

Responsible for Destiny: Historizing, Historicality, and Community

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A recent exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art showcased the arms and armor of 15th century emperor Maximilian I. The pieces are at once wildly aggressive and delicate. A pair of gauntlets are spiked at each knuckle but also finely etched with scrollwork giving the impression of lace. A menacing visor is paired with a breastplate that has the waistline of a Victorian corset. The boots of another suit are, as one art critic wrote, “aggressively stylish”—ending in a highly impractical footlong point.¹

What makes these artifacts a source of wonder and fascination is not their age, and—although impressive—it is also not their artistry that keeps one’s attention. They are fascinating, because they belong to a world that has been. They were once part of “a context of equipment and were encountered as ready-to-hand and used by a concerned Dasein who was-in-the-world,” but that world is no longer (GA 2: 503/SZ 380). It is hard to imagine *who* one might have been in the medieval world—the possibilities provided by the social norms, shared conceptual framework, and available technology and equipment were so different from those given by our world. For this reason, it is also hard to fully grasp many historical artifacts (like the menacing and frilly armor of Maximilian); we just don’t fully *get* the projects and roles these artifacts would have supported, though we can try to understand them through imperfect analogy with similar roles, projects, and ambitions of our own world. There is something thrilling and unsettling in thinking about such an odd creature as the one who wore this armor but from whom I am in some way “descended.”

Dasein “stretches *itself* along” through life (GA 2: 495/SZ 374) by taking up and taking over roles that have been handed down. We can hold ourselves in social roles and thus have projects only by taking up possibilities we inherit. The roles of knight, serf, and minstrel are no longer part of the culture in which we find ourselves. Instead, we can be soldiers, farmers, and entertainers. In a historical frame of mind, we might think about how much the current role of soldier is indebted to that of knight or wonder whether it is part of the same legacy at all.

Historizing is the name Heidegger gives to this stretching along that marks the continuity of life by taking up possibilities and roles that have been and using them to project ourselves into the future (GA 2: 495/SZ 375), and he links it to *historicality*—our sense of a more general continuity of “history.” Heidegger draws out both inauthentic and authentic modes of historizing by the individual that give rise, respectively, to inauthentic and authentic modes of historicality.² He also gestures at (but does not fully elaborate on) the form of historizing that occurs in communities—the way a group or a “people” take hold of tradition to shape who they will be. He briefly touches on authentic co-historizing but says nothing at all regarding its inauthentic counterpart. This omission is quite surprising given how central historizing and historicality are generally to the question of the meaning and Being. It is particularly surprising when one appreciates that it may be *inauthentic* co-historizing that necessitated the planned (but unfinished) second half of *Being and Time*: the “phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology” (GA 2: 53/SZ 39).

In the introduction to *Being and Time*, Heidegger writes that “inquiry into Being...is itself characterized by historicality” (GA 2: 28/SZ 20). There is a history or “tradition” attached to the way Being has been interpreted that we inherit in our inquiry—it shapes the questions we ask and the answers that come most readily to us. Heidegger thought that tradition had become “master” in the inquiry into Being. By treating the categories and concepts developed and handed down from the Greeks to the Scholastics to the Modern philosophers as “self-evident,” the ontological tradition covered over the primordial “sources” from which our ontological categories and concepts are drawn—the phenomena themselves—making us “forget” that they have any phenomenological origin at all that requires interrogation or understanding (GA 2: 29/SZ 21). This, on Heidegger’s account, closes off original and authentic inquiry into Being (GA 2: 29/SZ 21). In part two of *Being and Time*, Heidegger planned the “phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology” (GA 2: 53/SZ 39); he was going to show how genuine

phenomenological insight into the question of being that started with the Greeks over time became leveled down into categories and concepts that were divorced from the phenomena. The way tradition thus became master, however, is best understood using the concepts that are given short shrift in division 2 chapter 5 of *Being and Time*: authentic and inauthentic historizing—especially inauthentic co-historizing.

In this paper, I attempt to round out these concepts. I examine what Heidegger says about authentic and inauthentic historizing and their relation to historicity and on the basis of these fill-in the underdeveloped concept of authentic co-historizing and reconstruct on Heidegger's behalf the concept of inauthentic co-historizing. I close by considering our responsibility for the possibilities we take up and the part we play in handing down possibilities (and perhaps shifting them) through historizing—for being, as Heidegger might put it, responsible for our destiny as a people and, more specifically, as a community of philosophers.

Historicity, Historizing, and Temporality

Division 2 chapter 5 of *Being and Time*, “Temporality and Historicity,” is ostensibly about the “problem of history”: How should we think about history given Heidegger's account of Dasein and, especially, temporality? So, it is striking that his initial discussion centers not on history in the grand sense of historical eras but on something like personal history. How do we understand the continuity of our own lives between birth and death? (GA 2: 493/SZ 373) While this might seem like a digression, in fact, it is the “source” of the problem of history in the grand sense (GA 2: 496/SZ 375). As Heidegger will show, our “common sense” (and distorted) view of history is an outgrowth of our everyday view of our lives as “connected” experiences. By contrast, authentic historicity—an authentic sense for history and our place in it—has its basis in our authentic historizing.

According to the “common sense” view, a human life is continuous in that it is made up of “a sequence of Experiences ‘in time’” (GA 2: 493/SZ 373).³ Experiences come to be actualized as “right now” and pass away, our lives a long chain of these experiences. This way of thinking about the connectedness of life is rooted in an understanding of Dasein as present-at-hand—as a thing “in the current ‘now,’” or that has passed away and is no longer, or that is coming along and is not yet actual (GA 2: 494/SZ 373)—an understanding of Dasein Heidegger

has, by this point, thoroughly undermined.⁴ This view of our lives as the “connected” now-experiences of a present-at-hand Dasein is also the basis of our common sense interpretation of history as a series of events ordered one after another in time that come along and disappear successively. However, since on this view only the “now” is, it’s not clear what kind of being the past can have, nor how there can be any “connection” between the now and the past at all. Instead of explaining the connection between past, present, and future, this view cuts us off from tradition by undermining the possibility of its being and blocks an authentic understanding of history and its continuity.

An authentic understanding of the continuity of our lives (or “personal history”), by contrast, provides the “solution” to the problem of history. Heidegger suggests that when we understand the continuity of our lives in terms of authentic temporality, we see that life’s continuity results from our *historizing* (GA 2: 495/SZ 375)—the way we take up what has been as we project ourselves into the possibilities of the future. Once we understand that the continuity of our own lives results from historizing, we can authentically grasp the continuity of history more broadly in terms of this ongoing individual and communal historizing in which traditions are handed down and taken up (GA 2: 496, 505/SZ 375, 382). But what *is* historizing exactly, and how does it result in continuity at both the individual and more general level? To fully grasp historizing and to understand its relation to history generally, we have to dig into its “existential-temporal conditions”—i.e. originary temporality.

According to Heidegger, what makes us unique in our being is that our being is an issue for us—we *care* about who we are, how we are doing, and whether we are measuring up to our own expectations. This care is grounded in a non-sequential temporality (GA 2: 433/SZ 327). We can care about who we are and how we are doing only because we are *futural*; we are always “coming towards” a possibility that is not yet actualized (GA 2: 430/SZ 325). We are futural not in the sense that we aim at some specific end goal. Rather, as William Blattner puts it, we are always “casting” ourselves forward into roles that are “futural with respect to action.”⁵ These roles are never accomplished and done with the way that a goal is. Instead, a role is a way one wants *to be* that sets the parameters of what one should do and how one should act in order to hold oneself in a role. We can settle on and “come towards” certain roles and self-conceptions by doing certain things and acting in a certain way or we can abandon those roles and stop moving towards them. For example, it matters very much to me that I’m a good parent. This role dictates

I do certain things and act in a certain way. There is also no end goal in the sense of there being a finish line; I have to keep doing things and acting in a certain way to cast myself into a role that is always futural with respect to my actions.

We also only care about who we are because we exist as *having been*. What matters to me, who I want to be, and how I know whether I've "made it" can only be determined on the basis of possibilities that have been handed down to me (i.e. are live cultural possibilities in the world in which I live) and that, over the course of my life, have come to matter to me in different ways. What possibilities are live possibilities, how I decide between them, and how I judge myself are a matter of the kind of person I already am—who I *have been* (GA 2: 431, 434/SZ 326, 328).

Finally, it is *having been* and *futurity* that come together to allow me to encounter my current situation as I *presently* do. For example, the experience of adversity in a given situation only arises from the fact that I cast myself into a *future* possibility that is important to me on the back of who I *have been*—of it mattering to me given the person I find myself already to be. To borrow an example from Sartre, a cliff might be experienced as a serious impediment if I want to get to something on the other side, or it might be an aid if I want to climb it to get a view of the countryside. Futurity gives the cliff its current meaning as "it waits to be illuminated by an end in order to manifest itself as adverse or helpful,"⁶ and what pushes me to take up either of these specific ends is a role into which I cast myself. I am a medic trying to reach an injured hiker; I am an outdoorswoman trying to take in the views—the specific activities only call to me given a possibility into which I cast myself. *Having been* similarly gives the cliff its meaning. It is only because certain roles already matter to me given the kind of person I am and the cultural context in which I find myself that any intermediate projects supporting them emerge. Without the roles of nature lover or medic and "without picks and piolets, paths already worn, and a technique of climbing, the crag would be neither easy nor difficult to climb; the question would not be posited, it would not support any relation of any kind with the technique of mountain climbing."⁷ Having been and futurity thus disclose our present situation (GA 2: 431ff./SZ 326ff.).⁸

These structures of originary temporality are the basis of historizing and historicity. History, in short, is derivative of temporality. So, with this understanding of Heidegger's view of temporality, we have the tools to understand authentic and inauthentic historizing and the way in which they give rise to authentic and inauthentic historicity.

Authentic Historizing

One can cast oneself into possibilities from what has been either authentically (in anticipatory resoluteness) or inauthentically (in irresoluteness). The distinction between the authentic and inauthentic modes isn't based on the ontic content of the possibilities. It's not about casting into a possibility that is "true" to the content of one's character, for example. Rather, it's about being "ontologically" true to oneself (GA 2: 516/SZ 391). In anticipatory resoluteness, Dasein understands itself as the kind of entity that is responsible for *who* it is (Being-guilty) and that has possibilities (potentiality-for-Being) from which it must choose *who* it is (GA 2: 506/SZ 382).

We inherit a set of cultural possibilities from which we can never "extricate" ourselves—we are *thrown* into the world. It is in terms of, against, and for these handed-down possibilities "that any possibility one has chosen is seized upon" (GA 2: 507/SZ 383). Even resolute Dasein—aware of itself as an entity responsible for choosing *who* it is—isn't at liberty to choose *any* project or interpretation. We do not make ourselves from the ground up (GA 2: 506/SZ 383). Rather, our world provides the equipment, roles, relations, concepts, etc. that shape our lives and provide both the possibilities and the limits of *who* one can be. But where do these possibilities come from? "We must ask whence, in general, Dasein can draw those possibilities upon which it factually projects itself" (GA 2: 506/SZ 383). These possibilities come from a tradition, and understanding that connection between what is handed down in tradition and our possibilities for being makes *historizing authentic*.

In *authentic historizing*, Dasein resolutely takes over the possibilities of a tradition *in terms* of that tradition and as explicitly part of a tradition (GA 2: 507-508/SZ 383-384). A Dasein already aware of its responsibility for *who* it is can also understand the possibilities it takes up as part of a tradition that is handed down from what has been. This doesn't mean that the authentically *historizing* Dasein is explicitly aware of the genealogy of any traditional possibility taken over⁹ or understands the "process" by which traditional possibilities are taken over.¹⁰ However, in *authentic historizing*, part of our awareness of the possibilities into which we cast ourselves includes an awareness of them as part of a tradition within which we have grown up. When we authentically press ahead by taking over a heritage, we are engaging in a *repetition* (GA 2: 509/SZ 385). Repetitions do not merely repeat what has been the way a parakeet might

mimic a word; they are a “reciprocative rejoinder” (GA 2: 510/SZ 386)—a response to having “heard” what has been that repeats it in the way a word or phrase repeated in dialogue might still have its own meaning and advance the conversation.¹¹ We, thus, hand down to ourselves possibilities that have been part of our tradition and take them over as our *fate*. (GA 2: 507ff./SZ 384ff.). Our fate is thus both that which we are responsible for freely choosing and that which is foreshadowed by what has been.

Consider the case of a young woman who decides to become a software developer. She thinks about this career in terms of who she wants to be and recognizes that she has been called to the role; it is who she is. She pushes ahead into the role resolutely and so is taking up and continuing on in a tradition. But in what way does she have to be aware of the tradition she is becoming a part of for it to count as authentically historizing?

It might seem odd to think of the relatively recent discipline of software development as being a “tradition” at all. We generally think of a tradition as the accumulation of hundreds of years of communal habits and norms that are passed down generationally, and we tend to measure traditions in years; the most robust being those that have persisted for centuries. However, this cannot be what Heidegger has in mind by “tradition.” This common sense view of tradition would define and measure it in terms of the numbers of sequential present-at-hand moments or “Nows” for which it held sway and is thus rooted in an understanding of time as sequential present-at-hand moments—one Now that is present and other Nows that are either future or past. However, this would directly conflict with Heidegger’s non-sequential view of originary temporality—the more fundamental basis for sequential “clock-” or “calendar-time.” Originary temporality characterizes *futurity* as the roles we cast ourselves into that order our projects and that we are always acting toward, what *has been* as the way things matter to us because of the cultural context in which we find ourselves and our individual history, and the *present* as our orientation to an environment that that offers us the tools to pursue our projects. Tradition, too, must be understood in non-sequential terms. Just as an artifact does not, according to Heidegger, “become ‘more historical’ by being moved off into a past which is always farther and farther away, so that the oldest of them would be the most authentically historical” (GA 2: 504/SZ 381), a tradition does not become “more traditional” because of the number of years it has held sway or the number of times it has been handed down. One takes over a tradition when one “grows up” in it—not in the sense that one experienced the tradition in childhood, but rather

in that certain practices, norms, and ways of interpreting the world come to be one's own through exposure. Robust traditions are heavy—like a gravity well, they persistently pull and arrange our expectations, our sense for how “things are,” and our intuitions about who we should be into an ordered constellation. A tradition is a nexus of roles, practices, and concepts that *have been* and that to some extent both capture and set our interpretation of the world and ourselves. The most robust traditions are those that have the greatest sway over our interpretation of things.

If you aren't sure whether or not software development counts as a tradition in the sense of a set of connected roles, practices, and concepts that one might “grow into” and that might shape one's interpretation of things, consider it first as a field with a specific research agenda. Software developers create tools (software) for people to use and they themselves use tools to do this. There is “a consensus concerning the problems of the field, their order of importance or priority, the means of solving them (the tools of the trade), and perhaps most importantly, what constitutes a solution.”¹² It is at least a tradition in the sense that any discipline is a tradition, and to “grow up” in the tradition is to be a practitioner that sees the field in the same way. However, software development is a tradition in a more robust way since it has a distinct culture, the shape of which has recently become a popular topic for writers and journalists: the valorizing of brilliant individuals, an emphasis on binge work, a penchant for libertarianism, even a kind of fashion.¹³ It also includes a social milieu of macho passive aggressive sexism that adds up to, as Emily Chang recently put it, a “brotopia.”¹⁴ There is, in short, a fairly robust tradition that has heroes, practices, and a culture.

Consider the way this software development tradition might “stick” to our female computer programmer. As she grows into the tradition—majoring in computer science in college, developing friends in the field, taking on internships, and accepting her first job—she will start to take on the tradition as her own. If she is at all cognizant of the tradition, part of her sense of the role into which she casts herself is that it has a “tradition” of male chauvinism and often overt sexism.¹⁵ How she will hold herself in the role must be sensitive to the ways in which the “tradition” can be hostile to people like her. If she disagrees with peers in the wrong way, she might be seen as shrill. As she rises through the ranks, she will inevitably run into at least one male programmer that undermines her at every opportunity, because he hates having a woman for a boss. She might also have a sense for the way in which she will be taking over a smaller tradition of women trailblazers.¹⁶ If she does have a sense for this, her calling is “disclosed

explicitly as bound up with the heritage which has come down” (GA 2: 510/SZ 386). She sees her calling in terms of these traditions, and so “chooses her hero” (GA 2: 509/SZ 385). She will be finding *her* way of being a software developer by drawing on and reshaping what is handed down by the tradition. She will determine her *fate* by drawing on and integrating that tradition into her comportment, but the response, as a reciprocative rejoinder, is not simply *determined by* the tradition. She might take up the tradition in a rebellious way (“that’s not something I’m going to tolerate”), an accommodating way (“it’s just boys being boys”), or in resignation (“this is what it takes to show I’m one of them”). She might in any of these ways be authentically historizing.

Authentic historizing is the basis for authentic historicity—an authentic sense of oneself in history. In repetition, the continuity of our lives is revealed as our historizing. We do not move from experience to experience, but continually take over, sustain, and abandon possibilities based on what has been. We are continuously “stretched and stretching ourselves along” through life. This “moment of vision,” is a “disavowal” of the common sense way of thinking about the continuity of our lives as a series of connected experiences moving from future to present to past (GA 2: 510/SZ 386). Instead, we have a sense not only for the way in which our lives are continuous, but the way in which historizing involves taking up a heritage. History is thus revealed not as a series of events that become present and pass away, but as the continuous historizing of Dasein who take up and pass down possibilities for being.

We characterize repetition as a mode of that resoluteness which hands itself down—the mode by which Dasein exists explicitly as fate. But if fate constitutes the primordial historicity of Dasein, then history has its essential importance neither in what is past nor in the “today” and its “connection” with what is past, but in that authentic historizing of existence which arises from Dasein's future. (GA 2: 510/SZ 386)

In authentic historizing, Dasein has an implicit understanding not only how one is “part” of history through a connection to what *has been*, but also how one is *continuing* history. Our taking up what has been is always future oriented. We are taking a stand on the possibilities that we hand down to ourselves in a rejoinder to tradition, we choose what to take up and how to take it up, and in so doing have a sense of the way our place in history is forward facing. Our present, too, is “placed” in history—animated by both our futurity and responsibility for what we hand down from what has been. It is this sense of history that inspires the kind of interest in Maximilian’s armor described above, a sense for them *in terms* of those possibilities that no longer matter (are no longer live) and those that still do (ambition, power). What makes them

“historical” and historically interesting is their relation to possibilities that are near and far from those we can take up today and the sense that they are part of an ongoing process of which we are a part.

Our historicity is a basic part of our being whether we recognize it (and authentically hand down to ourselves what has been) or conceal it (and take it on inauthentically as the “past” (GA 2: 510, 515-517/SZ 386, 390-391)). I will now turn to this latter option: inauthentic historizing as that which conceals historicity.

Inauthentic Historizing

Even in our everyday, inauthentic mode of existing we are casting ourselves into roles, and we understand the environment around us and the things that happen in terms of these roles. Spilling coffee on a computer as one writes an email isn’t a mere “event”; it’s a mishap interrupting a task that is required of some role one has cast oneself into, and that is true whether or not that role is taken up authentically or inauthentically (GA 2: 512/SZ 387-388). However, in our inauthentic mode, we tend to think of these everyday doings primarily in terms of “what is getting done and what is ‘going to come of it’” (GA 2: 512/SZ 388), not in terms of *who* we are and how our doings make us who we are. Dasein, remember, is that being for whom its “Being is an issue for it” (GA 2: 16/SZ 12), and it “has always made some sort of decision as to the way in which it is in each case mine” (GA 2: 57/SZ 42).

In each case Dasein is its possibility, and it “has” this possibility, but not just as a property, as something present-at-hand would. And because Dasein is in each case essentially its own possibility, it can, in its very Being, “choose” itself and win itself; it can also lose itself and never win itself; or only “seem” to do so. (GA 2: 57/SZ 42)

Irresolute and inauthentic Dasein is, Heidegger points out, insensitive to and unaware of its possibilities (GA 2: 517/SZ 391). What he means by this is that inauthentic Dasein does not see its choices as *possibilities* in the existential sense of possibilities—that is as possibilities for being *who* one is. A person, for example, might know they can choose between several career possibilities, but not see these as possibilities for who it can be, it misinterprets existential possibilities as mere options for acting, shirking the responsibility of “choosing and winning” its being. Instead, existential possibilities are leveled down and interpreted merely as options to do this or that. Inauthentic Dasein is oblivious to possibilities not because it doesn’t know it can

choose to be either a doctor or an accountant. Rather, it is unaware of these as different possibilities for being *who* it is—that these choices make one who one is and that in choosing one rather than another, one is responsible for who one is. Irresolute Dasein is insensitive to the way in which all its projects, interaction, choices make it who it is by casting it into and sustaining it in certain roles, so, to put it more precisely, it is unaware or insensitive to *possibilities for being who it is*. In inauthenticity, “we compute the progress which the individual Dasein has made—his stoppages, readjustments, and ‘output’; and we do so proximally in terms of that with which he is concerned—its course, its status, its changes, its availability” (GA 2: 512/SZ 388). Here there is no sense of the way in which what one is doing sustains the roles into which one casts oneself, nor of how all of one’s projects, interaction, and choices make one who one is by casting one into and sustaining one in certain roles—the reciprocal way that I make my roles and my roles make me. Instead, irresolute Dasein is absorbed in its dealings and reacts as need be to complete tasks at hand.

Consider a young woman who becomes a doctor just like her mother. She has this ambition, in part, because it is a life with which she is familiar. The hours, duties, income, and prestige have formed the background rhythm of her life. She is still receiving a tradition—she has still grown up in a context of meanings and matterings and has taken over a role provided by these—but she has no sense of the way who she chooses to be is rooted in and shaped by this background. It is not that she fails to understand there is a history to the profession or that she is following in the footsteps of her mother. She may well know these things, but what she doesn’t have a sense for is the way what has been is a continual force on who she is nor that she is nonetheless responsible for she will be. Tradition isn’t a set of static facts, but something ongoing that is shaping and shaped by who she chooses to be. Yet she has no feel for the way *who she is* is connected, continuous with, and continuing on what has been. She can’t have a sense for this, because existential possibilities have been leveled down to mere options. She considers who she is to be settled and static—a core self that chooses among exterior options which have no deep effect on her—not Dasein whose choice of roles and possibilities continually shape who it is. Insensitive to “possibilities, [she] cannot repeat what has been” (GA 2: 517/SZ 391). That is, because she experiences her future as a set of options rather than as existential possibilities that will make her who she is, she cannot understand the way these possibilities for being are part of a tradition or appreciate the way in which who she is and can be is continuous

with who has been. If she were to see her choices as choices about who she will be based on what has been instead of superficial choices, she would also see those choices as only possible within and yet freely chosen from out of a tradition. This isn't to say she is inauthentically historicizing because she isn't a phenomenologist explicitly articulating this connection to tradition. Rather, she is inauthentic because she doesn't have a sense (even an implicit one) of the way she is both responsible for choosing who she is and deeply rooted to a tradition.

Inauthentic historicizing conceals the connection between tradition and possibility, and without connecting one's possibilities to a tradition, the continuity of history as a continual taking over of possibilities—a "fate [that] has been primordially stretched along" (GA 2: 517/SZ 391)—is also concealed. This gives rise to an inauthentic historicity in which history is thought of as a "present" today that has arrived on the back of the "past" yesterday and awaits a "future" tomorrow. In inauthentic historicity, one confronts a "past" that is stripped of its real meaning and becomes "unrecognizable" (GA 2: 517/SZ 391), retaining and receiving only the "actual" that is left over, the world-historical that has been, the leavings, and the information about them that is present-at-hand." (GA 2: 517/SZ 391). One who inauthentically encounters Maximilian's armor, for example, might see something merely curious or beautiful or alien. "It's weird that people once wore that." "Lovely craftsmanship." "How old is it, again?" However, they wouldn't see the armor as part of a historicizing Dasein, albeit one belonging to a world that is no more. They certainly could not connect their own ambitions or fears to those artifacts or see how who they are today might be in some ways an echo of the Dasein that have been.

Authentic and Inauthentic Co-Historizing

We now have a sense for authentic and inauthentic historicizing, but Dasein does not ever historicize (in either mode) in solitude; the world it is always drawing on is a shared world. However, Dasein can also explicitly *co-historize* by taking up what has been not just with an eye for individual possibilities, but for the possibilities of a community. Heidegger notes that the authentic form of communal historicizing "goes to make up the full authentic historicizing of Dasein" (GA 2: 508/SZ 385), suggesting that individual historicizing and communal co-historizing are two distinct aspects of historicizing. In short, what we have been calling "authentic historicizing" is just the individual aspect of authentic historicizing, which must be supplemented by a communal counterpart: authentic co-historizing. Heidegger's discussion of co-historizing, however, is

sparse. He addresses only *authentic* co-historizing directly, and gives no space at all to *inauthentic* co-historizing. However, co-historizing in both its authentic and inauthentic modes are key to understanding historizing and how it is not only shaped by but shapes the world into which Dasein is thrown. I will thus fill out Heidegger's discussion of authentic co-historizing and supply the account of inauthentic co-historizing that is absent from *Being and Time*.

Authentic Co-Historizing

Heidegger notes that Dasein does not historize or “stretch itself along” in a vacuum but exists in a community, and so is always drawing on a shared tradition. Therefore, extending our analysis, Dasein can also historize in an explicitly communal way. This occurs when a community explicitly grapples with a shared tradition to lay claim to who *they* will be (GA 2: 508/SZ 384). Whereas the authentic historizing of an individual reveals their *fate*, the authentic *co-historizing* of a community reveals its *destiny* (GA 2: 508, 510/SZ 384, 386). Heidegger is clear that this is a distinct aspect of historizing. Destiny is not merely the result of adding up the fates of a group of individual Dasein authentically historizing; a destiny is seized by a community when it authentically takes over a heritage and determines who it is *as a community*. In his discussion of authentic co-historizing, Heidegger invokes the destiny “of a people” and of a “generation” to illustrate his meaning, but the struggles that determine the destiny of a people often play out as a conversation that can shift from group to community to population and back again. Authentic co-historizing is a struggle through communication about who *we* will be in connection with a tradition—a reckoning that can fluidly shift from the small interpersonal conversation to large-scale debate.

Susan Brownmiller's memoir describes an example of authentic co-historizing in the Women's Liberation Movement. She recounts a story about the discovery and naming of sexual harassment and the struggle that followed to take over a tradition—to seize who *we* were as a “people.” The struggle was initially confined to a small community of feminists attempting to make sense of a common experience for women—unwanted touching, leering, and suggestive comments. “We realized that to a person, every one of us...had had an experience like this at some point, you know? And none of us had ever told anyone before. It was one of those *click, aha!* moments, a profound revelation”.¹⁷ Though the connection was clear to the women involved, there wasn't a single concept that captured all of these varied experiences.

Eight of us were sitting in an office of Human Affairs...brainstorming about what we were going to write on the posters for our speak-out. We were referring to it as “sexual intimidation,” “sexual coercion,” “sexual exploitation on the job.” None of those names seemed quite right. We wanted something that embraced a whole range of subtle and unsubtle persistent behaviors. Somebody came up with “harassment” *Sexual harassment!* Instantly we agreed. That’s what it was.¹⁸

In this example, women talked through a shared experience that lacked a unifying concept. Nothing in the tradition handed down adequately captured the practice or its harms, making it hard to make sense of or respond to the experiences. In the absence of a readily available concept or way of “taking” the experience, women had to draw on what *was* available to patch together a new concept that made sense and that clearly articulated the wrongs of the practice. They had to *find* a way to connect their experiences to an existing tradition. While there was no tradition that captured sexual harassment, there was a tradition of discrimination, civil rights violations, and civil rights activists.¹⁹ Sexual harassment was named and understood in terms of discrimination on the basis of sex so that it could be assimilated to an existing tradition of civil rights.²⁰

There are two key features of this example that clearly mark it as authentic co-historizing. First, there is an explicit attempt to understand one’s possibilities or the roles into which one can cast oneself in terms of a tradition. The women in the meeting are already casting themselves into the broad roles of feminist or women’s liberation activist, but it was also a role that was in-process and being fine-tuned to the demands of the current situation. A role is always futural in terms of action; one must do things to cast oneself into and sustain oneself in a role and conversely, roles guide our ways of taking and responding to situations. In trying to capture and name the practice of sexual harassment and its harms, they are working out a way of framing or “taking” certain acts—how a feminist or women’s liberation activist takes and responds to them. This stance on what they came to call “sexual harassment” becomes part of the role of feminist, part of the way one can “come towards” *feminist* as a role or self-conception. A community of feminist activists had to think explicitly about how their experiences “fit” within existing traditions to capture these practices, and in so doing, they adopted (and adapted) roles from those traditions. Equally important was thinking about how they *didn’t* fit, how traditional roles and ideas needed to be amended to accommodate their experiences; this is what made their response reciprocal.

Second, this was a struggle for the destiny of a community. This struggle started within the women’s liberation movement as a fight to understand their experiences and who *they* were as feminists—the destiny of women’s liberation; it became a struggle for who *we* are as a population—the destiny of America. As sexual discrimination became part of the broader conversation in the United States (and especially as it played out in the court system), there were vigorous fights over what it meant to be a man or a woman and how we should understand these roles in light of our heritage.²¹ It became a fight to “challenge and to legitimate the social arrangements that make men men and women women.”²² Here we can see a community collectively realizing that its being is an issue for it, that certain categories that structure its self-understanding at the deepest level must be continuously renegotiated rather than being settled, unquestionable facts. These struggles for destiny played out as a conversation that shifted from group to community to population and back again.

To see how this kind of authentic co-historizing provides an authentic sense of history, consider that it is only by seeing history as a continuous struggle for destiny that we have a true sense of our place in history. We didn’t just arrive in the #MeToo era; *we* made choices and had fights about who we are and how we would take up our tradition. We chose our heroes, not by selecting real individuals to valorize, but by lifting up as *role models* certain ways of being a woman that these women forged and fought for. To understand the continuity of history as the continued struggle and co-historizing of a community is authentic historicity. The “we” of the #MeToo era is different from the “we” of Susan Brownmiller’s generation, but they are connected and continuous. To see this continuity is to place ourselves in history in an authentic way.

Inauthentic Co-Historizing

Like individual historizing, co-historizing has authentic and inauthentic modes. I’ve filled out Heidegger’s account of authentic co-historizing, but he doesn’t give any account of inauthentic co-historizing at all. An account can, however, be reconstructed by drawing on what we know about authentic co-historizing and (individual) inauthentic historizing.

Inauthentic historizing at the individual level hides Dasein’s character as being responsible for “stretching itself along” by taking up what has been (GA 2: 516-517/SZ 391). Although we are continually casting ourselves into roles and possibilities, and understand

ourselves, events, and our environment in terms of these roles (the way occupying the role of alpine medic made a cliff an obstacle), inauthentic Dasein doesn't see the roles *as* possibilities for being or the demands of the roles as means of sustaining a way of being. Who I am is understood to be settled, a settled and static self who then performs actions. Inauthentic Dasein tends to think in terms of what must be done and what will result (GA 2: 512/SZ 388) with no sense of the way in which its doings make it who it is. The same then will be true of inauthentic co-historizing. However, in inauthentic co-historizing, what is taken as settled is not who *one* is—the role(s) into which one has cast oneself—but who *we* are and what *we* stand for. In cases of inauthentic co-historizing, we actively cling to tradition in communal interactions as a neutral and static interpretation of things with indisputable authority. We do not acknowledge the possibility of choosing what has been—that is, we fight to conceal that choices have brought us to this point and that handing possibilities down to ourselves is never a neutral receiving but something we actively choose and participate in. You can see examples of this in the comments section of almost any article or op-ed about a social issue. A recent post about the harm of deadnaming,²³ i.e. calling a trans person by their birth name when they have changed it as part of their gender transition, elicited many comments that were some variation of the following:

So, are we going to all have to throw out our dvd's of Juno, Whip It, and X-men because it published material with [Elliot Page's] deadname?

It's getting so hard to communicate these days. Every god damned thing you say, write or do is a crime against humanity.

These comments exemplify *inauthentic historizing*. In these cases, who we are and the possibilities for how we should take things, understand them, and who *we* should be are taken to be set. Every objection is understood in terms of a change or alteration to the way things are without recognizing that the way things are came about. These are malleable features of our social framework that have themselves resulted from people taking a stand on what is or is not acceptable, and we are responsible for continuing and sustaining a particular tradition or abandoning it or altering it. There is nothing neutral about retrenching what is handed down, though inauthentic co-historizing attempts to conceal this. Recognizing that we can't deadname even in the cases of famous celebrities means we have to adapt, and that continuing to do what we "have always done" isn't passive inaction but a choice about who we are. These responses all

attempt to conceal that we have a choice about how we take over what has been and that we can choose who *we* want to be, the existentiell choosing, that is, the “choosing to choose” of resoluteness (GA 2: 358/SZ 270).

As one would expect, one can see in inauthentic co-historizing the kernel of inauthentic historicity—the tacit presumption that history is a series of events that come to be and pass away and what we inherit are just present-at-hand “leavings” or information about the things of the past. By covering over the processes of historizing as actually historical and presuming we have no choice in how what has been is taken up, one is left to interpret history as a series of present-at-hand “Nows” that are no more—concealing the way we got here on the back of communal struggle.

The Question of Being and the Destiny of Philosophy

Inauthentic co-historizing blocks social change by casting tradition as something to be received rather than something we hand down to ourselves and for which we are responsible. It pulls back from change by treating certain aspects of tradition as neutral and by concealing the continuity of history as rooted in continuous historizing of Dasein.

Inauthentic co-historizing can also block the authentic inquiry into Being. The question of the meaning of Being is itself characterized by historicity; it comes with a tradition that shapes its asking and answering. This means that we can take up the tradition authentically—recognizing that we have a choice about how we take over what is handed down—or inauthentically—clinging to what is handed down as a neutral and static interpretation with indisputable authority. To understand the inquiry into Being as it has come down to us, we have to have a sense for the way the tradition *has been* taken over—how what comes down to us has been shaped by inauthentic or authentic historizing. Asking the question of Being, as Heidegger writes, requires inquiring into the “history of that inquiry itself” to “bring ourselves into full possession of the ownmost possibilities of such inquiry” (GA 2: 28/SZ 21).

Heidegger thought that tradition had become “master” in the inquiry into Being—that it had coalesced into dogma via what we can now (after elucidating the concept further) identify as inauthentic historizing. Greek ontology, based in genuine phenomenological insight, had, through inauthentic historizing, “deteriorated to a tradition in which it gets reduced to something

self-evident—merely material for reworking” (GA 2: 29-30/SZ 22). Beginning in the Middle Ages, Greek insights into the question of Being started to come apart from their “primordial ‘sources’” (GA 2: 29/SZ 21)—the phenomena and experiences that initially inspired them. Instead, Greek ontology became a “fixed body of doctrine...taken over dogmatically” by the Scholastics. The subject matter of the question of being became the tradition itself—philosophers began engaging in an inauthentic form of philosophy in which the source material for inquiry became the tradition itself. Down through the work of the Scholastics, modern philosophers, Kant, and Hegel the original phenomenological insights of the Greeks travelled further and further from their original and authentic phenomenological source. Heidegger doesn’t claim that there have been no genuine insights into the question of the meaning of Being. Certain “domains” of Being—the cogito, the subject, reason, spirit, person—have been revealed throughout.

But these all remain uninterrogated as to their Being and its structure, in accordance with the thoroughgoing way in which the question of Being has been neglected. It is rather the case that the categorial content of the traditional ontology has been carried over to these entities with corresponding formalizations and purely negative restrictions, or else dialectic has been called in for the purpose of Interpreting the substantiality of the subject ontologically. (GA 2: 30/SZ 22)

The tradition itself became the “self-evident” starting point for inquiry and the authority dictating the method by which inquiry would proceed. So, we as philosophers began to forget that the inquiry had any other origins. In this way, Dasein’s historicity became “thoroughly uprooted by tradition” (GA 2: 29/SZ. 21). This is a clear example of the effects of inauthentic co-historizing.

We do not know exactly what would have been in the unfinished second part of *Being and Time*, the “phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology.” However, given Heidegger’s account of its motivation and what we now know about historizing and historicity, it’s plausible that it would have required a systematic account of the ways in which the tradition became master—an account of the way inauthentic historizing slowly covered over the importance and connection to “those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being” (GA 2: 29/SZ 22).

Historizing is a forward-facing as well as backward-facing endeavor. When I initially presented the concept of inauthentic co-historizing, I emphasized that it involves taking as

settled who *we* are and what *we* stand for. It is by clinging to the authority of tradition that we shake off our responsibility for choosing our destiny, who we want to be as a community. If the history of ontology is a story about inauthentic historizing, in what way did the philosophers of the tradition fail to choose their destiny? When we cling to tradition as indisputable authority, we conceal that choices have brought us to where we are and made us who we are. Those in the tradition failed to see that we shape not just the content of the field but what it is to *do* philosophy at all. An authentic encounter with the question of Being via phenomenology was this authentic encounter, and it is why Heidegger thought the project so radical—it is a new way of doing philosophy and being a philosopher. Heidegger also emphasizes that this is by no means an attempt to “shake off” the ontological tradition, but rather explore its “positive possibilities” (GA 2: 31/SZ 22)—to reconnect the tradition with and hold it accountable to the phenomena. Phenomenology is intended as a “rejoinder” to the tradition—an attempt to authentically renegotiate the field and who we will be as philosophers.

In this paper, I have attempted to clarify Heidegger’s views on authentic and inauthentic historizing, co-historizing, and historicity. These ideas are important for developing a complete picture of Heidegger’s work in *Being and Time* and for understanding why he viewed his project as so radical. These concepts can also help us make sense of our role in shaping who *we* are—as people and as philosophers. Destinies are fought for and shaped by individuals in community. Maximilian is called the “last knight,” not because he was the very *last* knight, but because he was the most magnificent in a waning tradition and likely buoyed and extended it.²⁴ But the legacy left behind was not his alone. Thousands of people—metal workers, knights in tournaments, the powerful who gave him recognition (even early on when his power was more show than substance), average people that thronged to his demonstrations and events and told stories about what they saw—together shaped a destiny. What of us will be handed down is being decided right now—by us—by what we choose to engage with and how we choose to engage, by what we take up and how we take it up. We are doing the small work of the philosophical community and if we do it authentically, we will determine our destiny.²⁵

¹ Farago, Jason. "At the Met, Heavy Metal on a Continental Scale." *The New York Times*, October 24 2019, C, 18.

² This isn’t stated as clearly in the text as it could have been. Heidegger writes that, “In accordance with the way in which historicity is rooted in care, Dasein exists, in each case, as authentically or inauthentically historical” (GA 2: 497/SZp. 376). He later expands on this, writing:

Dasein factually has its “history”, and it can have something of the sort because the Being of this entity is constituted by historicity. We must now justify this thesis, with the aim of expounding the ontological

problem of history as an existential one. *The Being of Dasein has been defined as care. Care is grounded in temporality. Within the range of temporality, therefore, the kind of historizing which gives existence its definitely historical character, must be sought.* Thus the Interpretation of Dasein's historicity will prove to be, at bottom, just a more concrete working out of temporality. We first revealed temporality with regard to that way of existing authentically which we characterized as anticipatory resoluteness. How far does this imply an authentic historizing of Dasein? (GA 2:505 /SZ 382, em)

So, the way in which historicity is rooted in care grounded in temporality is historizing. I take this claim to directly connect authentic historicity to authentic historizing and inauthentic historicity to inauthentic historizing.

³ Macquarrie and Robinson translate the word "Erlebnisse" as "Experiences" with a capital "E" to distinguish it from "Erfahrung." There is an important connection between "Leben" ("life") and "Erlebnisse" ("Experiences") that would otherwise be lost in translation. As the translators note, "An Erlebnis' is not just *any* 'experience' [*Erfahrung*'], but one which we feel deeply and live through'." Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2008, p. 72n1.

⁴ This view of connectedness, as Heidegger notes, is also internally inconsistent. It requires a "sort of framework which this succession gradually fills up" (GA 2: 494/SZ 374). But if only the "right now" is actual, in what way can this present-at-hand framework exist? Furthermore, even the common sense view of the connectedness of life "does not think of this as a framework drawn tense 'outside' of Dasein and spanning it round, but one rightly seeks this connectedness in Dasein itself" (GA 2: 494-495/SZ 374). So, the common sense view at once requires and has no place for a framework that fills with experiences.

⁵ Blattner, William D. "Existential Temporality in Being and Time (Why Heidegger Is Not a Pragmatist)," in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Harrison Hall (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), 105.

⁶ Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness*. trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), 482.

⁷ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 482.

⁸ I am heavily indebted to Blattner's "Existential Temporality in Being and Time," and his *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) for this understanding of temporality.

⁹ The passages in which Heidegger discusses this are a little unclear. He writes:

It is not necessary that in resoluteness one should *explicitly* know the *origin of the possibilities* upon which that resoluteness projects itself. It is rather in Dasein's temporality, and there only, that there lies any possibility that the existentiell potentiality-for-Being upon which it projects itself can be gleaned explicitly from the way in which Dasein has been traditionally understood. (GA 2: 509/SZ 385, em)

This passage might mean that authentically historizing Dasein need not be explicitly aware of the traditional nature of possibilities handed down—which would directly contradict my reading that one must be explicitly aware of taking over part of a tradition. However, Heidegger is later quite clear about the "explicit" nature of the handing down: "The resoluteness which comes back to itself and hands itself down, then becomes the repetition of a possibility of existence that has come down to us. Repeating is handing down explicitly—that is to say, going back into the possibilities of the Dasein that has-been-there" (GA 2: 509/SZ 385). And later: "In repetition, fateful destiny can be disclosed explicitly as bound up with the heritage which has come down to us" (GA 2: 510/SZ 386). So, the better reading of the passage above is that one need not know the genealogical origins of a handed-down possibility (for example, one need not know how the role of fire fighter came about to have a sense for the way in which taking up that possibility is carrying forward a tradition).

¹⁰ Again, this is a tricky interpretive point. The passage I am drawing on here is:

Die Entschlossenheit, in der das Dasein auf sich selbst zurückkommt, erschließt die jeweiligen faktischen Möglichkeiten eigentlichen Existierens *aus dem Erbe*, das sie als geworfene *übernimmt*. Das entschlossene Zurückkommen auf die Geworfenheit birgt ein *Sichüberliefern* überkommener Möglichkeiten in sich, obzwar nicht notwendig als überkommener. (GA 2: 507/SZ 383)

Macquarrie and Robinson translate the key second sentence as: "In one's coming back resolutely to one's thrownness, there is hidden a handing down to oneself of the possibilities that have come down to one, but not *necessarily as having thus come down*" (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 435). However, they note that the grammatical structure of both sentences is fairly ambiguous (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 435, n1). It might, for example, reasonably be translated as "In one's coming back resolutely to one's thrownness, there is hidden a handing down to oneself of *traditional possibilities, although not necessarily as traditional*." As William Blattner has also pointed out to me, in the Macquarrie and Robinson translation the word "thus" in "but not *necessarily as having thus come down*" doesn't seem warranted by the original German. If this is right, it is less clear that Heidegger is referring to the "process" of handing down being hidden and not the nature of what is handed down as being traditional. This would be a problem for my interpretation. However, Heidegger is in other places clear that authentic historizing is a repetition, which is an *explicit* handing down as tradition (see the previous note). Second, if authentic historizing doesn't involve an explicit

connection to tradition, it's not clear how it connects to *historicality* and an authentic understanding of the continuity of history or why it would be the centerpiece of a chapter on history.

¹¹ Here's an example of this kind of repetition in conversation:

"I've got to take care of my nun," I told him.

"Your nun?" he wrote, as opposed to what most people would say, "Your *nun*?"

The repetition brings new meaning to the phrase and advances the conversation, and, as the author points out, there are different ways that inflection can change the meaning of the repeated phrase to shape the conversation in different ways. (This example comes from Patchett, Ann. "These Precious Days." *Harper's*, January, 2021, 28-50.)

¹² Mahoney, Michael S. "Finding a History for Software Engineering," *Annals of the History of Computing* 26, no. 1 (2004), 9.

¹³ Thompson, Clive. *Coders: The Making of a New Tribe and the Remaking of the World* (New York: Penguin Press, 2019).

¹⁴ Chang, Emily. *Brotopia: Breaking up the Boys' Club of Silicon Valley* (New York: Penguin, 2018).

¹⁵ Consider, for example, that a picture of Lena Söderberg as a *Playboy* centerfold was one of the primary photographs used to test the algorithms that would become JPEG technology and that it is still used in computer science classes today.

To male software developers, the story of Lena has generally been seen as an amusing historical footnote. To their female peers, it's just alienating. "I remember thinking, What are they giggling about?" recalls Deanna Needell, now a mathematics professor at the University of California at Los Angeles. She first encountered Lena in a computer science class in college and quickly discovered that the model in the original photo was in fact fully nude. "It made me realize, Oh, I am the only woman. I am different," Needell says. "It made gender an issue for me where it wasn't before."

(From Chang, Emily. "Women Once Ruled the Computer World. When Did Silicon Valley Become Brotopia?" *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 2018.)

¹⁶ See Byrne, Ciara. "The Loneliness of the Female Coder." *Fast Company*, September, 11, 2013 and Mundy, Liza. "Why Is Silicon Valley So Awful to Women?" *The Atlantic*, April, 2017.

¹⁷ Brownmiller, Susan. *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution* (New York: The Dial Press, 1990), 281.

¹⁸ Brownmiller, Susan. *In Our Time*, 281. This also is a key example in hermeneutical injustice. Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹⁹ Siegel, Reva B. "A Short History of Sexual Harassment," in *Directions in Sexual Harassment Law*, ed. Catharine A. MacKinnon and Reva B. Siegel (New Haven: Yale Press, 2003), 9. See also Catherine MacKinnon's work, which is often credited as crystalizing this particular way of connecting sexual harassment and women's liberation to the civil rights tradition.

²⁰ This touches on a long-standing and significant debate in Heidegger scholarship—the question of whether language follows experience or whether it forms it. However, I think the naming of "sexual harassment," can plausibly fit either view. It could be that women were experiencing sexual harassment prior to the naming and just needed to find the right "label" for the experience, or it could be that women were experiencing something that, prior to the concept for it, neither was nor wasn't sexual harassment. Although *then* it neither was nor wasn't sexual harassment, once the term was coined, it *was* sexual harassment—to adapt the language of Heidegger's ontological idealism: then it neither was nor wasn't, but now is was.

²¹ See Burris, Val. "Who Opposed the ERA? An Analysis of the Social Bases of Antifeminism." *Social Science Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (1982), 305–17, and Marshall, Susan E. "Who Speaks for American Women? The Future of Antifeminism." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 515 (1991), 50–62.

²² Siegel, Reva B. "A Short History of Sexual Harassment," 2.

²³ Yuko, Elizabeth. "What Is Deadnaming, and How to Avoid It." *lifel hacker*, December 4, 2020. <https://lifel hacker.com/what-is-deadnaming-and-how-to-avoid-it-1845802589>.

²⁴ See Krause, Stefan. "Maximilian I's Commemorative Projects and Their Impact," in *The Last Knight: The Art, Armor, and Ambition of Maximilian I*, ed. Pierre Terjanian (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 53-63, and Terjanian, Pierre. "The Central Place of Armor in the Ambitions and Life of Maximilian I," in *The Last Knight: The Art, Armor, and Ambition of Maximilian I*, ed. Pierre Terjanian (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 39-52.

²⁵ I wish to thank William Blattner and Lee Braver for their extensive, thoughtful, and clarifying feedback on this paper.