, as opposed to being determined by forces exterior to this deep self, or heteronomy. Taking responsibility for our being-in-

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<sup>11</sup> As I will argue in chapter five, McManus (2015) can be read as advancing this kind of account. For others, it seems that an idea of wholeheartedness plays some role, if not a central or sufficient role, in their interpretation of responsibility in Heidegger. Crowell, for example, approvingly cites Haugeland's location of responsibility in the 'existential commitment' of resoluteness, but says that this aspect alone isn't enough and that responsibility requires a discursive element (2013 p210-211). While Han-Pile's account equates responsibility with 'choosing to choose' as we shall see, at one point some idea of wholeheartedness is added that seems to be constitutive of this responsibility:

'In existentiell freedom, the choice of choosing oneself is made wholeheartedly in the sense that Dasein takes without reservation as much responsibility for itself as is allowed by its finitude and the relative degree of ontological transparency achieved.' (2013 p304)

<sup>12</sup> Where the 'self' that is the law here is the deep self, contra Kant's strict understanding of autonomy as governance by universal rationality. Frankfurt himself cites approvingly the notion of 'autonomy', and sees this as the right way to understand freedom (2004 footnote to p20). The current chapter's story could perhaps be read through the lens of 'freedom' and its equation with responsibility. To be responsible is to be free, and while freedom has been thought to mean freedom of will, the ability to do otherwise, Frankfurt shows, mirroring his early work, that freedom in fact is an alignment with one's will, or what one cares about. This too would accord with Heidegger's belief (that freedom is not liberty of indifference, but finding oneself inclined in one direction. Importantly, as we shall see, Frankfurt's reading supposes freedom is finding oneself ultimately inclined to the particular things I care about, in contrast to anything 'beyond' that. I will challenge this view in chapter six.

the-world on this reading means affirming our particular attunement, affirming our thrownness (as ‘taking over’ our thrownness might perhaps be read).

### **Rejecting the Frankfurtian Account**

However, there are good reasons to reject this as an account of taking responsibility. The first point that may strike us about the idea of clarity and confidence is that it seems to make something like bloody-mindedness a virtue. It suggests that we acquire a kind of affective stamp in virtue of particular environmental and psychological factors - in virtue of our thrownness - and once we have this stamp, once we care about certain things and have clearly identified this, we are to confidently let it guide us through the world, reverting to its authority at every checkpoint. This picture presents the task of taking responsibility as a kind of obstinate affirmation of oneself, immune to any serious influence from the world and others. Responsibility simply requires looking deep inside oneself before ploughing head down into the world.

It seems that Frankfurt himself is aware of this problem, as he feels the need in two separate footnotes to assert that his picture does not necessitate being stubborn:

It is perhaps worth pointing out that being wholehearted does not entail having a closed mind. The wholehearted person need not be a fanatic. Someone who knows without qualification where he stands may nonetheless be quite ready to give serious attention to reasons for changing that stand. (2004 p95. See also p28)

But it's not clear on what grounds Frankfurt is able to make such a claim. As we have already seen, the things someone cares about at the fundamental level:

determine as well what he may be willing to accept as a reason for acting, what he cannot help considering to be a reason for acting, and what he cannot bring himself to count as a reason for acting. (2004 p50)

If this foundational affective lens through which the world shows up to us is determinative, it seems that anything that might threaten this foundation cannot even

show up for us in a way that could genuinely threaten it. In fact, Frankfurt goes even further to claim that what it means to care about something in this way means that we deliberately steer ourselves away from anything that might threaten this foundational caring and the action that results. The clear and confident agent:

guides himself away from being critically affected by anything – in the outside world or within himself – which might divert him or dissuade him either from following that course or from caring as much as he does about following it. [...] [He] suppresses or dissociates himself from whatever motives or desires he regards as inconsistent with the stability and effectiveness of his commitment. (1988 p87-88)

Being ‘clear and confident’ or wholehearted, seems to involve steering oneself away from anything that might threaten our answer to the question of how to live, what we care about.

A sense of the general problem can be shown here by looking to how it plays out in microcosm in the questions after a philosophy paper. I think we can differentiate between three types of comportment that the speaker takes.

The first is when the whole experience is a one-way conversation. After presenting their thoughts, the speaker is blind to any kind of question or critical comment. The problems presented by the audience do not even show up to them. Despite an important point being suggested to them by several people, to the point where patience and politeness begin to wane, they remain impervious and impenetrable. The question is not understood, the import completely lost, as the speaker merely keeps repeating the same points already made in their paper in response.

On an uncharitable reading, this is the kind of picture we get with Frankfurt’s clarity and confidence – once we are clear on what we care about, on who we are, we rigidly stick to it, ploughing through the world, head down, in the same way that the speaker does once they have come to their philosophical position. Like the speaker and their position, anything that might change what matters to us, what we care about, does not even show up to us. From this stance, only things that reinforce the position itself show up.



On a more charitable reading, we might try and take Frankfurt at his word. While it is not clear how it is possible given his other claims, we might allow that someone who is clear and confident about what matters ‘may nonetheless be quite ready to give serious attention to reasons for changing that stand.’ We can see this as corresponding to a different type of comportment toward the question and answer session.

This speaker, after giving their paper, listens to and understands the questions given. They may even do so keenly, eager to grasp any potential problems their position may have. They listen to the questions, perhaps clarifying that they have understood the problem, before attempting to respond to them. In contrast to the previous kind of speaker, the criticisms and problems show up to them, and they show up *as* problems. However, they show up solely as things to be overcome. They show up as issues to be incorporated into, and never as genuine reasons to abandon, their position. The speaker’s end goal is unwavering – the destination on the horizon is fixed – they *are* a Heideggerian, or a naturalist, or a utilitarian. The criticisms show up and are given focus only to be co-opted into the direction of travel, never to change it.

We can see this picture as corresponding to the most generous reading we can give of Frankfurt’s position given the other claims that he has made about being clear and confident. Many of us no doubt can recognize a tendency within ourselves to comport ourselves in this way – the way PhDs, research projects, careers etc. work, nurture precisely this tendency, a tendency that we shall be able to recognize later as what Heidegger calls our tendency to ‘fall.’

However, I think that we would all agree that this is not what philosophy genuinely demands of us; to really do philosophy surely demands being open to following new paths, to changing our position. While this Frankfurtian comportment, as seen in relation to philosophy, is certainly safer, more comfortable, less painful than the prospect of seeing hundreds of hours of work, thousands of words, endless energy ‘wasted’, it surely rests on the error of seeing oneself tied inexorably to a particular, foundational position. Were this the case, we might wonder how philosophy could get going at all. And we might think that here there is some connection between philosophy and our answer to the question of how to live.

This points us to a second way in which we might express the discomfort with Frankfurt's picture of responsibility, which concerns the relationship between being clear and confident and the possibility of change; the nature of becoming.

As we have seen, it seems that being wholehearted is to look deep inside ourselves, realize what matters to us at the deepest level and align ourselves with this, clearly and confidently letting this be our guide in the world. We have seen Frankfurt protest that this does not mean being closed off to things that may lead us to change our position, but given how things must show up in the light of the particular way in which things matter to us, and how we even actively divert ourselves away from anything that might threaten this, it is difficult to see how this could be true. This is confirmed when we look further to how Frankfurt characterizes becoming clear and confident or wholehearted with respect to the foundational care that Frankfurt here characterizes as love:

But suppose that our love is so wholehearted, and that we are so satisfied to be in its grip, that we could not bring ourselves to alter it even if a measure by which it could be altered were available. In that case, *the alternative is not a genuine option*. (2004 p49, emphasis mine)

This reinforces the idea that the possibility of change does not even show up for Frankfurt, but it also introduces another related point. While we are not given a detailed account of exactly *how* we become clear and confident, on Frankfurt's characterization it seems to be a once-and-for-all event. We acquire a particular affective orientation to the world through certain natural and circumstantial means, and at some point in time we come to realize the foundational nature of this orientation and become confident in it. At this point, Frankfurt describes this as being akin to the kind of satisfaction achieved through the certainty of mathematics: 'The issue is settled' (2004 p65). This is no mere analogy, as we later see: 'The wholehearted person is *fully settled* as to [...] what he cares about.' (2004 p95, emphasis mine) The kind of picture Frankfurt has in mind is shown even more starkly in another section as he outlines what is required for us to be clear and confident in what matters. One such feature is that what matters does so for its own sake, and not instrumentally. If this was not the case, we could

never be genuinely satisfied by it, because it will *always be unfinished*. Since what it aims at is always a *preliminary or a preparation*, it will leave us always *short of completion*. (2004 p53 emphasis mine)

Given this, it seems that being wholehearted in what we care about is for the matter to be finished, to be completed. We are no longer on the way, but have arrived.

Such a picture bears an uncanny resemblance to a Hollywood narrative, in which an unhappy protagonist toils at their office job, strains to resist the romantic advances of their morally suspect co-worker, and all the while neglecting their family and their true creative passion. At last they come to realize that what really matters, what they really care about, is their family and their creative pursuit. This is who they really are, this is their real answer to the question of how to live. Finally clear and confident in this, they leave their unsatisfying job and the dark passions it threatens to facilitate, escaping to a new life by the coast to pursue their creative passion and spend time with their family. The decisive step has been taken and the audience is left safe in the knowledge that all is happy ever after. The issue is settled, and the audience is supposed to feel as Frankfurt at times describes the state of clarity and confidence itself – restful, relaxed, and satisfied.

But we can surely not be wholly satisfied with this as a characterization of how we can stand in relation to what matters to us, as what taking responsibility means. Experience tells us that this is not the way life works. Perhaps if we reflected longer, we might even question whether this settled, satisfied stasis would be desirable. If our film's protagonist remained affectively orientated in the same way despite a political crisis calling upon them to abandon their creative pursuit, or if their partner became a fervent advocate of the fascism at the heart of such a crisis, we would find their persisting confidence and clarity in what they care about troubling.

Importantly, in this case and in the general way that Frankfurt's picture presents one as closed off from threats or changes to what we care about, this does not seem to be what we would call taking responsibility – it looks more like its opposite. Taking responsibility in the case of the philosophy paper would surely amount to something more like acknowledging that the philosophical position is wrong before giving attention to the truth of the matter at hand and letting oneself be guided to a new philosophical stance. Or in the 'Hollywood' case, responsibility

might demand abandoning one's creative dreams, confronting one's spouse, and giving oneself over to the political effort that had previously left one unmoved. Following the method we have seen wherein the fundamental ontological level can always be seen manifesting itself in our everyday understanding, it is not clear how the idea of wholeheartedness, clarity and confidence, can be seen to lie at the bottom of these cases of taking responsibility as their meaning and ground. These worries problematize seeing wholeheartedness as capturing what taking responsibility looks like. Instead, Frankfurt's model gives an undesirable and unlikely way of comporting oneself.

### **Covering Over Anxiety**

It will be helpful here to look at what is motivating Frankfurt's account in order to uncover the root of the problem, which will in turn point the way to prospective solutions. Frankfurt believes that accompanying the deep level of what we care about is a desire that we should relate to this ground with clarity and confidence, that is, wholeheartedly: 'It is a necessary truth about us, then, that we wholeheartedly desire to be wholehearted.' (Frankfurt 2008 p106)

Yet we might ask how caring about whether we care confidently is possible. If the particular things we care about most deeply are the ground on which our life sits, if they determine how experience shows up for us and determine, as we have seen, what shows up as a reason or not, how could we not be confident with respect to them? Surely we could have no reason to *not* be confident in them if all reasons show up in the light of them. Put otherwise, how could we wish to be wholehearted and confident in what we care about at the deepest level unless this deepest level, what matters to us most, were vulnerable in some way? Why would we need to be confident in caring about these fundamental things unless there were the threat that they might cease to orient and impel us in our lives, unless what matters to us most might stop mattering to us?

Frankfurt himself provides the answer for the question of how we can care about being wholehearted in describing the motivation of his project :

What presses us to inquire into them [the questions that find their answer in clarity and confidence] is not disinterested curiosity, or puzzlement, or wonder, or awe. It is psychic distress of another variety altogether: a kind of nagging anxiety, or unease. (2004 p4-5)

The ground of Frankfurt's project manifests itself in anxiety. Indeed, the threat of anxiety is mentioned several times throughout Frankfurt's work as that which we are trying to avoid with wholeheartedness, with clarity and confidence. It seems that underlying Frankfurt's picture, that which motivates the pursuit of clarity and confidence in what matters, is the constant threat of anxiety.

What seems to underlie Frankfurt's picture implicitly is the threat that what matters most, that which determines who we are, our answer to the question of how to live, is vulnerable. Even the affective grip that seems to tie us to our lives as a whole might in some way lose its hold. Frankfurt even begrudgingly admits (describing as typically pathological) that even our 'innate' care for our children and the preservation of our own life, this psycho-biological 'fact', can lose its hold (2004 p84).

But if this threat is always there, if it is possible that even those apparently foundational attunements can lose their grip, then none of them grip me with the kind of necessity that the idea of 'wholeheartedness' tries to suppose or impose. If this is the case, there is no firm bedrock of what we care about underlying our existence. There is no particular content that we are bound to ineluctably, no particular way that existence matters that is not vulnerable to change. Beneath the deepest particular way in which things matter, beneath the deepest attunement on Frankfurt's story, lies what Heidegger calls the fundamental attunement of anxiety. What allows Frankfurt to describe what we are hoping for as 'the more intimate comfort of feeling at home with ourselves.' (2004 p5) is precisely what Heidegger calls the uncanniness, the 'unheimlichkeit' or 'unhomeliness' of anxiety.

As Frankfurt shows us, it is anxiety that lies at the basis of his account. But it is precisely the failure to acknowledge anxiety, and the vulnerability it reveals (as I shall argue in the next chapter), that leads to the aforementioned difficulties with Frankfurt's position. It is anxiety that ultimately prohibits clarity, confidence, and satisfaction in the Frankfurtian vane. While his account depends upon, and in places

acknowledges, the way that even our deepest cares are vulnerable, his picture of wholeheartedness, of clarity and confidence, seems to be at odds with this vulnerability. His account seems to depend on suppressing this vulnerability and instead pretending that we can erect an immutable, solid foundation for ourselves if we so want.

To believe in a fixed foundation of our lives, to try and stick rigidly to a particular way of caring, is to try and cover over the type of things that we are. For Heidegger, as we shall see, it is the fundamental attunement of anxiety which makes the kind of beings that we are starkly manifest to us. It is in light of this that taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world is to be found.

### Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued why the traditional model of responsibility as the mastery or control of the subject, whether in the form of choosing or deciding, or as a kind of self-determination or autonomy, are not viable models for taking responsibility in the light of the thrownness that is disclosed in our attunement.

Having already shown how all projection was necessarily grounded in attunement in the previous chapter, I looked to a similar model of what matters to us in the work of Harry Frankfurt. In conjunction with Frankfurt, I argued in greater detail to show how any control, whether this was thought to be grounded in reasons or in a kind of pure choosing or deciding, had its ground in attunement. Ultimately choice, reasons, and control are grounded in the attunement that grips us already in virtue of our thrownness. Thus seeing responsibility as taking control of our thrownness is illusory, since the weight and power of this control comes from our thrownness itself.

Next, we looked to an account of taking responsibility found in the work of Harry Frankfurt, a variety of which some have read Heidegger as advocating. There, taking responsibility is seen as becoming wholehearted in our attunement, having clarity and confidence with respect to what we care about. I argued that such a model was undesirable, unlikely, and ultimately could not be seen to constitute the meaning and ground of our everyday understanding of taking responsibility. It was seen that in

fact anxiety lies at the basis of Frankfurt's work, albeit in a way that his account sought to cover over or turn away from.

For Heidegger in the experience of anxiety we face up to the mode of being of human existence, as I shall show in the next chapter. In contrast to Frankfurt's account – whose failure lies in covering over the insight anxiety yields, and so covering over our mode of being – I shall aim to explicate what anxiety reveals and give an account of taking responsibility that is sensitive to this, and thus sensitive to the mode of being of Dasein that we find ourselves thrown into.





## Chapter Four - The Meaning of Anxiety

‘I can very well think what Heidegger meant about being and anxiety.’<sup>1</sup> This, so the story goes, is one of only two of Wittgenstein’s comments on Heidegger’s thought. It is perhaps little surprise that it is Heidegger’s analysis of anxiety that would capture one’s attention, as for Heidegger it is through the affect of anxiety, and not through our cognitive powers, that we get an experience of ‘being as such’:

Earlier, in analyzing Descartes’s concept of the subject, I referred to his statement that we actually have no affection of being as such. But there is such an affection (if one wants to use this mode of expression). Anxiety is nothing other than the pure and simple experience of being in the sense of being-in-the-world. (HCT p291)

In *Being and Time* anxiety is described as an experience in which ‘the structural totality of [our being]... come[s] to light in an elemental way’ (SZ 182), in which the central fundamental aspects of our existence are made manifest. To add to this striking claim about the ontologically disclosive capacity of a feeling of anxiety, it is anxiety that can offer the possibility of existing in a way that is *eigentlich*, authentic. When brought face to face with our being, the possibility of acknowledging and living in the light of this being, the possibility of authenticity, is presented, in contrast to a way of living that forgets or flees from our being: ‘the possibility of authenticity and inauthenticity, is shown, with a primordial, elemental concreteness, in anxiety.’ (SZ 191) What it really means to be Dasein is made manifest in anxiety, and it is by living in the light of *this* that one can be authentic. For this reason, Heideggerian accounts of authenticity often take their cue from anxiety<sup>2</sup>. What it means to be authentic, and so by inclusion responsible on the understanding outlined in the

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1 Quote of Wittgenstein’s to Schlick and Waismann dated December 30th, 1929, in Waismann 1979

See ‘Wittgenstein on Heidegger and Cosmic Emotions’ (Marion 2014) for discussion of both of Wittgenstein’s comments on Heidegger.

<sup>2</sup>Whether primarily (Han-Pile 2013, McManus 2013), or in conjunction with other aspects of authenticity (see, for example, Crowell (2013) who sees the call of conscience as adding the decisive element of ‘discourse’ to the idea of authenticity and responsibility, or Guignon (2013) for whom a confrontation with one’s own death is required in addition to anxiety in his account of authentic existence.)

introduction to the thesis, will depend upon the insights that are given in anxiety and the way that these insights are taken up.

In this chapter, in contrast to accounts that see anxiety as opening up a ‘space’ for the traditional model of responsibility by viewing anxiety as providing a kind of break with one’s thrownness, I will argue that there is no such break. I will show how Heideggerian anxiety instead makes us face up to the grip of our thrownness. I will do this by focusing on the affective experience of *threat* that is constitutive of the experience of anxiety which – surprisingly – has been neglected.

With this focus, I hope in addition to remedy a worry that arises from Heidegger’s characterization of the relation between fear and anxiety. I argue that we are presented with a false dichotomy between an extreme kind of fear and what I shall call Heidegger’s ‘radical’ anxiety – a dichotomy in which our everyday experience and understanding are missed. This importantly runs counter to Heidegger’s general phenomenological approach, and threatens the plausibility and accessibility of his account of anxiety and the ontological insight it apparently yields.

I will begin by outlining this problem, before then focusing on radical anxiety. To understand this problem, it is useful to turn back to the problems with Frankfurt’s account of responsibility as wholeheartedness in the previous chapter.

## **Fear, Anxiety, and the Absence of the Everyday**

In the last chapter, we saw how Harry Frankfurt’s conception of care shared many key features with Heidegger’s analysis of attunement. We looked to Frankfurt to elucidate why our attunement threatens the idea of control through choosing as a model of responsibility.

We saw that we cannot change or control the way we’re attuned at the level of who we are, from which our thoughts and deeds spring, as any control necessarily presupposes and is shaped by these very attunements. In the face of this, Frankfurt suggested that what is important in relation to these ways we find existence mattering is not being able to control or change them, but rather to be clear and confident, or wholehearted, in relation to these attunements. I argued, however, that this resulted in

a problematic picture in which bloody-mindedness was a virtue, and the possibility of what matters to us changing was foreclosed.

I traced the significant divergence between the Heideggerian and Frankfurtian pictures to the attunement of anxiety. It was contended that the experience of anxiety and the ontological insight it affords speak against the Frankfurtian picture. It is anxiety that prevents our being clear and confident, that prevents (as Frankfurt variously described it) our being restful, satisfied, and at home with ourselves. Support for the significance of anxiety was taken to be found in the fact that Frankfurt himself acknowledges anxiety as a motivating factor for his project – a motivation for our striving to become clear and confident with respect to our deep attunements. I argued that despite Frankfurt's having to acknowledge the attunement of anxiety, it is ultimately the suppression of this anxiety and its ontological insight that leads to the problems with his account. The implication was that to avoid this problematic picture, and ultimately to understand what taking responsibility means in the face of our attunement, the fundamental attunement of anxiety must be heeded.

A kind of 'confirmation' of the importance of anxiety was taken to lie in its appearance in Frankfurt's own work as that which motivates the search for clarity and confidence. The presence of the *very thing* in Frankfurt's own work which, on a Heideggerian analysis, in fact undermines that work seemed to attest all too triumphantly to the Heideggerian picture. In having to acknowledge anxiety as a feature of our experience, it can be suggested that Frankfurt affirms the Heideggerian picture in spite of himself. But the question arises of whether anxiety in Frankfurt *is* the 'very thing' that ultimately shows his account to be untenable. More simply, in talking about anxiety, are Frankfurt and Heidegger talking about the same thing? In accepting the experience of anxiety, is Frankfurt accepting the same experience whose analysis by Heidegger might undermine Frankfurt's account?

The minor significance Frankfurt attributes to anxiety means that we are told very little about what he means by the term. In the several mentions of anxiety throughout *The Reasons of Love*, we are told only that it is 'psychic distress' (2004 p5), and it is suggested that it is closely connected to 'uneasiness' (2004 p50). But while the minor significance attributed to anxiety partially accounts for the lack of Frankfurt's explanation, perhaps a more important factor is that explanation is superfluous; we all know what anxiety is. It is a common kind of affective

experience, the kind we feel before an upcoming job interview, or upon learning that our loved one's journey will soon come into dangerous weather. It is a kind of distress, unease, or discomfort characterized by worry or concern.

We might be forgiven for thinking that our everyday familiarity with the idea of anxiety that Frankfurt naturally relies upon would guarantee that he and Heidegger are talking about the same thing. At the very least, from what we have seen of Heidegger's method, we would expect that our everyday understanding of anxiety will form the starting point from which we go on to see this ontologically more significant understanding. We would expect to be shown how this radical, ontologically significant anxiety stands as the 'meaning and ground' of our everyday understanding, thus justifying the use of the term 'anxiety' to capture both<sup>3</sup>. However, as we shall see, Heidegger's description of anxiety appears to depart radically from our everyday understanding, excluding all of the everyday examples of anxiety given above. Instead, for Heidegger, these would be captured by a different attunement that is commonly confused with anxiety (SZ 185), namely fear. In Heidegger's characterization of these two affective experiences, I will argue that the important everyday phenomenon of anxiety is missed

Heidegger begins his analysis of anxiety by way of illustrative contrast with the attunement of fear, stating that fear and anxiety are obviously 'kindred phenomena' (SZ 185) that are so close that 'for the most part they have not been distinguished from one another' (*ibid.*)<sup>4</sup>. As I shall explore in more detail later, what appears to connect the two is that they are affective experiences of some kind of threat [*Bedrohung*] (e.g. SZ 140, 189). The crucial difference however, and the reason why the everyday examples of anxiety above cannot be anxiety for Heidegger, lies in that which makes us feel anxious and that which we feel anxious for; in other words, that in the face of which (*Wovor*) and that about which (*Worum*) we experience the threat.

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<sup>3</sup> Support for this idea can be found in Heidegger's endorsement of the principle '*a potiori fit denominatio*' (SZ 329), a favourite of Blattner's (1999, p90).

<sup>4</sup> The distinction seems to have been taken from Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Anxiety*: '[anxiety] is altogether different from fear and similar concepts that refer to something definite, whereas anxiety is freedom's actuality as the possibility of possibility.' (1980 p42)

Any experience in which the threat comes from a particular entity within the world, be it a person or an object, is fear. In contrast,

*That in the face of which one has anxiety is Being-in-the-world as such. What is the difference phenomenally between that in the face of which anxiety is anxious and that in the face of which fear is afraid? That in the face of which one has anxiety is not an entity within-the-world. [...] This threatening does not have the character of a definite detrimentality which reaches what is threatened, and which reaches it with definite regard to a special factual potentiality-for-Being. (SZ 186)*

Not only does the threat of anxiety not come in the face of any definite entity within the world, but it follows that it is also not a threat that applies to us in virtue of understanding ourselves in some particular way, in virtue of projecting into some particular possibility:

*That which anxiety is profoundly anxious about [*Worum*] is not a *definite* kind of Being for Dasein or a *definite* possibility for it. Indeed the threat itself is indefinite, and therefore cannot penetrate threateningly to this or that factually concrete ability-to-be. (SZ 187)<sup>5</sup>*

For Heidegger then, our examples of our everyday understanding of anxiety are ruled out as being ‘anxiety’. The threat from the interview (presumably the threat of failing or doing badly) arises within a definite context, as I apply for a particular job and wait in a specific room, etc. It can only threaten me insofar as the particular possibility of pursuing that career, and more broadly a certain self-understanding, is

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<sup>5</sup> Generally less emphasis is given in the secondary literature on the way that fear pertains to Dasein insofar as it understands itself in light of a particular possibility (the determinate ‘about which’ of fear). This might be because the contrast by Heidegger himself between fear and anxiety tends to focus on ‘that in the face of which’ anxiety arises. For example, after highlighting again the two structural moments of the ‘about which’ and ‘that in the face of which’ in contrasting the indefiniteness of anxiety to fear, Heidegger emphasizes that: ‘In particular, that in the face of which one has anxiety is not encountered as something definite with which one can concern oneself’ (SZ 343). This may be because Heidegger wants to hold open the possibility of inauthentically relating to death by fearing it: fear for one’s life, while inappropriately conceiving death in some kind of innerworldly way as an object or event (SZ 254), nonetheless seems to pertain to Dasein as a whole in some way (albeit in a skewed way that fails to see Dasein as possibility) and not just insofar as Dasein understands itself in the light of some particular possibility.

one that I project into. Equally, the threat of harm to my loved one arises in relation to a specific being and a specific context, namely the loved one themselves and their dangerous journey, and threatens insofar as I understand myself in the light of a particular relationship to this loved one. Only to the extent that I encounter these specific entities in relation to a projection of myself into particular possibilities, can the threat arise and the attunement grip me. Given this determinacy, for Heidegger these experiences should be characterized as fear and not as anxiety.

In contrast, for Heidegger neither ‘that in the face of which’ nor ‘that about which’ anxiety arises pertains to anything particular about me or the world. Rather, the threat is in the face of being-in-the-world as a whole and Dasein as ‘being possible’ as such. In anxiety, that in the face of which and that about which we are anxious coincide (SZ 188) and reveal Dasein as being-in-the-world as such. The threat doesn’t come from a particular entity but rather comes from ‘nowhere’ (SZ 186) and threatens us not insofar as we are in any particular way but insofar as we *are* at all. We are anxious about being as such. Rather than arising from and pertaining to any particularity, all particular possibilities recede; entities are ‘not relevant at all’<sup>6</sup> (*ibid.*), the context in which they appear is ‘of no consequence’<sup>7</sup> (*ibid.*). Rather, ‘the world has the character of completely lacking significance’ or meaningfulness<sup>8</sup> (*ibid.*). Given that, as being-in-the-world, we understand ourselves in terms of the possibilities afforded by the world, the complete insignificance of the world in turn means an inability to understand ourselves in any particular way. With the insignificance of the world comes the insignificance of all of our particular relations to it, to other people, and to the way we understand ourselves through these.

Far from arising from and pertaining to anything specific, anxiety arises from no particular entity, concerns us in no particular way, but rather is an all-encompassing threat that grips us from nowhere and renders all our particular projects and relations with the world and others insignificant in a particular way. It is in fact in virtue of this that anxiety is taken to be so important to yielding ontological insight: in the experience of anxiety, albeit in a ‘simplified’ and ‘elemental’ way (SZ 182), Dasein is said to be brought before itself in its ontological structure, face to face

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<sup>6</sup> *überhaupt [...] nicht relevant ist*

<sup>7</sup> *als solche überhaupt ohne Belang*

<sup>8</sup> *völliger Unbedeutsamkeit*

with the kind of being it is. Precisely ‘on the basis of this *insignificance* of what is within-the-world, the world in its worldhood is all that still obtrudes itself.’ (SZ 187)

I will return to the claims of utter or complete insignificance shortly, but for now it is enough to have seen that for Heidegger, the difference between fear and anxiety is that fear pertains to particular worldly possibilities whereas anxiety pertains to no such particular worldly possibilities or the entities and people that show up thereby: ‘Fear is occasioned by entities with which we concern ourselves environmentally. Anxiety, however, springs from Dasein itself.’ (SZ 344) This is *the* difference, the basis on which fear and anxiety are distinguished. In other respects they are apparently alike, ‘kindred phenomena’, which allows us to be introduced to anxiety via fear. As presented by Heidegger then, we are given a dichotomy: an affective experience of a threat is fear if it pertains to a worldly particular;<sup>9</sup> it is anxiety if it arises from nothing in particular and in fact all particular possibilities and the entities and people these relate to sink into insignificance (SZ 343).

With this distinction in place, it might seem that Heidegger is simply labelling our everyday, determinate anxiety ‘fear’, in distinction from radical, indeterminate anxiety. But it’s not clear that this is the case. If we look to Heidegger’s characterization of ‘fear’, we see that he is not capturing anything like our everyday sense of anxiety. This can be clarified by looking to the distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity that apparently tracks that between fear and anxiety. Anxiety brings us face to face with our being, and thus is linked to authenticity. Additionally, the resoluteness of authenticity is at times characterized as a ‘readiness for anxiety’ (SZ 297)<sup>10</sup>. Fear, by contrast ‘is anxiety, fallen into the ‘world’, inauthentic, and, as such, hidden from itself.’ (SZ 189) Fear is inauthentic, an attunement that has apparently succumbed to the tendency to forget or flee the kind of being that we are.

This forgetting or closing off the kind of being that Dasein is (SZ 342) manifests itself in the ‘bewilderment’ and ‘losing our heads’ (SZ 144) characteristic

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<sup>9</sup> Heidegger does distinguish between different types of fear (If the threat is sudden it’s ‘alarm’, if the threat is from something unfamiliar it’s ‘dread’, if the threat is both sudden and unfamiliar it’s ‘terror’. Timidity, shyness, misgiving, and becoming startled are also given as variations of fear (SZ 142). These are subcategories of fear however, and the dichotomy between fear and anxiety still stands as presented above.

<sup>10</sup> This will be discussed in the next chapter.

of fear as Heidegger describes it. We fail to take hold of any particular possibility in panic, failing even to distinguish possible from impossible possibilities (SZ 342). We simply clutch at the first possibility to hand, as shown for Heidegger in the way that those escaping a house fire grab and save items of no import at all:

When one has forgotten oneself and makes present a jumble of hovering possibilities, one thus makes possible that bewilderment which goes to make up the attunement-character of fear. (SZ 342)

Additionally, he suggests that *das Man* ‘perverts anxiety into cowardly fear’ in the face of death (SZ 266), whereas ‘He who is resolute knows no fear; but he understands the possibility of anxiety as the possibility of the very attunement which neither inhibits nor bewilders him.’ (SZ 344)

For Heidegger then, in the cowardly attunement of fear, we jumble salience, possibility, and impossibility in paralyzing panic that is expressive of covering over, fleeing, or forgetting our mode of existence as Dasein. In contrast, anxiety brings us face to face with the kind of being that we are, and apparently offers the possibility of courage and fearlessness.

It is clear from this that Heidegger is not labelling our everyday understanding of anxiety as ‘fear’ – he is missing the everyday phenomenon altogether. When we talk about anxiety in our everyday sense, an experience of worry or concern over a particular threat, seldom, if ever, are we talking of an affective experience in which we are bewildered or panicked to the point of being disarmed in front of a confusing multitude of possibilities. Seldom are we talking about a state in which we disregard the kind of things that we are to the point that we fail to see possibilities as mutually excluding one another, and to the point at which the texture of salience is so jumbled or distorted that we can only grasp at the closest possibility to hand. We typically have not strayed so far from our own being when we talk of anxiety in an everyday, determinate way. My anxiety about my interview or loved one is not expressive of a failure to see that possibilities mutually exclude one another. Nor is my anxiety about my interview or loved one expressive of jumbling the importance of different possibilities - in these examples anxiety relates to things whose vital importance to



my world and self-understanding remains salient, whose importance is in fact expressive of the way that these particular possibilities exclude others.

This is not to say that in this localized anxiety we ‘face up to’ or are confronted with the kind of thing that we are in the same way as in the radical anxiety characterized by Heidegger. But our everyday understanding of the experience of anxiety is certainly not captured by Heideggerian ‘fear’. Our everyday experience of anxiety is not the cowardly panic in which my being is covered over or fled from, despite our everyday experience of anxiety being an experience of a determinate threat. Heidegger’s analysis here appears to have omitted the wide expanse of threatening affective phenomena between the extreme experiences of radical anxiety and fear portrayed as the blind panic of self-forgetfulness.

There are several paths we might want to take in objection to this picture<sup>11</sup>. There is a concern that with this dichotomy, insofar as we experience threat affectively, we must be more or less debilitated on Heidegger’s story – through the insignificance of all possibilities in radical anxiety, or the dizzying confusion of possibilities in fear. This simply is not borne out in experience. In relation to authenticity specifically, we might wish to nuance this hard and fast distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity (and by inclusion taking responsibility and its opposite) that maps on to anxiety and fear. Or we might want to reject the heroic tenor, and the denigration of fear that Heidegger himself engages in despite seeing this rejection of fear in relation to death as a pernicious characteristic of *das Man*. While these are potentially fruitful avenues, I will approach the problem through the phenomenological methodology that I have shown is operative in Heidegger’s work.

### **Heidegger’s Methodological Inconsistency**

As I outlined in the thesis’ introduction, Heidegger is explicit about the methodological need to begin from Dasein in its everydayness:

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<sup>11</sup> Staehler (2007), for example, objects to this picture on the basis that it precludes authentic attunements that pertain to another person, such as love.

We must rather choose such a way of access and such a kind of interpretation that this entity can show itself in itself and from itself. And this means that it is to be shown as it is *proximally and for the most part* – in its average *everydayness*. (SZ 16)

The force of this ‘must’ is phenomenological, and is in opposition to ways of understanding that attempt to squeeze Dasein into ill-fitting ontological preconceptions. By beginning with everydayness, we begin with ‘the horizon that lies closest to us’ (footnote *x* to SZ 50), avoiding the kind of ‘free-floating’ (SZ 36) theoretical abstraction that can soar so high as to lose sight of what it was attempting to capture in the first place. Starting from the ‘unbiased evidence’ (SZ 188) of the everyday ensures that Heidegger’s analysis is grounded in the phenomena. Here it is worth remembering that the phenomenon of phenomenology properly understood is the being of entities (SZ 35). This is not something distinct from, but necessarily contained within every appearing, belonging to what thus shows itself (*ibid.*). Thus, while we learn of the tendency of everydayness to forget or cover over Dasein’s being, this being still shines through in the everyday, requiring excavation but nonetheless always there. There is no disconnect between the deep and the shallow, the profound and the pedestrian.

Typically, this approach is a virtue of Heidegger’s phenomenological method. We begin in the midst of the complexity of existence before being pointed to an experience we are familiar with. From there we are led by Heidegger to circle downwards in interpretation, looking at the shape this experience takes. We are shown what is ‘experienceable’ within that experience – that which is typically ignored but is in fact constitutive of that experience, and that which constitutes the ‘meaning and ground’ of the experience from within the experience itself. We are led down through our experience, its contours and limits, to see the kinds of beings that we are.<sup>12</sup>

Elsewhere in Division II we can see Heidegger adhering to this methodological commitment. We begin from our everyday understanding of death,

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<sup>12</sup> See Burch (2011) who explicates this through the language of ‘formal indication’ (a description of method found more commonly in earlier work, but still mentioned in *Being and Time* e.g. SZ 177)

or guilt, or the call of conscience ‘that everyone agrees that he hears’ (SZ 281). And while the ontological understanding of these terms that we reach is not the same as these everyday senses, we begin from our everyday understanding and pursue this to its depths, never losing sight of the everyday experience as the connection to its ontological ground is made clear<sup>13</sup>. As Heidegger describes in relation to conscience:

on the one hand, the everyday way of interpreting conscience cannot be accepted as the final criterion for the ‘Objectivity’ of an ontological analysis. On the other hand, such an analysis **has no right to disregard the everyday understanding** of conscience and to pass over the anthropological, psychological, and theological theories of conscience which have been based upon it. **If existential analysis has laid bare the phenomenon of conscience in its ontological roots, then precisely in terms of this analysis the ordinary interpretations must become intelligible** (SZ 290, bold emphasis mine)

By this reckoning, it seems that if anxiety is ‘laid bare in its ontological roots’, then our everyday understanding must become intelligible in connection with this; we should be led to see how this familiar experience points to a deeper, ontologically revelatory experience, as Heidegger in fact does for another fundamental attunement, boredom, in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*.<sup>14</sup>

Yet for anxiety, Heidegger gives us no such path. Instead our everyday understanding of anxiety is completely missed, and the possibility of it becoming intelligible on the basis of the radical, ontologically significant experience of

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<sup>13</sup> The case of guilt rests less easily here. As mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, Heidegger does not begin from an experience of the feeling of guilt, as we might expect, but rather from a conceptual analysis of our everyday understanding of it as a particular debt to another, from which Heidegger moves to the idea of a lack at the heart of Dasein, its essential ‘nullity’.

<sup>14</sup> Heidegger begins here with our everyday experience and understanding of boredom, before ‘deepening’ the analysis of this most common form to reveal a second, less commonly noticed ‘intermediate’ (FCM p157) form, before finally explicating the fundamental attunement of profound boredom. This latter underlies the other two forms as the condition of possibility (FCM p156), constituting their meaning and ground.

anxiety is passed over.<sup>15</sup> The problem becomes still more pressing in the light of Heidegger's acknowledgement that most of us will not have experienced this radical anxiety: such an experience, Heidegger affirms, is 'rare' (SZ 190). While the Wittgensteins of this world may know what Heidegger means by anxiety – instinctively, as it were – for the rest of us the experience and its possibility of ontological insight and confirmation may be completely out of reach.<sup>16</sup>

With only a characterization of wild, 'cowardly' fear to latch on to, without a propaedeutic path from our everyday experience of anxiety, we are left only with Heidegger's characterization of the radical kind of anxiety. On certain readings of this radical anxiety however, in particular the kind of readings that would allow for it to reveal a space of 'freedom' from which we could take responsibility, this experience looks nothing like anxiety at all. In the next section I will demonstrate the kind of implausible readings of anxiety that such accounts require. By focusing on the idea of the 'threat' that I take to be essential to an experience of anxiety, and the idea of vulnerability that goes with this, I will argue that anxiety does not reveal a space for taking responsibility on the traditional model. I will then show that this same idea of 'threat' is that which should be focused on in linking the everyday idea of anxiety with Heidegger's radical picture of anxiety, thus offering the connection between the ontologically significant and the everyday that Heidegger's own account leaves wanting.

### **Anxiety as the Space of Freedom: 'Anxiety' without Anxiety**

What is typically stressed in anxiety is that it manifests our freedom. In Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Anxiety* (whose importance Heidegger acknowledges in two footnotes

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<sup>15</sup> This methodological connection to the everyday is in fact even praised within the subsequent analysis of that which is disclosed in anxiety, as we are told that: 'everyday discourse and the everyday interpretation of Dasein furnish our most unbiased evidence that anxiety as a basic *Befindlichkeit* is disclosive in the manner we have shown' (SZ 188).

<sup>16</sup> This is particularly pressing for the question of the 'extension' of the term Dasein. See Martin (2013) 'The Semantics of "Dasein" and the Modality of *Being and Time*'

in *Being and Time*), anxiety is emphasized as ‘freedom’s actuality’ (2003 p42)<sup>17</sup>. In Sartre’s adoption of the idea via Heidegger, anxiety is said to be the ‘manifestation of freedom in the face of the self [which] means that man is always separated by a nothingness from his essence’ (BN p59)<sup>18</sup>. Some idea of freedom is also clearly part of what Heidegger wishes to get at in the disclosure of our being as ‘being-possible’:

Anxiety makes manifest in Dasein its *Being towards* its ownmost potentiality-for-Being – that is, its *Being-free for* the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself. Anxiety brings Dasein face to face with its *Being-free for* (*propensio in...*), the authenticity of its Being. (SZ 188)

Or, again:

Being-free *for* one’s ownmost potentiality-for-Being, and therewith for the possibility of authenticity and inauthenticity, is shown, with a primordial, elemental concreteness, in anxiety. (SZ 191)

As we saw earlier, radical anxiety is an affective experience that does not pertain to specific possibilities, to particular objects, people, and projects. Quite the opposite: we are told that ‘the world has the character of completely lacking significance.’ (SZ 186) This experience of anxiety can be understood as a ‘distancing’ (Crowell 2013a p294). In anxiety, the particularities of our identity, the particular shape the world has, and the particular people we relate to, all slip away in some sense. In falling away from us in anxiety, it is revealed that who we are, our identity, is not necessary. If it were necessary, this experience of distance could not be possible. Unlike other beings whose essence is in some way fixed, this ‘distance’ in the experience of anxiety reveals that who I am is only a possibility.

It is this distancing from our possibilities that could be seen to undercut Frankfurt’s account of wholeheartedness. Frankfurt’s story presented taking responsibility through wholeheartedness as affirming what we care about as if it were

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<sup>17</sup> I take it that Kierkegaard’s involved discussion of the sympathetic antipathy and the antipathetic sympathy of anxiety avoids the worry about emphasizing the freedom of anxiety in what follows.

<sup>18</sup> It is translated as ‘anguish’ in Sartre (2003), including in the specific references to Heidegger’s discussion.

a solid foundation. Yet as what we care about slips away - as we are 'distanced' from it in anxiety - it is shown that who we are is not immutable, solid, and unchanging but is itself only a possibility. Our being as possibility through and through is shown, and with it Frankfurt's ideal of wholeheartedness appears as an unrealizable attempt to cover over or flee from this being.

Anxiety is therefore supposed to reveal this break or distance from our identities and the particular world that co-exists with them. In showing that we have no fixed essence, the idea of freedom presents itself. In particular, this distancing from what matters to us in anxiety could be thought to reveal the possibility of choosing and deciding what we care about, the possibilities we project into. For example, in Han-Pile (2013) we read:

By breaking down its involvement with the world, anxiety enables Dasein to become pre-reflectively aware of its self-interpretative nature, and faces it with an ultimatum: Dasein has to choose to choose itself, or not. (2013 p294)

With anxiety and the distancing from who we are, the space is opened for taking responsibility by choosing who we are.

As McManus (2013), Burch (2010), Dreyfus (1991), Crowell (2010) and many others have shown, however, this choice cannot arise *in* anxiety because with the slipping away of what matters, there is no basis on which to make such a 'world-defining' choice (Dreyfus 1991)<sup>19</sup>. As Heidegger declares in *The Concept of Time*, 'anxiety is a state that provides no basis for immersion in the world' (COT(d) p35). This amounts to going back to our analysis of attunement and Frankfurt's assessment of choice, in which choosing requires that a particular possibility already matters to us, already grips us strongly enough for us to take it up. If there's a sense in which no possibilities grip us in anxiety, choice cannot arise here. Nonetheless, as accounts like Han-Pile (2013) and Thomson (2013)<sup>20</sup> suggest in various ways, anxiety could

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<sup>19</sup>I don't find Bracken's (2005) scant textual evidence to support his argument that particular 'authentic' factual possibilities appear in anxiety to be convincing against the philosophical and experiential force of the counter-claim.

<sup>20</sup> See also Friedman (2000), as presented in McManus (2015 p165)

nevertheless be understood to reveal a distance from what matters that allows for a choice to be made as we come through anxiety or find ourselves on the other side.

Here we need to be careful. The type of freedom that is revealed and the type of ‘choice’ that goes with it depend upon the nature of the ‘distance’ from what matters that anxiety is supposed to disclose. One might think that this distance is a radical disconnect from what matters, a separation of a kind of pure self from all the particularities that we find ourselves thrown into – this is the kind of ‘nothingness’ between consciousness and facticity revealed in anxiety for Sartre, for example, in which our radical freedom is disclosed. This kind of complete break from what matters to us can be seen as a return to the kind of ‘larder’ picture of thrownness we saw in chapter one<sup>21</sup>: anxiety reveals that we can, in some sense, step back from the larder of possibilities, survey the whole, and thereafter have some increased scope or potential for choice. Here, the power of the subject and the traditional model of responsibility are reaffirmed. In this break from possibilities, the movement of thrownness is suspended, to reveal some sort of ‘I’ that is exempt from its power. It might be thought to reveal that in fact the power of these attunements, the grip of these possibilities, is suspended. The possibilities stand before me, inert, and their grip is given its force only through my assent or choosing. I will argue, however, that this picture of ‘anxiety’ in which there is a complete ‘break’ from the power of our attunements, however, couldn’t in fact be anything that we could plausibly call anxiety.

As we saw earlier, radical anxiety is characterized by Heidegger as an experience in which particular possibilities ‘sink away’ into ‘utter insignificance’ (SZ 187), in which ‘the world has the character of completely lacking significance.’ (*ibid.*) This may give the impression of a fantastical experience in which the world and the way I understand myself through it disappear completely, which would seem to leave only a bare perceiver in some kind of void or darkness. Heidegger could perhaps be understood to advance such a view in saying that ‘anxiety does not ‘see’ any definite ‘here’ or ‘yonder’ from which [the threatening] comes.’ (SZ 186) Here the experience seems to be one of total blindness, total void. Yet such a mystical

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<sup>21</sup> And indeed, Withy (2011) seems to endorse such a complete break from who we are: given the indeterminacy of anxiety for Withy, it makes as much sense to say it is revealed that I am a sense-maker (as Withy characterizes Dasein) as to say ‘there are sense-makers’.

picture does not seem to capture anything remotely close to any experience we could conceivably characterize as ‘anxiety’.

If we look closer however, we see that this blindness cannot be what Heidegger has in mind, as we are told that ‘[t]he utter insignificance [...] does not signify that the world is absent’ (SZ 186). It is rather that the world and its particular possibilities no longer grip us to the point where we can take them up and project into them. The ‘sight’ that we no longer have is not the visual representation of geometric space, but the existential spatiality that comes from the concerned involvement that requires projecting into particular possibilities. The ‘understanding’ that anxiety deprives us of is the existential understanding that is projection into possibilities.<sup>22</sup>

This characterization of the experience is not the complete blindness that seems so implausible. However as presented here, there is nothing to suggest it is not a state in which the world’s possibilities float before me, none of which grip me in any way at all. I sit out of the reach of all possibilities equally. Projecting into the possibility of a relationship with my partner of many years grips me no more than a relationship with the postman; of pursuing philosophy no more than philately. All possibilities stand before me, devoid of any hold on me at all. Characterized as above, this may sound like a relaxed tarrying alongside the particular commitments of existence, a quiet moment to survey life’s rich tapestry of possibilities. But an experience of such complete detachment could not be anxious.

The first point to note is that the world and possibilities that disappear are not a world or possibilities in general but *my* world with its texture of salience. It is important to remember what ‘the world’ that is lost (and thus the ‘worldhood’ that shows itself) are. ‘World’ for Heidegger means a referential context of significance (SZ 123). But it is a context of significance whose shape as a whole is partially constituted by my particular relations and self-understanding (*ibid.*). As we saw in the first and second chapter, the lay of the land ahead is determined by the point on the horizon that I am aiming at. The world that sinks into meaninglessness in anxiety is the world from my perspective; the world that sinks away in anxiety is *my* world. The definite shape of the world that impressed itself upon me leaves a hollow with

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<sup>22</sup> Here I follow Burch (2010). I shall also go on to basically agree (for different reasons and in a slightly different form) with his contention that a ‘trace’ of our particular worlds and identities must remain in anxiety



definite contours, the particular way I was gripped leaves a mark. It is not that all possible relations with others, all possible self-understandings, all projects stand before me equally. Thus, I agree with Burch (2010) in saying that something like a trace of our particular world remains<sup>23</sup>. The connection between the existential and the existentiell is not completely severed, leaving something like a pure 'I' of apperception that is untouched by the grip of thrownness.

We can find support for this reading of anxiety in the description of the analogous fundamental attunement of boredom in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*:

the 'it is boring for one' itself explodes the situation and places us in the *full expanse* of whatever is in each case manifest *as a whole* **to this specific Dasein as such**, in each case has been manifest, and in each case could be. [...] For whom then [do beings as a whole refuse themselves]? [...] presumably for the self whose name, status and the like have become irrelevant, and which is itself drawn into indifference. Yet **the self of Dasein that is becoming irrelevant in all this does not thereby lose its determinacy**, but rather the reverse, for this peculiar impoverishment which sets in with respect to ourselves in this 'it is boring for one' first *brings the self* in all its nakedness *to itself* as the self that is *there* and has taken over the being-there of its Da-sein. (FCM p143, bold emphasis mine)

The meaninglessness or irrelevance experienced in a fundamental attunement is experienced in relation to the *specific* meaning or relevance that is my life, my world.

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<sup>23</sup> I disagree, however, with the contention that we must pull ourselves out of anxiety through a choice, and this choice on the basis of the trace. Even if resoluteness requires a response to anxiety as declared (Burch 2010 p219), it seems that this does not necessitate a response *in or from* anxiety. See, as quoted earlier, *The Concept of Time*, 'anxiety is a state that provides no basis for immersion in the world' (COT (d) p35). I don't think the idea that anxiety passes without requiring action on the part of its sufferer is 'facile' or 'insufficient' (Burch 2010 p219). As I argued in chapter two, while we may sometimes influence our attunements, it seems that they can and often do come and go without any action on our part. Additionally, Dasein's being as fallen is such that it *essentially* moves away from facing up to its ontological constitution; anxiety wouldn't be possible or necessary if this falling away from our being didn't happen. The move out of anxiety is written in Dasein's ontological constitution.

A ‘distancing’ of *some* sort occurs which allows one to see who one is as a possibility. After all, we have seen Heidegger describe an experience in which the world ‘sinks away’ into ‘utter insignificance’ (SZ 187). However I think the particular things that matter to us, the way the world shows up to us, can still be seen. In the inability to grip us as they once did, our affective bond to them is seen. The fact that these possibilities and not others matter to us is made manifest. I think that the experience of anxiety could in this respect helpfully be likened to semantic satiation, the experience of repeating a word so many times that it loses its meaning. Here, like anxiety, that which was previously meaningful is experienced as meaningless. The word which previously meant something becomes a mere phoneme. But this is not to say that the phoneme disappears. The phoneme remains, but it does not connect with us in the same way anymore. It stands at a distance, empty. Importantly, the phoneme is not experienced as meaningless in the same way that other noises are meaningless, or that words in a different language might be meaningless. It is a conspicuous absence of meaning that shows up precisely in virtue of its previous meaningfulness. It shows up as a positive inability to touch us as it once did.<sup>24</sup> So it is with our particular self-understanding and relations with the world and others. Their meaningfulness is so stark in virtue of the particular way that they were previously meaningful, in virtue of the particular way that they oriented and moved me. They are conspicuous in their distance, in the absence of the kind of grip they once had. They still touch us in this shadowy sense.

To say that possibilities slip away from us does not in itself describe an anxious experience. As suggested above, this distancing could perhaps describe a blissful kind of meditative experience in which what matters to me, and all the troubles and difficulties this brings, no longer touch me. Yet anxiety is anxious precisely because those particular relations, self-understandings, projects that are normally the secure foundation of my life remain and touch us *as* no longer meaningful. But some kind of affective bond remains to my identity and world, a bond that precisely makes itself manifest in its being *threatened*. I think that this is

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<sup>24</sup> To borrow a phrase from Regina Spektor, we might otherwise characterize this as being like forgetting the words to your favourite song.

required for anxiety to be anxious, for it to be the kind of intense, unpleasant experience that radical anxiety surely must be.

In the next section, I will examine this threatening character of anxiety by beginning from our everyday experience of anxiety – thus restoring the connection to our everyday understanding that I argued Heidegger’s own exposition of radical anxiety problematically missed. I will show how, through this threatening character, the grip of thrownness remains in such a way that makes us face up to our thrownness at the deepest level, our thrownness into the enigma of Dasein. Rather than offering a space of respite from the power of thrownness from which we can take control and mastery of our lives, anxiety reveals how pervasive this grip is and in so doing, points us towards the need for a different understanding of responsibility.

### **Threat and Vulnerability**

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, for Heidegger fear and anxiety are united by an experience of the ‘threatening’ (e.g. SZ 140, 266). The affective experience of threat is the constant that allows the differentiation between threat that pertains to particular entities, objects, and possibilities characterized as ‘fear’, and the indefinite threat of what I have been calling radical anxiety (SZ 186).

The feeling of threat is one that we can see as underlying our everyday experience of anxiety. In anxiety before an academic job interview, the austere building and room of serious faces appear threatening. What is threatened in this case is the possibility of pursuing an academic career, of being an academic, or a philosopher perhaps. In anxiety over our loved one’s journey through inclement weather, the threat is to their well-being. In this feeling of threat, what is rendered explicit is that what is threatened matters to me. In feeling anxious about the interview or the flight, it is made manifest that being an academic or my loved one respectively matter to me. I am affectively bound to them, I am attuned to them.

This determinate feeling of threat can be described in other words as an experience of *vulnerability*. In the threat experienced in our everyday cases of anxiety, what matters is shown to be vulnerable – it is open to being lost, broken, or

disappearing in its current form. In various ways my pursuit of academia and my loved one are shown to be vulnerable. The way that they matter to me, the way that they orient and move me, is open to being lost. What is threatened is revealed in its character as thrown projection. In the experience of threat the affective grip of, and so my thrown submission to, what is threatened is revealed; the threat could not arise unless what is threatened mattered<sup>25</sup>. Equally, its character as possibility is also shown. If my career aspiration, relationship, or life were essential, necessary, as part of a fixed essence, then they could not be threatened.

Our everyday experiences of anxiety then are characterized by a determinate threat arising in a particular situation in which a particular aspect of existence that I am bound to affectively is shown to be vulnerable. As we saw, it is the experience of threat that characterizes radical anxiety too for Heidegger. But while the threat in our everyday anxiety is limited to some one particular thing that matters to us, radical anxiety is not contained in this way: *'the Befindlichkeit which can hold upon the utter and constant threat to itself arising from Dasein's ownmost individualized Being, is anxiety.'* (SZ 265 - 266)

While our everyday experiences of anxiety arise in relation to particular possibilities, situations, people, and objects, radical anxiety reveals a threat that is 'utter' and 'constant'.<sup>26</sup> It is not just the case that one particular aspect of our existence is threatened and shown to be vulnerable. It is rather that every particular thing that matters to us is vulnerable; we are vulnerable as such. The particular 'who' that each of us is, our answer to the question of what it means to be, is shown to be vulnerable. The particular way the world strikes us as meaningful, as true and good, is dramatically shown to always be vulnerable and open to threat. In this extreme anxiety, the threat and vulnerability of our everyday experience of anxiety is radicalized and extends to every particular aspect of our lives.

I think that emphasizing this particular 'threatening' aspect of Heidegger's explication provides a way of understanding the link between everyday anxiety and radical anxiety, thus avoiding Heidegger's own neglect of the everyday experience that I showed to be problematic above. More importantly, this threatening aspect is

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<sup>25</sup> This is what I take Sartre to miss in his famous characterization of anxiety at the precipice. This experience could only be anxiety if my life touched and gripped me as 'mattering'.

<sup>26</sup> 'ständige und schlechthinnige'

essential to the experience of radical anxiety, as Heidegger himself characterizes it. This threatening aspect, as I have shown above, reveals that an affective connection still remains with what matters to us – it precisely makes manifest what matters to us as it is threatened wholesale. To read anxiety as revealing a strong break from what matters, a complete disconnect with who I am, is to miss this threatening aspect that makes anxiety what it is. There is no such ‘break’ in our thrownness in which we can find freedom to choose. There is no space to find power and control, and thus there is no haven for the traditional model of taking responsibility in the experience of radical anxiety. There is no such break from the particular being I am thrown into; even in anxiety, I remain in the throw.

### **Face to Face with our Thrownness into Dasein**

It should be clear from what has been said already in relation to our everyday anxiety how this absolute vulnerability of radical anxiety reveals our being as thrown possibility. The particularities constitutive of who we are, that which matters to us at the deepest level, are shown to be vulnerable in radical anxiety. Here, it is disclosed that even that which we are bound to most deeply, that which is constitutive of our identity to the point where it shapes our whole existence, is only a possibility. With those foundations of our particular lives revealed to be possibilities, Dasein’s being as such as possibility is revealed. Yet as I have argued, we still remain touched by these particular possibilities in their conspicuous inability to grip me in the same way that they once did, as my affective connection to them is threatened. They remain conspicuous in their meaninglessness. In some sense, our thrownness into a particular ‘who’ can still be seen. Yet we have not illustrated how our thrownness into Dasein, which stands as the meaning and ground of the particular way we are thrown, is seen. Radical anxiety for Heidegger is so important because ‘the structural totality’ of Dasein is made starkly manifest, albeit in a ‘simplified’ and ‘elemental’ way (SZ 182). I will now demonstrate how we are brought face to face with our thrownness into the being of Dasein in radical anxiety.

In the experience of radical anxiety, the fact that Dasein is an ‘I’, the fact that being is first-personal, is made visible for Heidegger in the way that the grip the

world and others previously had on me loses its hold, or ‘sinks away’ as Heidegger describes it here (SZ 187). In the vulnerability of my particular affective bonds to the world and others, with no worldly possibilities or others gripping me as they once did, the ‘I’ obtrudes:

The ‘world’ can offer nothing more, and neither can the Dasein-with of Others. [...]Anxiety individualizes Dasein for its ownmost Being-in-the-world. (SZ 187)

In radical anxiety, Dasein is disclosed as ‘*solus ipse*’, as an I alone. But perhaps with this ‘I alone’ there might be a return to the power of the subject, a focus on the subject from which the traditional model of responsibility might again find a foothold.

In anxiety, it might be thought, we can see a kind of independence of the self from the world and others, and taking responsibility will involve living in a way that is expressive of this. Perhaps there might be a way of negotiating the vulnerability of what matters, maybe by seeing this vulnerability as the ultimate vulnerability of what matters in death, but that until then the point is to ‘stay true to ourselves’ in the face of the world and others in the manner of Frankfurt (albeit with a greater acknowledgement of our ultimate mortality). While anxiety may not reveal a space from the particular things that matter to me, it reveals an independence of who I am from the world and others. There is a kind of independence in which it is revealed that it is ‘up to us’ as Guignon (2013), for example, reads this experience of anxiety:

In the mood of anxiety, we discover ourselves as individualized, as *solus ipse*, in the sense that our usual dependence on the world and others breaks down and we find that our lives are up to us alone to live. (2013 p15)

To take responsibility will be to affirm this independence in some way, this autonomy in the face of the world and others.

Yet while the ‘I’ and the mineness of being become pronounced in anxiety, I don’t think that this is to the neglect of the world and others. For one thing, I don’t think vulnerability can be read in the way above, given that even if applied narrowly to our

mortality, this kind of reading sees death as an event at the end of life and not the ever-present possibility that it is for Heidegger. But more simply, Heidegger himself is quite clear on this point:

Anxiety individualizes Dasein and thus discloses it as *'solus ipse'*. But this existential 'solipsism' is so far from the displacement of putting an isolated subject-Thing into the innocuous emptiness of a worldless occurring, that *in an extreme sense what it does is precisely to bring Dasein face to face with its world as world, and thus bring it face to face with itself as Being-in-the-world.* (SZ 188, emphasis mine)<sup>27</sup>

In direct contrast to Guignon and in accordance with the quote above, I take radical anxiety to in fact show a kind of dependence of the 'I' on the world and others, the necessity of the others and the world that are beyond the I. I take anxiety to show the necessity of this relation, and thus Dasein's being as being-in-the-world and being-with-others. My particular affective connection to the world and others, the particular way the world and others matter, has lost its meaningfulness. But this is not to say that the I can be meaningful alone. It rather shows the opposite. With the threat to the grip of my world and particular others on me, my need for that grip as such is shown more starkly than ever.

We can see this in the language Heidegger uses in discussing anxiety. Anxiety is variously said to reveal our 'abandonment' (e.g. SZ 192, 308)<sup>28</sup>, our

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<sup>27</sup> See also: 'But if concern and solicitude fail us [in anxiety], this does not signify at all that these ways of Dasein have been cut off from its authentically Being-its-Self. As structures essential to Dasein's constitution, these have a share in conditioning the possibility of any existence whatsoever.' (SZ 264)

<sup>28</sup> This idea of abandonment, like anxiety in general, can be taken up in a one-sided way (as by Sartre e.g. 2003 p463, as we saw in chapter one) as manifesting our freedom. Here, the idea is that in being abandoned we are cut off from any guidance or rules that would constrict us. We are abandoned, alone, and what we do is up to us. Yet I don't think this is where the accent on the idea generally lies, nor is it that which Heidegger is attempting to capture. The idea of abandonment is introduced not as an explication or illustration of Dasein's being-possible as 'freedom' but precisely to emphasize the other side of Dasein that anxiety also reveals. Having just told how anxiety reveals Dasein's being-possible (SZ 191), Heidegger emphasizes ('but', 'however' (SZ 192)) that this is not the only feature of Dasein's being that is revealed in anxiety. *Additionally*, '[t]he abandonment of Dasein to itself is shown with primordial concreteness in anxiety.' (SZ 192)

uncanniness as the ‘not-being-at-home [*das Nicht-zuhause-sein*]’ (SZ 188)<sup>29</sup>, and Dasein as ‘naked’ (e.g. SZ 343-344).<sup>30</sup> With these images, we can see that in a certain sense there is a slipping away of the world and others to reveal an ‘I’ alone. In abandonment, some person or persons have departed and left us alone, without support or guidance, when they otherwise might have been expected or obliged to stay. When we are not at home or without a home, the shelter, support, relationships, space, privacy, etc. of home are out of reach. In nakedness, we are without the garments that protect and warm us, or perhaps constitute our identity, and are left as a ‘pure’ I alone with nothing ‘external’.<sup>31</sup>

Yet in each case, the sense is not that the ‘I’ in this state is presented as independent. These are not positions of power or self-determination. In abandonment, not being at home, and nakedness, the sense is not that life is ‘up to us’ without these ‘external trappings’ of these particular others, our home, or our clothing. Rather, the importance of these things is shown in the threat of their absence. In the absence of those closest people who support us, the home in which we comfortably dwell, and the clothes that warm and protect us, and through which we are ‘ourselves’, it is shown how much they matter. It is shown how we rely on the particular things and people that we are affectively bound to in the world.

In fact their absence reveals, in a ‘simplified way’, that we are effectively bound to the world and others *as such*. In the threat to, the vulnerability of, our particular attunements to the world and others, it is revealed that in some way the world and others must matter to us. In the experience of abandonment, homelessness and nakedness that Heidegger evokes in describing anxiety, it is not the case that the world and others disappear completely. Rather, the world and others as such loom larger, daunting and strange. They are inescapably there, and we are open to being touched and affected by them, as much as we might want to

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<sup>29</sup> ‘Here “uncanniness” also means “not-being-at-home” [*das Nicht-zuhause-sein*]. [...] Being-in enters into the existential ‘mode’ of the “not-at-home” [*Un-zuhause*]. Nothing else is meant by our talk of ‘uncanniness.’ (SZ 188-189)

<sup>30</sup> We saw the idea of Dasein’s being in its ‘nakedness’ earlier in the quote from FCM p143.

<sup>31</sup> Compare here an image from Kierkegaard’s *Works of Love* (2009 p95-96), in which the particular everyday ways in which we understand ourselves, our particular roles, relations and self-understanding, are likened to clothes or garments we wear.



close ourselves off in these kinds of experiences. With this imagery used to capture what it feels like to experience radical anxiety, Heidegger is pointing to the way that in anxiety it is revealed that the world and others must matter to us. The world and others as such, looming large and indeterminate, reach in and grab us in a way that the 'I' cannot close itself off from. Rather than showing a kind of independence, I take this vulnerability that is felt in anxiety, captured in Heidegger's descriptions of abandonment, not being at home, and nakedness, to reveal that we remain affectively bound to the world and others as such. Anxiety does not reveal the independence of the I from the world and others that can then serve as a basis for some self-determination and the restoration of taking responsibility on the traditional model – anxiety in fact shows the necessity of our being gripped affectively by them.

In thinking to the question of responsibility, it is clear that taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world must, then, be sensitive to the revelation of our necessarily being affected by the world and others that is revealed in anxiety. Anxiety, contra accounts like Guignon's, shows that the focus of taking responsibility cannot be on the subject conceived in opposition to the world and others.

I have showed how radical anxiety makes manifest the way we find ourselves having to be an 'I' that exists as possibility in relation to a world and others. Finally, I can now show how radical anxiety brings us face to face with the enigma of our being – the way that we are gripped by the question of what it means to be, though the 'answer' always lies beyond us. In this experience of anxiety, as we have seen, the way the world and others grip me, in connection with my self-understanding, fails to do so in an important sense. My answer to the question of who am I, what it means to be, fails to connect with me as it once did, just as the meaning of a word evades me in semantic satiation. Yet as my 'answer' sinks into a kind of meaninglessness, it affects me in doing so. I feel anxious. And this is so because I am still gripped by the attunement to the meaningful as such. I feel anxious as my life strikes me as meaningless because having a meaningful life matters to me. I am still gripped by the meaningful as something that orients and moves me, as something that I aim towards.

As we saw earlier, the meaningful as related to our lives as such can be captured with the way we use the ‘true’ or the ‘good’ – in seeking the meaningful we seek what is otherwise called true, or good. In the loss of meaningfulness in anxiety then, we may say that our lives, our answer to the question of what it means to be, suddenly no longer strike us as true, or good. What we thought was meaningful, true, or good, suddenly strikes us as empty. It no longer grips as it once did. Yet this experience is *anxious* precisely because being in the truth, aiming at the good, matters to us. We remain in the grip of the meaningful, the true, the good. This is not to say that in anxiety we suddenly experience a ‘meaningful’ or ‘true’ or ‘good’ in itself. Far from it. But as the shape of our lives suddenly strikes us as meaningless, as no longer true or good, we see that this is what we are gripped by and aiming at all along. In the breakdown of what we took to be good, true, or meaningful, our attunement to it is made manifest.

In anxiety it is revealed that the question of what it means to be and a certain kind of answer – one that is good, true, meaningful - matters to us. But by the same token, in this experience it is revealed that the ‘answer’ is beyond my grasp (which is in fact the direction that Wittgenstein takes anxiety as the opening quote continues)<sup>32</sup>. If what is meaningful, good, or true were fully grasped by me, if I had full understanding of what it means to be or how to live, this could not be taken away or undermined. I would possess it, it would be mine. But as anxiety, an attunement that breaks in one me, threatens my answer to the question of what it means to be, it is revealed that this is not the case. As my answer to the question of how to live or what it means to be is threatened, it is revealed that what is meaningful, true, or good, was never completely in my grasp at all, but always beyond me – this is the sense of the enigma of Dasein, as I argued in chapters one and two. If it were not beyond my grasp in some way, it could not be so radically questioned and undermined in radical anxiety. Despite my remaining gripped as

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<sup>32</sup> ‘I can very well think what Heidegger meant about Being and Angst. Man has the drive to run up against the boundaries of language. Think, for instance, of the astonishment that anything exists. This astonishment cannot be expressed in the form of a question, and there is also no answer to it. [...] This running up against the boundaries of language is Ethics. [...] In ethics one always makes the attempt to say something which cannot concern and never concerns the essence of the matter. It is a priori certain: whatever one may give as a definition of the Good – it is always only a misunderstanding to suppose that the expression corresponds to what one actually means (Moore). But the tendency to run up against shows something.’

shown above, this vulnerability of my entire conception of what is a meaningful, good, or true life shows that whatever it is, it is beyond my grasp of it.

Returning to Frankfurt briefly can help to make this clear. In covering over anxiety in the previous chapter, Frankfurt can be seen to be covering over the ontological insight it contains. As well as ignoring anxiety's revelation that we are fundamentally being-in-the-world and being with others, as the examples of the closed-off subjects in the previous chapter showed, Frankfurt's idea of wholeheartedness, of clarity and confidence, suggests that our answer of how to live is settled. Far from being an enigma that perpetually draws us yet is always beyond our reach, what is meaningful, what is true, what is good, is already to be found in what we care about for Frankfurt. It is within our grasp. In contrast, I take anxiety to reveal that what is meaningful, what is good, what is true, is not settled by looking to what we care about. It is never within our grasp, and as such it is always at issue for us.

This is what human existence is, as the foregoing analysis has shown. But crucially, in radical anxiety we are *forced to pay attention to* this thrownness into the enigma of Dasein as being-in-the-world and being-with-others, which stands as the meaning and ground of the particular self and world we find ourselves thrown into. As everyday experience attests, it can often take a project, a relationship, or even a possession of ours to be under threat for us to take notice at all and to give it our attention. The extreme threat to who we are, to our answer of what it means to be, makes us pay attention, however briefly, to the question of what it means to be, and to the answer that we are giving. It makes us pay attention to the way we are gripped by what is meaningful, true, good, and the way that the world and others must matter to us. It makes us pay attention to the particular things that matter to us *in the light of this*. While the being of Dasein may be manifest in other attunements, anxiety brings human existence face to face with itself against our tendency to fall away from this being (SZ 184).

### Conclusion

In this chapter I have offered an interpretation of anxiety in which the grip of our thrownness in all its aspects still holds. As a result, I have demonstrated that the

experience of anxiety offers no space for redemption of the traditional model of taking responsibility, in contrast to readings which suggest that it might. Anxiety is not a space within or outside of our thrownness from which leverage can be obtained for the subject to 'take responsibility' through the power of choice or self-determination.

In doing so, I identified a problem with Heidegger's own account of the dichotomy of fear and anxiety, arguing that this completely misses anything like our everyday experience of anxiety, a point that I argued was methodologically problematic. I then showed how characterizations of 'anxiety' that are congruous with the idea that it reveals a complete detachment (as a possible space of freedom) in fact miss anything like the experience of anxiety at all.

I argued that the 'threatening' aspect of anxiety, and the vulnerability that goes along with this, links our everyday experience of anxiety and radical anxiety, and should therefore be emphasized. By looking to this integral aspect of the experience of anxiety, I argued that the grip of our thrownness still holds in anxiety, and that the traces of our thrownness into a particular 'who' in a particular world remain. I then argued that in the face of the revelation of the vulnerability of our identity, we are brought face to face with the way that we remain gripped as an 'I' in relation to the world and others. Finally, I argued that anxiety shows that at bottom we are gripped by what is meaningful, what is experienced as true or good, yet what exactly this is remains in question for us - it grips and moves us, yet remains beyond our grasp. Anxiety forces us to face up to this as the being of Dasein.

In the next chapter I will assess a number of Heideggerian readings of taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world in light of our thrownness. Each yields important insights and captures an aspect of what I take to be important, and so points towards an answer of what it means to take responsibility for our being-in-the-world. Yet I will argue, on the basis of the thesis so far, that each falls short.

## Chapter Five - Heideggerian Accounts on the Traditional Model

In seeking to understand a Heideggerian account of taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world, I have provided an analysis of how thrownness and its first-personal manifestation in attunement, including the fundamental attunement of anxiety, threatens the traditional model of seeing responsibility as lying in the power or mastery of the subject. Having now completed this analysis, I am in a position to assess more thoroughly attempts in the Heideggerian literature to find such an account of responsibility in Heidegger's thought. In this chapter, I will assess four recent accounts of taking responsibility on the basis of Heidegger's existential analytic that I take to be compelling representatives of some version of a traditional account of responsibility<sup>1</sup>. By looking at responsibility for our being-in-the-world conceived as rational reflection and judgement, choice, wholeheartedness, and independence from *das Man* (represented by Crowell (2013), Han-Pile (2013), McManus (2015a) and Withy (2015) respectively), key insights will be gained for the positive account that I propose in the next and final chapter. However, I shall argue on the basis of my preceding analysis, and the methodological principle that such an account of taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world should be able to make intelligible our everyday understanding of responsibility, that each of the following accounts falls short in virtue of ways in which they maintain the accent on the power, control, or self-determination of the subject.

### Reflection, Judgement, and Giving Reasons

Perhaps the commentator who has sought to characterize Heidegger's fundamental ontology in terms of responsibility and taking responsibility most explicitly, and at

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<sup>1</sup> I will not discuss accounts, most prominently made by Guignon (e.g. 2013), that interpret authenticity as a kind of 'narrativism' in part because I think that such accounts are less commonly explicitly linked with the idea of taking responsibility. I am also sympathetic to the criticism that such narrativist accounts rely on an understanding of temporality that is not Heidegger's (See Crowell 2002). Additionally, as should become clear as I put forward my own Heideggerian understanding, I think such accounts risk missing the fundamental 'correlation' of the human and being that lies at the heart of Heidegger's whole thought, in particular the 'giving' of being that's more prominent in the later thought. Limits of space preclude the full discussion that this argument would require however.

greatest length, is Steven Crowell. We can see Crowell as representing a reading of taking responsibility that is more in keeping with prominent strands of thinking about responsibility outside of Heideggerian thought that identify it with some kind of cognitive process of judgement, evaluation, or assessment in terms of reasons.<sup>2</sup>

In Crowell's Kantian inspired view, we are essentially responsible beings because the givens of our situations that affect us do so only as possibilities – as claims to be endorsed or not. This is revealed in anxiety, as all claims (which for Crowell typically grip us in the form of Korsgaardian practical identities) breakdown. This breakdown is a 'distancing' (Crowell 2013 p249) revealing an aspect of the self that is irreducible to those particular claims, that stands in relation to those claims. This aspect of the self is an orientation to 'measure', to better or worse, or to something like the Platonic Good. We are responsible beings because the things that claim us do so as possibilities that we stand towards in the light of 'measure' (2013 p189).<sup>3</sup> By taking up these claims, these possibilities we're solicited by affectively, we give them authority as 'good' or 'best' and make them our ground and basis for acting:

Ontologically, then, to be responsible would mean that I am essentially called to view the givens of my situation as assessable in light of better and worse, that I cannot not view them in that way. When I opt to attend my son's Little League game over having a beer with my buddies – both of which belong to my facticity as claims upon me toward which I am inclined – I have made the former inclination my reason by treating it as normatively better than the latter. (2013 p221-222)

This basic way that Dasein is a responsible being for Crowell can be 'taken over' authentically – Dasein can take responsibility (2013 p280, p300). As mentioned above, Crowell identifies taking responsibility with Heidegger's account of 'taking

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<sup>2</sup> For example some versions of Korsgaard's work, and more straightforwardly 'analytic' work on responsibility such as the work of Angela Smith (e.g. 2005). Others within that debate do appear to give more value to non-cognitive aspects alongside cognitive aspects (e.g. Shoemaker's accounts of attributability and accountability in Shoemaker 2013), however in general the focus appears to be on the more cognitive modes of experience.

<sup>3</sup> In accordance with our earlier analysis, Crowell sees that our privileged way of being claimed is through our attunement: 'What claims us is primarily affect: Affect is the *primary* way in which the factic ground that I must take over shows itself.' (2015 p221)

over being-a-ground', which means 'that I take responsibility for my facticity' (2013 p276).

As the idea of making into a 'reason' in the quote above alludes to, Crowell understands Heidegger's existential analytic, and specifically the idea of ground or basis, in terms of 'reasons'<sup>4</sup>. To take up a possibility that claims me affectively is in a sense to make it my 'ground', my basis for acting. But to do this authentically is to do this transparently (2013 p254) which for Crowell means to take this claim as my *reason*:

to take over being-a-ground would be to stand toward grounds in the sense of being determinants of my being as toward grounds in the sense of potentially justifying *reasons*' (2013 p 189)

To take responsibility for Crowell is to make possible grounds, the way I am claimed affectively, into reasons, in light of better or worse. So what does making a claim into a reason involve, what is a reason?

A reason for Crowell seems to be that which one can give to another by way of justification: taking responsibility is 'taking over factic grounds as justifying reasons' (2013 p277)<sup>5</sup> Here again Crowell appears to see Heidegger through a Kantian lens, wherein something like a notion of universality is tied into the idea of making something a reason:

The possibility "articulated" in breakdown is being-responsible (*verantwortlich*); but because Dasein is *Mitsein*, to be responsible is to be

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<sup>4</sup> Crowell acknowledges Heidegger's generally critical stance toward rationalism (footnote 26 to 2013 p187); the way that for Heidegger the primary disclosure of the world is affective rather than cognitive or rational (2013 p179); that reasons can only show up as reasons on the basis of attunement (2013 p202); that for Heidegger reason giving does not go all the way down, that giving reasons at some point 'gives out' (footnote 26 to 2013 p187); and that our most basic commitments themselves cannot be rationally grounded (footnote 15 p210). In light of this acknowledgement, to then argue as he does that being Dasein authentically centres on reasons, requires a great deal of textual and argumentative work, reinterpreting Heidegger's whole project of fundamental ontology through a variety of texts from the late 1920s to argue that Heidegger is concerned with normative grounding and that such grounding receives its legitimacy by being understood in terms of reasons. Accordingly, to assess this approach as a whole as a reading of Heidegger would require a breadth and depth of analysis that is not possible here.

<sup>5</sup> See also 'reasons, grounds in the sense of justifications.' (2013 p188)

answerable or accountable *to others*. And this means that whatever other possibility authentic Dasein commits itself to, it is simultaneously beholden to the practice of reason-giving. (2013 p216)<sup>6</sup>

At times this sounds like taking responsibility is constituted by actually justifying oneself to others, by verbalizing one's reasons to other people:

Responsibility transforms a creature who is “grounded” by social norms into a ground of obligation – one who “grounds” norms by *giving* grounds, that is, reasons. (2013 p187)

Yet this surely cannot be right. If we think back to occasions, great or small, whereby we can consider ourselves to have taken responsibility to any degree, to have manifested in our ontic comportment an assumption of responsibility, no doubt plenty of experiences will come to mind in which no such justification of ourselves to others was required or appropriate.

However, it seems that this is not Crowell's meaning. In recognition of Heidegger's discussion of reticence as authentic discourse, Crowell tells us that taking responsibility does not mean ‘chattering endlessly about how I am justified in doing this or that’ but rather ‘being *prepared* to give reasons for (to own up to) the measures at stake in one's behaviour’ (2013 p226). Taking responsibility as making my grounds into justificatory reasons does not mean that such reason-giving to others must materialize. It rather means that others are *in principle* taken into consideration in what it means to make something a reason for myself. I must *be prepared* to give justificatory reasons to any other, just as for Kant to make something my maxim means I must be prepared for it to become universal law. Taking responsibility requires entering the space of giving and asking for reasons, even if this never results in actually being called upon to justify oneself to another.

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<sup>6</sup> See also: ‘to take over being-a-ground is to be oriented toward the measure of what is best as such and so to stand toward the given as toward (possible) reasons. [...] Because Dasein is essentially *Mitsein*, in being accountable for myself I am answerable to others who are affected or could be affected by what I do’ (p235)



Here I think we should question this model of relating to others. It is not clear why our being-with-others, and even specifically our linguistic being-with-others, should be conceived in this way of asking for and giving justification to others. Surely there are many ways of relating to others that we might think are responsible (such as attempting to share the way I see the world with another) that are not of this adversarial nature. Equally, this model seems to give undue priority to linguistic communication. Surely we can ‘answer’ others without giving justificatory reasons, and instead answer by pre-reflectively projecting on the basis of the solicitation of an attunement – feeling moved to give money to a homeless person, or instead finding my own journey to matter more, are both ‘answers’ to this person’s silent question, before any idea of linguistic justification has entered the scene.

But the idea that an answer can be ‘before’ the idea of justificatory reasons brings us on to the worry I will pursue with this idea of taking responsibility, which concerns what the idea of this ‘preparedness’ to give reasons involves. The worry is that such a picture requires explicitly thinking about, deliberating, or assessing the things that are making claims on me, before deciding which one should be my reason. This would be done in the light of what Crowell calls an orientation to measure as such, at times equated with the good: ‘thanks to [...] the ability to take over being-a-ground – I am able to judge and act in light of the good, in light of what is best; that is, in terms of (justificatory) *reasons*. (2013 p209)

The idea of ‘judging’ invoked here supports the worry that what taking responsibility means for Crowell is deliberating or reflecting upon reasons and deciding which is best, such that I can then give this reason to others by way of justification if called upon.<sup>7</sup> It seems that this reflection is a way of ‘stepping back’ from the solicitations of our thrownness to enable us to take responsibility for them. This ‘stepping back’ need not be a step back to a ‘pure reason’ that is

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<sup>7</sup> This kind of assessing of reasons could not go on during anxiety for Crowell, as the breakdown of our practical identities leaves us without any criteria by which we could assess these identities as possible reasons. As Crowell notes, our most basic commitments themselves cannot be rationally grounded (footnote 15 p210, p300). And authenticity (and by inclusion taking responsibility) is not to be conflated with ‘breakdown’ (2013 p216). Presumably then, the preparedness to give justificatory reasons must be something that a responsible individual does when going about their everyday lives.

completely free of our attunement – as we saw in connection with the discussion of Frankfurt, Crowell acknowledges that all reasons find their basis and weight in attunement (Crowell 2013 p202). A problem remains however. The idea that taking responsibility requires reflecting on and judging possible reasons before assenting to the best paints a picture of being responsible that is at odds with how we are for the most part, as Heidegger’s general analysis famously makes salient, and which we have seen in particular in relation to the attunement that grounds our being-in-the-world. As we have seen, for Heidegger ‘cognition’ (which presumably includes explicit judging) is famously a ‘founded’ phenomenon (SZ 137). It is founded on the more basic way in which we exist as being-in-the-world as projecting on the basis of attunement, which need not be, and typically is not, explicit. An important part of Heidegger’s project is to displace the philosophical primacy of cognition and the thinking subject in favour of human existence as a pre-reflective understanding of being on the basis of a pre-reflective attunement, that typically takes the form of an absorbed engagement with the world. It would seem strange then, to say the least, to suggest that to be this being ‘properly’, authentically, essentially requires some kind of conscious awareness. To make reflection inessential to Dasein’s relationship to being as we have seen, only then to make it essential to having this relation ‘authentically’ seems wrong.

If being prepared to give justificatory reasons requires reflecting on each possible reason for action and assessing these reasons (and further, assessing in a way that considers them as justificatory reasons that could be given to others), then this model seems too reflective, too cognitive, to be a model of taking responsibility in light of Heidegger’s compelling analysis which reveals the extent to which our being is not reflectively self-aware. Instead, our movement through the world is typically on the basis of an attunement that is pre-reflective. Entering into the space of reasons seems to require a level of explicit awareness that goes against the thrust of Heidegger’s fundamental ontology as we have outlined specifically in the disclosive grip of attunement. The importance of this point is explained well by Han-Pile:

much of *Being and Time* is intended to bypass the primacy of consciousness and to show that being in the world, in its everyday forms, does not require self-awareness (on the contrary, this would prevent us from responding appropriately to the affordances of the world). (Han-Pile 2013 p293)

Yet, if making my factic grounds into ‘justificatory reasons’ is not this reflective act, it’s not clear what it could be. At times, Crowell seems to rebuke such a reflective characterization:

The point is not that I necessarily sit around weighing reasons for whether fatherly duty has priority in this case; rather the point is that in following the one “inclination” I am making it my reason; I am not just following it in the way an animal would follow its instinct. (2013 footnote 7 p222)

The difference between ‘making something a reason’ and something like following instinct, we learn, is that in the former ‘I (*transparently*) hold it best” (Crowell 2013 p225, emphasis mine). This transparency, for Crowell, is identified with recognizing that the practical identity which claims me, the particular way I find that the world affects and solicits me, has no normative claim on me, no authority, independently of my commitment to these claims. To take responsibility for the claims that are made on me is to ‘recognize their motivational force as stemming from my commitment to them.’ (2013 p300). Leaving aside the question of whether the insight in anxiety, that things that solicit me are possibilities, is the same as the idea that something’s normative force is to be thought of as coming from my commitment to it (which my argument in the previous chapter disputes), it remains unclear what Crowell thinks this ‘transparency’ is, if we are to reject the idea of reflecting on justificatory reasons (with an eye to others) as I think we have good cause to do. We seem to be left with something like an idea of ‘commitment’ that is yet to be specified, while the motivation to understand taking responsibility in terms of making motivations into ‘reasons’ in the first place becomes unclear.

### **The Choice to Choose**

As we just saw in the preceding section, Han-Pile (2013) is explicitly sensitive to the non-reflective thrust of Heidegger’s account, and her own account of what it means to take responsibility shows this. For Han-Pile the self-ascription of responsibility is identified with the ‘choice to choose’, which ‘makes Dasein responsible for what it is.’ (2013 p301) Broadly speaking, this is the choice to face up to our ontological freedom as revealed in anxiety, our lack of any fixed determining essence, which then allows us to make the choice of who we are existentially. For Han-Pile this choice,

and thus our responsibility, is not absolute in the Sartrean vein, but is limited by our thrownness: ‘Nor can the responsibility involved be absolute, since the choice itself is not fully within Dasein’s control. Dasein is responsible *up to a point*, and this is as good as it gets.’ (2013 p309) The central idea is a familiar one: taking responsibility is identified with choice, with something like taking control. To assume responsibility for, is to exercise choice over. However, in contrast to the accounts of responsibility of Kierkegaard and Sartre that influenced and were influenced by Heidegger respectively, this choice is not an explicit, reflective choice, but is rather ‘pre-reflective’, and thus sensitive to the way that much of our existence is based on being pre-reflectively gripped by possibilities. We are not aware of this choice whilst choosing, but nor is the choice closed off from our explicit awareness of it, as we may become aware of the choice we have made retrospectively. But importantly, such a choice, and the taking responsibility that it constitutes, need never be made conscious. While Dasein may become aware of its choice to choose (for example, by being pressed for reasons from others), ‘such full awareness may never arise, or the reasons for its actions may never be fully articulated, and Dasein would still be existentially free.’ (footnote 9, p314). For Han-Pile, we take responsibility insofar as we pre-reflectively choose in light of a pre-reflective awareness that we are not determined by any fixed essence. While, as we shall see, Han-Pile’s account offers a variety of insights, we might be reticent to adopt this picture of what it means to take responsibility on a Heideggerian account.

Han-Pile, in contrast to Crowell, importantly emphasizes the non-reflective thrust of Heidegger’s account. However, we might worry that Han-Pile’s own picture may go too far in the other direction. While she argues that the choice constitutive of assuming responsibility need not be conscious, she goes on to suggest further that not only *need we not* be aware of taking responsibility itself, but that we *cannot* be aware of taking responsibility when it happens. We can become aware only in retrospect:

The pre-reflective awareness of responsibility is not directly available *as such* to Dasein in the first person, because the very process whereby it would become available would transform it from pre-reflective into reflective. (2013 p310)

The idea that we cannot be aware of assuming responsibility or being responsible is a strange one.<sup>8</sup> It appears to claim that if, first-personally, we ever think we are taking responsibility, or if we make a conscious attempt to be responsible, we are wrong and misguided. This seems out of keeping with Heidegger's general methodological approach in which our everyday ways of thinking contain within them some sense of the ontological truth of the matter. While not being the 'final criterion', ontological analysis 'has no right to disregard the everyday understanding' (SZ 290) as we have seen. It also seems to go against the way that for Heidegger, attunement and understanding for example, while primarily being pre-reflective, still have explicit, reflective forms. Attunement and understanding do not cease to be when they become explicit and reflective, even if these are 'founded' on the pre-reflective forms, so it's unclear why taking responsibility should be different.

More importantly, Han-Pile appears to give no argument to suppose that this is the case. Heidegger's emphasis on the 'founded' mode of explicit awareness points to the need to be able to explain assuming responsibility without requiring such explicit awareness. But while it is important for this reason to show that taking responsibility *can* happen without explicit first-person awareness of this, we are not shown what warrants the further thought that such assuming responsibility *must* be pre-reflective and only pre-reflective.

A second concern emerges in relation to the focus on choice, and the way in which this is characterized. While Han-Pile importantly acknowledges that choosing can be pre-reflective and is not absolute, the characterization given nonetheless portrays such a choice as a kind of leap of blind will, albeit one from which our gaze is averted:

Think back on your life: there are hard-to-pin-down but crucial moments in our existence when we are pre-reflectively aware that, even though nothing prepared us for it and there is nothing necessary about it, a possibility has opened up that calls to us in such a way that we have to make the leap of

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<sup>8</sup> The quote technically says that pre-reflective awareness of responsibility is not available first-personally. But unless the quote is to be taken as a mere truism stating that pre-reflective responsibility is pre-reflective, it seems the stronger claim is meant that taking responsibility as such is pre-reflective and is not something that can be done with explicit awareness. Han-Pile's third-personal example of taking responsibility later in the paper seems to suggest further that this is her meaning.

appropriating it inasmuch as we can. Such a leap is the choice of existentiell freedom. (2013 p311)

While anxiety reveals that there is ‘nothing necessary’ about the particular possibilities that are taken up, I think that this does not warrant the further idea that ‘nothing prepared us’ for taking up such a possibility – an idea which threatens to portray choice as baseless or arbitrary.

As our analysis of attunement has shown, for a choice to arise, for a choice to show up to us (even pre-reflectively), we must be attuned to the possibilities. Both possibilities must already draw me in some sense otherwise there would be no choice to be made. While we may want to hold on to the idea that choice can feel like a leap, that qualitative shifts are made, I don’t think it is a leap in a totally unknown direction, a leap completely in the dark. If I follow Han-Pile’s suggestion to think back on decisive moments in my life in which I see that a choice was made, the lack of necessity rings true – there is some sense of a leap. But it does not feel like nothing prepared me for such a choice. When I land from such a leap I am not completely lost and disorientated. The choice makes sense to some greater or lesser degree. When I find myself on the other side of the choice, I find that, whether I have been aware of it or not, I had in some sense seen where I would land. I was oriented to this possibility. Indeed, I surely had to have been for the situation to even show up to me (pre-reflectively) as offering a choice. As we saw, it is our attunement that allows such possibilities to show up, and solicits us to take them up.

If Han-Pile is not to be seen to be offering a phenomenologically inaccurate and philosophically problematic account of choice as suggested above, we are at the least owed an account of how such decisive choices come about. As presented, the choice to choose as an account of what it means to take responsibility is lacking.

### **Wholeheartedness - Choosing Oneself**

McManus’ (2015a) account of taking responsibility, like Han-Pile’s, takes up the notion of the choice to choose. Unlike Han-Pile’s however, the idea of choosing

between differing existential possibilities does not occupy a central place in the story here.

For McManus' Wittgenstein-inspired account, anxiety functions as a corrective to our tendency to erroneously read-off how to live from a perceived essence of the world. Anxiety makes us realize that, instead of there being inherent, essential meanings in things in the world that can dictate how I live, 'I see that the meaning of the objects that I encounter is determined by the life I happen to be living' (2015a p173). As well as shattering this illusion, anxiety for McManus throws into relief projects that speak to us, that we find 'intrinsically meaningful' (2015a p176), and that need no justification. In contrast, other projects are shown to be 'provisional' as their significance disappears along with the world and others in anxiety's individuation.

In light of this, choosing to choose is at no point conceived as choosing between existentiell possibilities or projects. It is (in accordance with my analysis of attunement) 'not choosing *per impossible* – what to care about' (2015a p179). Rather:

I am choosing myself as the one who will choose – rather than deferring the judgement in question to someone else – to 'the world' or the They – and their assessment of what matters. This is also recognizably something that could be called 'assuming responsibility for oneself and one's actions. (McManus 2015a p178)

Here, McManus' model appears to mirror the account by Frankfurt we saw earlier. Just as Frankfurt conceives the task as a kind of wholeheartedness in which one finds out what one cares about and lives confidently in accordance with this, so for McManus the task is:

choosing to live in line with what one fundamentally cares about. The challenge in doing so is acknowledging that one has an opinion, refusing to disburden oneself of one's own judgment, and accepting this burden – actually acting on that opinion, that judgment – is taking responsibility oneself for one's actions. (2015a p179)

In virtue of the similarity with Frankfurt's picture of clarity and confidence, the worry is that the same problems apply. As we saw, in Frankfurt's picture we are left with a stubborn, bloody-minded individual imposing their will upon the world and others, unreceptive to that which is given. And indeed, at times McManus' account here worryingly threatens to present a similar kind of picture, as he tells us that having realized the possibilities that really matter to us, 'we will act on the former [ownmost possibilities] come what may, *irrespective of* whatever legitimation or confirmation 'the world' may offer' (2015a p180, emphasis mine). It seems difficult to believe that to be responsible could mean to become insensitive to changing demands that the world and others might make on me.<sup>9</sup>

When this kind of worry was seen in Frankfurt, it was suggested that not only was such a picture out of keeping with how we might typically understand taking responsibility, but that it also wasn't possible to sustain such a picture. There, it was argued that the experience of anxiety 'undercuts' the bond of even our deepest attunements. Yet McManus' Heideggerian view, in contrast to Frankfurt, pays close attention to anxiety.

The contention here concerns McManus' reading of anxiety. While acknowledging that anxiety reveals meaninglessness in some respect, this is interpreted by McManus in two ways. For inauthentic Dasein who holds the erroneous view that meaning is inherent in things in the world, there is the experience of relative meaninglessness as this error is shattered. For those who do not hold such a fantasy, there is the revelation of the meaninglessness of a life in which the closest, provisional possibilities have been taken up instead of our ownmost possibilities.

As the previous chapter on anxiety shows, I agree that texture of some sort remains in anxiety – while the world recedes into insignificance in anxiety, it is nonetheless *our* world that is disrupted by the experience, and as it recedes it leaves an emptiness in the distinct shape of that which has departed. The shadows that

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<sup>9</sup> Heidegger's remarks on resoluteness seem to point against such a conception, as we are told that in resoluteness we:

'cannot *become rigid* [versteifen] as regards the Situation, but must understand that the resolution, in accordance with its own meaning as a disclosure, must be *held open* and free for the current factual possibility. The certainty of the resolution signifies that one *holds oneself free for* the possibility of *taking it back*'. (SZ 307-308) See also SZ 391



remain retain their particular form, and their grip on us is shown in the threat to them that anxiety is. However, I think it is integral to anxiety that these projects that are closest to us lose their grip in some sense, as I argued the experience of threat and vulnerability captures. The threat shows them to be possibilities, and ultimately shows my being itself to be as possibility. In contrast, in McManus' view these projects keep their hold, as only the 'provisional' projects recede into meaninglessness. While I think that some kind of distancing of what matters most is important in revealing our being is possibility, I think that three other issues arise with this picture in which our ownmost possibilities retain their hold in anxiety.

The first is that it is unclear how McManus' reading can accommodate a number of claims that Heidegger makes about anxiety. Heidegger's characterization of the 'collapse' in anxiety is that it impacts the 'totality', that the world has the character of 'completely lacking significance' (SZ 186). Yet if our 'ownmost' possibilities retain the same grip and only 'provisional' possibilities recede, it's difficult to make sense of the way that anxiety is in some sense all-encompassing. So too, it is hard to see how McManus' account can capture the uncanniness or 'unhomeliness [*unheimlichkeit*]' (SZ 188) of anxiety, in particular when the possibilities that are our 'ownmost' are characterized by McManus himself as those in which we feel 'at home' (2015a p176)<sup>10</sup>

The second reason is that without the collapse of those possibilities that are closest to me, those that matter most, it's hard to see why the experience would be anxious, which as we saw requires that we are shown that what matters to us might not. The experience as McManus characterizes it for those who don't hold on to the delusional view of meaning, while perhaps making them realize they have been neglecting their ownmost possibilities in favour of those which matter less, does not sound like an anxious experience to the extent that Heidegger's language suggests. If

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<sup>10</sup> By way of counterargument, it should be mentioned that McManus points to a passage that could be read to support his view:

'He who is resolute ... understands the possibility of anxiety as the possibility of the very mood which neither inhibits nor bewilders him. Anxiety liberates him from possibilities which 'count for nothing', and lets him become free for those which are authentic.' (SZ 344)

However I don't think this entails that 'becoming free for' means that particular possibilities retain their grip on Dasein *in* the experience of anxiety itself. I think this could more plausibly read as suggesting that anxiety performs some kind of revelatory function *in the light of which* particular possibilities are taken up, rather than 'during which'.

I were to see that I did in fact have possibilities that really matter, commitments that remain unshaken in the face of some collapse, this experience seems heartening and edifying, which is in contrast to Heidegger's description and, I imagine, our own experiences of anxiety. The threat and vulnerability of the experience of anxiety requires that what matters is shown to be a possibility, and not a solid foundation that I can build my life upon post-anxiety.

The third reason is that McManus' picture seems to rely on the idea that I can retain possibilities, projects that are 'ownmost', while the world and others fade into insignificance and 'have nothing more to say to me' (2015a p176). This is preceded and supported by the idea that those ownmost projects are those which I would continue to find meaningful even 'were my society to abandon the values that inform such projects' (2015a p176). I take it that the intention is to show anxiety as an experience that deprives Dasein of the possibility that inherent meaning or value in the world can dictate what to do, that the world can live Dasein's life for it in some sense. Given the suggestion of finding meaning regardless of what the world had to say, and the way that for Heidegger (and for McManus) it is the 'world' as a whole and every other Dasein that become meaningless or superfluous in anxiety (2015a p176), the implication is that we can have projects and possibilities independently of a world. But because Dasein is essentially being-in-the-world, this is not possible. As we saw, to be Dasein is to find oneself gripped by the world in attunement – to be a doctor or a socialist or a friend just is for the world and others to show up as mattering in a particular way. What's more, any particular project depends for its meaning on the world; its meaning is given, sustained, and recognized by the norms and standards of the world which solicit me affectively. It's not clear how I could hold on to being a father, as McManus suggests, if fatherhood and all the meanings and values on which it depends (family, love, support) were no longer meaningful in the world I found myself in. If we are to avoid this picture of the individual as being able to hold on to particular projects and possibilities independently of the world and others, I think that in anxiety *all* of my possibilities must be shown to be vulnerable, as I have suggested in the previous chapter.

As with Frankfurt, I think McManus' account of taking responsibility, accommodated by a reading of anxiety that I would challenge, paints a picture of an individual closed off from, unreceptive to, the world and others. It is a picture that

should be questioned on Heideggerian grounds, as well as the way that such an account is at odds with our idea of being responsible.

### **Independence from *das Man***

Katherine Withy's (2015) account of taking responsibility centres around attunement and with this focus, as our earlier analysis of attunement suggests, the idea of being open to the solicitations of the world is important. Yet while Withy's account presents an openness to the world as integral to taking responsibility, it nonetheless also describes what I take to be an unfeasible picture of a certain kind of independence of the individual, thus according with the traditional focus on the self. It is a representative example of specifically Heideggerian accounts, not yet encountered in this thesis, that see taking responsibility as a kind of distancing from *das Man*, a taking back of responsibility from those who previously carried it for us.

For Withy, taking responsibility is letting our attunement (which, given that she focuses on Heidegger's reading of Aristotle, she calls 'pathé' here) be 'genuinely disclosive'; taking responsibility is being receptive and open to that which attunement discloses. We are told that being genuinely disclosive means attunement that discloses in a way that resists *averageness*, or *das Man*:

In the repeated resolution for genuine openness and against averageness, we make ourselves responsible for the *pathé* [...] In this, we own up to the constant temptation of averageness and we take ownership of our affective life. (2015 p30)<sup>11</sup>

To take responsibility for our affective life (on the basis of which we project as we have seen, and thus, to take responsibility as such) means to hold ourselves open to be affected in a way that is 'against averageness'.

The concern here is that Withy is in some sense attempting to separate the individual from the world in a problematic way – to set the individual in

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<sup>11</sup> We are also told that genuine disclosing is disclosing what the excellent person discloses, finding things matter that the *phronemos* would find matters, but the only route we are given into this circle is the story about resisting averageness.

opposition to that which is necessarily constitutive of them as an individual. For Heidegger, as we saw, the way the world is disclosed to us through attunement is constituted by the public way of being:

The dominance of the public way in which things have been interpreted has already been decisive even for the possibilities of being attuned – that is, for the basic way in which Dasein lets the world “matter” to it. *Das Man* prescribes one’s *Befindlichkeit*, and determines what and how one ‘sees’. (SZ 169-170)

There exist no ‘separate’ attunements that would reveal possibilities outside of those provided by *das Man*.<sup>12</sup> The world shows up to us through a lens wrought by our particular social, political, historical situation. This manifests the ‘societal’ aspect of our thrownness as discussed in chapter two. What being authentic, and by inclusion taking responsibility, means for Heidegger, cannot be any kind of separation from the crowd:

*Authentic Being-one’s-self* does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from the “they”; *it is rather an existentiell modification of the “they” – of the “they” as an essential existentielle*. (SZ 130)

Withy comments in a way that appears to be sensitive to this idea, stating that: ‘We cannot extricate ourselves from social norms entirely, nor should we want to – it would be contrary to our political or social nature.’ (2015 p27-28) However, it is difficult to see how this insight is incorporated into the account<sup>13</sup>. In the very next sentence, we are told that ‘resisting averageness must be some version of standing off to the side of the crowd so as not to get caught up in its mood.’ (2015 p28) And later, that taking responsibility ‘governs the intentionally complex pathos negatively: it is a

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<sup>12</sup> We could also see Heidegger’s rejection of the possibility of a kind of ‘bare’ experience as making the same point: ‘In no case is a Dasein, untouched and unsexed by this way in which things have been interpreted, set before the open country of a ‘world-in-itself’, so that it just beholds what it encounters.’ (SZ 169)

<sup>13</sup> At one point Withy makes a distinction between blameworthy and unblameworthy, owned and unowned falling (2015 p31) which perhaps could do some work here, however this is never explained.

resolution not to allow public norms to interfere.’ (2015 p30) Again, this sounds like a kind of detachment. Given that all particular attunements, that which determines what shows up as mattering, are constituted by public norms, on Heideggerian terms this is not possible.

At times it seems like taking responsibility might not be finding oneself attuned in a way that is detached from *das Man* and all its standards, but perhaps attuned in a way that is resistant to the dominant norms, the most prominent ways of being attuned. We can think that the scope of attunements arises from within *das Man*, that what ‘matters’ cannot be something completely beyond the parameters of our socio-cultural context, yet still think that taking responsibility is to be found in difference or independence from the prevailing wind, by going against it or finding currents in its margins. At times it seems like this might be what Withy has in mind as a way of incorporating opposition to *das Man* in a framework that acknowledges our social nature:

In closing ourselves to the pull of averageness and holding ourselves open to the situation, we set ourselves out for being touched and *against the customary ways of being* so. (2015 p29, emphasis mine)

However, to make acting *contrary* to popular norms the standard is equally to be beholden to those norms, when it is clear that for Withy genuine disclosure is being beholden to the situation instead. By acting in contrast to the general trends of *das Man*, we take our orientation from these trends just as much as if we conformed to them. In both cases, individual Dasein’s openness to, and engagement with, any matter is transformed into an openness to, and engagement with, society and the crowd’s stance. Whether in conformity with or in contrast to, we are no longer oriented by what is, but only by what is popular. Yet this is exactly what accounts such as Withy’s seek to avoid.

Conceptualizing responsibility through independence from *das Man* appears to either posit an individual that is in some way detached from the crowd, or is problematically beholden to them in a way that such accounts actually want to avoid.

## The Failure of the Traditional Model

I take it that the above accounts of Crowell, Han-Pile, McManus and Withy each point to something important, as I will show in the next chapter. But in different ways, I think each falls short. This can be seen to be a result of the attempt of such accounts to maintain the idea that responsibility is to be found in the power or self-determination of the subject in some way or other. This traditional model, as I hope to have shown, needs revision on the basis of the prior analyses of thrownness, attunement, and the fundamental attunement of anxiety.

While Crowell's account of responsibility through judgement and reason-giving didn't appeal to any kind of pure reason, it nonetheless appeared to locate responsibility for our being-in-the-world in the ability of the subject to 'step back' from the grip of what matters, the movement of thrownness, through reflection, deliberation and judgement. Responsibility was still found to lie in some detachment that enabled the subject to assent to and thus 'give' the power to the grip that reasons have for it. Yet the perpetual movement of thrownness, the way that we are always already attuned to possibilities pre-reflectively and the way that the grip of what matters retains some of its force even in anxiety, all speak against seeing responsibility in the power of the subject to step back and judge or reflect. Too much of what is important in life happens in between such judgements.

Han-Pile offered an account of choice that was sensitive to this pre-reflective nature of existence, to the way we are drawn to possibilities without explicitly reflecting on them. But while this account of choosing was sensitive to certain features of Heidegger's account, to focus on the (pre-reflective) ability of the subject to choose, neglected the way that any choice is already dependent upon possibilities mattering to us and soliciting us, as I argued in chapter three: 'the chips are already down' in Frankfurt's words, pre-reflectively or otherwise, and an account of responsibility needs to be sensitive to this.

McManus appeared to offer an account in the vein of the wholeheartedness of Frankfurt. While this account offered a reading of anxiety that acknowledged that our identity in some sense still touches us, ultimately this was used in a kind of affirmation of the subject. To take responsibility was presented as lying in the self-determination of the subject in opposition to the world and others. But as the

analysis of the attunement to the world and others that necessarily grips us in chapter two showed, this model of responsibility is out of keeping with Heidegger's account of our thrownness and attunement. This was further demonstrated in my analysis of anxiety. Here the important vulnerability of what matters to us, revealing our being as possibility, was also shown, which again speaks against such an account of taking responsibility.

Withy's account of responsibility, while sensitive to the way Dasein is attuned to that which is beyond the 'I' in some respects, nonetheless tried to locate responsibility in a kind of independence from *das Man*, thus focusing on the subject through asserting a kind of self-determination relative to *das Man*. The analysis of our thrownness into a particular society in chapter one, and the way this manifests in our attunement in chapter two, speaks against such a reading.

I take it that my analysis of thrownness, attunement, and the fundamental attunement of anxiety all show that responsibility for our being-in-the-world can't lie in reflection, choice, wholeheartedness or independence from *das Man*. I take it that my analysis so far has shown these attempts to maintain the traditional model of responsibility in the face of thrownness to fall short.

In contrast to such attempts, I take Blattner (2012, 2013, 2015) to begin to point away from the traditional model, revealing important insight in doing so. While pointing away from the traditional model of responsibility however, I take his account to nonetheless miss our thrownness at the deepest level, our thrownness into the enigma of Dasein.

### **Responsiveness and the Missing Enigma**

For Blattner, assuming responsibility or being responsible amounts to a responsiveness *to*: 'Dasein is thus the ground of itself in that it is responsible for, because responsive to, who it already is.' (2013 p329) Given that Dasein's being is being-in-the-world, to be responsive to who it is just is to be responsive to the solicitations that come from the world and others that are textured in a way that is constitutive of my identity. Rather than conceiving of taking responsibility as emphasizing a distinction between ourselves and the world and its norms, for Blattner

taking responsibility is a particular way of being responsive to the solicitations that arise from the world.

For Blattner, when absorbed in *das Man* in such a way that we are not taking responsibility, ‘one’s responsiveness to norms is diminished or compromised’ (2013 p330). As a result, we experience only the ‘general situation’, in which the situation is ‘experienced in terms of crude and prepackaged elements, rather than in terms of all its normative subtlety and nuance.’ (2013 p330) In contrast, the responsible individual is responsive to the particular situation and not the levelled down, prepackaged version; they are ‘open to alternative possibilities obscured in the general situation’ (2013 p331).

In contrast to the picture of a closed-off subject imposing itself on a world that threatened McManus’ account (and characterized Frankfurt’s earlier), for Blattner taking responsibility as being responsive means avoiding this kind of stubbornness that he confirms characterizes the inauthentic for Heidegger: ‘Heidegger associates beings lost in the Anyone with “stubbornness [*Versteifung*] about the existence one has achieved.”’(p325, quote from SZ 264<sup>14</sup>) To be responsible, that is responsive, in contrast for Blattner is to be ‘more flexible’ in how one navigates the world (2013 p333).

Blattner’s characterization of anxiety is important here. In agreement with my previous analysis, anxiety for Blattner captures the vulnerability of Dasein’s projects, the way that the particular affective ties I have to the world can break down. Living in the light of the vulnerability of my commitments revealed in anxiety for Blattner means that I must become receptive to how my affective ties with the world and others may change, to the way that some can break down (to be replaced). I think it is worth quoting Blattner at length here, where he says this receptivity (and flexibility):

requires the ability to “take back” prior commitments and habitual modes of activity. As the situation changes and as one’s attunements alter, one is called upon to adapt and change with the situation. If one falls out of love, if the community in which one lives disintegrates, or if the for-the-sakes-of-which to

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<sup>14</sup> This is in contrast to Macquarrie & Robinson’s translation as ‘tenaciousness’, which Blattner (correctly, I think) rejects as being too positive to characterize the inauthentic picture that Heidegger is presenting at this point in the text.



which one is committed are no longer possible, then one is called upon by the situation to change. That is, one must be open to the vulnerability of existence. (2015 p333)

McManus (2015a) rejects Blattner's reading of anxiety which accords with my own, due to a failure to be able to explain how, in some way, authentic (and by inclusion responsible) Dasein could be 'ready for anxiety' as Heidegger tells us they are (SZ 301, McManus 2015a p167).<sup>15</sup> Here, McManus' worry seems to rely on seeing 'ready for' as being prepared for some event that will happen in the future, with the worry arising 'if such readiness is meant to help one deal (in some sense) with anxiety when it strikes.' (McManus 2015a p167) However, given Heidegger's project in *Being and Time* of revealing how this kind of linear time is in fact derivative from a more original existential temporality as discussed in chapter one (and this from the originary ecstatic openness of Dasein as temporality), it would be surprising if being 'ready' for authentic Dasein were to be understood in the sense of inauthentic time as an event to happen in the future. Just as for Heidegger the 'anticipation' of death does not mean relating to some event that will happen in the future<sup>16</sup> but rather concerns a manner of comporting oneself that is expressive of one's finitude (SZ §53), so too I think this readiness for anxiety should be understood as a way of comporting oneself that is expressive of the insight revealed in anxiety.<sup>17</sup>

And I take it that Blattner's position begins to give us such a comportment that is expressive of the vulnerability of our commitments that is revealed in anxiety. Moreover, he importantly does so in a way that avoids seeing this as requiring some kind of explicit reflection, as Crowell's account supposes. Our acknowledgment of

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<sup>15</sup> For McManus, this readiness for anxiety is explained by the way the inauthentic hold the delusion the world has inherent meaning that is shattered in anxiety, whereas the authentic have no such delusion, and are thus in a sense 'ready' for anxiety.

<sup>16</sup> 'by "Being towards death" we do not have in view an 'actualizing' of death' (SZ 261) - This is rather the understanding of the 'they', who seek to transform a proper relation to death into 'fear in the face of an oncoming event' (SZ 254) (in which the fact that it is 'fear', is related to the inappropriate temporal understanding).

<sup>17</sup> This idea can be seen throughout Heidegger's work, for example in his lectures on religion, we see that the second coming is not to be understood as an event in the future but rather mode of comportment: - 'the question of when the second coming will be is not an object-historical when, but is understood in the 'how' of a comportment' p73 *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*

the vulnerability of our commitments is not an intellectual acknowledgment, but rather one that is integrated into our comportment:

to be aware of the vulnerability of one's deepest commitments and entanglements is to be prepared to *struggle* for them. To "take a friendship for granted," as we sometimes say, is to fail to attend to it and nurture it. One must attend to it and nurture it *because* it is vulnerable. (Blattner 2012 p171)

So I take it that in fact Blattner's account shows how the authentic (and so the responsible) are 'ready' for anxiety insofar as their projection is expressive of the insight revealed in anxiety, is expressive of the vulnerability of our commitments. As we shall see, my own account will build on Blattner's gesture to such a comportment here.

Like the anticipation of death, this may incidentally in turn mean that one is 'ready' for a future occurrent episode of anxiety insofar as the vulnerability that anxiety reveals has already been appropriated, and thus perhaps an occurrence of anxiety will not be such a shocking departure from our previous way of being. However, just as the time of 'future nows' is derivative upon the more fundamental futurity of a stance toward possibilities, this kind of readiness is derivative upon this type of comportment that I believe Heidegger is fundamentally pointing to with the idea of 'readiness for anxiety'. In responding to McManus' criticism of Blattner, I take it that here I have indicated how my own account will be understood in relation to the question of 'readiness for anxiety'.

Before going on to suggest a model of taking responsibility or being responsible that I think is generally consistent with Blattner's account yet importantly goes beyond it, I would like to point to a worry about a potential omission in the account which concerns our thrownness into, our attunement to, the enigma of being Dasein.

Blattner conceives taking responsibility as being responsive to the solicitations of the situation. Being responsible means being responsive to the attunements that define me, my identity, in a flexible way that is open to the possibility that such attunements might shift or change. Blattner notes that Heidegger's account of authenticity (and by inclusion responsibility) has a

transcendental aspect insofar as ‘conscience is a transcendental condition of the possibility of Dasein being responsible at all.’ (2013 p322). But he is quick to assert that this does not mean that Dasein’s responsiveness has the character of transcendence:

The normative responsiveness that defines the authenticity of the self is not responsiveness to norms that are themselves transcendental, that is, not to a categorical imperative or transcendent good, but rather to the everyday goods or for-the-sakes-of-which of practical life. (2013 p333)

We might agree that there is no transcendent ‘content’ that we respond to, no particular dictates whose words come from above and beyond. Yet I think (and believe Heidegger thinks) that we respond to these particular solicitations in the light of, with an orientation to, something that is in some sense beyond any particular norm that solicits us, as my analyses in chapters one to three have argued.

I take it that Heidegger’s focus on transcendence in various forms throughout his work points not only to the transcendental as being a condition of the possibility of, but rather also to transcendence in the sense of being always beyond. My analyses of the enigma of facticity as that ‘beyond’ on the basis of which we project, its explication in the analysis of thrownness as that ‘already’ which we are submitted to, and the way we are gripped by that which is beyond us in the analysis of attunement (including anxiety), all support this.

Throughout this analysis, I have referred to this enigma as the question of what it means to be, and I have described the way that this grips us through the idea that what is meaningful, what is true, what is good matters to us. To those familiar with Heidegger’s work, the idea that we are gripped by meaning or the meaningful, or even by truth should be familiar. Less familiar might be the idea that on a Heideggerian story we are gripped, moved and oriented by, what is ‘good’. While I outlined reasons for thinking that this characterizes our experience earlier, I spoke very little about its aptness as a characterization of Heidegger’s thought.

Following Crowell, I think Heidegger’s references during the period of *Being and Time* to the Platonic ‘Good’ lend support to this view. In explaining Plato’s iconic analogy in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* – ‘All vision needs light,

although the light is not itself seen' (p 284) - Heidegger can be seen to point to the idea that, contra Blattner, these everyday norms solicit me in the light of something beyond them. As briefly touched upon, Crowell has done the most to bring out the significance of Heidegger's remarks on the Good for agency and responsibility. Crowell focuses in particular on passages found in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, in which Heidegger identifies the Good with Dasein's for-the-sake-of-which, that in the light of which understanding as projection occurs: 'The [*idea ton agathon*], which is even beyond beings and the realm of ideas, is the for-the-sake-of-which.' (MFL p184) And while I think there are good grounds to reject understanding this in terms of 'justificatory reasons', I think Crowell importantly highlights that for Heidegger we are always oriented to something that is beyond all particularity and is that in the light of which particular possibilities show up to me and solicit me.

I think this is borne out phenomenologically in our everyday experience as I outlined in chapter two, and in the limit situation of anxiety in the previous chapter.<sup>18</sup> Our world shows up to us by gripping us in terms of qualitative distinctions, our attunement is textured by gradations of better or worse in a wide variety of respects, and this seems to be constitutive of our experience – our experience couldn't be as it is without some possibilities (pertaining to ourselves, objects, people etc.) gripping us as better than others. When we are solicited by possibilities, when we are attuned to one possibility and not others, this is constituted at the same time by the sense that the possibility we are taking up is better in some way or another than others. Its being good in some way is part of what solicits us, is bound up with the meaning of the solicitation.

In addition to shaping our experience, I think that when something strikes us as good, its goodness does not strike us as coming from us, as our analysis of attunement showed. To foreshadow our direction by quoting Iris Murdoch, 'The ordinary person does not, unless corrupted by philosophy, believe that he creates values by his choices' (2001 p95). Here I think, as so many times already on Heidegger's recommendation, we would do well to heed this everyday voice. In this

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<sup>18</sup>See also, for example, Jonathan Lear's characterization of radical irony as revealing a distance between what we aim at in taking up certain possibilities, and the particular norms and standards that are constitutive of those possibilities: 'my ironic experience with teaching manifests an inchoate intimation that there is something valuable about teaching— something excellent as a way of being human—that isn't quite caught in contemporary social pretense or in normal forms of questioning that pretense.' (2011 p22)

sense of not finding its origins in us, this goodness, that at which we aim, is beyond us. And not just beyond in the sense of a societal understanding that I might one day catch up with. As I have argued, this ‘outside’ is that which can never become wholly ‘inside’ – it always remains beyond our grasp. To follow Murdoch and Charles Taylor once again here, we can see this phenomenologically in the way that our experience contains gradations of goodness that always point to the possibility of a better. All possibilities that present themselves do so as better than others, but none as perfect. There is always better, there is always a ‘beyond this particular possibility’. There are always further adumbrations of ‘good’ yet to be revealed, that we do not currently have access to or understanding of. To borrow an idea from Emerson’s essay ‘Circles’ (2003), our experience contains within it the idea that around every circle another can be drawn. There is always a beyond that our taking up possibilities aims at and aspires to. As we already saw, Charles Taylor sees this relationship to something like the good as an:

inescapable feature of human life [...]in order to make minimal sense of our lives, in order to have an identity, we need an orientation to the good, which means some sense of qualitative discrimination, of the incomparably higher. (Taylor 1989 p47)

Given that Heidegger in places himself uses the term, I think we are justified to point to this beyond as the ‘good’ in a Heideggerian account, so long as we remember that this ‘good’ includes but is not limited to what we might call the ‘moral’, and essentially contains within itself an enigmatic character of that which is not fully graspable by us. This enigmatic character should not be lost by adding to it the idea of ‘goodness’ as capturing that towards which we strive. What is good or best remains forever only partially revealed to us, always undergoing more or less radical revision. As the Socratic dialogues show, the search for the good is relentlessly aporetic. Despite our constant pull to its direction, the good remains enigmatic.

We must not let analogies or our first contact with Plato lead us to believe that the Good is some big sphere in the sky that can show us what to do, as I shall explore further in the next chapter. Like being for Heidegger, good is not *a being*. Rather, good is that always beyond that we aim at that structures our experience -

that is contained within our experience, yet is always beyond that experience. It is that in light of which the experience shows up.

So is 'good' *the* term that should be used to capture this enigma? While Heidegger does use the term 'good', the idea of 'truth' is also used in his discussion.<sup>19</sup> In some such cases, an awareness of the difficulty of this connection is highlighted. For example, in speaking of the sun analogy here in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, the sun is identified with truth:

The understanding of truth is the condition of possibility for scope and access to the actual. We must here relinquish the idea of interpreting in all its dimensions this inexhaustible simile. (BPP p284)

Perhaps 'truth' is the better term for capturing that which we remain gripped by, that structures our existence yet remains perpetually beyond, as Emerson's characterization here has it:

Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth, that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on mid-noon, and under every deep a lower deep opens. (2003 p225)

Shortly after Heidegger's link of Plato's sun with 'truth', we read:

How the [epekeina] must be defined, what the "beyond" means, what the idea of the good signifies in Plato and in what way the idea of the good is that which is supposed to render knowledge and truth possible – all this is in many respects obscure. (BPP p285-286)

This obscurity is essential. What this 'beyond' is, is ultimately for Heidegger the enigmatic open question of our facticity that we can't help but strive to get at,

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<sup>19</sup> It is perhaps worth remember that with Heidegger's conception of 'understanding', any distinction between truth as pertaining to knowledge, and goodness to action, breaks down given that our fundamental relationship to what 'is', our understanding of what is (and so what is true) consists of projection into possibilities and not just theoretical knowing.

beneath, or beyond, which placing a name on risks limiting and closing off *as* an enigma. The terms ‘good’, ‘meaningful’, or ‘true’, all point to our relation to that which is beyond us, to that which we can never fully grasp, capture, or solve, but that which we always strive for, that which always matters to us and always solicits us. Each might be thought to include the other in some sense, and thus we can see no obvious priority of that which is the ‘ultimate’ beyond.

In some ways it might be most faithful to Heidegger’s word to call this ‘beyond’ and our relationship to it ‘being’ and our always partial disclosure of it.<sup>20</sup> In which case we might describe the way that this disclosure reveals itself as always partial, always pointing beyond itself, and note the way that we are always already engaged in the project of disclosing. Yet I think the idea of the ‘good’ best captures the grip of the enigma, the way that this enigma is something I ‘aim’ at and find myself striving for and drawn to. In relation to our agency, I think ‘good’ is often the most appropriate characterization.

Whatever it is called, I think this enigma that we are submitted to, gripped by, is an aspect of our thrownness that Blattner neglects, if not rejects completely with his comments on a ‘transcendent good’, although perhaps this is with a more substantive notion of ‘good’ in mind. Yet I think the account of the flexibility of our commitments depends upon such a notion of being gripped by that which is beyond any particular commitment, which also feeds in to the idea of the vulnerability of our commitments that Blattner is alive to. When we see that our commitments need to change, we see them as bad, mistaken, or meaningless; when we see that new attachments must take their place (which they must), we see other possibilities as better, or the truth, as more meaningful. And it is our aiming at this, our being attuned to this, which facilitates the breakdown of old possibilities and the replacement with new.

Despite this important omission, the beginning of a move away from the traditional model in Blattner chimes with my account so far. In fact, my positive suggestion for how taking responsibility is to be understood is, I think, to be found

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<sup>20</sup> This appears to be what Heidegger comes to have in mind as he talks of our striving for being in a discussion of Plato’s cave in *The Essence of Truth* lectures of 1932.

implicitly in some of Blattner's remarks. Blattner talks of rejecting seeing only the 'crude' situation in favour of 'clearly seeing' (2013 p333), allowing the 'subtlety and nuance' (2013 p330) of the genuine situation to appear. We are told that being authentic 'expands one's vision' beyond our own narrow confines (2013 p325-326). Being inauthentic is to 'fail to notice' – failing to notice instead of '*attending to these changes* in one's attunement' (2012 p172 – emphasis mine). It is from this latter idea of *attending, of attention*, implicit in the ideas of expanding vision and being perceptive to subtlety and nuance, that I propose we can understand what it means to be responsive, and so to be responsible.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, on the basis of the analysis of chapters one to four, I have argued that attempts to read Heideggerian accounts of taking responsibility on the traditional model as lying in the power of the subject – whether as reflective judgement, choice, wholeheartedness, or independence from *das Man* – fall short. These models, represented in compelling forms by Crowell, Han-Pile, McManus, and Withy respectively, each offer important insights that will be taken up in my own account in the next chapter.

I then looked to Blattner's account, which I argued pointed away from the traditional model. In virtue of the similarities with my own account so far, in particular the idea of anxiety as revealing the vulnerability of what matters, progress was made in understanding what an account of taking responsibility that is sensitive to Heidegger's insights will look like. We have seen that to take responsibility involves being in some way 'responsive' to the way we're attuned in a manner that acknowledges the vulnerability of our deepest commitments, and how this can be seen as a 'readiness for anxiety' in accordance with Heidegger's description. To be responsible one must be receptive to the solicitations of the world. However I also argued that Blattner's reading importantly misses our thrownness into the enigma of Dasein, before justifying characterizing this as the enigma of the good.

In the final chapter, taking inspiration from Iris Murdoch, I will propose that taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world means becoming attentive.







‘Tell me to what you pay attention and I will tell you who you are.’ (Ortega y Gasset (1962 p94)

## Chapter Six - Attention

In this chapter, I will outline what I take attention to be, and will argue for why a Heideggerian account of taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world should be understood in its terms. Through the idea of attention, I seek to provide an account of taking responsibility that is sensitive to the insights gained from the preceding analysis of thrownness and its first-personal manifestation in attunement. The aim is to provide a recognizable account of taking responsibility, and through the use of examples I will aim to show that attention or attentiveness captures what we recognize to be taking responsibility.

It should be pointed out again that this is a ‘Heideggerian’ account of taking responsibility. This is not to say that Heidegger himself speaks of authenticity in terms of attention. But neither does he characterize authenticity in terms of giving reasons, making a pre-reflective existentiell choice, being wholehearted, or separating oneself from *das Man*. As mentioned, Heidegger’s writing of Division II of *Being and Time* was notoriously rushed<sup>1</sup>, and this, for some, explains the difficulty in extracting a clear account from Heidegger’s words of how authenticity should be understood. The variety of interpretations that Heidegger’s talk of authenticity attracts, indicates that understanding exactly what it means requires going beyond Heidegger’s own words to some degree.

As we have seen, Heidegger does offer us some tools with his talk of resoluteness, choosing to choose, etc. But the meaning of these is highly contestable, illustrated with Han-Pile’s and McManus’ diverging interpretations of ‘the choice to choose’. The point becomes stark when we see how resoluteness can either be taken to mean something like Frankfurtian wholeheartedness or its very opposite as ‘unclosing’ disclosure (Kompridis 2006).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Kisiel (1993) Appendix C, as also referenced by McManus in his introduction to *Heidegger, Authenticity, and the Self*.

<sup>2</sup> See Kompridis’ interpretation of ‘decision’ and ‘resoluteness’: ‘The German word for decision is *Entscheidung*, whose literal meaning refers to the act of unsheathing, as in unsheathing one’s

Rather than beginning from textual analysis of the concept of ‘authenticity’ in Division II, the idea of attention arises as a result of my analysis thus far of ideas introduced in Division I. And while it is not a characterization that Heidegger himself uses, I think we can see this as a Heideggerian account insofar as it finds its origin in Heidegger’s distinctive conceptions of thrownness and attunement (including anxiety). The plausibility of this as a Heideggerian reading will come from the way that ‘attention’ fits with Heidegger’s analysis as I have characterized it. In addition, the account will also tie in, by contrast, with the idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity that characterize falling.

### **Heidegger and Murdoch**

The use of the idea of ‘attention’ as a philosophical concept finds its most prominent home in the works of Simone Weil and Iris Murdoch, the latter under the former’s influence. And it is with the aid of Iris Murdoch that I think the idea of attention can appropriately be used to help us understand a Heideggerian account of responsibility.

On the face of it, using Iris Murdoch to help us give a Heideggerian account of responsibility seems unlikely or perhaps ill-advised. Murdoch sees Heidegger as a romantic existentialist, as one who writes with ‘superficial gloom’ that conceals self-satisfaction and a feeling of superiority over, and contempt for, the ordinary human condition (2001 p49). At one point Murdoch even goes so far as to posit that ‘Heidegger is Lucifer in person.’ (2001 p70). It is not just Heidegger’s style or character that cause this ire – the idea of authenticity for Murdoch is associated with a problematic ‘force of will’ (2001 p49). Likewise, the concept of responsibility is also associated with such a will, as well as with some misguided ideals of sincerity, or freedom as detachment in the form of choice, decision, or rationality (2001 p48, 78-

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sword. But *Entschlossenheit* is not synonymous with decision, or decisiveness, or a manly readiness to take action; it is synonymous with *Erschlossenheit*, with disclosure, or disclosedness. “Unclosing” or “unclosedness” would serve as a much more accurate and felicitous translation. It preserves the common semantic origin of both terms in the verb *schliessen*, to close, as well as the characterization of human sense making activities as activities of disclosing meaning and possibility. More important, it draws attention to the receptive character of the activity to which both terms refer.’ (Kompridis 2006 p58) For what it’s worth, as should be clear, I would favour this interpretation.

79). The ideals of authenticity and responsibility are conceptions that Murdoch spends a great deal of time arguing against.

But as I have shown, precisely these conceptions of authenticity or responsibility are not ones that best capture a Heideggerian picture. It seems Murdoch herself perhaps allows room for this with the admission of never being too sure of having understood Heidegger (2001 p49). Additionally, her detailed (unfinished) engagement with his work shortly before her death<sup>3</sup>, as McManus (2015b) notes, further suggests that Murdoch herself saw something in Heidegger's work outside of the picture of romantic freedom, sincerity, or self-assertion that she derided. And indeed, as McManus shows, important points of convergence (which McManus traces to the influence of Aristotle) can be seen between the two thinkers that suggests the possibility of a fruitful exchange.<sup>4</sup>

Beyond McManus' idea of a kind of shared Aristotelianism, I believe a deep core of convergence can be seen to run through their thought, which can be viewed from various angles. Both thinkers aim at something like the unity of existence: Heidegger's lifelong struggle with, and pursuit of, the univocity of being can be seen to be captured by Murdoch's understanding of the good as a kind of 'shadowy, unachieved unity' stretching through the whole of existence (e.g. intro. to SZ, Murdoch 2001 p95). Both thinkers famously tread the borders of mysticism (Murdoch 2001 72)<sup>5</sup>; both eschew the idea of a fact/value distinction (e.g. Murdoch 2001 p29<sup>6</sup>, SZ 71); both want to retain an idea of the human as fallen that is not tied to theology (Murdoch 2001 p27, SZ 179-180).

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<sup>3</sup> See 'Sein und Zeit: Pursuit of Being' in Broackes (2012)

<sup>4</sup> McManus focusses on a shared Aristotelian heritage in order to show, with the help of Murdoch, how conceptual 'seeing as' is possible on a Heideggerian account in a way that can accommodate the heterogeneity and novelty of concrete experience. Interestingly, at times McManus characterizes this kind of conceptual seeing as a way of being responsive to, and *responsible for*, the norms of the world. It's not clear how this discussion of responsibility as conceptual seeing fits with McManus' account of taking responsibility and authenticity that we saw earlier. But in contrast to that earlier account of responsibility, I take this 'seeing as' picture to cohere with the account of responsibility that I will propose. However, constraints of space mean I cannot discuss the interesting issue of the particularity of the concrete further here.

<sup>5</sup> Heidegger's later work is more commonly considered to lean towards mysticism, although throughout his career Heidegger held an interest in mysticism, in particular that of Meister Eckhart (See Kisiel 1995 throughout, but esp. p18, 76 and Part I section 2). For all its systematicity, Heidegger's search in SZ for the '*transcendens* pure and simple' (SZ 38) can be seen to retain some connection with mystic thought.

<sup>6</sup> See also p27 and 253 in *Existentialists and Mystics* (Murdoch 1997)

But there are three important aspects of this core that Murdoch and Heidegger share that I take to be most relevant here; three aspects of Murdoch's account that map features of Heidegger's thought that we have seen to be relevant in our discussion of taking responsibility or being responsible. In explicating them, the aim is to justify turning to an idea of attention inspired by, and developed in conjunction with, Murdoch.

The first important shared feature is that Murdoch rejects a Cartesian picture of the subject, a picture that she sees as underlying the kind of existentialism that Heidegger too rejected as a mischaracterization of his own thought.<sup>7</sup> For Murdoch, this dominant existentialist philosophy<sup>8</sup> that she finds in the moral sphere is problematic because it is:

still Cartesian and egocentric. Briefly put, our picture of ourselves has become too grand, we have isolated, and identified ourselves with, an unrealistic conception of will, we have lost the vision of a reality separate from ourselves.  
(2001 p46)

We can see this as corresponding to the central Heideggerian idea, exemplified in the idea of 'being-in-the-world', that we are not a separable locus from which being emerges. Being is not reducible to the subject; rather, being and Dasein require one another as correlates, and one is not reducible to the other. As we saw from our analysis of attunement, we exist as the 'between', as one pole always in relation to another that exists and impacts upon us in a way that is outside the control of our particular projections<sup>9</sup>. This shared feature is that which Frankfurt and the positions

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, in the *Letter on Humanism* (e.g. p157-158)

<sup>8</sup> Murdoch uses this term to capture not only the philosophical movement that found its centre of gravity around Sartre in France of the 1940s, but also the Anglophone moral philosophy that surrounded her in England at the time, seeing the latter as being in essence a version of the former.

<sup>9</sup> For Heidegger being cannot be separate from Dasein (SZ §44) and interestingly, Antonaccio's (2000) reading of Murdoch as a 'reflexive realist' suggests that the same is true of Murdoch: 'The vision of the good is only available through subjective resonance. We can conclude from this discussion that the idea of the good implicit in Murdoch's account of realistic vision is a reflexive principle whose objectivity is not conceived independently of a thinking, valuing consciousness. The good as a criterion of truthful moral vision is not purely external to consciousness but is located *between* mind and world.' (p142). Accordingly, I think the 'reality separate from ourselves' in Murdoch's should be understood as a reality that is not subject to our grasp or control, and whose being cannot be subsumed to ours.

represented by McManus and Withy seem to ignore in assuming some kind of independence or disconnect from the world and others when taking responsibility.

In acknowledging that individuals are always bound to that which is ‘beyond’ them, Murdoch does not then tie them exclusively to social norms, as a position like Blattner’s threatened to. Famously for Murdoch, as we saw too for Heidegger, that which is beyond us as individuals is not confined to the world and others, but rather points to the perpetual beyond which Murdoch, as at times Heidegger, sees in terms of the Platonic Good. As with Heidegger, this ‘beyond’ for Murdoch is not a being that we can see apart from beings: ‘The Good itself is not visible[...] it cannot be experienced or represented or defined.’ (2001 p68)

And just as we saw that for Heidegger there is no solid, determinate basis underpinning the striving of our existence, so too for Murdoch:

The only genuine way to be good is to be good ‘for nothing’ [...] That ‘for nothing’ is indeed the experienced correlate of the invisibility or non-representable blankness of the idea of Good itself. (2001 p69-70)<sup>10</sup>

The good for Murdoch (which she also links with the beautiful, the true, and with ‘reality’, of which the latter two resonate with ‘being’ for Heidegger), as we saw with Heidegger’s use of the term, is that which is always beyond particular possibilities and that in the light of which particular possibilities show up. Antonaccio (2000) captures this point clearly in what she calls the ‘formal’ component of Murdoch’s idea of the good, a description which shows how I think the idea can be seen to work in a Heideggerian vein:

The good is a transcendental notion that provides the condition for the possibility of moral identity without itself specifying any substantive conception of value or identity. Further, the transcendental idea of the good includes the notion of perfection even at this formal level. This is because the idea of value itself presupposes qualitative distinctions of worth that depend on

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<sup>10</sup> We can see this as linking to the way that anxiety is at times characterized by Heidegger as revealing the ‘nothing’.

the notions of good and bad, better and worse, truth and falsity in relation to some ideal of “the best” of most perfect. (Antonaccio 2000 p15)

The inclusion of the word ‘moral’ before ‘identity’ in the quote above is, I believe, a slip from Antonaccio, who in the next paragraph distinguishes this formal notion of good for Murdoch with a substantive meaning which ‘specifies the specifically moral content of this idea of perfection’ (*ibid.*). This substantive content points to something like resisting (as far as possible) the ‘fat relentless ego’ (2001 p51) that threatens to dominate our agency, and instead appreciating the individual reality of other human beings. It is not the substantive but the formal notion of good that I see as mapping on to the Heideggerian project, whose domain is ‘broader’ than the moral. The lack of substantive content is particularly important for Heidegger when we consider the ultimately enigmatic nature of that on the basis of, and toward which, we strive. We will return to the ‘substantive’ issue in due course but for now, it is important to flag this as a potentially significant point of divergence between Heidegger and Murdoch.<sup>11</sup> This same difference can perhaps be seen in the way that Murdoch will talk of virtue, while Heidegger will talk of authenticity. While this is not insignificant, both nonetheless see these respective terms as capturing something like an expression or actualization of a deep human essence to which we have a propensity, yet which must constantly resist a counter tendency (for Heidegger falling, for Murdoch the ego).

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<sup>11</sup> In Heidegger’s lecture course of 1932 (beyond the primary range of my analysis), Heidegger seems to go further than saying the ‘good’ is broader than the moral, and seems to positively reject any moral connotations at all. Heidegger at first rejects any kind of delimitation:

‘We must once again underline the necessity of freeing ourselves at the very outset from any kind of sentimental conception of this idea of the good, but also from all perspectives, conceptions, and definitions belonging to Christian morality and its secularized corruptions (or any kind of ethic), where the good is conceived as the opposite of the bad and the bad conceived as the sinful. It is not at all a matter of ethics or morality, no more than it is a matter of a logical or epistemological principle.’ (ET p72)

Before then seemingly going further and potentially excluding the moral:

‘[Good] does not have any kind of *moral* meaning: ethics has corrupted the fundamental meaning of this word. [...] The good is the sound, the enduring, as distinct from the harmless meaning suitable for aunts: a good man, i.e. respectable, but without insight and power.’ (ET p77)

Whatever the merits of Heidegger’s thought there, I see no reason on the basis of Heidegger’s thought around *Being and Time* to exclude the moral.



Importantly though, we have seen that Murdoch shares Heidegger's anti-Cartesianism in seeing that we are always necessarily bound to that which is beyond us. We have seen that for Murdoch too this beyond is ultimately something that is perpetually beyond us that our agency nonetheless aims at. It is this to which we are ultimately drawn, 'a magnetic but inexhaustible reality' that we feel ourselves solicited to (Murdoch 2001 p41). We can see this is the same inexhaustibility of the enigma that we are thrown into, which Murdoch, as at times Heidegger, identifies with something like the Platonic Good.

The second important feature that Murdoch's picture shares with Heidegger's is related to the rejection of an isolable Cartesian subject, and captures another feature that we have seen in the analysis of thrownness and attunement. As we saw, for Heidegger Dasein is always attuned, and this attunement is the basis from which possibilities arise and are taken up. This contrasts with the view that sees Dasein as a 'free floating potentiality for being' or *liberium arbitrium* (SZ 144). Like Heidegger, of central importance for Murdoch is a rejection of an idea of a pure will (or any other kind of 'pure' faculty such as rationality) that is in some way detached and free to move independently from all 'empirical' factors.<sup>12</sup> Instead, Murdoch gives an account in which our actions and choices arise from 'a continuous fabric of being' (2001 p29), a background of 'attachments'. This corresponds with the account given earlier of attunement as the privileged first-personal experience of our thrownness (which is often partly characterized as these 'empirical' factors as we saw in chapter one).

This background from which choices and possibilities arise can be seen to capture what positions represented by Han-Pile threaten to obscure with language of unprepared leaps. Attachments for Murdoch, like attunement for Heidegger, structure our experience in terms of the possibilities that show up for us. It is in light of this, rejecting the leaping of an empty will, that Murdoch claims 'I can only choose within the world I can *see*' (2001 p35-36). 'Seeing' and choosing to take up possibilities already depends upon some kind of affective relation to those possibilities. In keeping with our rejection of positions where power and responsibility come through choice, for Murdoch we need to already be attuned to

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<sup>12</sup> Murdoch here typically characterizes these ignored factors in terms of empirical psychology, Freudian psychology, and Marxism.

(or have some ‘attachment’ to in Murdoch’s parlance) a possibility for it to show up to us as a possibility. As a result, for Murdoch it is important (perhaps most important) to look to the background attachments that ‘[lie] behind and in between’ (2001 p65) our actions and choices that in fact make them what they are.

The third feature that Murdoch’s account shares with our Heideggerian picture can be seen through the way Murdoch appears to share Heidegger’s well-known veneration of the ‘peasant’: ‘The virtuous peasant knows [...], although what he knows he might be at a loss to say.’ (2001 p72) Underlying this, we can see the rejection of a picture of the human as finding its greatest expression in reflection and explicit thought. This is the picture, represented above by Crowell, that we saw must be rejected on a Heideggerian account. And it seems on Murdoch’s too, as her account of human being doesn’t necessarily find its pinnacle in explicit reflection – rather, ‘it must be possible to do justice to both Socrates and the virtuous peasant.’ (2001 p2) We note also here that while for Murdoch, as I have suggested for Heidegger, explicit reflection is not a necessary feature of her account of human being at its utmost, this is not to say that explicit reflection is thereby excluded; the virtuous peasant *and* Socrates are to be included in her story.

Thus we can see the deep similarities between the basis Murdoch has for her account of the virtuous human being and the basis we have obtained for a Heideggerian account of the authentic, and by inclusion responsible, human being. Like Heidegger, Murdoch denies the idea of a self-subsisting subject from which the existence of all else comes, in favour of acknowledging the foundational, necessary relation to that which is beyond the subject. She sees this beyond as ultimately being the ‘good’, which transcends any attempt to grasp it, shapes our agency, and which we continually aim at without any ultimate ‘ground’ from which we do so, in the same way that I have proposed Heidegger’s account of the ‘enigma’ should be understood. Like Heidegger, Murdoch views human agency as constituted by and arising from that to which we already have an affective attachment or bond – all particular possibilities are taken up on the basis of these attachments. And like Heidegger, Murdoch’s account seeks to avoid setting explicit reflection at its summit, whilst not banishing it all together.

It is on this conceptual basis that is shared with Heidegger, and is so relevant to our discussion, that Murdoch invokes the idea of ‘attention’ and being attentive as

the route to, and substance of, virtue; it is the ‘instrument and outcome of moral growth’ (Cf. Bagnoli 2012 p218). From this, we can think of the idea of ‘attention’ and being attentive as being expressive in a special way of the distinctive picture of human being that Murdoch portrays, which is shared by Heidegger.

Before advancing attentiveness as a model of responsible, it is first necessary to examine what attention and attentiveness are. In doing so, we shall see how the comportment of attention avoids the problems that we have seen other possible Heideggerian understandings of responsibility meet, in a way that remains true to the insights of Heidegger’s idea of attunement. I will then show why the idea of being attentive is an appropriate way of understanding being responsible, taking responsibility, on a Heideggerian account.

## **A Phenomenology of Attention**

I assume that attention is something familiar to us, something that we can easily point to in our own experience. We might think of when we are studying or learning, as perhaps when listening to a lecture or reading a text. Murdoch gives the example of learning a language, Russian. Or we might think of when we are talking seriously with a close friend, perhaps about a difficult time they are going through. In each case, if comporting ourselves as we’d wish in these situations, I think we would see ourselves as attending to, giving or paying attention to, the Russian instruction or our friend’s words.

In doing so, we can think that we ‘focus’ on the textbook in front of us, or our friend’s words. Our energies are directed toward this and not towards other things that may otherwise hold them. If we decide that we need to do our Russian homework and begin going through our textbook, we find that we ignore the conversation on the radio, the other books on the desk, or the thought of what we are going to eat for dinner, as our thoughts, our vision, our bodies, are directed toward the textbook. Likewise, when talking with our upset friend we ignore the phone vibrating in our pocket, the newspaper on the sofa, and the plans we may have had to spend the time relaxing or reading. We turn ourselves to face them, and direct our eyes and ears upon them as they speak. In paying attention, attending to, we orient ourselves toward the object of our attention to the relative exclusion of other things. The greater the degree

to which we do this, the more of ourselves we orient without remainder, the more we can be said to be attending or paying attention.

This orientation seems also to require something like constancy. We would not wish to say we were attending to learning Russian or our friend's troubles if we read or listened only for a minute, before making a tea, perhaps to return for another minute or two, before answering an email. We might think of attention as necessarily requiring some kind of duration, a kind of minimum time span. But I think here, in characterizing attention as a mode of comportment for a Heideggerian model, we should remember Heidegger's insights regarding existential temporality. As we have seen, the everyday sense of clock time as a series of 'now' points is a derivative form of the more primordial existential temporality that is captured by the structure of Dasein as fallen thrown projection. Rather than considering attention as requiring a minimum kind of duration in everyday 'clock time' then, I would suggest that the kind of constancy that captures our experience of attending to something is to be understood as projecting on the basis of that to which we are attending. It is taking the object of attention as our point of orientation. When we attend to something or someone, we project on the basis of that or them, or more specifically as we have seen, we project on the basis of our attunement to that or them. When attending to Russian, it is on the basis of my attunement to this object that I take up possibilities: I might physically move to better read the Russian text, note down vocabulary, or reach for a grammar book in search of a rule. The Russian text is that centre that my acts are aimed towards. Likewise, when listening to a friend I take them as the basis for my projection, I take them and their trouble as my point of orientation, the locus for my thoughts and actions: I ask them questions about how they are feeling; I leave silence for them to collect their thoughts and to talk or not as they so wish; I place a hand on their back to give comfort. The reason why the brief stints of reading or listening are not really attending is not their brevity of duration, but rather because they fail to project on the basis of Russian or the friend. They fail to take them as their point of orientation. Rather, in these examples we project on the basis of other concerns, such as our desire for tea, the issue of a forthcoming email, or perhaps simply a desire precisely not to attend.

The idea of the 'constancy' of attention, I think, captures another feature of attention. This orienting ourselves around, projecting on the basis of, can also be seen

in the way that we might characterize attention colloquially as becoming ‘absorbed’ in that to which we are attending. I think this potentially suggests a loss of self that we shall see is misleading. But nonetheless I think it captures a sense of giving oneself over to, heeding, that which is the object of attention. In projecting on the basis of it, we are receptive to it as something that doesn’t just exist as an extension of ourselves, but has an existence beyond us. We say in paying attention that we ‘lose ourselves’ in the Russian book because we orient ourselves around this: the truth of Russian language (as instantiated in our textbook) we might say becomes our measure. Equally, in attending to our friend, we take them and the troubles they describe as the basis for our projection, as we let the truth of their difficulties and what is best for them be the standard for our actions. The object of attention becomes the locus of our projection.

Yet it is important to note that despite taking the object of attention as the basis for our projection, ‘giving ourselves over to it’ in some sense, the self still remains and is not ‘lost’ in the object – both subject and object poles are necessarily ‘there’ in attention. While we focus on the Russian text or our friend’s words, we are still ourselves projecting into our particular possibilities that allow the language or our friend’s troubles to manifest themselves: even when engrossed in the Russian textbook the particular self remains, searching for the grammar rules we don’t yet understand, pronouncing aloud the words most alien to us, rereading sentences we find difficult. So too when talking to our friend: we ask questions to facilitate their story, we might ask them if their trouble is similar to a particular previous occasion, we might make the kind of jokey comment we are aware they like if it seems they need a release of tension. Our identity still remains and continues to structure the projection. Here the resonance of the word attunement might be helpful. As the idea of attunement suggests, two poles are required. This is true of tuning an instrument: both the instrument and a standard note (such as that from a tuning fork) are required. In tuning, the instrument itself is adjusted and tweaked, its particular sound taken into account. But it is the tuning fork’s note which is the focus, the standard, and point of orientation for the tuning. While the instrument and its particular tones are considered, they are so always in relation to the standard note as that at which they aim.

This relates to another way in which we are still ‘there’ when attending. In her essay ‘Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God’, Simon Weil describes school children’s efforts at being attentive:

Most often attention is confused with a kind of muscular effort. If one says to one’s pupils: “Now you must pay attention,” one sees them contracting their brows, holding their breath, stiffening their muscles. If after two minutes they are asked what they have been paying attention to, they cannot reply. They have not been paying attention. They have been contracting their muscles. (Weil 2009 p109-110)

I think this captures the idea raised above that attention is a kind of orientation to, a giving oneself over to, that to which we are attending. It is partly because the school children see the point of focus as themselves, concentrating on their own exertion and act of attending, that they fail to attend. But equally it points us to the kind of awareness we have when attending. Weil seems to suggest that the students’ ability to retrospectively make explicit what they have been attending to is indicative of whether they have or have not been attending. And this characterization maps that of pre-reflective consciousness (that we saw typically characterized attunement in chapter two), suggesting that this is at least one way in which we attend.

If we consider what it’s like to attend, I think this rings true. As we saw, we might characterize attending by saying that we are absorbed in the work or the conversation, or even that we ‘lose ourselves’ in them. We saw that this language captures the focus of the activity and the point of orientation (where the particular self, our identity, still plays an important part). But this idea of ‘absorption’ also captures the way that when we are attending, we often stop explicitly reflecting or thinking about what we are doing. When attending to our study of Russian, we can imagine becoming engrossed in trying to translate a paragraph or reading down the list of verb conjugations. I would suggest that here we would not be explicitly aware of what we were doing, nor necessarily explicitly deliberating about or reflecting about the content. Equally, when asking questions to our friend to hear more about their difficult time, or placing an arm on their shoulder for support, I think in both cases we would typically not be explicitly reflecting on, nor deliberating about, what we were doing. Yet, as Weil suggests, if interrupted and asked about the Russian

conjugations we were trying to understand, or if, after our friend has left, we stop to reflect on the conversation and their situation, we would be able to do this. So while there is some sense in which attention can feel like we lose ourselves in that to which we are attending, our reflections on what it's like to attend suggest that we remain pre-reflectively aware and thus pre-reflectively still 'there'. We might think of this in contrast to cases where we become transfixed or mesmerized by something or someone in a kind of stupor; when asked in this case what we were attending to, we may very well be lost for all but the most basic words.

This type of contrast case points to another feature of attention. In this kind of entranced state with a thing or person that might bear some formal similarities with attention, we have no sense of anything beyond the object of our gaze. Yet, if we look again to Simone Weil and her description of the particular kind of 'effort' of attention that can be seen in some form in academic work, we see a hint that attention proper is not like that: 'When we set out to do a piece of work it is necessary to wish to do it correctly, because such a wish is indispensable in any true effort' (Weil 2009 p108). The idea here is that when we attend to something, in this example academic work, we do so in the light of that which is beyond the work in some sense, namely here 'correctness' or truth, but which we might also capture by saying we wish to do the work 'well'. In light of the analysis earlier, we might say we wish to do so in light of the good. I think something like this can be seen if we look to what it's like to attend again in our examples. In attending to learning Russian, as Murdoch describes, 'My work is a progressive revelation of something which exists independently of me' (2001 p87). In attending to Russian, we attend to it as something 'true', as something whose truth comes from beyond us: we read its vocabulary, its grammar, as something whose truth does not come 'from us' but 'to us'.

I think this perhaps become manifest in the way that, when attending, we might stop in puzzlement at the textbook's apparent flouting of a rule we thought we knew, before looking to check a different text for help – the possible 'breakdown' of its truth makes our orientation to it in light of its truth manifest here. I think the same 'beyond' can be seen when we attend to our friend. We orient ourselves to our friend, take them and their trouble as our point of orientation, the basis of our projection. But we do this in the light of, 'with an eye to', the idea of a beyond, the true or the good. Even while we are fully engaged in their words, oriented to them - their need to be

comforted, their request for an opinion - this is done with an eye to what is best for them. Again, in the experience of the possible ‘breakdown’ of what is best for them - as they ask us to do something that appears to make their situation worse, or as we see the need to gently contradict them with an uncomfortable truth – we see that our orientation is to them in the light of what is best, what is true, or what is meaningful perhaps. We give ourselves over to them in the light of that which is beyond them (and beyond us too). We are oriented to their good.

There is one final aspect of attending, being attentive, that can be seen in our examples. While we have pointed out that attention doesn’t require our explicitly reflecting on the object of attention, it is additionally worth pointing out that paying attention is not just a ‘mental’ activity, pre-reflective or otherwise<sup>13</sup>. Perhaps seen more clearly in the term ‘attending’ (as in attending an event, to business, to someone in need), rather than ‘paying attention’ which is usually associated with mental focus, I think attention as such includes our comportment more generally. It is something done with the whole self. As we saw, paying attention to Russian is constituted by positioning ourselves to read the textbook, searching through other sources for help, perhaps sounding out words to ourselves. So too, paying attention to our friend requires not just listening but asking questions, turning to face them with a suitable expression, resting an arm on their shoulder. So while Murdoch characterizes attention in terms of ‘looking’ at something, in the same way that Blattner used language of seeing, I think attention goes beyond this narrow range. This can be seen clearly if we imagine we were asked to attend, or ‘watch’ someone’s toddler whilst they were busy. This means not only focusing our mind’s gaze on them – it means running after them, taking away the pair of scissors they’ve inexplicably acquired, trying to comfort them if they are upset. Just as for Heidegger ‘seeing’ captures projecting into possibilities and not just gazing with one’s eyes (SZ 146), just as ‘understanding’ too pertains to this projection and not an act of cognition, so too I think our own experiences of attending attest that to be attentive, to attend, also captures our practical comportment more broadly.

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<sup>13</sup> In her talk of attention, Iris Murdoch tends to focus on the devotion of our intellectual (if not necessarily reflective) energies, chiefly in order to make the point that the moral mind is not an extensionless point of pure reason or will. However I don’t think Murdoch says anything that precludes broadening attention to include our more general comportment.



Having looked to what it means to be attentive, to pay attention, we can begin to see how this model avoids the problems that we saw with other ways of thinking about Heideggerian understandings of being responsible that remained in the traditional model. As we saw, being attentive does not require that we ‘stand back’ and explicitly reflect or deliberate, as the model represented by Crowell suggested. From what we have seen, I think it is clear that being attentive avoids the picture of a kind of subject that is separable in some sense from the world, others, and *das Man* that we saw in positions represented by McManus and Withy. As Richard Moran puts it well, ‘Attention [...] is in its very nature answerable to something outside oneself’ (Moran 2012 p187, emphasis mine). In attending to Russian or our friend we acknowledge that their existence is not subsumable to ours, and express this irreducible bond we have to that which is beyond us. In giving ourselves over to the object of our attention, in projecting on the basis of this object, *we are receptive to this ‘beyond us’ in an exemplary way*. And as the discussion of this attention in the light of the good (or true) suggests, this receptivity retains an eye to that beyond that we have called the good, the true, or the meaningful, that frames but is always beyond any particular possibility. To be attentive is not to be blindly fixated or ensnared to the particular object of attention, but to give oneself over to it in light of the good (or true) that is always beyond it. This is in contrast to Blattner’s picture where this enigmatic beyond was ignored. Relatedly, I think it is the idea of attention that we can see as that which is implicit in Blattner’s account that is expressive of the vulnerability of our commitments. As in the case of Blattner’s example, because a relationship of love is vulnerable we need to attend to it, to orient ourselves by it, rather than risk losing something important.

While I have begun to show how the model of attention avoids some of the problems of the traditional accounts of responsibility, I will now show how this model of responsibility can also in fact help to explain the features of these traditional accounts. In doing so, the way my account avoids the problems with the traditional model will additionally be developed further. I shall begin by illustrating how the idea of attention can be seen to underlie the view that reflection is necessary for responsibility, before showing how this model can additionally explain the worry that led Han-Pile to go too far in the other direction and say that taking responsibility cannot be something that we are explicitly aware of.

## Accounting for the Traditional Model

### Reflection

When thinking of attending to Russian or our friend's troubles, we saw how it is possible that we do so without explicit reflective awareness. I think this can apply both to the fact that we are attending as such, and that to which we are attending: we might not be thinking of whether or how we are paying attention, and likewise we might not be explicitly reflecting on (deliberating about, judging etc.) the object of our attention, as might be the case when jumping to prevent a mishap to the toddler in our charge.

As we saw in particular with phrases such as 'paying attention to', attention is perhaps most commonly regarded as turning one's mind's eye to – giving something one's conscious, explicit attention. And here this can help to explain why some kind of explicit reflection is thought to constitute taking responsibility. Given that paying attention (as we saw is also the case with attunement and understanding) is perhaps more readily associated with an explicit reflective act, we can see how taking responsibility might be thought to consist exclusively in this kind of explicit reflection. Perhaps, as in Crowell's case, thinking about and judging, having and giving reasons, might be thought to be just the highest form of being attentive to the world, others, and the good. In contrast, we have seen that while this explicit form of attention is still attention, it is only part of the story, and not the most important part. As we saw in opposition to this picture, attention is often not explicit but pre-reflective.

But in contrast to Han-Pile, this everyday understanding of attention as something explicit and reflective is not wrong. In contrast to the way we cannot be reflectively aware of taking responsibility for Han-Pile, to think of responsibility in terms of being attentive allows us to see that in an important sense we can be aware of taking responsibility in a way that isn't just after the fact. This seems to facilitate our everyday understanding, in keeping with Heidegger's methodology.

Additionally, if we see taking responsibility as becoming attentive, Han-Pile's worry about being reflectively aware of taking responsibility can be understood and explained in a way that her account omitted. By analogy with listening, the worry might be put as follows: we might think that as soon as I think about listening, or

reflect on what I am listening to, I am no longer listening. In the example given earlier of comforting my friend, as soon as I reflect and think about my friend's worries, or about my act of paying attention, I stop paying attention to the friend. Explicit reflection and judgement risk shifting the focus from the proper object of attention to the subject (perhaps the subject as the 'ground of reasons', as for Crowell), thus dissipating attention proper and responsibility with it. There is some credence to this worry, and perhaps there is indeed a tendency within reflection to drift away from the object of attention itself as we become engrossed in our own thoughts about the matter. I don't think this necessarily holds in all cases though: a sentry on guard may be reflectively aware that they are listening attentively, that they are hearing every little sound, and they may reflect on exactly what those sounds are. Yet they may still be attentive, still give themselves over to what they are listening to by taking that as their point of orientation. Equally it seems possible to explicitly think about the need to be attentive, and possible to reflect on our friend's worries, in a way that doesn't take our attention away from them. While this account of attention can explain Han-Pile's worry, I take it to also show how taking responsibility is possible in the kind of explicit way that is consistent with our everyday understanding.

### Choice

The idea of attention can also help us make sense of how choice and decision arise in a way that avoids positing a kind of groundless leap that was shown to be problematic in accounts represented by Han-Pile's. I will show, with the help of Murdoch, how attention is the important component underlying such choice. In doing so, given the way responsibility is so often linked with choice, some further support is given to the idea being attentive can be seen as an account of taking responsibility.

As we saw in chapter three, in contrast to the idea of a kind of 'groundless choosing', we take up possibilities on the basis that we are attuned to them, that they matter to us. In arguing against philosophical conceptions of an extensionless willing, reasoning, or choosing, Iris Murdoch stresses this point as we saw: 'I can only choose within the world I can *see*' (2001 p35-36). Murdoch often uses this visual characterization, but her talk of 'attachments' suggests this is an aspect or metaphor for something broader, including that which we have characterized as attunement

For Murdoch, it is attention that is crucial in determining ‘the world we can see’, in determining our ‘attachments’ and the possibilities we take up. It is the first-personal ‘work’ of attention that determines the strength with which possibilities show up and solicit me, and thus it is attention that can allow conflicting possibilities to appear, meaning a choice is to be made:

If we ignore the prior work of attention and notice only the emptiness of the moment of choice we are likely to identify freedom with the outward movement since there is nothing else to identify it with. (2001 p36)

For Murdoch, it is a failure to consider the work of attention that leads to pictures of choosing in a groundless way that was represented by Han-Pile earlier.

Given that we take up possibilities on the basis of our attunement to them, what Murdoch calls our ‘attachment’ to them, this kind of attachment needs to ‘grow’ before we take them up. And this explains the way that we cannot just change at will. Here I will quote Murdoch at length, as I find her characterization perspicuous:

It is small use telling oneself ‘Stop being in love, stop feeling resentment, be just.’ What is needed is a reorientation which will provide an energy of a different kind, from a different source. [...] The neo-Kantian existentialist ‘will’ is a principle of pure movement. But how ill this describes what it is like for us to alter. Deliberately falling out of love is not a jump of the will, it is the acquiring of new objects of attention and thus of new energies as a result of refocusing. [...] Human beings are naturally ‘attached’ and when an attachment seems painful or bad it is most readily displaced by another attachment, which an attempt at attention can encourage. (2001 p54-55)

Here we can see that in Murdoch’s example, a commitment, an affective attachment, has appeared (in the light of the good in which the current attachment shows up as ‘bad’) to need to change. We may remember Blattner’s similar example here and note that in many cases attention may be required to recognize that a love is bad or painful. Once one has seen that an attachment is ‘bad’ (or, more often I think, contemporaneously with this), attention to other possibilities is

required to build an attachment, to become sufficiently deeply attuned, such that we are moved to take up a new possibility. Remembering our analysis of attention above, this paying attention to new possibilities is not limited to reflectively thinking about them, but can take the form of attending with our entire comportment, as a deepening of attunement (or creating a new attachment) can happen through engaging in activities and interactions with new people in multifaceted ways.

We can surely only be attentive to that to which we're already attuned in some sense. To varying degrees, a possibility must be on my radar in order for me to turn to it as an object of attention. Obviously we are 'aware' in some sense of a wide range of possibilities in our society, just as we might be 'aware' of a wide range of people with whom we might form meaningful attachments. But we still need to 'see' such possibilities as possible goods for us; they still need to 'touch' in some way that which matters to us deeply. They need to connect to that deep attunement of our identity - which we might call our sense of the good - that is the condition of the possibility of more particular things that matter to us. Thus we cannot just pay attention to whatever we want if a change is to be made. Shifts in attention are generally only slight – to the periphery of, or to a new aspect of, that which already matters to us. Such change, says Murdoch:

is slow; we are not free in the sense of being able suddenly to alter ourselves since we cannot suddenly alter what we can see and ergo what we desire and are compelled by. (2001 p38)

As it is put elsewhere, we do not have the absolute ability to choose and change, but we rather have 'some continual slight control over the direction and focus of [our] vision' (2001 p39).

I think this picture of 'attention' as the means by which we might choose and change is compelling, capturing the slow, piecemeal way that our efforts over time can affect those deepest aspects of our lives, can influence the way the world shows up to us. In contrast to an idea of big, bold leaps of groundless freedom, I think it offers a picture that captures what the experience of choosing is like in a way that is sensitive to the way that we have seen attunement constitute our being-in-the-world. While at times the last step of such change can feel like a 'leap',

attention has already oriented us enough to see the landing, and has already moved us enough to make the approach. Crucially, this compelling account of ‘choice’ remains oriented to that which is beyond the subject, with its focus on our attachment to the world and others in the light of what grips us as true, good, or meaningful.

Yet, following Murdoch, we can see why this ‘choice’ is not really the locus of responsibility, but an occasional eye-catching manifestation of the attentiveness that I am arguing is really constitutive of taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world. As we saw, attention can ‘build an attachment’, attune us more deeply, to a possibility such that a choice emerges in the first place, given that a choice can only emerge if at least two competing possibilities pull on us to a sufficient degree to both show up as options. But given that we generally do not find ourselves stranded like Buridan’s ass, typically we have a preference and take up one possibility over another.

For Murdoch, it is the work of attention that attunes us to possibilities to varying degrees. Accordingly for Murdoch, the ‘work’ of choosing is generally made outside and in between the moments where choices show up to us. To identify the heart of the issue, which for us here is responsibility, with the moment of choice is thus a mistake:

if we consider what the work of attention is like, how continuously it goes on, and how imperceptibly it builds up structures of value round about us, we shall not be surprised that at crucial moments of choice most of the business of choosing is already over. (2001 p36)

As Murdoch goes on, this is not to say that such choice, or ‘freedom’, is illusory, but rather, as we have seen, freedom is a piecemeal business that goes on in between the moments of explicit choosing. In contrast to accounts that emphasize the moment of choice, represented by Han-Pile’s account, which make taking responsibility something that has to happen at discrete moments (‘we choose to choose ourselves in a discrete way’ - Han-Pile (2013 p308)), being attentive is something that one is called to be ‘all the time’ (Murdoch 2001 p42):

The task of attention goes on all the time and at apparently empty and everyday moments we are ‘looking’, making those little peering efforts of imagination which have such important cumulative results. (2001 p42)

I take this constant call to be attentive, and so to take responsibility, to be in keeping with Heidegger’s thought.<sup>14</sup> Note that Murdoch here is not saying that we *do* pay attention (and thus we are taking responsibility) all the time. As I shall show, Heidegger, Murdoch, and our own experience reveal that this is generally not the case for most of us – in fact we have a tendency to do the opposite, which I will argue is captured by ‘falling’ for Heidegger. However, as our ‘task’, it is possible to be attentive (and thus responsible) not just at discrete moments of choice but with more constancy.<sup>15</sup>

With this acknowledgement that freedom and choice are not a matter of ‘a grandiose leaping about unimpeded at important moments’ (2001 p36) but rather a matter of shifting our attachments to that which is outside of us, of shifting the way we are attuned through shifts in attention, Murdoch goes further: ‘If I attend properly I will have no choices and this is the ultimate condition to be aimed at.’ (2001 p38)

In rejecting the idea that the heart of the matter (for Murdoch virtue, for our purposes responsibility) lies in an unrestricted ability to choose, Murdoch moves to the idea that in fact what is to be sought is the opposite, an experience of ‘a kind of ‘necessity’’ (2001 p39). Moreover, while attention was linked to the very slight and gradual ability we have to change, if done ‘properly’, this attending is also linked to a situation in which no choice arises. I think here we can begin to see how the idea of attention can explain the idea of wholeheartedness that taking responsibility was linked to with Frankfurt, and represented by McManus’s account, earlier.

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<sup>14</sup> We can also think here in general of Heidegger’s understanding of Dasein’s being at issue for itself – this is not something that is the case at discrete moments, but is Dasein’s being as such, as long as it is.

<sup>15</sup> Here again we can see constancy in the sense of existential temporality: not in the sense of duration as subsisting over ‘clock time’, but as a modification of the way we project on the basis of attunement.

### Wholeheartedness

First, it is important to capture the kind of necessity that I think Murdoch is referring to. It is not the kind of necessity in which one feels an external constraint on oneself, a kind of coercion against some aspect of ourselves, as we might feel when being arrested or being confined to a bed through illness or injury. It is rather the kind of necessity we feel when the truth of something becomes clear – whether this is the right direction to go when trying to get somewhere, the answer to a logical puzzle, or the realization of the futility of a course of action. It is the kind of necessity by which a bystander might rush to someone else's aid, which might be characterized afterwards by saying 'I had to do something'. It is the kind of necessity that makes us stay with someone in need, which again might be expressed by saying 'We can't leave them here'. As Murdoch says, this is a kind of necessity in which no choices, no alternatives, even show up<sup>16</sup>. I take this to be the same phenomenon that Frankfurt wishes to capture with the idea of 'volitional necessity', and I think his description of this phenomenon is illuminating<sup>17</sup>:

the feeling with which we [submit to volitional necessity] is by no means one of dispirited passivity or confinement. [...] we are typically conscious of an invigorating release and expansion of ourselves. (2004 p64-65)

As we saw with Frankfurt earlier, there is an association of this kind of necessity with responsibility. There's a certain kind of conception in which responsibility (tellingly usually described as self-responsibility) is seen as a kind of unwavering fortitude in sticking to a commitment, as being immovable in the face of (easier) alternatives and possible negative consequences. Responsibility is seen as taking up a possibility with a kind of necessity, as perhaps best encapsulated in the philosophical imagination in Luther's 'Here I stand, I can do no other'.

As Han-Pile's work reveals, there is evidence to show that, just as Murdoch suggests with attention, Heidegger too saw a relation between choice and decision,

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<sup>16</sup> The expressions like 'we can't leave them here' that reject the possibility are typically only uttered when another person has suggested that possibility in some way, not because it has shown up to the subject as a live option.

<sup>17</sup> Bernard Williams captures a similar idea with the notion of 'practical necessity'. See Williams 1981 p124ff.



and something like necessity, with the latter being a superior state of affairs. Here, Heidegger talks of both under the term ‘freedom’:

In his study of Cartesian freedom in the *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, Heidegger had made the following comment: “in order to be free, it is not required that I can move in both directions but rather: *quo magis in unam propendeo eo liberius* (the more I incline to the one, the freer I am). Here the Augustinian concept of freedom comes to the fore: the more primordially the *propensio* is for the *bonum*, the more authentic the freedom of acting . . . I am genuinely free if I go towards what I understand” (GA 17: 151) (Han Pile 2013 p294-295)

Additionally, as we saw represented by McManus, a specifically Heideggerian understanding of responsibility can be taken to consist of some kind relation of necessity to a particular commitment. This is how Heidegger’s talk of ‘resoluteness’ is typically taken – as affirming a particular defining commitment with a kind of necessity, ‘come what may’.

As we also saw however, this understanding of responsibility can be problematic in leading to a picture of a self-subsisting individual, stubbornly affirming themselves in the face of the world and others. By understanding responsibility through attention, and the kind of necessity this can give rise to, the appearance of responsibility as a kind of wholeheartedness can be explained. Yet in showing how this is not a kind of affirmation of self but rather a manifestation of attention, we can also see importantly how it differs from the kind of problematic picture we saw earlier.

As we saw, attention is attention in the light of a ‘beyond us’, variously characterized as the true, good, or meaningful. And it is in this idea of the good or the true that I think this ‘necessity’ is to be found. A possibility taken up where it feels we have no choice, is taken up as the good or the true, the only ‘right’ thing to do. Typically this ‘beyond’ does not show itself as such because no alternatives show up. But I think, again, this may manifest more clearly in some kind of breakdown. We might think of such cases as when we are questioned by another, or when the only true or right thing to do is blocked off, frustrated by other powers. When questioned we might say ‘I had to do it, I couldn’t just leave them:

it was the right thing to do', or we may simply describe the situation in such a way as to let its obvious truth or rightness become manifest to the questioner. Or if our course of action becomes blocked, as for example I am stopped from helping someone or waiting with them by some kind of bureaucracy, the rightness of that course of action and its meaningfulness will become stark, as an explicit judgement that 'this is just wrong' or perhaps as a feeling of indignation or guilt.

And it is because attention contains within it an orientation to the good, the true, the beyond, that Murdoch can link attention with a kind of necessity, as Heidegger's citing of Augustine and Descartes on this point suggests. While choices show up when there is a degree of uncertainty or shifting understanding about the good or 'the best thing to do', the thought is that if we are sufficiently attentive the good will show itself and solicit us with force akin to compulsion. Importantly, Murdoch rightly points out that it is a 'kind of' necessity. It is crucial to remember that the good is always beyond us – our disclosure, our interpretation of the good, our answer to the question of what it means to be is always partial and ongoing. So long as we are attuned in the light of this beyond, the good, there is always fallibility – there is vulnerability in any particular possibility taken up, as we saw. Perhaps it is reflective of this, as is the case with Socrates' famous *daimon* whose semi-divine intervention is negative and stops him doing wrong, that this necessity is often characterized as knowing the wrongness or badness of the alternatives, rather than knowing with full certainty the goodness or truth of what is being done - the Luther quote, for example, states that he can do no other, referring to the wrongness of the other courses of action rather than to the rightness of his own.

In contrast to this picture, we saw in Frankfurt's account a failure of sensitivity to that which was 'beyond' us and the vulnerability that is bound up with this. Telling in this regard is the fact that Frankfurt sees agential necessity as 'volitional' - what we care about for Frankfurt is in fact a shape of our will. It comes 'from within' as it were, without being tied to that which is 'beyond' us.<sup>18</sup> And it is this that can be seen to lead Frankfurt to the problematic model of 'clarity and confidence' we saw earlier. Murdoch's diagnosis here is apposite:

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<sup>18</sup> For Murdoch instead: '*Good, not will is transcendent*. (2001 p68)

Without some more positive conception of the soul as a substantial and continually developing mechanism of attachments, [...] 'freedom' is readily corrupted into self-assertion. (2001 p69)

We don't really just want to be 'true to ourselves' as these kinds of pictures of responsibility (and typically authenticity) might be characterized. We don't want to be true to a bad self, but only to ourselves insofar as this self is good, as best we understand this. This 'good' is always beyond us, and never completely grasped by the self that aims at it. In opposition to the kind of self-assertion that we saw characterize certain conceptions of Heideggerian responsibility, we have seen (following Murdoch) that attention can help explain this appearance while actually being a model that doesn't fall foul of the problems we saw earlier. If we were to follow Murdoch (who in turn follows Weil), this sort of necessity might better be called 'obedience' (2001 p39) than 'resoluteness', so long as obedience is understood as obedience to the enigmatic, open beyond - the good, the true, the meaningful.

#### Independence from *das Man*

As we saw in Chapter One, for Heidegger *das Man* can facilitate a way of existing that falls or flees from our being and as such is inauthentic, and one in which Dasein is deprived of its responsibility (SZ 127). This danger is what underlies accounts of taking responsibility characterized by a kind of distancing from *das Man*, as represented here by Withy's account.

Again, as with choice and wholeheartedness above, I think we can see how not being subsumed to *das Man* is a manifestation of responsibility as being attentive, and not constitutive in itself of taking responsibility. Here however, I will show this by arguing that the falling of Dasein into *das Man* can be characterized as an inattentive mode of being. In showing inauthenticity and a loss of responsibility to be characterized by attention's opposite, this will strengthen the case for seeing attentiveness as constituting responsibility. Additionally, on top of the analysis of thrownness and attunement from which my reading derives, seeing Heidegger's distinctive characterization of *das Man* in terms of attention will lend extra support for this as a specifically 'Heideggerian' account.

As we saw briefly when looking to Blattner's account, part of falling into *das Man* can be characterized as a 'levelling down' (SZ 127) in which we become 'insensitive' to differences of level and genuineness (*ibid.*). And as Blattner's account suggested, this is in contrast to a perspective that is sensitive to the subtleties and nuance of a situation. I think it is no stretch to characterize such an insensitivity as a matter of attention. If we think to examples in our own lives in which we might have missed the finer points of an issue, in which we have glossed over a situation with a preformed, one-size-fits-all understanding, I think it is fair to characterize these as cases where we have been inattentive, and not oriented ourselves around, given ourselves over to, the matter at hand.<sup>19</sup> We have failed to give ourselves over to the truth of what's there.

As well as this insensitivity that characterizes 'levelling' down, *das Man* is also described as having 'stolen away' whenever a decision is pressed for (SZ 127). Here again, I think that we can characterize this in terms of inattention in light of the insight we gained from Iris Murdoch. Attention is a means of deepening one's attachment to particular possibilities, drawing one more strongly to possibilities. As we saw, it is attention that in fact often means that most of the work of decision is 'already over', and that if we attend 'properly' no choice will present itself at all. The indecision that Heidegger characterizes as plaguing our being in *das Man* can be seen to lie in inattention – it is a failure to attend to particular possibilities that means one is not attuned to any of them enough to be drawn to take a particular possibility up.

Further, with Heidegger's talk of falling into *das Man* as characterized by 'curiosity', we are given a description which we might think of as the antithesis of attention, namely falling as 'distraction'. Curiosity:

seeks restlessness and the excitement of continual novelty and changing encounters. In not tarrying, curiosity is concerned with the constant possibility of *distraction*. [...] To be amazed to the point of not understanding is something in which it has no interest. (SZ 172)

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<sup>19</sup> Here McManus's (2015b) account of 'seeing as' in Heidegger and Murdoch is particularly relevant in filling out this story.

I do not think it needs to be shown how this distraction and constant change are characteristic of attention's opposite; I hope both are clear from a consideration of our own attempts to pay attention, and from the characterization of attention's 'constancy' above. Additionally, I think it is worth pointing to the final sentence in the quotation above, where this kind of inattention is linked with a failure to acknowledge that which is beyond one's grasp. In contrast we have seen all attention properly speaking points to what is beyond one's grasp, as it is a giving oneself over to that which is beyond the 'I' in the light of the true, the good, or the meaningful.

We see that this failure to acknowledge that which is beyond one's grasp is characteristic of *das Man*, a failure that I think it is fair to characterize in terms of a failure to be attentive in light of the enigmatic beyond. At times Heidegger characterizes this as 'tranquilization', a state we might think of as being inattentive to everything. Our falling into *das Man* for Heidegger brings with it the 'tranquilized supposition *that it possesses everything, or that everything is within its reach.*' (SZ 178, emphasis mine). In contrast to the state of attentiveness which is expressive of that which is beyond our grasp, for our fallen state the opposite is the case. The point is reinforced even more strongly in the following:

Idle talk and ambiguity, having seen everything, having understood everything, develop the supposition that Dasein's disclosedness, which is so available and so prevalent, can guarantee to Dasein that all the possibilities of its Being will be secure, genuine, and full. (SZ 177)

With the idea of 'security', in contrast to the vulnerability shown in anxiety that points us to the need for attentiveness, our irresponsible fallen being supposes its grasp to be genuine and full – that is, complete, without need, with nothing outside of it.

I think that in addition to this textual justification, there is also some intuitive support to be found in understanding the Heideggerian idea of 'falling' through the lens of attention. This falling away from our being, which typically for Heidegger takes the form of falling into *das Man*, is an 'essential tendency' (SZ 167) of our being. I think that if we look to our own experience, the idea of falling away from attention as an 'essential tendency' has some plausibility. From the most minor acts

of attention, we can see that attending is difficult. I think I am not alone in feeling a certain draw away from that to which I should attend, as when writing, marking, or listening to a meeting, my thoughts and actions are drawn to almost anywhere other than where they should be. The vast folk-lore on marriage points to a similar fading of attention, often lost beneath ‘habit’, from that other to whom one is bound most deeply. The sudden loss of that other, as the limit situation of anxiety mirrors, can in many cases reveal that the attachment had not disappeared but was rather simply not attended to. I think such cases show such a tendency, or temptation to inattention.

As I go on to flesh out this picture of responsibility as attentiveness, it will become clearer what it means to avoid this kind of falling into *das Man*. But for now, from the above, I think that it is plausible to see falling as characterized by Heidegger as a kind of inattention. We can therefore see how this model of responsibility as attention can underlie the kind of independence from *das Man* that is taken to be the locus of responsibility itself.

Having begun to see in the phenomenology of attention how this mode of comportment avoids the problems with the traditional model of responsibility, I have argued that being attentive can in fact account for these understandings of responsibility on the traditional model. In arguing that the idea of attention lies at the heart of that which usually gets the name ‘taking responsibility’, more credence is given to the suggestion that what it means to take responsibility for our being-in-the-world on a Heideggerian reading is to be attentive. The question remains however, as to what exactly we are to be attentive to. The next section will address this question.

### **The Enigma of Attention’s Object**

Provisionally, I would like to begin by suggesting we pay attention to that to which we’re attuned, that to which we’re ‘attached’ in Murdoch’s parlance. As we saw, attunement captures the ‘between’ that we are, the way our existence is properly conceived as ‘between’ subject and object. We might think then, that our attention should be to this ‘between’, and to neither ‘pole’ more than the other. Murdoch, however, is quite clear about attention on this point: ‘the direction of attention should properly be outward, away from self’ (2001 p58).

This might lead one to think that this is to the complete exclusion of the self in contrast to the picture of attunement given above. For Murdoch though, the self does not disappear either. As Antonaccio's 'reflexive realist' reading emphasizes, the 'good' and 'truth' (and other 'value concepts') aren't separable from the subject, but 'they are stretched as it were between the truth-seeking mind and the world' (Murdoch 2001 p88). Equally, to turn attention 'outward, to place the accent on the 'object' pole, is not to completely disregard the 'subject' pole for Murdoch. While the direction of attention is most properly outward, at times a concentration on the subject is needed for this. In her famous example of a mother-in-law (M) who holds an unfair and unjust view of her son's wife (D), it is attention to the daughter-in-law that 'remedies' the situation. Yet some awareness of the self is necessary for this:

M tells herself: "I am old-fashioned and conventional. I may be prejudiced and narrow-minded. I may be snobbish. I am certainly jealous. Let me look again."  
(Murdoch 2001 p17)

Just as with the tuning analogy, while the focus remains on the 'object', the tuning fork note, this might still require work on the 'subject', the instrument to be tuned, whether to bring it in line with the tuning fork's note, or perhaps to temporarily silence it in order that the note be heard properly in the first place.

But while Murdoch's ontology here might seem compatible with the Heideggerian picture as I have described it, it might be argued that the reason for the focus 'away from self' in fact lies in an aspect of Murdoch's view that is not shared by Heidegger. In Murdoch's account, the reason for this focus 'outward' seems largely to be due to her Freudian conception of the self, the idea of the 'fat relentless ego' that is continually enveloping itself in a world of fantasy that covers over all else, leading her to conclude that 'self is such a dazzling object that if one looks *there* one may see nothing else.' (Murdoch 2001 p30)

As well as not sharing this Freudian view, we might even think that Heidegger's thought in fact runs in the opposite direction. At times it seems that for Heidegger being responsible might mean focusing on the self in some way in contrast to letting oneself lose oneself 'outward' into the crowd. Murdoch herself puts the point through the lens of the novel:

The nineteenth century novel succumbed to convention, the modern novel succumbs to neurosis. The nineteenth century novel is better than the twentieth century novel because convention is the less deadly of the two. (Murdoch 2001 p217)

In contrast to Murdoch, the general consensus on Heidegger would, I believe, place his existential analytic in the camp of the twentieth century novel given these two options, with a focus that moves from the crowd to the self. But while Heidegger does not share Murdoch's Freudian conception of the self, and wants to avoid the dangers of 'convention' in the form of *das Man* in some sense, I still believe the characterization of attention (and so, responsibility) as finding its focus 'outward', as accenting what we might call the 'object' pole, is fair for a number of reasons.

We have already seen good reason to think that fallen Dasein is in fact characterized by inattention. But it is true that falling is often characterized in some way as losing the self in the world (SZ 222), fleeing 'towards' the world (SZ 189), or falling into the world (SZ 175). And we might think that this could be seen to capture the kind of 'giving oneself over to' that characterizes attention. But as we have seen, attention proper is not a loss of self, in contrast to being mesmerized or transfixed. And it is this latter kind of loss of self that I think Heidegger is aiming at in describing Dasein's fallen being as a losing itself in the world, which is a kind of being 'which is completely fascinated by the 'world' and by the Dasein-with of Others in *das Man*.' (SZ 176) The word Heidegger uses for 'fascinated' here, *benommen*, is commonly used to mean dazed, stunned, numb. And I think these connotations are what Heidegger is trying to capture here in talking about inauthentic Dasein. Thus while there might be superficial similarities, the movement away from the self that characterizes falling should not be seen as the movement of attention.

Further support is to be found in the way that at one point Heidegger actually characterizes our problematic relation to *das Man* as manifesting in a kind of focus on the self. Heidegger claims that the 'alienation' characteristic of falling 'drives [Dasein] into a kind of Being which borders on the most exaggerated 'self-dissection'' (SZ 178). And this is congruous with what we already understand



about Heidegger's analytic of Dasein. Importantly as we have seen, Heidegger seeks to move away from a Cartesian focus on the subject as an isolable entity. We saw, for example, the rejection of understanding attunement as 'the reflective apprehending of something 'within'' (SZ 136). For authenticity (and thus responsibility) to return to a kind of Cartesian focus on the subject would seem to reject the very ontological foundation that Heidegger's analytic seeks to uncover. Such wholesale rejection of Cartesianism seems to rule out responsibility consisting of attending to the 'subject' pole of our attunement.

Yet the suggestion of attention as a focus on the 'object' pole does not mean a rejection of the existence of the 'self'. As we saw earlier, as endorsed by Blattner, the self is constituted by the solicitations from the world and others. Its texture is constitutive of our identity - ask me who I am and I'll tell you what I see, as it might be put. As Heidegger puts it, a proper relation to the self:

is not a matter of perceptually tracking down and inspecting a point called the "Self", but rather one of seizing upon the full disclosedness of Being-in-the-world *throughout all* the constitutive items which are essential to it, and doing so with understanding. (SZ 146)

So it seems that even if one interprets authenticity (and thus responsibility) as being attentive to the 'self' (and so as 'self-responsibility') it would be proper for the direction of our attention to be 'outward', at the 'object' pole, or at the world or others:

one's *own* Dasein becomes something that it can itself proximally 'come across' only when it *looks away* from 'Experiences' and the 'centre of its actions', or does not as yet 'see' them at all. Dasein finds 'itself' proximally in *what* it does, uses, expects, avoids – in those things [...] with which it is proximally *concerned*. (SZ 119)

As the musician Jim White describes in the film 'Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus', when trying to keep his bike on the white line across a New York bridge he would always fail if he looked down at the bike and the line – only by looking straight ahead at the horizon could he keep to the white line. As we shall see, it is

not only the point of looking away from the self but the idea of the horizon too that is prophetic.

Thus we can see that it is in keeping with Heidegger's account to see the proper direction of attention to our attunement as being 'outwards', away from the subject pole. But accepting this, some more delineation is needed as to the proper object of attention. As the analysis of attunement demonstrated, we are attuned in a wide variety of ways to a wide variety of possibilities that grip us from without. It is surely not responsible to attend to whichever way we are affected, to give ourselves over and submit to the first possibility that solicits us.

I would agree. Instead, on the basis of the kind of analysis we have seen so far, to be responsible for our being-in-the-world, I would suggest, is to be attentive to our attunement at the deepest level. As we have seen throughout, this idea of 'depth' can be understood as being 'the condition of the possibility of'. What is deep is 'beneath' what is shallow insofar as it is its 'meaning and ground' (SZ 35), being the necessary condition of the shallower, and that which can be seen within the shallower as giving it intelligibility. As we saw, at the foundation of the way that existence shows up as soliciting us in particular ways is the way that things matter to us more generally. This way that things matter to us, which emerges in a particular way in relation to the social, can be understood as our identity – those particular attunements that serve as 'the indispensable horizon or foundation' out of which we think and act, to borrow Charles Taylor's words (1985 p35).

This identity is manifest in a certain configuration of the way the world and others appear to us, the way they affect, solicit, and summon us. Thus, on the model of responsibility suggested above, it might seem that attending to that to which we're attuned most deeply means giving ourselves over to that which matters most to us, that which is most important, in contrast to ignoring this in favour of other, 'shallower' ways of being affected. To attend to our child or our job, to political movements that help with social issues we care about, to give ourselves over to these instead of submitting to the temptations to do other things or nothing at all, we might think, is to take responsibility, to be responsible.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> I think we perhaps also see more localized, specific 'acts' of taking responsibility through this kind of model in which responsibility is linked to whether one attends to or ignores that to which one is attuned. However in some cases the 'depth' or strength of our attachment is not the

This agrees with the picture given variously by Frankfurt and McManus. And there is some important truth to this, as we shall see. But I have argued that there are good reasons to think that taking responsibility is not affirming our identity, what matters to us, in this way. This is because these particular attachments, the particular way we're attuned as Heidegger's analysis shows, are themselves dependent upon the structure of Dasein that is revealed in such attunements. Our thrownness into a particular 'who' gains its meaning from our thrownness into a 'who' as such. Attending to our deepest attunements requires attending to our attunement as Dasein that stands as the meaning and ground of our particular identities. This means that in attending to the particular ways we are attuned, to the particular objects of our attunement, this must be done in such a way that our being-in-the-world, our being-with-others is not closed off (to the degree that it can be) but is also attended to, remains a point of orientation.<sup>21</sup>

But importantly as we saw, that which lies 'beneath' the structure of Dasein and gives it its meaning is an enigma. In accordance with the structure of thrownness, this enigma is that which we must continually strive towards, an enigma I think it makes sense in this context to say we strive towards under the name the 'good' or 'the true' or the meaningful. Here, as mentioned, I follow Crowell in connection with the idea of the 'good' with Heidegger. As I have argued throughout, it is our attunement to this enigma, our attachment to this, that is 'deepest' in the sense of being the meaning and ground of deepest particular attunements. Our identity is a provisional answer to the question of what it means to be, as aiming at a meaningful or good life. And the force of the grip of the world, others, and the particular manifestations of these, comes from this attunement to what is good, what is true, or what is meaningful that is always yet to be settled.

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'actual' strength or depth but the kind of way we 'should' be attuned. Certain things ought to matter to us, and matter to us enough that we are moved by them to a certain minimal degree – we 'should' attend to them to a certain degree. Irresponsibility in this localized sense is when things that 'should' matter fail to move one.

<sup>21</sup> There lies here the possibility that being attentive to our being-with-others will involve not closing ourselves off from some particularly ethical kind of demand that grips us, and that human existence as such involves an ethical relation to others, as advocated by Levinas, Løgstrup, and others. Some might argue that, contra these thinkers, for Heidegger our affective 'attachment' to others is neutral and has no such ethical valence. I am sympathetic to readings of Heidegger that see such an ethical possibility in his thought as mentioned (e.g. McMullin 2013 Raffoul 2010), but I cannot defend such a position here myself.

As we saw, and as Taylor (1989) shows at length, our particular identities are bound up with a conception of what is good, what we are oriented and moved towards. And as we also saw, this good is always 'beyond'. In Murdoch's characterization of the good, it is 'the magnetic centre' (2001 p100) of our projects, relationships with others, engagements with the world, towards which we are solicited. It is this enigmatic beyond that is the ultimate for-the-sake-of-which. As we saw, this enigmatic beyond is never fixed or settled. We are continually drawn beyond each possibility we take up. It is a question, once open, that cannot be closed. I think that to be responsible, on a reading that finds its basis in Heidegger's existential analytic and the possibility of authenticity as transparency with respect to our being, requires being attentive to our being as conceived above. It is to be attentive to the enigmatic good, the true, the beyond to which we are attuned.

But how is this to work? As Murdoch herself questions sceptically about the good, 'Can good itself be in any sense 'an object of attention'?' (2001 p67) As we saw, in contrast to certain views of Plato, the good is not a particular transcendent object that we can look at. It is not a tablet from which we can read off what to do. As Murdoch says:

The Good itself is not visible. Plato pictured the good man as eventually able to look at the sun. I have never been sure what to make of this part of the myth. While it seems proper to represent the Good as a centre or focus of attention, yet it cannot quite be thought of as a 'visible' one in that it cannot be experienced or represented or defined. We can certainly know more or less where the sun is; it is not so easy to imagine what it would be like to look at it. (2001 p68)

So if the good is not 'visible' in Murdoch's sense, if this enigmatic beyond is not a particular object we can see, what could it mean to attend to it? I think that to attend to this enigmatic beyond does not require anything like turning to face this enigma in contrast to particular things. To return to our aural attunement analogy, this enigmatic beyond is more like silence than a noise competing with the particular note we are trying to tune to. The silence helps it become clearer, sharper, lets new aspects of its sound emerge.

As we saw, we always already find ourselves drawn towards a particular ‘shape’ of the good, we are always already attuned to a particular interpretation of this enigma. We already find ourselves as particular answers to the question of the good or the true, in relation to our own lives, the world, and other people (in keeping with the structure of Dasein). To attend to the beyond, to the enigma of the good or the true, I think means attending to the direction from which it comes *through* the particulars that we take to be its instantiation, the best current answer to its question. It means giving ourselves over to our particular attachments but with a sense that these are not complete, not final. It means not covering over this enigmatic beyond. Again, Taylor’s description is helpful here, as he describes ‘trying to open myself, use all of my deepest, unstructured sense of things in order to come to a new clarity.’ (Taylor 1989 p41-42). Importantly, it is only through ‘my deepest’ sense of things that I can attend, and here the truth of accounts such as McManus’ can be seen.

And here again we can see how Heidegger’s characterization of *das Man* can be captured by the idea of inattention. We are told that our own Dasein ‘dissolves’ (SZ 127) into *das Man*. I think we can now see this as a failure to attend: we always already find ourselves with a particular identity that aims at the good from a particular angle. To give oneself over, to attend, in contrast to dissolving in *das Man*, is to bring this particular shape of the self into relief as one gives oneself over to the possibilities that aim at the good. But crucially it is not affirming our identity in the face of the world and others. It is being attentive to way the world and others affect and move me (as Withy (2015) captures), to the particular shape this takes in my identity, all of which gain their hold from that enigmatic beyond of the good or true that grips me. It is following the path where we currently sense truth or the good to lie, being open to the way that it might take us in different directions, and to the way that a new and difficult path might emerge from it. It is giving oneself over to that ‘magnetic centre’ that pulls the subject from beyond it, through the world and others and the particular ways these show up to us.

Being attentive to the enigmatic beyond that we can call the good does not mean turning away from particular possibilities. But as I have suggested in chapter four, our being – as possibility, being in the world, and being with others that is ultimately gripped by this enigmatic beyond – is made manifest more starkly as particular possibilities recede in a special way in limit situations like anxiety (but here

we might also think of other Heideggerian cases such as boredom, guilt, the silent call of conscience, and awe in later works, and perhaps many other contenders Heidegger does not mention like grief, birth, illness etc.). But as we saw with anxiety, this experience that shows us our orientation to the good, or the true, or the meaningful, does not tell us anything in particular. In keeping with a formal understanding of the enigma that draws us, there is no ‘content’ of the good, for example, that we can read off that might give us guidance, or solace or consolation. We can see nothing if we look directly into the sun. Silence ‘says’ nothing. Yet I think such experiences can make us pay attention – the threat of anxiety, for example, in the effective way that ‘threats’ do, makes us pay attention – that we ‘face up to’ our being means we are forced to pay attention to it, at least momentarily. In seeing our vulnerability, in seeing our deepest attachments to ourselves, the world, and others collapse, we see the need to be attentive to them, and the need to do so in light of our being as Dasein.

I have argued that to take responsibility on a Heideggerian account is be attentive, to attend to, the way we’re attuned most deeply. This means giving ourselves over to the solicitations of the world and others that grip us in light of the good, which means ultimately keeping ourselves open to the enigmatic beyond of the good, the true, or the meaningful that we are attuned to most deeply. I will now aim to flesh this out by looking to two examples that I think demonstrate this kind of attentiveness. In addition, these examples will lend support to the idea that attentiveness is how *taking responsibility* should be understood, as it captures the contours of what, on our everyday understanding, we would call taking responsibility and its opposite. As we have seen, while our everyday understanding is not necessarily authoritative, and is subject to being skewed through falling, it nonetheless contains important insight. Any account that purports to capture a phenomenon like taking responsibility from its ontological ground must be able to give intelligibility to this everyday understanding.

These examples will necessarily be underdetermined for two reasons. The first is that it’s not clear how we could determine with certainty whether someone had taken responsibility from the third person point of view, especially given that more visible types of comportment such as explicitly judging (and perhaps giving reasons to others), choosing, being wholehearted, or being independent from *das Man* were shown to not be where the locus of responsibility is found. Secondly, any particular

example we give cannot, on its own, show that someone has taken responsibility or is responsible in the more general sense that a Heideggerian analysis points to. To put the point in Heideggerian terms, any example will be ontic, which may or may not be expressive of a way of relating to one's own being as such that captures the type of responsibility we are looking at here. Notwithstanding this under-determination, I think it is important that the suggestion of 'attention' is able to capture what shows up to us as taking responsibility.

## **Taking Responsibility as Attentiveness**

### ***Locke***

For my first example, I will consider the protagonist of the 2014 film *Locke* - construction manager Ivan Locke<sup>22</sup>. Ivan is presented as a meticulous, reliable individual. He excels at the job that he enjoys, and appears to be a loving father and husband. Yet the film follows Ivan as he drives from Birmingham to London to attend the premature birth of his child with a woman he once slept with around seven months prior, his sole act of marital infidelity. After taking the phone call that announces the unexpected impending birth of his child, Ivan drives to London to attend. The film consists of Ivan's lone drive to London, and the story unfolds through phone calls with his family, colleagues, and the woman having his child. Through these calls, he explains to his children that he is missing their valuable family time watching football, tells his wife the devastating news of his betrayal, and attempts to deal with a monumental concrete pour he was due to be managing in the early hours of the morning. In the course of the journey, Ivan loses his job, his wife leaves him, and he encounters a variety of difficulties with the concrete pour that he attempts to orchestrate from his car, despite his already being sacked at that point. The film ends as he nears the hospital, and we do not learn of the fate of the concrete pour, the encounter with the new-born child and the mother who is a stranger to him, or whether his family life and marriage can be salvaged in any way.

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<sup>22</sup> I would like to thank Jakub Kowalewski for his insightful discussion of this example.

We are presented a picture of Ivan before the incident as what we might call a responsible man, as he is trusted deeply by his colleagues and spouse. Yet it is what we might call an ‘irresponsible’ act that sets the story up and drives the narrative.

In reaction to this irresponsible act, which itself can be characterized as a failure to attend to the good of his family, I think Ivan clearly warrants the description of taking responsibility. Ivan makes sure that he (unlike, we learn, his own father), is present for the birth of the baby who was conceived on his one-night stand. While it might have been easy to ignore the affair and the child to varying degrees, Ivan takes it up to great cost (which is not to say he should be admired), losing his family and the career that he loved. Despite being sacked, with the help of his assistant Ivan aims to arrange the job for the next day so that the project and the building are not compromised by his absence. He declines the suggestion from his line manager that he should have just lied and said that illness was the reason for his absence, which would have allowed him to keep his job. After disappointing his children about their eagerly anticipated evening watching football together, he tells his wife about his betrayal and the baby. She is sickened, and leaves him. But Ivan ‘faces up’ to it all, as taking responsibility is often characterized. In his own words:

I could just drive. Around the M25 and then to Dover. Or some fucking where. And not face it. [...] But I’m going to drive straight to the worst place for me. The worst place on earth for me to be. (Knight, S., Ford, Jourdan, Squillante, Wright, J. 2014)

In supporting this woman and the baby, in facing up to endless heart-wrenching and difficult conversations about his actions; in doing absolutely all he can do to ensure the completion of the project in spite of his sacking; in trying to reassure his children whilst promising them his honesty; and in doing all of the above in light of the knowledge that he is likely to lose his job, his home, and his family, I think we would say that Ivan is taking responsibility for his being-in-the-world, he is being responsible.

It is perhaps possible to read this responsibility on each of the traditional ways mentioned above. There are things that might make us think that this responsibility consists in reflecting, judging, and being prepared to give reasons (which he is called upon to do in the countless phone-calls) as accounts



represented by Crowell suggest. After all, the story largely consists of him engaging in dialogue regarding his behavior, and we assume reflecting on this as he drives in the quiet moments between calls.

There are things that might make us see this responsibility as being constituted by making decisions, by choosing. At the start of the journey we see Ivan pause at a junction, changing the direction of his indicator from his usual route home to head to London, perhaps supporting the picture of responsibility as choosing represented by Han-Pile. He is driving, he is in charge of his destination. He talks about taking things in his own hands. He attempts to still control the concrete pour from his journey on the M6, using his meticulous planning of it to aid his hapless assistant in its implementation.

In many ways we could see Ivan as going against the crowd as accounts represented by Withy suggest, not being beholden to *das Man*. For example, we might see this in the way that he refuses to pull a sick-day, despite this being sanctioned by the way that ‘everyone does it.’

We could perhaps see him affirming his identity, as Frankfurt suggests, and which the position represented by McManus seems to support, as he talks of previously not behaving ‘like himself’ (Knight et al. 2014) in getting into this mess, with responsibility perhaps meaning to be ‘true to himself’ once more. His commitment to doing the concrete pour in spite of his manager sacking him and banning him from the job can seem to be a wholehearted commitment in face of opposition from the world and others. We could see him affirming resolutely with the declaration at one point that all will be as he wishes, that the pour will be ok, that his wife will forgive him: ‘Katerina will be ok. In the morning she will be ok.’ (Knight et al. 2014)

Yet immediately after this declaration, he qualifies this as how it *can* be, calling it his ‘*prayer*’ (Knight et al. 2014). We can see this as suggestive of the ‘beyond’ to which attention is oriented. He follows his description of ‘not being himself’ with the words that he will ‘do the right thing’ (Knight et al. 2014) - this suggests that, in contrast to seeing the affirmation of one’s identity as important, his relation to himself is important insofar as it’s expressive of an orientation to the beyond of the ‘good’ or the true, as I suggested. And while the film suggests a moment of decision at the traffic lights, this is framed by seeing this scene through

his blurry eyes. As he (and the picture) focuses, attends, he gives himself over to the pull of his unborn child, shortly after stating to his assistant 'I don't have a choice' (Knight et al. 2014). This suggests that attention underlies the choosing and resultant 'necessary' taking up of this possibility – his 'attending properly' means he doesn't have a choice, as Murdoch put it. And finally, his lack of explanation of his reasons to his children on the phone, for example, suggests that it is not reason-giving that is important, but attending to them by reassuring them. While at times we see Ivan try and make decisions, to assert himself, and give reasons, I think it is here that he is less clearly taking responsibility, being responsible. His attempted giving of reasons to his wife to explain his infidelity, his threatening orders to his assistant, his pause at the traffic lights before he gains focus, are the moments when he appears most irresponsible, most irresponsive to the world and others, and most isolated in his car.

The very fact of the baby, the fact that a number of complications arise with its birth, the various problems that arise with the planned concrete pour, all in fact emphasize Ivan's lack of control regarding what matters to him. These aspects of Ivan's life are beyond him in an important respect. Yet it is when he is attentive to these, when he projects on the basis of these in the ways explained above, that he is responsible. It is in listening to his assistant, to both of his children, his wife, and projecting on this basis, as well as projecting and orienting on the basis of his child-to-be, that he takes responsibility.

One example of this is the way that Ivan listens to his children, both separately, as they phone to recount the football match they have watched. As the journey and the story progresses, one does so with a tone that shows that he is aware that something has arisen between his parents. Ivan picks up on this and comports himself on this ground. Here he asks how the child is, before sensing on the basis of this that it is best not to reveal the story to them now. Instead he listens, in spite of the dizzying array of complicated and weighty issues that press upon him, as the child gives a detailed account of the goal that Ivan has already heard from the first child earlier, but which apparently gives the child comfort to talk about.

Ivan remains attentive. The incessant and irritating noise of his phone ringing, or of the voice telling him that he has a 'call waiting', makes the audience

feel the burden upon him. We feel anguish, as we know this unrelenting ring and the name on the screen brings with it a new and taxing conversation. It is exhausting. Yet still Ivan remains attentive, answering every single call, despite the huge temptation to cancel or ignore the call, shut off the claims that gnaw at him, and drive alone in silence. He listens, and for the most part acts and speaks on the basis of that to which he is deeply attuned, attached.

These bonds that he is receptive to, attentive to, are constitutive of his identity. Part of the pull of being with the new-born baby arises from his own feelings at being abandoned by his father. Yet, as we saw, this is not just an affirmation of self. It was his intimation of what is 'right'. Ivan's understanding of what is good is shaped by the particular person he is – someone whose father wasn't around. But it is at the 'good' that Ivan is aiming, and not at an affirmation of his own self. In being so attentive, Ivan experiences a kind of necessity. As he imagines talking to his father, he asserts that he will not be like him. He will be there for the child. There is no choice for Ivan here.

But in what sense he will be there, he does not know. He affirms several times that the mother is little more than a stranger to him. We hear nothing of what is going to happen, how he is going to 'be there' for the child in a way his father wasn't, short of giving the child a surname. He desires to stay with his family, to live with them – his life's vision had lain with them. Yet he feels he must go to this new baby. There is a sense of the enigmatic, the beyond, on the path that Ivan is ineluctably taking. He is attentive to the good that remains beyond his grasp. We are shown the name on the screen that accompanies every other call in the film, but as Ivan nears the hospital we see the phone ring and 'Unknown' emerges. Ivan pauses, before answering this unknown call. He is greeted by the mother and the sound of his new child. Thus in taking responsibility, Ivan is attentive to that enigmatic beyond on the path of the right.

### ***Disgrace***

For my second example, I will look to the character of David Lurie in J.M. Coetzee's novel *Disgrace*. In contrast to Locke, Lurie shows only glimmers of

being responsible, and so the model of taking responsibility as attention is shown more by its opposite in this case. Here we will see that this irresponsibility in fact shows features of the traditional account of responsibility, isolating attention as the locus of responsibility. This example will also bring out the important societal aspect of our thrownness that responsibility must relate to.

Lurie is a professor specializing in romantic poetry in a Cape Town university. He might be characterized as a Kierkegaardian ‘aesthete’ whose chief pursuit seems to be seducing women. As the novel begins in a changing, post-apartheid South Africa, we find Lurie pursuing various non-white women: after seeing a prostitute he regularly sleeps with out with her young family, Lurie pursues her when she stops seeing him, hassling her at home; he ‘seduces’ a colleague at work, before quickly abandoning her; he then pursues, and ultimately rapes, a student named Melanie from one of his classes. The student complains of harassment, and Lurie is brought before a disciplinary hearing at the university, ultimately leading to him to resign from his post, and capturing some part of the ‘disgrace’ that the novel’s title refers to. We might fairly I think characterize the Lurie we find as ‘irresponsible’. As Melanie’s boyfriend puts it, the way Lurie acts as if he can ‘just walks into people’s lives and walk out again when it suits’ (Coetzee 1999 p30), causing untold damage before taking flight for the next pursuit, could fairly be characterized as irresponsible.

I think this irresponsibility can be understood in terms of not being attentive: to others and the affective bonds he creates with them, to the changing societal situation, to his own sense of what is right or good, and ultimately to the enigmatic beyond of that which lies beyond his grasp. We are told early on that ‘His sentiments are, he is aware, complacent, even uxorious. Nevertheless he does not cease to hold to them.’ (Coetzee 1999 p2) He fails to attend to that which he knows to be better. Again, when entering the disciplinary panel, we learn that ‘He is going into this in the wrong spirit. But he does not care.’ (Coetzee 1999 p47) Importantly, he does not want to *listen* to the hearing about his wrongdoings, does not want to let it affect him – he does not want to attend to it at all. While those on the hearing warn of his inattention to the ‘gravity’ of the situation, he declares: ‘Pass sentence, and let us get on with our lives’ (Coetzee 1999 p48). This inattention, this ignoring, can be seen to apply to the bonds he creates to the

secretary he sleeps with, and increasingly more seriously to the demands that come from the prostitute 'Soraya' and from his student Melanie. In the latter, this culminates in his closing himself off to her protests as he forces himself upon her, as 'nothing will stop him' (Coetzee 1999 p25), and in the 'profound wellbeing' he wakes with after their first unwanted sexual encounter, unaffected, untouched by Melanie's distress.

Lurie seems to fit the profile of what I have been calling the mode of wholeheartedness, the 'clarity and confidence' espoused in Frankfurt. Lurie knows clearly who he is, and sticks firmly to this in the face of pressure from others to do otherwise. He will not renounce his conduct with his student, Melanie. He stands firm in what he calls his pursuit of 'eros', declaring to the public that he was 'enriched' by the experience, in the face of the condemnation of all and against the advice of all those around him to change his course of action. Here too we might see Lurie as conforming to Wither's account of taking responsibility, as he is receptive to his attunement to 'eros' in contrast to the demand from the masses to feel shame and repent which at times, in the novel, feels like merely a pressure to 'just say the right words', to play the game, that seems to point to a falling into *das Man*.

But as the novel shows, this clear and confident individual, not doing as 'they' do, is not a picture of a responsible individual but the opposite. It is of someone who is rigid, stubborn: he declares himself that 'His temperament is not going to change, he is too old for that' (Coetzee 1999 p2). His temperament is fixed, set. He is closed off to anything beyond his ego, and the possibility of change this might bring. As he remains impervious to being affected by his actions in the disciplinary hearing, he reacts angrily to the suggestion of counselling through which he might learn and change: 'I am a grown man. I am not receptive to being counselled. I am beyond the reach of counselling.' (Coetzee 1999 p49) The centre of Lurie's life is squarely set in his narrow 'I', rigid and closed off from being affected by the world and others, yet happy to assert and impose itself upon them, as his actions described above are brought out clearly in the focus in his poetry class of the word 'usurp' – '*usurp upon* means to intrude or encroach upon. *Usurp*, to take over entirely' (Coetzee 1999 p21). Here the focus on the subject of the traditional model is clearly shown to be responsibility's opposite. The model

that we saw after Murdoch, in which one's identity is made salient insofar as it aims at the good that is beyond it, is made salient in its rejection by Lurie in favour of this clarity and confidence: 'I'll do it. But only as long as I don't have to become a better person. I am not prepared to be reformed. I want to go on being myself.' (Coetzee 1999 p77) Despite satisfying the traditional model of responsibility as wholeheartedness or independence from *das Man*, Lurie remains irresponsible. Instead Lurie's irresponsibility, as I have suggested above, can be characterized by a lack of attention to the world, to others, to what he knows to be good, and to what he sense to be 'better' as above.

As Lurie leaves his job in disgrace, he stays with his daughter in her farmhouse in rural South Africa. There however, they are burgled. Alongside the robbery, he is assaulted and his daughter is raped by three men, in an attack whose meaning is permeated by the half-century of Apartheid prior. As a result of this ordeal, Lurie can be seen to attempt to become responsible, to take responsibility. In contrast to his previous irresponsibility with regard to his daughter, this moment seems to mark an attempt to take responsibility: 'I let go of Lucy long ago. I have been the least protective of fathers. But the present situation is different. Lucy is objectively in danger.' (Coetzee 1999 p140)

In doing so, Lurie appears to resort to some kind of model of taking control through choosing and deciding. The idea of 'choice' is evoked in this attempt by Lurie to take responsibility, as he tries to impose this choice upon his daughter. But the 'choices' Lurie offers his daughter are clearly determined by his own orientation, on the basis of himself, to the exclusion of his daughter as a possible point of orientation:

Lucy, it really is time for you to face up to your choices. Either you stay on in a house full of ugly memories and go on brooding on what happened to you, or you put the whole episode behind you and start a new chapter elsewhere. Those, as I see it, are the alternatives. (Coetzee 1999 p155)

As the obvious weight of the options shows in accordance with Murdoch's analysis, what matters in Lurie's eyes means the choice is not really a choice at all. Here, the novel shows, how responsibility is not to be found in Lurie's attempts to take control through choice, as his confused and fractious interactions attest.

Here still, Lurie's irresponsibility in the wake of this ordeal can be characterized by inattention, a failure to orient himself by anything other than his ego. In trying to take responsibility, he replaces the distant inattention with which he related to his daughter with overwhelming inattention to her as he tries to impose his own view of the situation onto her. Throughout his stay his inattention to his daughter, to women and womanhood, to rural life, and to the changing social situation in South Africa in terms of race, class and gender, are all made manifest as he tries to take control of the unfamiliar by interrogating, challenging, and confronting all those around him. Most plainly, he fails to let Lucy be his point of orientation, to let her be that which moves him. She makes this clear to him, as she repeatedly tells him that he does not understand what has happened to her. Her letter to him reads:

Dear David, You have not been listening to me. I am not the person you know.[...] You do not see this [...] It is as if you have chosen deliberately to sit in a corner where the rays of the sun do not shine. I think of you as one of the three chimpanzees, the one with his paws over his eyes. (Coetzee 1999 p161)<sup>23</sup>

His new behaviour after the rape continues to fail to attend to her, to take Lucy and what is good for her as his point of orientation. The letter continues:

You behave as if everything I do is part of the story of your life. You are the main character, I am a minor character who doesn't make an appearance until halfway through. [...] I have a life of my own, just as import to me as yours is to you. (Coetzee 1999 p198)

It is in Lurie's failure to attend to Lucy here that his irresponsibility can be seen. More generally, it is in a failure to attend to the world and others, in ignoring the good as he understands it and the prospect of the good, the truth, the meaningful as he does not yet understand it, that Lurie's irresponsibility are to be found.

However there are signs in the novel that a change is possible, that he can become attentive and thus responsible. Such signs arise from the vulnerability he

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<sup>23</sup> Here we might see Lucy's metaphor of the sun as representing Lurie's inattention to that which is beyond, the good or the right.

experiences in the wake of the attack, thus chiming with my analysis of anxiety above. Lurie find himself peculiarly affected by the euthanasia of rural animals by his daughter's friend. In spite of his own stance on animals (and on Lucy's friend, whom he dislikes), Lurie finds himself becoming deeply involved in euthanizing animals with this friend. He becomes deeply attentive as he watches, and we are given a detailed description from his perspective of the way his daughter's friend deals with the animals. He comes to be taken by the practice, and a care for animals arises within him, apparently from outside of his self as he understood it: 'He does not understand what is happening to him. Until now he has been more or less indifferent to animals.' (Coetzee 1999 p143). This is a fact he himself is puzzled by, finding it '[c]urious that a man as selfish as he should be offering himself to the service of dead dogs.' (Coetzee 1999 p146)<sup>24</sup> He gives himself over to this matter, as he proceeds to go far out of his way to ensure the dead dogs are not left to be incinerated in an undignified fashion. He collects the dogs and drives to the incinerator at the appropriate time each week, leaving at a less convenient time for himself in order that the dog corpses are not left waiting to be picked at by scavengers. Rejecting the uncaring services of the workers at the incinerator, the romantic poetry professor loads the dog corpses onto the belt and operates the machinery himself. He follows the corpses' whole journey, and ensures a dignified end to their being. In his attentiveness to this cause, in giving himself over to the good of these animals, it can fairly be said that he takes responsibility for the end of these animals.

This potential for Lurie to change is shown elsewhere too, where an analogous change is shown through the artistic sphere. As he stays with his daughter, he is simultaneously working on an opera about the poet Byron (in whose footsteps he himself appears to follow) and his affair with a young countess. The opera is going nowhere, until he gives up on the vision of the opera that captures his own life (via Byron). Instead, he attends to the countess Teresa, placing the accent on her. In so attending, when he 'holds tight to Teresa' (Coetzee 1999 p183), to his astonishment 'in dribs and drabs, the music comes [...] sometimes the shade of a melody, having hovered for days on the edge of hearing,

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<sup>24</sup> It is interesting that the animal world draws Lurie out of his own selfish rigidity, in the same way as the kestrel does in an example of Murdoch's. See Murdoch 2001 p82



unfolds and blessedly reveals itself.' (Coetzee 1999 p183). In attending to Teresa, the enigmatic musical possibilities for the opera that were beyond him suddenly reveal themselves. In letting go of his affirmation of his own self, his attention turns outwards to Teresa and ultimately beyond her, to that enigma which he cannot grasp but must be open and receptive to.

With these two instances, he revisits his old understanding of himself as 'too old to learn a lesson' and for a time he wonders 'But perhaps that is not true, not always' (Coetzee 1999 p172).

Yet Lurie's attentiveness does not go beyond these two isolated cases in the story we are given. His attentiveness to the dead dogs points beyond this isolated, particular act, as he describes doing it for sake of a particular vision of a good world (p143), for some conception of dignity. But he does not give himself over to this. He returns to his inattentive, irresponsible being. He returns to the city and stalks Melanie performing in a play, before picking up a very young prostitute. While he feels a sense of her need for protection, he ignores this and returns her to the same street-corner he found her on. He goes back to visit his daughter's house and causes more trouble, striking one of the possible assailants, before reflecting once more that he is too old to change, too old to 'bend to the tempest' (Coetzee 1999 p209). We are left with the impression that the accent of Lurie's life will remain on the self he has nurtured for so long, inattentive to that which is beyond its reach, closed off to the enigmatic good that is beyond, in contrast to his daughter:

'I am determined to be a good mother David. A good mother and a good person. You should try to be a good person too.'

'I suspect it is too late for me. I'm just an old lag serving out my sentence.'  
(Coetzee 1999 p216)

In the face of the prospect of a new society, the need for new ways of relating to family, to women, to race, it appears he will remain irresponsible and unresponsive. And I think we can see his failure to *attend* as lying at the heart of this, a diagnosis he himself perhaps glimpses as he looks back ruefully:

So much for the poets, so much for the dead masters. Who have not, he must say, guided him well. *Aliter*, to whom he has not listened well. (Coetzee 1999 p179)

It is a failure to *listen*, a failure to attend to that to which we are attuned, that is significant, and that lies at the heart of his irresponsibility.

As Dasein, Lurie is necessarily attuned in some way to the world, others, and some understanding of the good as the enigmatic beyond, and cannot completely close himself off from them. Time and again, we see how he hears their call, he feels their solicitations. He is aware of the prostitute Soraya's wish for him not to try and contact her; he hears all of Melanie's refusals against his advances, he feels her reluctance in every aspect of her body language; he senses his daughter's unhappiness towards him; he shows awareness (with the help of his daughter) that being a woman doesn't mean what he thinks it to mean; he knows that inequality and racial tension still prevail in South Africa; he senses that country life is different to city life; he feels that his sentiments are bad, that he is going into things in the 'wrong spirit'. Yet he fails to attend to any of this, fails to act on the basis of this and let this move and orient him. Most of all, he is aware of the grip of what is true, what is good, what is meaningful, that is beyond him – no-one (repeatedly) makes the excuse that they are too old to change unless they see some legitimacy in the call to do so. The very resistance is acknowledgement of some attunement to the good, the better, that he fails to be attentive and give himself over to.

This, I believe, gives further support to the proposal that taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world should be understood in terms of attention and attentiveness. Both also show how difficult this task is. This brings me to my final point.

In contrast to the worry with Han-Pile's account where taking responsibility can only happen pre-reflectively, I think the model of attention allows us to accommodate the everyday insight that I suspect we would wish to hold on to: that in some sense it is possible to play a role in becoming responsible, in taking responsibility. If we return to our everyday examples, we can think about deciding to sit down and focus on our Russian homework, or the way we turn the

radio off and decide to listen to our friend. It seems that we can decide to be attentive, to pay attention. Yet this ability to choose is limited, and comes with certain qualifications (the kind of which Han-Pile (2013) herself in fact characterizes well with her talk of ‘medio-passivity’ in relation to conscience and authenticity more broadly). It must first be acknowledged that at times we become attentive, pay attention, without our choosing. We are grabbed by something, drawn to something without our choosing (which, as we saw in the analysis of attunement, can occur on the bases of pre-existing commitments or on the basis of being human as such, as in the cases of being grabbed to attend to others). Here, Lurie’s finding himself grabbed by the euthanasia of the animals is a case in point, from which he went on to attend further and deepen the way it mattered to him, which pointed beyond itself to a conception of a good world. Additionally, as also seen with Lurie, there are times where our attempts to be attentive, to pay attention, fail, as I’m sure we can all attest. As in the case of trying to bring about certain attunements discussed in chapter two, we may do all that we can – yet attention may not come. As well as our choice being partial in this way, the choice to attend must be of a certain kind. It must be one that acknowledges that the focus lies with the object of attention and not the one attending. The locus of attention, and so taking responsibility, is still to be found beyond the subject in an important sense. It must be a choice to give oneself over to the object of attention, to place the accent on that to which we’re attending. This is what Weil’s schoolchildren fail to do as – when called to attend, they focus on the furrowing of their brows and the narrowing of their eyes instead of on that to which they’re supposed to attend.

Attending, being attentive is difficult, and not just for schoolchildren. We can see this as explaining Heidegger’s characterization of our falling into the inattention of *das Man* as a ‘tendency to take things easily and make them easy.’ (SZ 128) Attention is a relentless task that we have a tendency to fall away from. This difficulty can also be seen to explain the more ‘active’ fleeing (SZ 184) from our being, which I think can be seen as the more ‘active’ ways of failing to be attentive to something. We might prevent ourselves from being moved by an attunement, prevent giving ourselves over to something, by instead making excuses in a bid to deflect its pull – I am in the service of ‘eros’, her beauty is not her own, I am too old to change, as we hear from Lurie. We might bury ourselves in something else in a bid to forget, or run away from that to which we should attend – moving away from the scandal he

caused to the countryside as we see with Lurie. Or as we have also seen with Lurie, perhaps more subtly, we can fail to attend by instead attempting to control or in other ways subsume that to which we should attend to our own existence, asserting ourselves in the face of all we come across.

While our experience shows the difficulty of attending, I think experience also tells us that it is nonetheless something we have a '*propensio in*' (SZ 188), as Heidegger characterizes authenticity. I believe that it is an expression of the being of Dasein to attend and be attentive. And it is in this idea of attention, I have argued, that taking responsibility for our being-in-the-world lies.

## Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued that Heidegger's account of Dasein's thrownness should make us rethink what it means to take responsibility for ourselves. Against the idea that taking responsibility lies in the power of the subject to find their basis for existence in themselves, to gain control or to determine themselves, I have argued that our thrownness points in a different direction. I have proposed that taking responsibility should instead be understood as being attentive to what we're attuned to most deeply. In contrast to the traditional model that seeks to try and find a space within or outside of our thrownness from which to gain leverage against it, taking responsibility should be understood as being attentive to this movement in which we find ourselves, to be attentive to ensure we are moved in a way that is good, true, meaningful.

In the first chapter, I argued that while the fact that 'I am' in some sense (the 'factual') captures the particularities of our existence, the fact that 'I am' proper ('facticity') pertains to the enigma of human existence as projection into possibilities in relation to a world and others. I showed that with the idea of thrownness, Heidegger importantly adds to this the idea of movement, the idea that I am moved on the basis of what I am. I am submitted to possibilities. While this movement of thrownness captures the way I am moved by the particulars of who I am – my particular body, character, upbringing, social historical context – the movement gains its meaning, its weight and force, from the movement of my being Dasein. The way I am moved to take up particular possibilities as the particular person that I am in the particular world I find myself in gets its force from being moved by the enigma of what it means to be as an 'I' in relation to a world and others. Here, the pervasiveness and force of our thrownness is shown, as I am submitted to possibilities, moved and taken from the ground up.

In the second chapter, I showed how our thrownness is experienced first-personally in our attunement, which I argued captures the spectrum of our affective lives: from our explicit moods, feelings, and emotions, to the constant background way that existence matters on the basis of which we project into possibilities. Here the pervasive strength of the movement of thrownness was shown. Whilst this pervasive grip typically remains in the background, shaping existence pre-

reflectively, the intense way we are gripped by feelings, moods, and emotions renders this explicit. I showed how our attunement, what matters, is shaped by the socio-historical context we find ourselves in, before showing how what we might call our identity is constituted by the particular way we are attuned, a particular way that existence shows up as mattering to us that grips and moves us. I showed how this affective grip of identity gains its force from the grip that existence as such has on me. The world and others must matter to me; they necessarily move me in some way or another. As shown in the analysis of thrownness, the way I am gripped and moved gains its force from the grip of the question of what it means to be, which remains perpetually open. The grip of the enigma of what it means to be, as that which my projection ultimately aims towards, is experienced as the grip of the good, the true, or the meaningful, which is never settled and always beyond me. The particular way that existence grips me gains its force from its gripping me as true, good, or meaningful. Existence matters in the particular ways that it does ultimately on the basis that having a meaningful life, a good life, a true life, matter. It is ultimately this that I am drawn to and gripped by. And this grip is constant, since what is meaningful, what is true, what is good, is never settled but always beyond me. Here the pervasive power of the grip of thrownness is shown first-personally as the experience of perpetually being affected, gripped, and moved, by that enigma that is ultimately beyond our grasp or control.

Having shown the power of the grip of thrownness as it is experienced in attunement, I then turned to the later work of Harry Frankfurt, particularly to his focus on 'what we care about'. I showed that Frankfurt's account maps on to several key features of Heidegger's account of attunement. Frankfurt's analysis was used to show how accounts of taking responsibility that attempt to find power and control over our lives through choice or rational deliberation are undermined. Choice and rational deliberation arise on the basis of the way that we are already attuned – they are not a space from which control over thrownness can arise, but are already bound up with our thrownness itself. I then turned to Frankfurt's own suggestion in the face of this, in which he argues that the task is to gain 'clarity and confidence' with respect to what we care about. I showed that this account of wholeheartedness, which mirrors some interpretations of the idea of 'resoluteness' in Heidegger's thought, in fact characterizes a stubborn, rigid individual that we would not wish to call responsible. I suggested that Frankfurt's account is undermined by the experience of anxiety that in

fact lies as that account's motivational basis. I argued that it is Heidegger's distinctive ontology of human existence, as revealed in the experience of anxiety, that ultimately separates the two accounts and, if properly heeded, allows us to avoid Frankfurt's problematic position.

In chapter four, I went on to analyze Heidegger's account of anxiety. I showed that an interpretation that remains faithful to the experience of anxiety reveals not only our being as possibility, but also our thrownness – for anxiety to be anxious my existence must not only be in the mode of possibility, but it must *matter* to me. It must grip, touch, and affect me. I argued that the notion of 'threat' that Heidegger uses to introduce anxiety, and the vulnerability associated with this, is crucial to understanding anxiety. This additionally allowed me to connect Heidegger's account of anxiety with our everyday understanding, amending this problem that I argued exists in Heidegger's own exposition of anxiety. Through this idea of threat, I argued that anxiety does not reveal a kind of 'space' from or within the movement of thrownness in which the traditional model of responsibility can regain a foothold. On the contrary, I argued that in anxiety our thrownness into a particular identity (in a particular world) is revealed. More than this, we are importantly brought face to face with our thrownness into Dasein as an 'I' that must project into possibilities in relation to the world and others; and thrown into the enigma of what it means to be, whereby what is meaningful, true, and good matters to us, yet always remains out of reach.

In the fifth chapter, having completed my analysis of thrownness and its first-personal manifestation in attunement (including the fundamental attunement of anxiety), I looked to several Heideggerian accounts of taking responsibility. I took these accounts to be representative of some version of the traditional model of responsibility, but which attempt to incorporate aspects of our thrownness. To this end, I looked at Heideggerian accounts that see responsibility to lie in reflective judgement (represented by Crowell), choice (Han-Pile), wholeheartedness (McManus), and independence from *das Man* (Withy). As reflected in the final chapter, each account raises important facets of a Heideggerian account of taking responsibility (Crowell's orientation to the Good; Han-Pile's limits on our ability to take responsibility and to be aware of this; McManus' emphasis on the importance of remaining attuned to our identity; Withy's advocacy of a kind of receptivity). Yet I

argued that each account falls short in some way in virtue of their attempts to focus on the power or self-determination of the subject. I then looked to Blattner's account, which begins to move away from the traditional model by seeing responsibility in terms of 'responsiveness'. While I argued that this points away from the traditional account and its problems in a way that my account would develop, I also argued that Blattner misses the important enigmatic beyond that lies at the heart of our thrownness and constitutes the meaning and ground of our existence.

In light of the previous analysis, in the final chapter I proposed that taking responsibility should be understood in terms of becoming attentive to the way we are attuned most deeply. I showed the important points of convergence between Heidegger's account and the work of Iris Murdoch, thus justifying using Murdoch's model of attention as a guide. In conjunction with Murdoch's work, I presented a phenomenology of attention that shows how it is a kind of comportment that avoids the problems I raised with the Heideggerian accounts in the previous chapter: attention was shown to be a mode of comportment (and not just a mode of mental or visual activity) that can be reflective or pre-reflective, that is sensitive to the way that possibilities show up on the basis of our attunement, that is by its nature answerable to something outside of the 'I' - the world, others, and the enigmatic beyond in the light of which these show up and solicit the 'I' - and that does not involve any kind of problematic separation from *das Man*. I showed that this idea of attention can in fact explain and account for the other pictures of taking responsibility previously analyzed, thus lending support for seeing attention as a comportment of 'responsibility' specifically. I then went on to isolate attentiveness as the heart of taking responsibility through the use of two examples, *Locke* and *Disgrace*, by showing how the protagonists' taking responsibility or not aligns with their attentiveness and not with the reflection, choosing, wholeheartedness, and independence from *das Man* that the examples also display.

Thus, I have argued that to take responsibility for our being-in-the-world is to be attentive. Our thrownness is pervasive. We find ourselves already as a particular person, with a particular identity, in a particular social context, all of which are beyond our power. We find ourselves already always moving in the midst of all this, already gripped and taken by particular possibilities, already with a particular stance on what is true, what is good, on what it means to be. This thrownness shapes the way



we think, feel, and act, and moves us along a particular path for the most part behind the backs of our explicit awareness. There is no space apart from this movement from which we can gain power or control, or the ability to determine ourselves in opposition or separation from its weight and force. Fundamentally, we find ourselves thrown into human existence, into Dasein. We find ourselves as an 'I' moved in possible ways of being in a world with others, for whom what it means to be in such a way is never settled. We are ultimately moved by this being in question, gripped (beyond our control) by the question of what it means to be, how to live. We are moved fundamentally by the aim of being in a world with others that is true, in a way that is meaningful or good. To take responsibility is to be attentive to this. While what grips us as true, meaningful, and good is only accessible through the lens of the particular identity and society we find ourselves in, it is never exhausted by this. There are always further adumbrations to be revealed to unsettle our current answer of what it means to be. To be responsible is to give oneself over to the good, the meaningful, the true as manifest in our society and through our identities, but in such a way that remains open and receptive to that which is beyond their scope, as yet to be revealed to us. We cannot take power over our thrownness, but we can navigate this movement that we didn't engender and cannot stop, to attempt to travel in the right direction insofar as this is revealed to us. Crucially, in contrast to the traditional model of responsibility, such navigation finds its focus on that which is beyond the navigator, as being attentive to the path ahead that they did not create, cannot control, yet can do their best to follow. Any capacity we have to exert influence on our lives is ultimately on the basis of being gripped by an attunement to that which is beyond us.

I have proposed that this reading of responsibility is Heideggerian, building from Heidegger's ontology of human existence as an expression of what it means to be Dasein. I have done this primarily on the basis of an analysis of thrownness and its first-personal manifestation in attunement, as well as showing how Heidegger's characterization of falling away from our being can be understood through the lens of attention.

Many questions and issues remain, of course. My analysis was based on the accounts of thrownness and attunement given in Division I of *Being and Time*. However, I think that the way is open to fruitfully reconsider Division II in light of the analysis I have developed here in terms of attentiveness. Though the heroic tenor

of Division II may seem at odds with my account, giving oneself over to the attunement to what is good can be every bit as difficult, as much as a burden, and requiring as much courage as Heidegger's language suggests.<sup>1</sup> Further analysis of Division II would show how resoluteness requires a receptivity to the situation, a lack of closing oneself off<sup>2</sup> that is well-captured with the idea of attention. The idea of 'repetition' (SZ 339) that Heidegger follows Kierkegaard in using is also amenable to being interpreted in terms of attentiveness insofar as attentiveness works against repetition's enemy: rigid habit. It is not a struggle to imagine how the 'moment of vision' (SZ 339), in which all is the same yet transformed, perhaps sharpened in some way, can be interpreted in the way that a situation is transformed, comes alive, when one gives it attention anew.<sup>3</sup> And while I did not examine death in detail, we can also understand attentiveness as a comportment to that which is beyond us, and beyond us essentially, that is expressive of our essential finitude. While limitations of space preclude developing such a reading here, I take it that further work could show that being-towards-death, and the rest of Heidegger's analysis of authenticity, is consonant with the comportment of attentiveness.

Considering Heidegger's work as a whole, I think seeing authenticity through this lens of attention and attentiveness offers a way of connecting the existential analytic with Heidegger's later work in contrast to disjunctive readings of Heidegger's thought. Against the model of reading responsibility-taking or authenticity as residing in the power or self-determination of the subject, seeing them in terms of attentiveness sits more easily with Heidegger's later characterization of an appropriate relationship to being as shepherding, listening, paying heed to – of particular note is *The Event* in which Heidegger advocates a heedfulness or an 'attentiveness to beyng' (TE p147)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Here again I take Murdoch to be helpful in such analyses, that could lead us to 'come to distinguish a self-assertive ferocity from the kind of courage which would enable a man coolly to choose the labour camp rather than the easy compromise with the tyrant.' (Murdoch 2001 p93)

<sup>2</sup> See Blattner (2013) and Kompridis (2011).

<sup>3</sup> In the words of American poet Philip Levine, 'pay attention. Let your eyes transform what appears ordinary, commonplace, into what it is, a moment in time, an observed fragment of eternity.'

<sup>4</sup> See also his description as attentiveness to 'the event' as 'the disposedness to the courage of steadfastness' (TE p39)

Finally, given the intuitive (and textual<sup>5</sup>) link between attention and the work of looking to the ‘things themselves’ in our own experience, an understanding of authenticity as attentiveness offers a route to understanding an isomorphism between authenticity and philosophy (which, for Heidegger, was phenomenology) that many have suggested Heidegger advocates.<sup>6</sup>

Such work remains beyond the bounds of this thesis however, which has argued that taking responsibility on a Heideggerian account should be understood as becoming attentive to our attunement at the deepest level, the level of the being of Dasein.

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<sup>5</sup> E.g. ‘Through this prior [phenomenological] reduction it first became possible to focus attention on the phenomenological field and the apprehending of its data.’ (Husserl 2012 p117)

<sup>6</sup> See Staehler 2007, Mulhall 1996, Ratcliffe 2013, Guignon 2000 etc., who seems to be picking up on Heidegger’s own comments such as those in FCM. p7.

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