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Being, narrative, and ethics: A hermeneutical-phenomenological inquiry into the ontology of ethics

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Being, Narrative, and Ethics: a Hermeneutical-Phenomenological Inquiry into the Ontology of
Ethics

A Project Presented to
the Faculty of the Undergraduate
College of Arts and Letters
James Madison University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

by Paul Lucas Goldberg

May 2014

Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Philosophy and Religion, James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts.

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Dedication

For my father

List of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations will appear as parenthetical citations in the text below in any quoting or otherwise citing from the following external sources:

- HP* “‘Homo Prudens.’” By Miguel de Beistegui. From *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy*. Ed. Raffoul and Pettigrew. Albany: State University of New York, 2002. 117-31. Print.
- HE* *Heidegger and Ethics*. By Joanna Hodge. New York: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- SZ* *Being and Time*. By Martin Heidegger. Trans. Macquarrie and Robinson. New York: Harper & Row, Inc., 1962. Print. Citations following pagination of original German edition *Sein und Zeit* (1927).
- BT* *Being and Time*. By Martin Heidegger. Trans. Macquarrie and Robinson. New York: Harper & Row, Inc., 1962. Print. Citations drawn from Macquarrie’s and Robinson’s notes to the text.
- ONGD* *The Oxford New German Dictionary*. 2007. Print.
- HPE* *Heidegger and the Place of Ethics*. By Michael Lewis. New York: Continuum, 2005. Print.
- LH* “Letter on ‘Humanism.’” By Martin Heidegger. Trans. Frank A. Capuzzi. From *Pathmarks*. Ed. William McNeil. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 239-76. Print.
- IOH* *Interpreting Otherwise than Heidegger*. By Robert J. S. Manning. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1993. Print.

- TI* *Totality and Infinity*. By Emmanuel Levinas. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Vol. 24.
Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969. Print. Duquesne Studies:
Philosophical Series.
- CPR* *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. By Immanuel Kant. Trans. Norman K.
Smith. London: MacMillan and, Limited, 1929. Print.
- BN* *Being And Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. By Jean-Paul
Sartre. Trans. Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Philosophical Library, 1956. Print.

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Preface

Every philosophical inquiry is oriented by a metaphilosophical understanding, and it is the purpose of this preface to broadly lay out the metaphilosophical underpinnings of this project.

When we ask *metaphilosophical* questions, we basically ask for an account of the nature and purpose of philosophical inquiry. The ‘nature’ side of such an account might manifest itself as a description of the basic structures and tendencies of philosophical inquiry; the ‘purpose’ side perhaps looks at these structures and tendencies and asks ‘what is aimed at?’ Another way of approaching such questions is by way of a negative analysis concerning other modes of inquiry, e.g., scientific, historical, artistic, etc. Still another way of approaching these questions is by the negative analytical method of *limits*—what is it that philosophical inquiry *can not* inquire into, and what does this imply about what it *properly does* inquire into?

Despite philosophical inquiry’s meta-ness when compared with other disciplines—questioning and defining the ways in which those other modes of inquiry can go about in their dealings, what their proper subjects and aims are—*philosophy itself* is not immune from philosophical inquiry. Underlying each and every particular inquiry are metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, and methodological assumptions (indeed, the very classifying of these assumptions into the above categories reflects metaphilosophical presuppositions).

Indeed, we might better rename these philosophical categories by what it is they really indicate: (1) the nature and structure of reality, (2) the accessibility of this reality to us, (3) the proper modes of comportment in accordance with this reality, and (4) the modes of communication one ought to adopt in order to explicate this reality. Of course, all of these

assumptions are reliant on the first: namely, metaphysical questions; or rather more simply, the assumptions concerning reality or ‘is-ness.’

Thus, assumptions concerning reality permeate every philosophical inquiry, and imply assumptions concerning its accessibility, valuableness, and privileged modes of explication. In explaining the metaphilosophical grounding of the work to come, do we mean to simply put our inquiry on a more fundamental basis, and thus get outside of our philosophical prejudicial assumptions? Do we mean to push the regress of ‘meta’ inquiry back simply one further step? No—rather, we seek *to more thoroughly ground our work and orient our reader in that which is to come.*

Let us first begin our metaphilosophical inquiry with a brief statement on the nature of philosophy: what does it consist in? Namely, modeling, depicting, representing reality. This statement is admittedly non-informative in a crucial sense, as it fails to specify what ‘reality’ implies, and admits definitions ranging between and beyond ‘idealism’ and ‘materialism.’ Nevertheless, what is important is the *givenness of reality* and *the depicting of reality*. In philosophical inquiry as in lived experience in general, reality is absolutely, irreducibly given: although it might not be ‘objective,’ although it might be ‘illusory,’ ‘elusive,’ or ‘simplifiable,’ *it cannot be conceived of as ‘not’; it cannot be reduced to unreality.* Reality is given, and not as a separate analytic ‘chunk’ of life or philosophical inquiry, but as the very *whole* of life and *wholly the subject of philosophical inquiry*. Philosophy *inquires* into reality by *depicting it* in some manner or other. That is to say, reality is *given* to the philosopher, who philosophizes on reality via representing that which is given to her.

This is to pave the way for what *should be* an uncontroversial remark in that *the business of philosophy is depicting reality, and the purpose of philosophy is to depict reality as faithfully*

as possible—that is to say, as close to reality itself as possible. The implication of this is the obviousness of the claim that *reality is more real than any depiction of it*, and any philosophical inquiry that wishes to proceed with integrity must never make pretensions of ‘capturing’ reality in any more real of a way than reality *itself* actually is given. Reality is primary, philosophy is secondary. The duty of philosophy is only to ever more reverently *delve into, point towards, illuminate, and hold open* reality; the duty of philosophy is **not** to *develop or construct* reality.

This, in turn, paves the way for an analysis of the prejudices inherent to philosophy, or the particular ‘diseases’ philosophy is prone to contracting. To take the depiction as primary and the givenness as secondary is to commit the egregious fallacy of ‘reification.’ To attempt to ‘capture’ a purified form of reality is to in one sense commit this fallacy; similarly, in undertaking a systematic analysis, to sacrifice commitment to given reality for the sake of commitment to one’s *system* is to commit this fallacy. Reification is a disease plaguing philosophy, and one that we will take great pains (in attempting) to avoid. Another disease that philosophers are prone to contracting—indeed, *must* contract—is to understand reality as given, *but problematically so*. Philosophers *qua*, as Plato noted[†] are in some sense *removed* from ordinary life. Importantly, philosophers do not find reality as *unproblematically given*, for in that case, there would be no reason to concern oneself with the business of philosophy—namely, *depicting* reality. Indeed, philosophers do not merely depict reality as the mirror depicts the looker; rather, philosophers depict reality as glasses depict words on the page: there is something *problematically out of focus, obscured, concealed, etc.* The business of philosophy is to depict reality *in focus, clarified, unconcealed*. Thus, philosophical inquiry necessarily presupposes a *problematic* in reality’s *givenness*. Is this a disease? Perhaps—many people live their lives

[†] “Ordinary people seem not to realize that those who really apply themselves in the right way to philosophy are directly and of their own accord preparing themselves for dying and death” (*Phaedo* 64a).

largely untroubled by the philosopher's worries, and this is something that the philosopher must cope with. But that reality is problematically given *as such* is not the issue; rather, it is the assumption of the *nature of the problematic* that is at issue. Much of philosophy looks to philosophize without questioning the nature of the problematic—for centuries, the 'mind-body,' 'subject-object,' 'problem of knowledge' conception of the problematic dominated the Western philosophical landscape, and without much attention paid as to whether *this conception is truly faithful at all*. Philosophers since then have argued against this conception, and we will join them, most especially in the early work of Martin Heidegger. Thus, philosophers must be aware of the 'disease' that they are inflicted with—that they assume a problematical givenness to reality—and of their metaphilosophical conception of the disease.

The metaphilosophical assumptions underpinning this work are as follows: an ontological conception of 'difference' following Heidegger, to be explained below; an epistemological conception of the hermeneutic circle, also following Heidegger; 'ethics' is the phenomenon that will be investigated, and thus admits of no definition outside of the givenness of this phenomenon in reality due to our methodology being one of Heideggerian hermeneutical phenomenology, which investigates *phenomena* as they are given in experience. What is the philosophical problematic, the disease, that we take as constituting the calling of philosophy? Namely, the *veiling of phenomena* as regards their constitutive *Being* due to linguistic and philosophical tendencies that discuss them as *entities*.

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Abstract

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger articulates his understanding of the ontological difference and the Being of the human-like entity, or Dasein. Dasein's Being, as existential, consists in the care structures of projection, thrownness, and fallenness, the unitary meaning of which is grounded in the ecstatical temporalizing modes of future, Present, and having-been. However, despite his deeply insightful ontological analysis of human Being, Heidegger rejects ontical ethical manifestations of the human as constitutive of Dasein. We claim that this neglect is the result of his *initial* focus on fallenness as one of Dasein's constitutive ontological structures. Thus, we seek to re-Interpret Heidegger's ontological conception of Dasein via the human's constitutive projection and thrownness in such a way as makes accessible genuinely ethical phenomena. We thereupon conclude that human Being is constituted by projection-continuums whose meaning is grounded in the ecstases of future going-towards, Past being-brought-here-and-attested-to, and present Being-oriented. These projections, as *existentiell*, we call 'narrative [lines],' which are the concrete manifestations of existential-Narrative-Being. These narrative lines are each constituted by a *fundamental* projection that automatically entails various *contingent* projections. In moving on to the analysis of ethics as constitutive of Narrative-Being, we consider phenomenal 'immorality' via its modes of antagonism and underminingness. The former consists in an Interpretation of conscience as imperativizing the human towards her existentially optimal Narrative fulfillment; the latter consists in an analysis of evil as prospectively annihilating the human's fundamental projections, thus revealing her world as *conditionally-held-open-to her optimal Narrative fulfillment*. Thus, these two structures, as unitarily holding-open-and-holding-me-to-my Narrative fulfillment, constitute ontological *ethos*.

I. Introduction

I.1. Basis, Justification, and Purpose

If Heidegger's thought is so constitutive of this project, then what is the purpose of undertaking this project at all? What have we to *originally contribute* to a philosophical conversation?

The answer is the following: despite Heidegger's profound analysis of human Being¹ as *Dasein*, he neglects to treat at length ethico-moral phenomena;² instead, he claims that any ethical system must reside in the call of conscience to one's ownmost Being-guilty,³ which he interprets in a decidedly amoral manner.⁴ Moreover, the *process* by which an ethical system could thereupon arise, or *the phenomenon of its arising* is neglected by Heidegger; and in any case, he views what is typically called 'morality' as some fallen mode of existence as an inauthentic 'they-self.'⁵ However, it is important that we note that this neglectful treatment is not a *failure* of Heidegger's work, as its focus lies in more general matters of illuminating the

¹ Although we employ the term 'human Being' to describe 'Dasein,' it is important to be wary of and reject the impulse to consider 'Dasein' to be an anthropological term. Heidegger himself would find this suggestion repugnant; as de Beistegui states, "what renders this straightforward anthropological reading of Heidegger impossible is Heidegger's fundamental intuition according to which what constitutes the human as such, its essence, if you will, is itself nothing human" (*HP* 117). This non-anthropological sense will be clarified below (cf. sections I.3 and II.1).

² In *Heidegger and Ethics*, Joanna Hodge begins her work with the following: "Heidegger himself writes very little about ethics, and then only to state that ethical questions are not his concern" (*HE* 1).

³ "This essential Being-guilty is, equiprimordially, the existential condition for the possibility of . . . morality in general and for the possible forms which this may take factually" (*SZ* 286).

⁴ "The idea of guilt must . . . be detached from relationship to any law or 'ought' such that by failing to comply with it one loads himself with guilt" (*SZ* 283).

⁵ "The common sense of the 'they' knows only the satisfying of manipulable rules and public norms and the failure to satisfy them. It reckons up infractions of them and tries to balance them off" (*SZ* 288). Heidegger continues in *SZ* 292-293, elaborating on this moralistic 'reckoning-up' and 'balancing-off': he interprets these moralisms as within a mode of 'guilt' oriented towards resolving *debts*, or perhaps *filling voids*. This is a mode based-upon a metaphysics of presence-at-hand, which ultimately is *inauthentic*.

human being's understanding relationship to Being. Nevertheless, it *is* a conspicuous privation in *Being and Time*, considering that ethical phenomena are manifest in the forefront not only of daily life (e.g., having to make 'moral choices,' making 'ethical evaluations' of oneself and others) but of specifically *philosophical* life, as well—i.e., 'ethics' is typically considered one of the three central 'categories' of philosophy, and certainly is the focus of much of the work of Plato and Aristotle, commonly considered the two central 'founders' of Western Philosophy.

Thus, the questions arise: on what basis is the Being of ethics passed over in *Being and Time*? Is there some way that, maintaining the integrity of Heidegger's Dasein, the ontological Being underlying ontical ethical manifestations can be made accessible? The assumptions that we make in answering these questions form the basis and justification of our work: namely, that the Being of ethics is passed over in *Being and Time* due to the work's ultimately focusing on phenomenal distinctions between the optimum of *authenticity* and the everyday fallen, counter-optimum of *inauthenticity*. This focus, we claim, pushes Heidegger's Interpretation of *Existenz* and care away from an ethical Being that is constitutive of human Being. In other words, while it *makes accessible* some phenomena that are deeply constitutive of human Being—e.g., the phenomenon of 'anticipatory resoluteness' in connection with Dasein's fallenness as constituting Dasein's Being-a-whole—it nevertheless *obscures* or *passes over* ethical phenomena, as automatically abiding by the tendency to link ontical ethical manifestations with the inauthentic mode of Being of the they-self. Thus, our project is laid bare: a *re-Interpretation of human Being that makes accessible ethical phenomena, and a phenomenological characterization of these phenomena*.⁶

⁶ This is to say that the 'ethical' focus of this Heideggerian-inspired work is *not* Heidegger's own 'ethical failings' as being an at times outspoken and enthusiastic member of the Nazi Party. Although this is a subject worth considering, it does not bear in any significant sense on our

Our re-Interpretation of human Being will involve a re-capitulation of Heidegger's analysis of the structures of *projection* and *thrownness* in connection with *temporality* that are constitutive of human Being; but our re-capitulation will cast these structures in new terms, terms that help make accessible the conception of human Being as *Narrative*, which we claim holds open the path to the provisional illumination of ethical phenomena. This '*Narrative*' indicates differently than does Heideggerian 'care.' But this indication is not so much, we claim, different *substantially*—i.e., in terms of the constituent ontological structures of human Being—but rather *emphatically*—i.e., it brings existential-ontological constituents of human Being *implicitly indicated but not explicitly disclosed* into the 'clearing'; it indicates as *emphasizing* different constituents of human Being than 'care.' This emphatic difference, we believe, holds open the accessibility of the phenomenon of *ethics* in ways previously covered-over. Thus, our project will first move to Interpreting human Being, generally, and then move to Interpreting the Being of ethics as a constituent of the human being. How is the phenomenon of ethics existentially-ontologically related to our Being as Narrative? This is the purpose of our philosophical inquiry, and comprises the body of our work below.⁷

project: we are not 'locked-in' to an Interpretation of Heidegger's work in keeping with his own nationalism and prejudice; rather, we Interpret his work purely according to its ontological notions, and these ontological notions' bearing upon ethics. The question as to whether Heidegger's ontology implicitly entails German nationalism, anti-semitism, etc., although interesting, thus would only serve to detract us from our aims, and will be put aside for the sake of this project. Nevertheless, should one wish to research more into these matters, cf. Faye, *Heidegger: the Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933-1935*.

⁷ Cf. sections III and IV below.

I.2. Methodology

The methodology that we employ is Heideggerian hermeneutical phenomenology. Although in many ways, this section might resemble a recapitulation of (§7) of *Being and Time*, we will simply summarize the main points of this section and explain some technical terminology that we already have employed and will continue to employ.

Heidegger breaks down ‘phenomenology’ into its etymological constituents of ‘phenomenon’ and ‘logos,’ before providing an explanation of the unitary indication of these terms. A ‘phenomenon,’ quite simply, is “the showing itself in itself” (SZ 31). But as Heidegger continues, this is further clarified as “the *Being* of entities” (SZ 35), which is to be distinguished from ‘appearance,’ which is “an entity itself” (SZ 31). This distinction requires the further distinctions between ‘Being’ and ‘being,’ and between ‘Being’ and ‘entity.’ What is an entity? Quite simply, entities are all those *things* that are, in whatever manner(s) that they are. Thus, what is ‘Being,’ as distinct from ‘entities?’ “Being is always the Being of an entity” (SZ 9); or rather, “Being [is] . . . that which determines entities as entities, that on the basis of which entities are already understood” (SZ 6). We might further clarify this term by saying that ‘Being’ is ‘the mode of being’ of an entity—although crucially, Being is *never an entity itself*. The ‘mode of being’ of an entity essentially answers a *how* question, rather than a *what* question; or rather, in a statement of the type ‘I am’ it focuses on the ‘*am*,’ or rather, *the way that I am*, rather than the ‘*I*’ that *I am*.⁸ Importantly, Being is the subject-matter of ontology. According to Heidegger, as well, the history of the field known as ‘ontology’ has *implicitly presupposed* the Being of entities, and actually functions more as a *listing-off of entities*. But since an entity is nothing other than its constitutive *Being*, the essential character of an entity, if its Being has been

⁸ Thus, we might say that, while entities are as ‘*nouns*,’ any entity’s Being always is as a ‘*verb*.’

concealed, has also been concealed. Take the following example: the *entity* is a car. But what is the *Being* of a car? There could be different accounts of this: some might say that the *Being* of the car is *an actualized, present object, which is composed of other present and simpler parts*; Heidegger would be prone to saying,⁹ differently, that the *Being* of the car is as a *ready-to-use thing that gets me around where I need to go*. The ‘Being’ of the car—the ways in which it is—*importantly defines its being a car*. To be a car is to ‘Be’ as a car—in other words, if there were an entity whose Being were something *other than* ‘getting me around where I need to go’ then this entity would simply *not be* a car. In order to be a car, some entity must ‘Be’ as a car. Thus, ‘Being’ signifies *the way in which an entity is, and furthermore that which determines this entity as what it is*; meanwhile, ‘entity’ signifies *something that is, but only is in virtue of its Being*; meanwhile, ‘being’ signifies some spare statement of presence or equivalence—e.g., this doorknob *is* (i.e., is presently) hot, or entities are their Being. Henceforth, when our subject is Being, the ‘B’ will be capitalized—however, in our future conjugations of the verb ‘to be’—e.g., is, am, are, were, will be, etc.—the first letter will remain lowercased in either the case of ‘Being’ or ‘being.’ Although this might seem convoluted at first, it ought to become quite clear in our discussion which sense of the verb is employed in each context.

Thus, a ‘phenomenon’ is the Being of an entity. But what about ‘logos?’ Heidegger identifies the signification of this term with “discourse” (SZ 32), but of a peculiar type: discourse, namely, in the crucial sense of “to make manifest what one is ‘talking about’” (SZ 32). But even more penetratingly, discourse “‘lets something be seen’ . . . that is, lets us see something from the very thing which the discourse is about” (SZ 32) by “pointing it out” (SZ 33). Importantly, since discourse lets something be seen by pointing it out, it has:

⁹ That is to say, early Heidegger, as seen in *Being and Time*.

. . . the structural form of [synthesis] . . . [which] does not mean a binding and linking together of representations, a manipulation of psychical occurrences where the ‘problem’ arises of how these bindings, as something inside, agree with something physical outside . . . [it rather] means letting something be seen in its *togetherness* with something—
letting it be seen *as* something. (SZ 33)

Thus, ‘logos’ as discourse is ‘letting something be seen as something by pointing it out.’ But the *basis* for this discourse is that things require being seen *as something*. That is to say, discourse, as being about something, must have *truth* as its goal. But the nature of ‘truth’ as Heidegger conceives of it is not in any sense co-extensive with ‘agreement’; rather, truth, for Heidegger, is ‘discovering.’ That is to say, truth is ‘dis-covering’ as in *uncovering or unconcealing*, while falsity is “*covering up*” (SZ 33) or ‘covering over’ or ‘concealing.’ Thus, the ‘logos’ that Heidegger conceives of is ‘letting something be *unveiled* as something by pointing it out.’ *To discourse is to ‘talk’ in such a way as to aim at unveiling something.*

Thus, what can we say of the unitary concept of ‘phenomenology?’ Phenomenology is discourse on phenomena; but put a bit more formally, it is ‘letting phenomena be seen in their unconcealment by pointing them out.’ Thus importantly, a ‘veiling’ or ‘concealment’ in reality is *given* for Heidegger, and it is this veiling that comprises the problematic of philosophy: namely, in reality, *appearances* or *entities* are proximally and for the most part *manifest*; however, *phenomena* or *the Being of entities* are proximally and for the most part *covered-over* or *veiled*. Thus, phenomenology is a descriptive science of Being—it aims to *describe* phenomena precisely and demonstratively. There are a couple of important implications of this understanding of phenomenology: (1) as Heidegger points out, ‘what is discoursed about’ (namely, phenomena) is prior to ‘what the discourse says’ (namely, the linguistic formulations

that are manifest in any concrete form of discourse). This is to say that phenomenology primarily unfolds as linguistically *indicating* or *signifying* phenomena rather than *capturing* or *dissecting* them. In other words, ‘phenomena’ are ‘pointed at’ or ‘pointed towards’ in discourse; they are not ‘taken,’ held,’ and ‘dissected.’ That is to say, in reading phenomenology, one must take care to focus on *the phenomena themselves that the linguistic formulations are attempting to indicate*, rather than *the linguistic formulations themselves*. And (2) the second implication is that phenomenological inquiry is *hermeneutical*. As Heidegger writes, “the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in *interpretation*” (SZ 37). This can be understood as follows: since the basis of phenomenology is ‘letting something be *unconcealed as something* by pointing it out,’ the ‘as something’ structure is fundamentally *interpretation*. That is to say, phenomenology consists in seeing each entity *as* its Being, and thus entities must be *interpreted* in such a way that their respective modes of Being become accessible. Another way of considering this ‘hermeneutical’ nature of Heideggerian phenomenology is to refer to Heidegger’s analysis of the ‘fore-structures’ composing the ‘hermeneutic circle,’ consisting in “fore-having,” “fore-sight,” and “fore-conception” (SZ 150). The ‘fore-having’ is “*something we have in advance* [that in every case interpretation is grounded in]” (SZ 150); the ‘fore-sight’ is “*something we see in advance* [that in every case interpretation is grounded in]” (SZ 150); the ‘fore-conception’ is “*something we grasp in advance* [that in every case interpretation is grounded in]” (SZ 150). These might be re-Interpreted as follows: the ‘fore-having’ is the givenness of reality to us—reality is pre-theoretically and pre-present-to-consciousness given *as something*—but this givenness is as of yet *undivined* (i.e., not-yet-unconfigured); the ‘fore-sight’ is the initial *divining* or *unconfiguring* of the givenness of reality—it is the as of yet *unarticulated* route to *delving into* this reality, the unarticulated route to analysis; the ‘fore-

conception,’ meanwhile, is *the articulation* of the analysis of the givenness of reality. Thus, in the ‘fore-having,’ reality is intuitively *given*; in the ‘fore-sight,’ reality is intuitively *analytically visible*; in the ‘fore-conception,’ the visible analysis of reality is intuitively *articulable*. Thus, the hermeneutical process works as a circle: the ‘fore-having’ comprises the *horizon* or the starting and solely possible endpoint of philosophical inquiry—philosophical analysis can proceed no further than the articulation of the fore-having via the fore-sight and the fore-conception.

Do these hermeneutical ‘fore-structures’ clarify Heidegger’s hermeneutical phenomenology? Indeed they should: *phenomena* are intuitively given in the fore-having; phenomena are implicitly *understood* in the fore-sight; and this understanding of the phenomena is intuitively *articulated* or *appropriated* in the fore-conception. To ‘unveil’ Being phenomenologically is to take one’s unitary, as-of-yet unpenetrated fore-having and *sight* and *articulate* it; in other words, although proximally and for the most part Being is veiled while entities are manifest, primordially, Being is given via the fore-having; to then *describe* this Being is to *interpret* the primordial *givenness* of Being that is in the fore-having along with the manifest presence of entities; when this interpretation is complete, the primordially given *Being* is sighted and articulated *as constitutive of the manifest phenomenon*.

This ends our methodological discussion of Heideggerian hermeneutical phenomenology, although we still must clarify some technical terminology.

I.3. Technical Terminology Explained

In addition to the terms that have been defined above, there remain a few more in need of clarification: Interpretation vs. interpretation; proximal, primordial, existential, existentiell, existentielle; ontical vs. ontological; constitute and constituent vs. categorial and category; and phenomenal vs. phenomenological. Some of these terms have already been employed above, and all will continuously be employed throughout the remainder of this essay.

The capitalized ‘I’ in ‘Interpretation’ (*Interpretation*) is no accident. It is to be distinguished from ‘interpretation’ (*Auslegung*). Although “in many cases these may be regarded as synonyms, their connotations are not quite the same” (Macquarrie and Robinson, *BT* 19). *Interpretation* connotes a more “theoretical or systematic” (Macquarrie and Robinson, *BT* 19) mode of interpreting—e.g., exegetical interpretation of a text—while *Auslegung* refers to the broader sense of interpreting any thing, occurrence, etc. as something. Thus, when we are speaking of the *general activity* of interpreting or interpretation, we will use the lowercased form of the word; however, whenever we employ the term to speak of *our systematic Interpretation of Being and ethics*, we will employ the capitalized term.

The term ‘proximal’ or its adverbial form ‘proximally’ follows the German adverb *zunächst*, which ordinarily means, ‘first of all,’ ‘at first,’ ‘for the moment,’ or ‘nearest to’ (*ONGD* 253). While all these meanings are not entirely beside the point when reading Heidegger’s work, they nevertheless fail to faithfully disclose his intentions: as Macquarrie and Robinson point out, “Heidegger often uses ‘zunächst’ in the sense of ‘most closely’, when he is describing the most ‘natural’ and ‘obvious’ experiences which we have at an uncritical and pre-philosophical level” (*BT* 25). Thus, ‘proximal’ and ‘proximally’ signify a *pre-theoretical* mode of Being in which my understanding of myself and the world is rooted in those dealings which

are *instantaneously closest* to my concern. For example, if I am at the moment furiously engaged in attempting to find my lost wallet, *proximally*, I *am* as ‘trying-to-find-my-wallet,’ even if more fundamentally (i.e., *primordially*), I *am* something or someone else.

‘Primordial’ (*ursprünglich*) can be understood as compared and contrasted with ‘proximal.’ In ordinary German, *ursprünglich* signifies ‘original,’ ‘initial,’ or ‘natural’ (*ONGD* 224); however, in Heidegger’s terms:

[If] the ontological Interpretation is to be a *primordial* one, this not only demands that in general the hermeneutical Situation [i.e., the fore-structures] shall be one which has been made secure in conformity with the phenomena; it also requires explicit assurance that the *whole* of the entity which it has taken as its theme [i.e., object of systematic inquiry] has been brought into the fore-having. (*SZ* 232)

Thus, combining this passage with the ordinary German definition, we can understand that ‘primordial’ signifies a *closeness* to Being, as does ‘proximal.’ But while ‘proximal’ is only concerned with a *instantaneous closeness to concern*, ‘primordial’ is concerned with a *fundamental closeness to the whole of an entity’s Being*. Thus, while ‘proximal’ refers to a *constituent* of Being: namely, closeness to one’s nearest-by existentiell-ontical concernful Being; ‘primordial’ refers to (1) one’s *whole* existentiell-ontical Being (which includes the constituents of one’s Being that are ‘furthest-away’ from one’s concern), or (2) *the constitution of one’s Being, generally*: namely, the existential-ontological structures of Being. The important distinction is that while I might be *proximally* [as this], I am nevertheless *primordially* [as that]. Proximally, I can be close to my instantaneous concern in such a way that my fundamental (primordial) whole-existentiell-Being or existential-structural-Being lies veiled from me.

Next, we must clarify existential, existentiell, and existenziale in their relation to and distinction from one another. But in order to do this, we must first undertake the task of clarifying the distinction between ‘ontological’ (*ontologisch*) and ‘ontical’ (*ontisch*). While Heidegger in *Being and Time* develops a systematic analysis of ‘ontology,’ this analysis is, for the moment, beyond our purposes. It suffices to say that for Heidegger, ontology is primarily the study of Being (as opposed to an enumeration of entities). In undertaking an ontological inquiry, one analyzes phenomena in their constituent components—but this is not to say that one partakes in ‘pulling apart’ these phenomena into predicated ‘categories.’ Rather, an ontological investigation takes *the unitary whole* of a phenomenon into one’s fore-having and fore-sight and analyzes the *structures that constitute this whole*. This is to be distinguished from an *ontical* inquiry—in an ontical inquiry, one *already operates with a pre-supposition of an entity’s Being and analyzes it as an entity on that presupposed basis*. Consider that, for Heidegger, “*only as phenomenology, is ontology possible*” (SZ 35); however, the natural sciences, e.g., are *ontical* forms of inquiry. To crystallize this distinction, consider the following: *ontologically*, things lie concealed from the understanding; *ontically*, however, everything is explicitly manifest. Ontologically speaking, an entity requires extensive analysis in order for its Being to be unveiled, while ontically speaking, an entity requires only *observation of explicit facts* in order for it to be comprehended.

Having undertaken the clarification of ‘ontological’ and ‘ontical,’ we can again look back to clarifying existential (*existenzial*) as distinct from existentiell (*existenziell*) and existenziale (*Existenzial*). These Heideggerian terms spring from an understanding of Heidegger’s concept of ‘existence’ (*Existenz*) as the phenomenal fore-having of the Being of the human being. Although

an analysis of this phenomenon will be systematically developed below,¹⁰ the referents for these terms can be understood in virtue of this general statement of ‘the phenomenon of human Being.’ Thus, ‘existential’ signifies ‘of the very essence of human Being’ or ‘constitutive of the general ontological structures of the human’; *existentiell*, meanwhile, signifies “the understanding of oneself that [only gets straightened out through existing]” (SZ 12)—or more accessibly, ‘relating to the *individually-lived life* of the human being’ or ‘as being a part of the ontical facts of the human being’; finally, *existentiale* signifies any one *particular* ontological structure of the human being. To crystallize this distinction, assume that the existential Being of the human Being can be described as ‘living towards the future unto death.’ Therefore, the *existentiell* Being of the human might therefore be ‘living towards the possibility of raising a large and successful family,’ or rather, ‘becoming the most famous rock star on the planet.’ Meanwhile, an *existentiale* of the human could be ‘death,’ or ‘the future,’ or ‘living-towards.’ Therefore, the *existentiality* of the human can be analyzed in its constituent components or *existentiales*, while the *existentiell* dealings of the human being are *reliant on* (i.e., they necessarily presuppose) their hidden *existentiales*, but such dealings themselves are nevertheless manifest. Thus, ‘ontological’ is often linked with ‘existential’ or *existentiale*,’ while ‘ontical’ is often linked with ‘*existentiell*.’

Our foregoing discussion has also demanded, which we have hitherto ignored, clarification of the terms ‘constitution’ and ‘constituent,’ and it might be helpful to define these terms in contradistinction with ‘categorical’ (*kategorisch*) and ‘category.’ To be *constituted* by things is to be not only the locus or ‘sum’ of those things (as would be the case in categorical discussions of entities), but rather *to be this unitary whole only in virtue of those things that constitute this whole*. Thus, while a unitary phenomenon might be nevertheless *unitary*, it might

¹⁰ Cf. section II.1.

be *constituted* by certain *particular analyzable components*, i.e., existentials. Thus, the *constituents* of human Being are those existentials. This discussion can be further clarified as a distinction between *constituted* entities and *categorial* entities. Entities that are *constituted* have a unitary Being, while entities that are *categorial* have disparate Being—i.e., Being that is nothing beside the spatio-temporally located sum of metaphysical ‘categories.’ That is to say, a ‘categorial’ relationship implicitly depends on a predication-relationship: i.e., taking an entity as having *some fundamental Being as presence*, and then having a predicated ‘category’ or ‘property’ superadded on to/metaphysically distinguishable from it. Thus, one might say, following Heidegger, that a ‘stone’ can have the *primordial* Being of ‘presence-at-hand’—i.e., it can *fundamentally* be as something that is ‘merely *there*’ as ‘just present in front of me’—and then also can be predicated by the *category* of ‘hardness’ or ‘grayness’ superadded on to its fundamental Being-present. To contrast, the human’s Being is *a constituted, unitary whole*. There is no ‘property’ that one can superadd or predicate on to the human in order to gain clarity as to her ontological structures. Humans are not something primarily ‘just present’ and secondarily things with *animation, rationality, etc.*; rather, humans are entities *primordially existent*, differing from the stone, which is *primordially* just ‘here.’ Thus, the human’s Being is *existentially constituted*, not *categorially predicated*.

Our final set of terms to shed light on is ‘phenomenal’ vs. ‘phenomenological.’ And this distinction is indeed rather simple: since we have analyzed the concept of ‘phenomenon’ to mean the respective modes of Being of entities which *are* the entities as that-which-makes-them-what-they-are and yet *problematically lie hidden behind the entities*, we now simply must explain these variants on the concept. As Heidegger states:

That which is given and explicable in the way the phenomenon is encountered is called ‘phenomenal’ . . . Everything which belongs to the species of exhibiting and explicating and which goes to make the way of conceiving demanded by this research, is called ‘phenomenological’. (SZ 37)

Thus, ‘phenomenal’ and ‘phenomenally’ refer to the primordial encounter with the phenomenon itself; ‘phenomenological’ and ‘phenomenologically’ refer, distinctly, to the business of *discursively describing* these phenomenal encounters. For example, when analyzing the phenomenon of, e.g., *cold*, I might say: ‘*phenomenally*, cold is as a that-which-makes-me-uncomfortable . . . *phenomenologically*, we have rendered ‘cold’ as a ‘that-which-makes-me-uncomfortable.’

Although there are other technical terms that will pop-up throughout this essay, they will be defined on an as-needed basis. For the moment, the above list of clarifications suffices.

I.4. Preview

This last (and brief) subsection concludes our introductory remarks preceding and grounding our analysis to come. The remainder of our analysis consists in the following.

Section II is divided into several subsections: subsection II.1 comprises a broad-brush summary of Heidegger's Interpretation of human Being in *Being and Time*, especially his analysis of care as comprising the call of conscience, and the meaningful grounding of care in temporality; the other subsections (II.2-II.5) involve analysis of certain critical approaches taken with regard to *Being and Time* that are relevant to an ethical discourse. Section III consists in our original analysis that is *substantively based upon* but *emphatically divergent from* Heidegger's analysis. This re-Interpretation consists in an analysis of our projection and thrownness into the ecstases of future, past, and present, which analysis will conclude in our rendering the unitary phenomenon of human Being as Narrative-Being constituted by existentiell narrative lines. Section IV consists in our provisional Interpretation of the phenomenon of ethics. Through the ethical phenomena of *antagonism* and *underminingness* we attempt to demonstrate the Being of ethics as existentially-ontologically constitutive of the human, and most faithfully indicated by the term '*ethos*.'

Section III is undertaken for the sake of holding-open before us the route for section IV's analysis. As we have concluded above, Heidegger's Interpretation of human Being, while not *deficient* in any way, and while generally *primordially faithful*, nevertheless veils the phenomenon of ethics. We, therefore, undertake to re-Interpret human Being in order to *make accessible* an analysis of the Being of ethics. And of course, an Interpretation of human Being is always ontologically prior to an Interpretation of the Being of ethics, as it is only in virtue of our human Being that the phenomenon of ethics is manifest and constitutive of us. Thus, section

IV's analysis, comprising an inquiry into the ontological structures of ethics, *is only possibly* (properly) undertaken as the phenomenal encounter of ethics by the human, and this phenomenal encounter can only be properly grounded if we have in the first instance *precisely (if preparatorily) demonstrated the general structural components of the mode of Being that encounters, and the unitary meaning of these structures as constituting this mode of Being.*

Thus concludes the body of our analysis. Still, this essay will end with a concluding section V that raises objections to our foregoing analysis, attempts to answer said objections, and finally discusses the philosophical implications of our analysis, including what additional analyses are required to further ground and develop the analysis hereupon undertaken.

II. Heidegger and Beyond

II.1. Heidegger's *Being and Time*¹¹

Heidegger begins *Being and Time* by discussing the basic aim of his project: fundamental ontology. This term denotes as ‘the ground of inquiry into Being,’ and this is roughly what Heidegger has in mind. What he means, however, can be more formally phrased as: an answer to the question *of the meaning of Being as such and in general*. ‘Meaning [*Sinn*],’ for Heidegger, has a peculiar signification: “that wherein the intelligibility [*Verständlichkeit*] of something maintains itself” (SZ 151). Thus, ‘fundamental ontology’ seeks to find some understanding of ‘Being’ that allows this term to be consistently intelligible, and moreover to find a meaning that does not merely investigate the Being of some particular entity or entities, but rather seeks to understand the meaning of Being *in general*, for all entities. In seeking a fundamental ontology, Heidegger looks towards the existential analytic of Dasein to provide at the very least a *clue*, if not the answer itself.¹²

In order to unpack this phrase, let us examine its components. Heidegger’s ‘Dasein’ is a term composed of two component words: ‘Da’ and ‘sein.’ Da-sein, therefore, denotes as ‘there-Being’ or ‘Being-there.’ Recall that ‘Being [*Sein*],’ signifies ways or modes of being, or ways or modes that things *are* that is constitutive of *what* they are—a focus on the ‘how’ verb that is constitutive of the noun ‘what.’ ‘There [*Da*],’ meanwhile, does not indicate any absolute or relative spatio-temporal position; rather, it refers to a “clearing [*Lichtung*]” wherein the “*lumen*

¹¹ Our exploration of *Being and Time* will move through Heidegger’s analysis quite quickly, stopping for deeper clarification on the pieces especially relevant to this thesis (namely, *conscience* and *temporality*).

¹² “Therefore *fundamental ontology*, from which alone all other ontologies can take their rise, must be sought in the existential *analytic of Dasein*” (SZ 13).

naturale”¹³ (SZ 133) can shine. This ‘clearing’ is metaphorically a cleared-out¹⁴ space in which the light of understanding *discloses* (or alternatively: reveals, unveils, unconceals). What is important in the conjunction of these two indications in Da-sein is that Heidegger is referring to a type of entity—namely, the human-like entity¹⁵—but referring to this entity solely by way of its Being. Therefore, ‘Dasein’ is the human, but it more fundamentally is the *Being* of the human. And this Being signified by ‘Dasein’ indicates that understanding and disclosedness (truth) are constitutive of the human being: in some manner or other, our Being is tied-up with this aspect of either ‘darkness’ *concealing* or ‘light’ *unveiling*.

‘Dasein’ is Heidegger’s first hermeneutical spiral into the unveiling of human Being, and his second is soon forthcoming: namely, existence [*Existenz*]. ‘Existence,’ for Heidegger, is not the simple notion of ‘being actual’ or ‘being present,’ but indicates in a rather more technical sense: this indication can be best captured by the phrase, “Dasein is an entity that . . . is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it” (SZ 12), or rather: ‘my Being is an issue for me.’ This phrase implicitly signifies the following: (1) there is a ‘mine-ness’, or some sense of individual ownership, over each Dasein’s Being—i.e., my Being concerns me in a way that no other entity’s Being does. As Heidegger states, “Because each Dasein has *in each case mineness* [*Jemeinigkeit*], one must always use a *personal* pronoun when one addresses it” (SZ 42). (2) My Being is importantly *unfinished*—it requires something of me—i.e., my Being constantly presents me with ‘questions’, so to speak, and these ‘questions’ *must be answered*, and answered, moreover, *only through my very existing* (that is to say, not merely intellectually); Dasein’s Being is such that the way that it is becoming is of central

¹³ I.e., natural light, or the light of understanding.

¹⁴ I.e., free from obstructive obscurants.

¹⁵ Or perhaps it would be more proper to say ‘the type of entity whose extensionality is exhausted by humans.’

importance to it. Finally, (3) each Dasein exists in the *disclosedness* or *disclosure* of (1) and (2); in Heidegger's words, "*Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's Being*" (SZ 12).

Therefore, in stating that fundamental ontology must proceed via the 'existential analytic of Dasein,' Heidegger claims that *only in taking seriously Dasein's Being-there and existence*, and proceeding with the whole of Dasein's Being as *Da-sein* and *Existenz* having been taken up into one's fore-having, can this analysis (i.e., fore-sight and fore-conception) be properly grounded.

Heidegger spirals ever further into his hermeneutical project: Dasein's Being can more formally be indicated by the unitary term 'Being-in-the-world [*In-der-Welt-sein*].' This term, although unitary, can be analyzed in its three constituent components: 'Being-in,' 'the [worldhood of] world,' and 'Being-with [as whom].'

Dasein's *Being-in*[-the-world] is indicated by the phrases "I reside" or "I dwell alongside" (SZ 54). In other words, Dasein's Being-in implies Dasein's being *at home* within a *meaningful context*. That is to say, Dasein's Being-in is characterized by *concern* [*besorgen*]: personally engaged encounters with entities fundamentally in terms of their places within a meaningful context (i.e., proximally, Dasein's Being-in is distinctly *opposed* to disinterested observation of entities' perceptual properties). This is all to say, Dasein encounters the world not as something *outside and alien*, but as *its home*, or the fundamental space within which it concerns itself; Dasein exists in this world as engaged in projects, and encounters entities as *meaningfully constituted* by a relationship to these projects, not as simply actualized, present-at-hand things to be perceived and cognized-upon.

The ‘worldhood’ of the world is the world’s essentially being a network of relationships of significance to Dasein’s projects. That is to say, the ‘world’ is a *meaningful context* in which entities *are* insofar as they are ‘ready-to-hand’ (i.e., pertinent to Dasein’s projects). What more can we say about readiness-to-hand? Heidegger indicates such readiness-to-hand in calling the totality of entities (*qua* their Being-ready-to-hand) by the term “equipment [*Zeug*]” (SZ 68). A totality of equipment’s readiness-to-hand is a mode of Being in which each item of equipment is ‘referred’ or ‘assigned’ (i.e., organized) on the basis of a network of involvements: this ‘network’ consists in sets of ‘in-order-to(s)’ and ‘for-the-sake-of-which(s).’¹⁶ Each item is *assigned* to do some piece of work as a ‘towards-which’ (i.e., towards accomplishing something) along an ‘in-order-to’ continuum; and this ‘in-order-to’ continuum seeks to accomplish something, which accomplishment is a ‘for-the-sake-of-which.’ Importantly, there can be *layers* of involvements in any particular network: say I am tightening a screw as part of an ‘in-order-to’ for the sake of ‘getting my car battery installed’; similarly, I am getting my car battery installed as an ‘in-order-to’ for the sake of being able to drive my car, which I am accomplishing as an in-order-to for the sake of being able to get around where I need to go. Thus, the ‘world’ is as networks of significance, consisting in equipment that is ready-to-hand in-order-to accomplish a ‘for-the-sake-of-which.’ Importantly, the world is *not* present-at-hand, or a collection of present-at-hand entities. ‘Presence-at-hand’ indicates an entity’s merely Being as actually and sparsely present; this mode of entities’ Being is what Heidegger calls “[*f*]ounded” (SZ 59)—that is to say, ‘un-originary’ or *founded upon* some more fundamental, primordial, elemental state: namely, *readiness-to-hand*. The upshot of this is that, most primordially, the world is not a bare, present

¹⁶ Or in the more traditional parlance, ‘means’ and ‘ends.’ However, the reader of Heidegger must take care not to accept the problematical metaphysics underlying the ‘means-ends’ distinction; thus, in order to avoid these philosophically loaded terms, we preserve Heidegger’s ‘in-order-to(s)’ and ‘for-the-sake-of-which(s).’

object of perception and cognizing; rather, the world is primordially *a meaningful space of involvements*.

‘As whom’ does Dasein exist as in Being-in-the-world? In other words, ‘*who*,’ precisely, is doing the Being in the world? Always, Dasein’s ‘as whom’ is as ‘Dasein-with’ or ‘Being-with’—that is to say, Dasein *is* as existing alongside other Daseins and other entities within the world. Ordinarily, in its average everydayness (i.e., proximally and for the most part), Dasein exists as an inauthentic ‘they-self [*das Man*]’; however, Dasein can be existentially modified into becoming its own authentic Self. As a ‘they-self,’ Dasein’s existence really is not its *own*, nor is it *anyone else’s*; ¹⁷ it is *inauthentic*. As one’s own Self, on the other hand, Dasein’s existence is authentically its own.

These three components of Being-in-the-world are, in turn, reliant-upon three basic structures of existence: projection [*Entwurf*], thrownness [*Geworfenheit*], and fallenness [*Verfallenheit*]. ‘Projection’ can be understood as pro-ject-ion: ‘ject’ is to throw, ‘pro’ indicates ahead or forward; thus, ‘projection’ is the quality of throwing-ahead-of-oneself. When we speak of ‘projection,’ we speak of ‘throwing our Being ahead of ourselves.’ What can this mean? As Being-in-the-world, Dasein is always already invested in certain *projects*. These projects comprise for-the-sake-of-which(s) that involve in-order-to(s). But to be doing work in attempting to accomplish something, Dasein is constantly *ahead of itself*—that is to say, invested in some potentiality that is not yet actual. Thus, projection is always the projection-upon (i.e., throwing its Being ahead of itself towards) some *possibility of Being*. A ‘possibility-of-Being’ is a non-actual, but rather *potential* state-of-Being. At any given moment, Dasein has all sorts of possibilities-of-Being that are available to it; in *projecting*, it ‘chooses’ some of these—

¹⁷ “The ‘who’ [of the they-self] is not this one, not that one, not oneself, not some people, and not the sum of them all. The ‘who’ is the neuter, *the ‘they’*” (SZ 126).

importantly, however, this ‘choice’ is not necessarily (indeed, proximally and for the most part is *not at all*) consciously cognitive. Dasein’s projection-upon possibility is simply its Being’s being constituted as *ahead of itself* in some particular possibility-of-Being.

Thrownness is not the counter-concept to projection. Nevertheless, it indicates Dasein’s Being as *Being-thrown-into-existence*. In other words, Dasein’s ‘thrownness’ is its ‘having-to-be’—or rather, its simple ‘that-I-am-always-already’; it is Dasein’s Being in some peculiar manner over and above any ‘consent’ or ‘input’ that it could possibly give pertaining to its existence. It is *thrown into* Being-in-the-world; it has no possibility to choose otherwise than its own existence. Thus, Dasein *always already* is Being-in as projecting, existing in a world of significance, Being-with others proximally and usually as a they-self. This is Dasein’s ‘facticity [*Faktizität*]’ or its thrownness into its Being-in-the-world.

Fallenness is the most difficult of these items to explain, but it should metaphorically be understood as a ‘falling [*verfallen*]’ from Dasein’s ownmost authentic Self to its inauthentic they-self. In its fallenness, Dasein falls away from its Being as truly its *own*, and into its Being as *not its own, but nobody else’s*—its Being as an anonymous ‘they.’ In falling, Dasein ‘loses’ itself in inauthenticity—but this also implies that it can re-gain itself. Dasein’s ‘as whom’ in Being-in-the-world can be gained as its own or lost in anonymity.

Importantly, each of these structural items constituting Dasein’s Being is disclosed via a particular mode: Dasein *understandingly* projects, is thrown with a *state-of-mind*, expresses its Self in *discourse*.

Dasein understands itself. Dasein’s understanding [*Verstehen*] is “*the existential Being of Dasein’s own potentiality-for-Being . . . this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of*” (SZ 144); that is to say, Dasein, as understanding, exists in the disclosure of its own

projections-upon possibilities-of-Being. As Heidegger states: “As projecting, understanding is the kind of Being of Dasein in which it *is* its possibilities as possibilities . . . Dasein is constantly more than it factually is” (SZ 145). That is to say, as projecting, Dasein is *throwing its Being ahead of itself*; but this ‘ahead of itself’ implies that Dasein *is* not presently actualized as this possibility—Dasein, in any given moment, is more than it is presently actualized as. Heidegger goes on to call this understanding Dasein’s “sight” (SZ 146). This ‘sight’ is Da-sein’s seeing the clearing of its ‘there.’ On the basis of its understanding, Dasein *interprets*. Interpretation is “the projecting of the understanding . . . [wherein] the understanding appropriates understandingly that which is understood by it” (SZ 148). In other words, interpretation is the development of the understanding—Dasein, in appropriating its understanding according to its projected-upon possibilities *interprets* both itself and other entities in the world.

Dasein’s thrownness into its existence is disclosed via its finding itself in a state-of-mind [*befindlichkeit*]. Finding itself in a state-of-mind, Dasein expresses its primordial ‘mood’ in response to its having to be, its being *thrown into* both its own existence and any given particular situation.¹⁸ Writes Heidegger, “a mood makes manifest ‘how one is, and how one is faring’. In this ‘how one is’, having a mood brings Being [*Sein*] to its ‘there [*Da*]’. However, a state-of-mind does not make *explicitly* known to Dasein all of its disclosive elements; rather, a state-of-mind unveils Dasein in its ‘having-to-be-existingly-in-a-situation’ in terms of its *feeling towards* this situation. That is to say, finding itself in a state-of-mind, “[t]he pure ‘that it is’ shows itself, but the ‘whence’ and ‘whither’ remain in darkness” (SZ 134). Crucially, however, “[a] state-of-mind always has its understanding . . . [u]nderstanding always has its mood” (SZ 142-143). But

¹⁸ “What we indicate *ontologically* by the term ‘state-of-mind’ is *ontically* the most familiar and everyday sort of thing; our mood, our Being-attuned” (SZ 134).

this is just to say that Dasein is always already *thrown into* having to project, and in projecting, Dasein's world is organized around this projection, and thus Dasein is *thrown into* this world.

The final structure of Dasein's disclosedness is *discourse* [*Rede*]. In its modes of discoursing, Dasein reveals its *fallenness*. For Heidegger, discourse is not "'reason', 'judgment', 'concept', 'definition', 'ground', or 'relationship'" (SZ 32)—or rather, discourse does not mean what we take it to mean in its 'scholarly' usage as an esoteric dialectic. Rather, discourse simply means 'talk,' but understood in a peculiar way: "to make manifest what one is 'talking about' . . . it lets us see something" (SZ 32). Alternatively: "Discourse is the Articulation of intelligibility" (SZ 161); but this 'intelligibility' can be articulated as either letting 'what the talk is *about*' come into the foreground and illuminate the 'there' (authenticity), or letting "what-is-said-in-the-talk" (SZ 168) upstage that which the talk is truly *about* and darken the 'there' (inauthenticity). In either case, discourse, "equi-primordial with state-of-mind and understanding" (SZ 161), discloses Dasein's 'Being-with.' Proximally and for the most part, Dasein discourses in the inauthentic modes of idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity—wherein Dasein *falls* and loses itself into the 'they' in its inauthentic discourse as "gossiping" (SZ 168), plunging itself ever-anew into the search for amusing "distraction" (SZ 172), finding itself within the ambiguity of the public's covering-over in the mode of "pass[ing] off" (SZ 174) what has been falsely understood. Inauthentically, Dasein's particular discursive modes reveal its fallenness and lostness in the anonymous 'they.'

Meanwhile, authentic discourse generally *keeps silent*, allowing intelligibility to be articulated without distracting artifice. In this and other modes of authentic discourse, what the talk is truly *about* is disclosed; the 'talk' does not *distort*, but rather *points towards in clarity*.

But the question as to how Dasein's wholeness and authenticity can be onto-
ontologically attested remains. Heidegger identifies *the call of conscience* as that which can

attest to these matters. This call is a mode of *discourse*, and one that calls Dasein out of its inauthentic fallenness into the ‘they’ and to its own authentic Self. The call of conscience is a discursive mode of “keeping silent” (SZ 273) that “summons Dasein to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-guilty” (SZ 289). Dasein’s Being-guilty, however, ought not to be understood in the standard manner of ‘making oneself responsible for others,’ or ‘feeling that one owes something to others’; rather, Dasein’s Being-guilty is its *always already* “Being-the-basis-of-a-nullity (and this Being-the-basis is itself null)” (SZ 285). This ‘Being-the-null-basis-of-a-nullity’ signifies two component ‘nullities’ or voids in Dasein’s Being, both constituted by Dasein’s Being-*thrown*:¹⁹ namely, ever-constant nullity, and *ultimate* nullity. Dasein’s Being-the-*null*-basis signifies that Dasein’s existence always and at every moment consists in *void*; Dasein is *thrown into* projection, which projection must constantly and evermore either *nullify* or *fail to sight* all possibilities save for the *one* that is projected-upon.²⁰ That is to say, Dasein’s existence always and at every moment is thrown into largely consisting in *nullity*—Dasein mostly consists in *that which it is not* [projecting-upon]; and in projecting-upon one possibility, Dasein irrevocably give up on countless others. Moreover, Dasein, as *thrown into projecting*, is therefore thrown into constantly and evermore being a ‘not-yet’ at any given moment; that is to say, “[i]n being a basis—that is, in existing as thrown—Dasein constantly lags behind its possibilities” (SZ 284).

Dasein’s Being-the-null-basis-of-a-*nullity* signifies the *ultimate* void underlying its existence: Dasein is as *hurtling towards* the inevitability of *death*, where ‘death’ stands-in to mean the *total and irrevocable loss of Being itself*. In death, Dasein not only relinquishes

¹⁹ “‘Nullity’ does not signify anything like not-Being-present-at-hand or not-subsisting; what one has in view here is rather a ‘not’ which is constitutive for this *Being* of Dasein—its thrownness” (SZ 284).

²⁰ “The nullity we have in mind belongs to Dasein’s Being-free for its existentiell possibilities. Freedom, however, *is* only in the choice of one possibility—that is, in tolerating one’s not having chosen the others and one’s not being able to choose them” (SZ 285).

numerous possibilities, it relinquishes all possibility evermore of *even having possibilities*: “[Death is] *the possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all*” (SZ 262). Dasein’s ultimate existential *nullity* is its stemming irrevocably *from* a void (birth) and hurtling irrevocably *towards* a void (death).²¹

Therefore, Dasein’s *ontological Being-guilty*, as Being-the-null-basis-of-a-nullity, signifies Dasein’s Being-thrown into existing as “*permeated with nullity through and through*” (SZ 285).

Therefore, if conscience discursively calls Dasein out of its lostness in the ‘they-self,’ in which it closes-off its fundamental wholeness and truth, it therefore calls Dasein as *beckoning it silently*, without words,²² to Dasein’s disclosive ‘there’ as its Being at every moment *null*, and being entirely enveloped on both ends of its totality by *nullity*. By disclosing its ownmost Being-guilty to Dasein and thereby Dasein’s death, the call of conscience leaves Dasein as *utterly and radically individualized*—called from its lostness in the they-self to its primordial and authentic own Self. This is because death *is*, existentially speaking, the revelation of Dasein’s utter individuality—for the ‘they’ says that “‘one dies’ . . . [but] ‘in no case is it I myself’, for this ‘one’ is *the ‘nobody’*” (SZ 253); in short, the they never discloses one’s death as one’s *ownmost and uttermost possibility*. They ‘they’ discourses on death in idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity, wherein the true and irrevocable claim that death holds on us is lost, closed-off, darkened. For the ‘they,’ as being no one in particular, *never itself dies, nor knows any possibility of death*. Only the individual *Dasein* dies; thus, when called by conscience to face up to its own death,

²¹ “[T]he nullity by which Dasein, in its very *basis*, is defined . . . is as thrownness into death” (SZ 308).

²² “The call dispenses with any kind of utterance. It does not put itself into words at all; yet it remains nothing less than obscure and indefinite. *Conscience discourses solely and constantly in the mode of keeping silent*” (SZ 273).

Dasein is radically individualized and beckoned out of its ‘they-self.’ In Being-guilty, Dasein is privy to its existence as *uncanny* [*unheimlich*]. ‘Uncanniness’ here indicates as “‘not-being-at-home’” (SZ 188); this ‘not-being-at-home’ means being displaced from one’s previous ‘home’ in the inauthentic with-world of the they-self—i.e., the they dictates the existentiell possibilities that every Dasein sights and projects-upon, and thus dictates the world’s *particular worldhood*. For example, we might assume for the moment that in contemporary American society, ‘hard work’ and ‘supporting your family’ according to ‘traditional values’ organizes the *world* and one’s possibilities—I either fail to *sight* or *take seriously* existentiell possibilities outside of these (e.g., joining a Buddhist monastery in Thailand). But in my *uncanniness*, suddenly these omnipresent possibilities seem unwelcoming and foreign to me; in conscience, Dasein is called to its ownmost Being-guilty, wherein its death is disclosed, and thus it is radically individualized, thrown out of its everyday Being a they-self; in this individualization, it finds itself as *uncanny*. And in this uncanniness, it finds itself in the state-of-mind of *anxiety*. Dasein, as *anxious*, exists as finding itself in the full disclosedness of its ownmost existentiality: its Being is suddenly an *issue* for it, but there is no quick and ready-to-hand *resolution* to this issue.

Anxiously, Dasein exists in *anticipation* [*Vorlaufen*] of its death. Dasein has been anxiously disclosed in its *guilt* as a *null* basis of a *nullity*—it exists at each given moment as projecting-upon one possibility that it is *not-yet*, and in projecting-upon such, it must at each given moment irrevocably relinquish innumerable possibilities; and it must *ultimately* relinquish all possibility of *ever having possibilities*. Thus, the issue of its existence is made plain: how *is* one to *exist in such nullity*? Certainly not as a ‘they,’ for the ‘they’ merely conceals the truth of death. Dasein, abandoned to its existence, must resolve the issue of its existence as abandoned to its own Self.

Thus, how does Dasein ‘resolve’ the issue of its existence? Namely, in *anticipatory resoluteness*. ‘Anticipation’ in the original German means ‘running-ahead’; this ‘running-ahead’ has the signification of ‘running-ahead’ of one’s current factual situation to one’s always-impending death. But this ‘running-ahead’ is nothing other than *projection*. In anticipation, Dasein *projects-upon* its ownmost and uttermost possibility of death. And in thus projecting, Dasein *reclaims* itself from its lostness unto death; it makes it takes death over as *its own*. Thus, Dasein can authentically be its *wholeness* (i.e., its taking over its own Self as a whole totality from beginning (birth) to ending (death)).

But how does Dasein *maintain itself* in such authenticity? Namely, in *resoluteness* [*Entschlossenheit*]. This resoluteness is resolutely *certain* in its Being-towards-death, existing unto death. And with this certainty, resolute Dasein *resolutely* holds itself open for its authenticity. This openness [*Erschlossenheit*] can best be described in terms of a ‘Situation.’ According to Heidegger, “the Situation is the ‘there’ which is disclosed in resoluteness—the ‘there’ as which the existent entity is there” (SZ 299). Less formally, the Situation is the array of possibilities over and above those bestowed upon the individual Dasein by the ‘they’ that Dasein at any given moment has available to it. Resoluteness does not signify *any particular possibilities that Dasein must project-upon*; rather, resoluteness signifies *Dasein’s holding itself open to the full array of possibilities available to its fully individualized Self at any given moment*.

Thus, in anticipatory resoluteness, Dasein *runs ahead of itself and thus reclaims its own individual Self*; and moreover it *holds itself open to its always-impending and uttermost possibility of death, and as individualized, its full array of possibilities over and above those given by the ‘they.’* In anticipatory resoluteness, Dasein exists authentically in its wholeness as a

Self. Therefore, according to Heidegger, “[t]his distinctive and authentic disclosedness, which is attested in Dasein itself by its conscience—*this reticent self-projection upon one’s ownmost Being-guilty, in which one is ready for anxiety*—we call ‘*resoluteness*’” (SZ 296-297). Thus, conscience calls *not* as a calling to our *responsibility to others*—and in fact, it calls us *out* of such *inauthentic* modes. Similarly, Being-guilty means not that we are *indebted* to others, or that we are guilty of some evil, but rather that we are, in our very thrown existence, *guilty*.²³

Thus, in our preceding analysis of understanding projection, thrown state-of-mind, and discursive fallenness, in addition to our extended analysis of conscience, Being-guilty, uncanniness, anxiety, and anticipatory resoluteness, we have delineated (broadly) the full outline of the meaning of Heidegger’s *care* [*Sorge*], which counts as yet a further hermeneutical spiral in the existential analytic of Dasein: formally, Heidegger defines ‘care’ as “‘ahead of itself—Being-already-in (a world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)’” (SZ 317). Thus, ‘care’ is this disclosive structure. However, it is important for Heidegger that ‘care’ is considered as a *unitary phenomenon*—although he has analyzed it according to its constituent components, most primordially, Heidegger believes, care indicates *unitarily*. Thus, Heidegger begins his search for the ‘meaning’ of this unitary care—or that which will allow us to maintain ourselves in care’s *unitary intelligibility*. It is from here that he begins his analysis of *temporality*.

²³ Heidegger addresses in *Being and Time* the four typical significations of ‘conscience’ and ‘guilty’:

- (1) that the function of conscience is essentially critical; (2) that conscience always speaks in a way that is relative to some definite deed which has been performed or willed;
- (3) that when the ‘voice’ [of conscience] is experienced, it is never so radically related to Dasein’s Being; (4) that our Interpretation takes no account of the basic forms of the phenomenon [of conscience]—‘evil’ conscience and ‘good’, that which ‘reproves’ and that which ‘warns’. (SZ 290)

Heidegger dismisses each of these significations as arising on the basis of Dasein’s inauthentic existence as a ‘they,’ thereby existing as divorced from its true existential Being.

Temporality [*Zeitlichkeit*] might be alternatively indicated as ‘temporariness.’²⁴ Its constituent structures meaningfully ground the Being of Dasein, which Heidegger has indicated as ‘Being-there,’ ‘existence,’ and ‘care.’ Care comprises his most thoroughgoing elaboration on Dasein’s Being, but its unitary meaningfulness has been obscured through the necessity of analyzing it in its constituent components. Meanwhile, ‘temporality’ is composed fundamentally of one component (i.e., *future*) that appropriates itself in different relations.²⁵

Heidegger designates each of temporality’s ‘components’ by the term ‘ecstasis [*Ekstase*].’ This word etymologically denotes as ‘standing outside,’ which for Heidegger’s purposes is proper: the *ecstases* of time are not fundamentally different ‘components’; they are more primordially *different ways of manifesting one’s relationship to one’s Self*. Dasein’s ecstatic character indicates Dasein as Being-constituted by a *movement* outside of one’s ‘here and now’; or rather, that one’s ‘here and now’ is merely a manifestation of Dasein’s fundamental moving-towards and coming-from.

Dasein’s ecstasis of *future* meaningfully grounds its Being-ahead-of-itself, or *projecting*. Dasein’s ‘having-been’²⁶ grounds the meaning of its Being-always-already, or *thrownness*. And Dasein’s Present grounds the meaning of its Being-with, or *fallenness*. Temporality meaningfully grounds Dasein’s primordially Being-a-whole, constituted by Being-towards-death

²⁴ We follow Lewis in reading ‘temporality’ in this way. States Lewis: “I would prefer to translate ‘*Zeitlichkeit*’ as ‘temporariness’ or ‘temporaeity’. [This] means that [B]eing is founded upon the presence within beings as a whole of a being [Dasein] which has only a *temporary* span” (*HPE* 15).

²⁵ “This phenomenon has the unity of a future which makes present in the process of having been; we designate it as *temporality*” (*SZ* 326).

²⁶ Clearly, ‘having-been’ corresponds to something like ‘the past’; nevertheless, Heidegger explicitly refrains from using ‘the past’ because of its connotative baggage as tied-in to inauthentic conceptions of ‘time.’ Heidegger states: “As long as’ Dasein factually exists, it is never past, but it always is indeed already as having *been* . . . [o]n the other hand, we call an entity ‘past’, when it is no longer present-at-hand” (*SZ* 328).

and Being-towards-birth. And as meaningfully grounding its Being-a-whole, temporality meaningfully grounds Dasein's authentic or inauthentic relationship to its Being-a-whole.

Dasein relates itself existentially to every temporal ecstasis either authentically or inauthentically. Futurally, Dasein is *authentically* as a 'coming-towards' where what it is 'coming-towards' is some projected-upon possibility; however, this 'coming-towards' means nothing different than 'running-ahead'; thus, Dasein is authentically futural as *anticipating*. Meanwhile, "the inauthentic future has the character of awaiting [or expecting]" (SZ 337). In awaiting and expecting, Dasein's Being is not *seized hold of in its own way*; rather, it is projected-upon as an 'external given.'

Dasein's ecstatical having-been is a *characteristic* of Dasein's future, wherein Dasein has the possibility of "com[ing] *back*" (SZ 326) to re-gather itself. That is to say, insofar as Dasein is authentically *futural*, Dasein is also as *having-been*. Thus, this movement 'back-towards' oneself has the character of 'taking up again' one's having-been, which Heidegger designates as *repetition*. In repetition, Dasein takes hold of its having-been in such a way as to make itself a *whole*: coming back for itself to gather-itself-up for its *thrown* projection. Inauthentic having-been, on the other hand, has the character of *forgetting*. As Heidegger states: "[t]he ecstasis (rapture) of forgetting has the character of backing away *in the face of* one's ownmost 'been', and of doing so in a manner which is closed off from itself" (SZ 339). This *forgetting* is a forgetting, importantly, of one *ownmost* Self—in other words, founded upon this inauthentic having-been of forgetting is 'retaining.' Retaining is an ecstatical movement in which one has forgotten *one's Self*, but nevertheless *retained* one's proximal *concern*.

Dasein's ecstatical Present might be more tellingly described as Being-constantly. As a Being-constantly, Dasein exists and *maintains* itself as a *temporal relation* to itself at any given

moment. This temporal relation is constituted entirely according to its relationship between its future and its having-been. Therefore, *authentically*, Dasein exists as a *Being-constantly* that *anticipates* as a *repetition*. *Inauthentically*, Dasein exists as a *making-present* that *awaits* as it *forgets*, or else *expects* as it *retains*. Dasein's authentic relationship to its Present, Heidegger maintains, is the “‘*moment of vision*’ . . . [i]t means the resolute rapture with which Dasein is carried away to whatever possibilities and circumstances are encountered in the Situation as possible objects of concern, but a rapture which is *held* in resoluteness” (SZ 338). Thus, Dasein's authentic Present is a holding-onto as a holding-itself-open-for the *moment of vision*. In holding itself open for the moment of vision, Dasein *anticipates* (runs-ahead-of-itself) and *repeats* (comes-back-for-itself). Dasein's inauthentic Present, therefore, is a making-present that *leaps away*. Its movement as characterized by *leaping away* can be understood as a *constancy* of *awaiting* that *forgets* its having-been. As such, as that which it awaits passes along into its having-been, Dasein's Present *leaps away to awaiting the next thing*. As constantly leaping away, Dasein utterly *loses* itself in the Present of forgotten awaiting. It never *is* grounded in a having-been; its future, as merely *awaiting*, is not groundingly seized hold of; thus, existing as *devoid of grounds*, temporally inauthentic Dasein in its Present cannot be anything other than a *lostness* unto its making present. As Heidegger states:

[T]he making-present is abandoned more and more to itself. It makes present for the sake of the Present. It thus entangles itself in itself, so that the distracted not-tarrying [not holding on to one's having-been] becomes *never-dwelling-anywhere*. This latter mode of the Present is the counter-phenomenon at the opposite extreme from the *moment of vision*. (SZ 347)

A founded mode of inauthenticity, as well, is in one's proximal and everyday *concern*: as concerned, one's inauthentic making-present manifests itself as an *expecting* that *retains*. In this founded mode, one's Present does not quite have the character of *leaping-away*; nevertheless, it is only on the basis of such leaping away—i.e., one's ability to forget one's Self and invest one's Being in a close-to-hand future that is *not seized upon*—that it can manifest itself. In such a Present, Dasein's making-present *retains* its having-been not in its own *primordial Self*, but in its objects of proximal concern. In *expecting*, one awaits with a degree of *assurance* (as opposed to in *mere* awaiting), but this expectation is nevertheless not wholly a possibility that has been resolutely seized hold of as *one's own*. In this form of concernful inauthenticity, Dasein is always “abandon[ed] to a ‘world’ of which it never becomes master” (SZ 356); moreover, this form of concernful inauthenticity in making-present comprises the “theoretical attitude” (SZ 357) of the natural sciences, wherein a certain form of concern “aim[s] . . . to free entities we encounter within-the-world, and to free them in such a way . . . that they can become ‘Objects’” (SZ 363).

Thus, it is only through the ecstases of temporality that Dasein can “[authentically] win itself” or “lose itself [in inauthenticity]”: in *forgetting* the primordial having-been of its Self, Dasein *loses its own Self*, it therefore takes refuge in the anonymous ‘they-self.’ Meanwhile, in *repeating itself*, Dasein comes back for its ownmost primordial Self in its projecting. But more must be said about this ‘repetition’ of Dasein’s ecstatical having-been. The grounds of this repetition lie in Dasein’s *historicality* [*Geschichtlichkeit*]. Dasein’s historicality is not the scholarly practice of history (Heidegger refers to this latter phenomenon as ‘world-historical-historiology’), nor is it fundamentally a *present-at-hand consciousness of the ‘past’*: rather, Dasein’s historicality primarily resides in its being constituted by having-been. Dasein, as

thrown into its existentially Being-in-the-world as care, is thus thrown into (1) gathering and organizing the world around its having-been, and (2) being born into a world made significant by other Daseins who have-been-there. Thus, Heidegger speaks of a ‘heritage’: Dasein draws its possibilities from its *thrownness*; ordinarily, Dasein is *thrown into* Being a they-self; but even more primordially, Dasein is thrown into Being-with, in a world made significant according to other Daseins who have-been-there; thus, the ‘well’ from which Dasein *must draw its possibilities of Being is irrevocably a historical well*; thus, Dasein’s *heritage* comprises its possibilities that have-been *handed-down* to itself that it may *repeat*. Therefore, Heidegger states:

The resoluteness in which Dasein comes back to itself, discloses current factual possibilities of authentic existing, and discloses them *in terms of the heritage* which that resoluteness, as thrown, *takes over*. In one’s coming back resolutely to one’s thrownness, there is hidden a *handing down to oneself* of the possibilities that have come down to one[.] (SZ 383)

Therefore, on the basis of having this *heritage that comprises Dasein’s source of sighted possibilities*, Dasein can be said to have a “fate” (SZ 384). And importantly, as every Dasein is also a Dasein-with[-Others], its collective historizing is drawn out of a collective heritage constitutive of its collective “*destiny*”(SZ 384). But these terms are not necessarily meant to indicate as ‘determined to some particular lot in life’; similarly, one’s Being thrown into *repeating* one’s inherited possibilities does not mean one’s having to take up the identical means and ends of one’s ancestors; rather, it means that Dasein’s projections *must always be in relation to Dasein’s inherited possibilities*; only by *fully grappling with one’s heritage and seizing-upon one’s self in a relationship with this heritage* (which relationship is thus *one’s own*) can any

Dasein authentically 'repeat.' Illustrating this phenomenon, Heidegger employs the term “*reciprocative rejoinder*” (SZ 386), which roughly signifies that (1) *Dasein* is *thrown into* an inherited array of possibilities; (2) *Dasein*, in authentically projecting, must in some way *reciprocate* towards these inherited possibilities by making a *rejoinder* to them. Thus, whether in *embracing and upholding* or *rebellious and rejecting* its inherited possibilities, *Dasein* is *thrown into responding* to its heritage in some manner or other. This constitutes *Dasein*'s historicity; and thus, in authentically *repeating*, *Dasein* takes its thrown historicity and, disclosed in the moment of vision, *takes up this historicity as its own*.

Thus, the final hermeneutical spiral is completed: have the aims of fundamental ontology been achieved? The Being of *Dasein*, whose Being has been provisionally indicated as ‘Being-there,’ ‘existence,’ ‘Being-in-the-world,’ and ‘care’ has thus been made meaningful as grounded in *temporality*. *Dasein* can exist authentically or inauthentically only as *temporal*; the existential analytic has revealed the meaning of *Dasein*'s Being—and thus the meaning of Being as such and in general—as *temporality*.²⁷ This constitutes the project of *Being and Time*.

²⁷ Although, one must note that Heidegger makes it clear that this provisional analysis is open for questioning. He ends his book with the question: “Does *time* itself manifest itself as the horizon of *Being*?” (SZ 437)

II.2. Later Heidegger's Response to *Being and Time*

In his mature years, Heidegger's thinking underwent substantial revision based on his inability to express 'the turn' in his exploration of Being. 'The turn' might best be (briefly) understood in the following manner: in *Being and Time*, Heidegger investigates the meaning of Being *qua* as revealed in Dasein's Being. 'The turn' is inverting this project: namely, investigating Dasein's Being via Being *qua*. While originally intended to be included as a part of Heidegger's project in *Being and Time*, "[t]he division in question was held back because thinking failed in the adequate saying of this turning and did not succeed with the help of the language of metaphysics" (LH 250).

A way of broadly summarizing Heidegger's change in thought between his early work in *Being and Time* and his later work might be the following: in *Being and Time*, the human being (Dasein) is analytically portrayed as the *ground* of all Being (i.e., is the basis of *fundamental ontology*), and thus, Dasein figures as the *originator and master* of all beings' meaningfully Being—i.e., all non-Dasein-esque entities have their respective modes of Being in virtue of their readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand for Dasein's projects. However, in Heidegger's later thought, the human is not so much the *grounding master* of all other beings' Being so much as she is the *guardian* of beings' meaningfully Being. In other words, 'Being' is not first generated and secondarily amended by the human; rather, Being is always *given*, and the human being lives to guard and maintain this Being.²⁸

²⁸ Heidegger states:

Thinking accomplishes the relation of being to the essence of the human being. It does not make or cause the relation. Thinking brings this relation to being solely as something handed over to thought itself from being. Such offering consists in the fact that in thinking being comes to language. Language is the house of being. In its home human beings dwell. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this

Although expounding on the above points is of great interest to a great many philosophical projects, it is not of great interest to ours: our focus is on finding a ground for the Being of ethics in the analysis of *Being and Time*. Nevertheless, Heidegger explicitly mentions ‘ethics’ in several regards in his “Letter on ‘Humanism’,” and we will consider his remarks so as to better understand his career-long treatment of ‘ethics,’ and how critics have responded to his philosophical encounters with ‘ethics.’

Heidegger’s first mention of ‘ethics’ in this work is in classifying it as a “suspect [true-ism] demanded by “the market of public opinion” (LH 241). He follows this up with a reference to the fact that his analysis of the ‘they’ in *Being and Time* is not to be understood “in an ethical-existential way, of the selfhood of persons” (LH 242). His next remark upon the subject mentions that “moral responsibility in every use of language” is undermined by “[t]he widely and rapidly spreading devastation of language” (LH 243). He later remarks that his analysis of ‘fallenness’ in *Being and Time* “does not signify the Fall of Man understood in a ‘moral-philosophical’ and at the same time secularized way” (LH 253). On ‘value’ in general, Heidegger writes: “through the character of something as ‘a value’ what is so valued is robbed of its worth . . . [e]very valuing, even where it values positively, is a subjectivizing” (LH 265). He moves on to treat ethics more directly: “Where the essence of the human being is thought so essentially . . . a longing necessarily awakens for a peremptory directive and for rules that say how the human being . . . ought to live in a fitting manner” (LH 268). In analyzing the history of ‘ethical’ inquiry, Heidegger states that “The tragedies of Sophocles . . . preserve the ἦθος [ethos] in their sayings more primordially than Aristotle’s lectures on ‘ethics’” (LH 269). Finally, Heidegger defines his conception of ‘ethics’:

home. Their guardianship accomplishes the manifestation of being insofar as they bring this manifestation to language and preserve it in language through their saying. (LH 239)

If the name ‘ethics,’ in keeping with the basic meaning of the word ἠθικός, should now say ethics ponders the abode of the human being, then that thinking which thinks the truth of being as the primordial element of the human being . . . is in itself originary ethics.

However, this thinking is not ethics in the first instance because it is ontology. For ontology always thinks solely the being (όν) in its being. (LH 271)

Therefore, what might we analytically gather from these various statements pertaining to ethics? Namely, that Heidegger has contempt for something like ‘ethics’ in the way it is typically practiced as an object of the philosophical dialectic concerned with ‘moralizing’ and developing standards of interpersonal valuation and normative behavior. However, he clearly reveres something like “originary ethics” or ‘*ethos*,’ in his peculiar sense of the term as ‘thinking the truth of Being’ or ‘dwelling in the house of Being’—i.e., Dasein’s existing in closeness to its relationship with its constitutive Being. But these remarks, as Heidegger indicates, seem to basically reduce to a mode of comporting oneself in ontological inquiry, and therefore pass-over ontical ethical manifestations such as ‘evil,’²⁹ ‘moralizing,’ etc. In short, even later Heidegger condemns ‘ethics’ as it is ontically practiced in ‘morality’ as something like the inauthentic Being of the ‘they’; he upholds ‘ethos,’ but only as a matter of comporting oneself

²⁹ Heidegger does provide us with some analysis of ‘evil’: “[t]he essence of evil does not consist in the mere baseness of human action, but rather in the malice of rage” (LH 272). However, his succeeding analysis in this section indicates, by our lights, that this ‘malicious rage’ is a rage against a “letting-be of ek-sistence” (LH 272). As ek-sistence means “standing in the clearing of [B]eing” (LH 247), we might state this ‘letting-be’ of ek-sistence consists in comporting oneself towards the truth of Being (i.e., the unconcealment of Being) in such a way as *lets* the unconcealed Being be—i.e., *respects it* as Being. Thus, the ‘malicious rage’ that Heidegger discusses as constitutive of evil might consist in comporting oneself in *disrespect* or *force against* the unconcealment of Being. But once again, this analysis of evil seems to pass-over ontical ‘evil’ manifestations, reducing the term of ‘evil’ to signify a *mode of ontological comportment*.

ontologically—namely, comporting oneself sensitively and respectfully³⁰ towards the unveiling of Being.

³⁰ We should note that ‘respect’ here is not a normative imperative in the sense of ‘thou shalt be respectful,’ but rather, a *mode of existing* in which each Dasein *lets* beings meaningfully be, does not try to foist *itself* as the ground and master of their meaningfully Being.

II.3. Levinas on Heidegger and Ethics

The French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas writes phenomenologically, following Heidegger, but in such a way as to fundamentally *reject* Heidegger's work in *Being and Time*³¹ as not only failing to *make sense of the ethical*, but also failing to *give the ethical its due place in philosophy*—namely, as *first philosophy*.³² Both Levinas's negative rejection of Heidegger and positive staking out of his own position are most famously expressed in *Totality and Infinity*.³³

In writing his essay, Levinas divides philosophical discourse as oriented in accordance with either 'totality' or 'infinity';³⁴ the history of Western Philosophy, he claims, is almost wholly oriented in accordance with 'totality.'³⁵ Such philosophical inquiry that proceeds as oriented towards *totality*, according to Levinas, *automatically* conceals truly ethical phenomena. Why is this the case? Philosophical approaches oriented towards the *implicit optimum* of totality are inherently *totalitarian*. Drawing a parallel between political conquest and philosophical

³¹ Manning states that, "Levinas's phenomenology is always a matter of interpreting within but always otherwise than Heidegger's phenomenological ontology" (*IOH* 7).

³² "Levinas[insists] . . . that it is not the knowledge of Being, but ethics—meaning our responsibility for the other person—that is the true subject of first philosophy" (*IOH* 7).

³³ Although his most famous work, we should note Manning's reservations concerning overly focusing on *Totality and Infinity* in the Levinasian canon. States Manning:

Levinas's attack on Heidegger is so strident in *Totality and Infinity* that the relation between Heidegger's and Levinas's philosophy is most often interpreted—especially by Heidegger's defenders—as an oppositional and adversarial one. This reading of the Levinas-Heidegger relationship is completely understandable, as Levinas scholarship has tended to interpret Levinas almost solely through *Totality and Infinity*, and Levinas's attack on Heidegger in this work is severe. (*IOH* 4)

³⁴ "Do particular beings yield their truth in a Whole in which their exteriority vanishes? Or, on the contrary, is the ultimate event of being enacted in the outburst of this exteriority? . . . [This book] will proceed to distinguish between the idea of totality and the idea of infinity, and affirm the philosophical primacy of the idea of infinity" (*TI* 26).

³⁵ "[F]rom Plato to Heidegger, panoramic existence and its disclosure are equivalent to the very production of being, since truth or disclosure is at the same time the work or the essential virtue of being . . . [this attitude] rests on this primacy of the panoramic" (*TI* 294). This "primacy of the panoramic" lies in contradistinction with "the break-up of *totality*, the denunciation of the panoramic structure of being" (*TI* 294, emphasis mine).

work, Levinas claims that the philosopher's obsession with *totalistic comprehension* is akin to the politician's/governor's obsession with *totalitarian domination*.³⁶ In other words, totalistic philosophy, in aiming to *comprehend* everything, thereby implicitly *demand*s that all beings *present and reveal themselves to the philosopher*.³⁷ "[T]o criticism everything must submit" (Kant, *CPR*, Axi n.)—this is the archetypal demand of the totalitarian philosopher. Such a demand automatically entails the following: (1) all beings that phenomenally *do not comply with the philosopher's demands* due to their standing outside of her philosophical 'system' as instances of problematical *otherness* or *alterity* are *concealed* in their truly *exterior* nature. That is to say, the philosopher is forced to *liquidate* these non-compliant beings of their essential, phenomenal *alterity* or *otherness* by virtue of a 'third term.' This allows the philosopher to illicitly *divest* these innately *exterior* beings of their phenomenal exteriority by *transferring* them across a *term* that allows them to bear some relation towards some unproblematically comprehensible beings, and thus the philosopher reduces the truly *other* to a seeming *same*.³⁸ Therefore the philosopher, in denying such beings their essential, phenomenal alterity, and subsuming them beneath phenomenally *familiar*, already-comprehended beings, thereby expresses her orientation towards *totalistic control* or totalitarianism. This demand also entails (2) a privileged emphasis on the *individual human*³⁹—this is because the intersubjective relationship is most fundamentally a relationship of *respect for otherness*; but in attempting to gain a totalistic comprehension, the philosopher *denies* beings their phenomenal otherness, and

³⁶ "The visage of being that shows itself in war is fixed in the concept of totality, which dominates Western philosophy" (*TI* 21).

³⁷ "To theory as comprehension of beings the general title ontology is appropriate" (*TI* 42).

³⁸ "[O]ntology: a reduction of the other to the same by interposition of a middle and neutral term that ensures the comprehension of being" (*TI* 43).

³⁹ "The meaning of individuals (invisible outside the totality) is derived from the totality" (*TI* 22).

thus automatically undermines the essential basis of her own intersubjective relationships [with Others]; instead, she implicitly privileges *identity, sameness*, her own individuality. Finally, such a demand (3) is oriented towards an implicit optimum of *freedom*, where ‘freedom’ means not ‘the ability to do anything,’ but rather, the ability to *force all beings to cede to one’s demands*.⁴⁰

A philosophy prioritizing *infinity*, on the other hand, is one that first and foremost consists in *ethics*. How does Levinas make sense of this? He claims that ‘being’ is an anonymous and impenetrable force that *abandons* the human being, leaves her as existing with other beings in a finite world.⁴¹ But the human being, as constituted by this ‘being,’ constantly looks to escape her burden of *finite* abandonment and thus *transcend* herself. But such transcendence reaches, as reaching towards the impenetrability of ‘being’ itself, towards the *infinite*. The infinite is that which *overflows and overwhelms* the finite totality,⁴² it is that which, as manifest *within* finite totality, thoroughly explodes any goal of comprehending its infinite nature; in short, the infinite is the *incomprehensible*. Its infinitude might be alternatively stated as *otherness, alterity, or exteriority*—i.e., exterior to, other than *finitude*. In other words, the individual human being, as finite, confronts beings bearing phenomenal *infinitude*, and confronts

⁴⁰ “Ontology . . . promotes freedom—the freedom that is the identification of the same, not allowing itself to be alienated by the other” (TI 42). Moreover, “[s]uch is the definition of freedom: to maintain oneself against the other, despite every relation with the other ensuring the autarchy of an I. Thematization and conceptualization . . . are not peace with the other but suppression or possession of the other” (TI 46).

⁴¹ According to Manning, “Levinas chooses the term *il y a, there is*, to denote the anonymous, impersonal Being that exists before *Dasein* comes to be . . . As Levinas and many others have pointed out, the anonymous and impersonal *il y a* is meant to contrast with and to contradict Heidegger’s notion of *es gibt, that which gives itself*” (IOH 42).

⁴² “Precisely perfection exceeds conception, overflows the concept; it designates distance: the idealization that makes it possible is a passage to the limit, that is, a transcendence, a passage to the absolutely other. The idea of the perfect is an idea of infinity” (TI 41).

them as *overwhelming, overflowing, primordially uprooting her own, individual finitude*.⁴³ In human existence, the phenomenon that most primordially expresses this infinity is the intersubjective relationship, which phenomenon most primordially is manifest in the face-to-face encounter with the Other [i.e., the human being that is not oneself].⁴⁴ The Other's *face* expresses truth more primordial than one could ever comprehend: it makes demands of one that, beyond the direct and immediate *encounter*, are not phenomenally manifest. In the face-to-face encounter with the Other, one perceives both a *welcoming*, but also a *demand*: "you shall not commit murder" (*TI* 199).⁴⁵ This phenomenal welcoming and demanding, as an encounter with infinitude, is of course cognitively incomprehensible. Therefore, a philosophy oriented towards *infinity* is not oriented towards the implicit optimum of comprehension, for comprehension of the infinite is what is precisely ruled-out by the infinite's very essence; rather, a 'philosophy of infinity' is oriented towards the implicit optimum of *respect for alterity*. Alterity makes demands of one, and these are demands that one must respect. As most primordially reflected in the intersubjective relationship, one is primarily and primordially demanded to *respect the otherness of the Other*. Therefore *ethics*, as the philosophy concerning respect for the Other's otherness, is thus the 'first' philosophy of infinity.⁴⁶

⁴³ States Levinas:

[A] relation with the infinity of a being which exceeds the totality . . . [as a] breach of totality[is] the possibility of a *signification without a context*. The experience of morality does not proceed from this vision—it *consummates* this vision . . . [b]ut it is a 'vision' without image, bereft of the synoptic and totalizing objectifying virtues of vision. (*TI* 23)

⁴⁴ "[A] situation [of encountering infinity] where totality breaks up . . . [s]uch a situation is the gleam of exteriority or of transcendence in the face of the Other" (*TI* 24).

⁴⁵ "[P]ower, by essence murderous of the other, becomes, faced with the other and 'against all good sense,' the impossibility of murder, the consideration of the other, or justice" (*TI* 47).

⁴⁶ "We name this calling into question of my spontaneity by the presence of the Other *ethics*. The strangeness of the Other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my possessions, is

In the section of his work entitled, “Metaphysics Precedes Ontology,” Levinas mounts perhaps his most direct attack against Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. In this piece, Levinas describes Heideggerian ontology as a philosophy deeply oriented by *totality*: since phenomena of alterity absolutely *refuse* to be subjected to totalistic comprehension, the philosopher must invent a new ‘third and neutral term’ in which the incomprehensible can be mediately comprehended and thus divested of its otherness. According to Levinas, for Heidegger the ‘ontological difference (i.e., the divorce of Being from beings)’ is the ‘wherein’ of this third term: namely, ‘*Being*.’ ‘Being,’ as the explicit object of Heideggerian ontology, therefore is the locus of the divestment of the essential alterity manifest in beings that overflow comprehensibility; ‘Being’ *allows* such essentially *exterior* beings to be subsumed under the equivalence of Being *as such and in general*. Thus, Heideggerian ontology forces an irreducible, incomprehensible *difference* into a comprehensible *equivalence*.⁴⁷ Thus, Heidegger’s ontology is implicitly oriented towards an optimum of *totalistic control*, and this orientation automatically *divests* beings of their primordial, infinite otherness. And in thus undertaking his ontological inquiry, Heidegger (and most of Western Philosophy along with him) immediately and *automatically* closes off the ethical dimension. This is because beings in whom ethics is phenomenally manifest are (*qua* beings bearing ethical relationships to oneself) exterior, incomprehensible, *not to be known*; that is to say, they primordially and primarily are as a *demand to be respected in their infinitude*; meanwhile ontological inquiry, which insists on phenomenal encounters with beings that manifest themselves as to be *known* or comprehended, is therefore *inherently contra-ethics*.

precisely accomplished as a calling into question of my spontaneity, as *ethics*” (TI 43, emphasis mine).

⁴⁷ “[T]he relation with someone [subordinated to] a relation with the *Being* [of someone], which, impersonal, permits the apprehension, the domination of the existent, subordinates justice to freedom . . . affirms the primacy of freedom over ethics” (TI 45).

Therefore, Levinas states: “ontology as first philosophy is a philosophy of power” (TI 46). However, it is important to note that ontology can *only be* a philosophy of power *on the basis of encountering something that must be overpowered*. That which must be overpowered in ontological investigations is *otherness*. Therefore, ontology *presupposes* otherness; and since metaphysics⁴⁸ is the philosophy that *primordially deals with otherness*, “ontology presupposes metaphysics” (TI 48); and thus, metaphysics (and thereby *ethics*) precedes ontology.

The philosopher R. J. S. Manning in his work on Levinas and Heidegger suggests that Heidegger’s ‘missteps,’ according to Levinas, count among themselves Heidegger’s inclusion of *fallenness* as a constituent structure of Dasein’s Being, and moreover his insistence on interpreting Dasein through the analytical schema of authenticity and inauthenticity. Manning claims that these foci, according to Levinas, privilege a *solitary, individualized* Dasein as ‘authentic’ or ‘the primordial state of Being.’⁴⁹ Meanwhile, Levinas believes that the *intersubjective* (or rather, social-communal) relationship *constitutes* the human’s primordial ‘being’; thus Heidegger, with his individualized ‘Dasein,’ privileges individual *freedom* over and against intersubjective *respect* or *justice*.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ “The aspiration to radical exteriority, thus called metaphysical” (TI 29). Thus, ‘metaphysics’ essentially consists in the will to *transcendence* of finitude. Therefore, “[i]f . . . ethical relations are to lead transcendence to its term, this is because the essential of ethics is its *transcendent intention*” (TI 29). Therefore, ‘metaphysics’ is inherently *ethical*.

⁴⁹ “Levinas’s argument is . . . [that] due to Heidegger’s notion of fallenness and inauthenticity, his analysis of authentic sociality takes as its subject solitary *Dasein*” (IOH 50).

⁵⁰ “Levinas interprets sociality explicitly otherwise than Heidegger does . . . [namely, as] the *I-you collectivity*” (IOH 51).

II.4. Critical Responses to Heidegger and Ethics

Our project can be distinguished from the bulk of the philosophical critical literature pertaining to the Heidegger-ethics nexus, in that the latter centers around three characteristic syntheses, none of which our project takes-up.

These three characteristic syntheses synthesize: (1) Heidegger's early work exemplified in *Being and Time* with his later work centering around 'the turn'; (2) Heidegger's philosophical work with his involvement as a member of the Nazi Party; and (3) Heidegger's 'ethos of dwelling' as reflected in his "Letter on 'Humanism'" with a conception of ethics similar to Levinas's intersubjective relationship, a conception that privileges interpersonal-ontical ethical dealings.

Two examples of critical approaches centering around *all three* of these syntheses are Joanna Hodge's *Heidegger and Ethics (HE)* and Michael Lewis's *Heidegger and the Place of Ethics (HPE)*. In *HE*, Hodge attempts to rescue an 'ethical' standpoint implicit in Heidegger's work by looking to synthesize later Heidegger's 'originary ethics' with earlier Heidegger's 'fundamental ontology.' She first distinguishes between three conceptions of ethics: ethics as (1) a history of ethical inquiry; (2) an inquiry concerned solely with human beings' well-being, and developing rules derived thereupon; and (3) an inquiry concerned with human beings in relation to difference and otherness (*HE* 1-2). According to Hodge, Heidegger himself, when putting down 'ethics,' only conceives of the first two conceptions of ethics; the latter conception goes explicitly untouched but implicitly suggested in his work.⁵¹ In undertaking her project, Hodge

⁵¹ States Hodge:

Heidegger . . . explicitly rejects the second version of ethics . . . since it takes the question of human flourishing in isolation from the wider context in which human beings find themselves. This is a restricted conception of ethics[;] by contrast . . . I seek to find at work in Heidegger's enquiries an unrestricted conception of ethics concerned not just

thus identifies ‘ethics’ as a relationship with ‘difference and otherness.’ This ethical relationship primordially manifests itself in “the self-constitution of human beings as individuals” (HE 191), which self-constitution culminates in *Entschlossenheit*. And *Entschlossenheit*, as consisting in a “transformation . . . [from] a general structure of openness . . . into a specific, individuated self-affirming recognition of the limited nature of any individual lifespan” (HE 195), therefore results in:

an analysis of *Dasein* that is . . . a description of what it is to be human for which there are three central ethical concerns: taking responsibility for oneself, refusing the temptation to take responsibility for others with the structure of *Dasein*, and recognising differences between self and others. (HE 202)

Ultimately, Hodge claims, *Dasein*’s ‘ethical concerns’ reveal the ontological conditions that constitute an ontically judging, normatively valuating, and character-forming (i.e., ontically *ethical*) entity.

Hodge implies that this understanding of ethics (i.e., relating to one’s self as *self-same* and to others as *Other*)—which is constitutive of the meaning of human Being as analyzed in the existential analytic of *Dasein*—is “linked to the question of human flourishing” (HE 12).

Ultimately, Hodge claims that Heidegger’s implicit understanding of (ethical) human flourishing “on an individual level . . . can be extended to insisting that the affirmation of collective *Dasein* must take place at the level of human beings as a whole” (HE 189).

Hodge also dwells at length upon Heidegger’s involvement in Nazism, engaging in an interesting dialectic with Heidegger’s most vociferous critics, critics who would dismiss his thought as innately *infected* with Nazism. Hodge attempts to defend the position that

with human beings, but with human beings in relation to difference and otherness. (HE 2)

Heidegger's ontology is not through-and-through permeated by Nazism, but rather, that his Nazism is the result of "Heidegger [himself] fall[ing] short of the possibilities of his own thought by . . . step[ping] back into the ground of metaphysics, while failing . . . to affirm the coterminous necessity of taking a step forward into the potentiality of ethics" (*HE* 3).

Lewis's *HPE* more directly approaches these three syntheses than does Hodge's *HE*. Indeed, Lewis begins his argument by stating that his work was "originally designed" in order to "answer[] Levinas's criticisms of Heidegger's stance on ethics" (*HPE* 8). Thus, explicitly moving forward with these syntheses in mind, Lewis attempts to demonstrate the following: it is Heidegger's evolving understanding of 'Being-with' (before and after 'the turn') that accomplishes an 'originary ethics' that is innately *intersubjective* and repudiatory of his prior involvement with Nazism.

In *Being and Time*, according to Lewis, the ontological difference as the *void* or *withdrawal* of Being from beings is *assumed*, but not thought properly. To think this withdrawal properly would be to "think the ontological difference in its very differentiation rather than to think [B]eing and beings in their already differentiated state" (*HPE* 162). For Lewis, this problematical assumption permeating *Being and Time* is most visible in Heidegger's analysis of Being-with as an existientiale. Being-with functions as the *genesis* of the authenticity/inauthenticity schema propounded by Heidegger, which schema problematically generates Heidegger's analysis of the *individualization* of Dasein on the basis of already-differentiated-beings. The beginning of the 'cracking' of this concealed problematic is initiated by Heidegger's brief and 'square-peg' analysis of 'authentic' Being-with.⁵²

⁵² Cf. *SZ* 298.

Lewis' position basically runs as the following: in the call of conscience, Dasein's utter *thrownness unto death* (i.e., *Being-the-null-basis-of-a-void*) is *understandingly* disclosed, and disclosed as that which *each Dasein must take-over*. Thus, Dasein is *individualized*. But the unthought nature of this individualization is its *primordially making-singular*. How is this the case? Conscience first suggests to Heidegger "the opening of a crack in indifference" (HPE 48). That is to say, conscience *singularizes* each Dasein from the unified totality of beings in the face of her death. Thus, conscience attests to Dasein's tearing herself out from this totality, making a space for her own individualized singularity; thus, this is the site of Dasein's *relating to Others as genuinely different*. Thus 'torn-out,' Dasein can now help tear-out other Daseins in true friendship. Thus, in the call of conscience, each Dasein has the possibility of relating to others *as absolutely Other* for the very first time.

But what we have just described here, according to Lewis, is the *differentiation of the ontological difference itself*—that is to say, *Dasein's Being-with-beings-in-their-Being*. Thus, as Dasein's individualization tears Dasein into a *space* in which it bears a closeness to both beings *and* their Being, this individualization *explodes the (in)authenticity schema*. This is because (in)authenticity, as a schema, comprises "determinations of the *understanding . . . eclipsing mood* at the expense of [such] understanding" (HPE 30). That is to say, *inauthentically*, Dasein is *thrown-into* relating to absolutely Other beings, while *authentically*, Dasein projects-upon Being. As thrown-into projecting-upon its own death, however, Dasein understandingly finds itself as an *individual* relating to *others* on the basis of these others' Being other beings.⁵³

⁵³ "To think of Dasein as alternating between two states, authenticity and inauthenticity, is to remain one-sided. Dasein is rather the stretch that opens a rent in the continuum of beings, a betweenness that allows it *genuinely* to be understood as [B]eing-with" (HPE 39).

Thus, Levinasian intersubjectivity (by Lewis's lights: singular beings relating to each other on the basis of their absolute difference from each other) is preserved in the crossing of Heidegger's thought from *Being and Time* to his later work. Moreover, Heidegger's shift in thinking spurred-on by a rethinking of Being-with initiated his properly distancing himself from Nazism:

In Heidegger's acknowledgement that it was precisely *his traumatic political engagement* [with Nazism] and understanding of history that *stirred the future windings of his thought* do we not find his admission that the problem of *[B]eing-with* was precisely the motivation for the crossing of his thought? (*HPE* 41, first two emphases mine)

Thus, in re-thinking Being-with on the basis of a more deeply-thought ontological difference, Heidegger preserves a place for 'originary ethics' as dwelling *with* beings in their Being—i.e., in the ontological differentiation itself.

II.5. Staking out our Project

In contradistinction to the characteristic critical discussions on the Heidegger-ethics nexus that are driven by the three specific syntheses mentioned above—syntheses that, as we briefly analyzed, manifestly function as *driving forces* in *HE* and *HPE*—we operate as attempting *none* of these three syntheses: (1) we admit that *Being and Time*'s explicit aim of 'fundamental ontology' is unsatisfactorily developed; nevertheless, we believe that *Being and Time* still has much to say with regard to *human Being* that is worth listening to. Therefore, we don't *discredit* the insightful analysis within *Being and Time* on the basis of Heidegger's own (later) critiques of its pretensions to 'fundamental ontology'; and therefore, we do not assume that any ethical discussion based in Heidegger must begin with his more fundamentally-ontologically-grounded 'ethos of dwelling.' (2) Heidegger's Nazism is of no concern to us in our project.⁵⁴ And (3) our ethical investigations will not begin from the assumption that Heidegger's 'ethos of dwelling' must be synthesized with a Levinasian account of ethics as ontico-interpersonal;⁵⁵ rather, the only assumption that we begin from is Heidegger's conception of human Being as 'care' in *Being and Time*.

Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to point out one fundamental similarity that our project bears towards those others that we have reviewed. Like Levinas and Lewis, we agree that the *failure* to consider ethical phenomena as constitutive of the human lies in *Being and Time*'s privileging of *fallenness* as one of Dasein's ontological structures; we claim that thus analyzing the human according to this structure, ontico-ethical manifestations are *automatically* and

⁵⁴ Cf. n. 6 above.

⁵⁵ Although we will leave the ontical manifestation of ethics as 'interpersonally located' explicitly *neglected* in this project's analyses, we shall comment in section V on the *reasons* for this neglect and the possibility of phenomenologically taking-up this manifestation at a later time.

categorically conceived of as ‘inauthentic.’ However, in contradistinction to Levinas and Lewis, we do not see this as a reason to chalk up fallenness and the inauthenticity-authenticity schema as a general *failure* in *Being and Time*; rather, we claim that these foci of Heidegger’s analysis simply in the first instance obscure properly *ethical* phenomena, keep such phenomena from manifesting themselves in their true light. That is to say, Heidegger’s focus on fallenness and (in)authenticity *automatically forces* ontical-ethical practices to *conform* to this schema, and in doing so, fails to give fully faithful *sight* and *voice* to these phenomena as possibly constitutive of human Being. Nevertheless, fallenness and (in)authenticity remain *invaluable* foci of analysis that allow innumerable other phenomena to come to the forefront in their unconcealment in Heidegger’s analysis. Therefore, our project’s starting point is not to forever ‘scrap’ fallenness and inauthenticity as analytical foci, but rather to place them on the ‘backburner’ so as to be considered at a later time.

Our project will focus on projection and thrownness as the structures that allow the existential Being of ontical ethical manifestations to reveal itself. Therefore, our re-Interpretation of Heidegger is wholly based on *Being and Time*’s understanding of human Being, and re-Interprets so as to make ethical phenomena fully accessible. That is to say, our work does not *reject Being and Time*; it *re-emphasizes* it according to the hermeneutical-phenomenological methodology.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ What we mean by this is not that our work lacks *any* substantive difference to *Being and Time*, but rather, that insofar as we consider the basis of human Being to reside in the existential-ontological care-structures of projection and thrownness as meaningfully grounded in temporality’s temporalizing itself via the unitary ecstases of future, present, and having-been, our work merely *re-Interprets* or *re-emphasizes* the nature of this meaningful grounding. However, we *do* part *substantive* company with Heidegger’s work insofar as we are not interested in undertaking a *fundamental ontology*, but rather an *anthropological ontology*—something that would be repugnant to Heidegger himself.

III. Being as Narrative

III.1. Thrown Projection into the Ecstasis of Future

To begin with, let us consider the most average and everyday ontical situation: I am going to the post office to deliver a package to a friend of mine who lives out of town. Now, say that you were to stop me on the way, and ask me, “who are you?” My answer to this question would undoubtedly smack of confusion—I would be caught off-guard and struggle to provide you with any answer at all. Ultimately, however, I might say something such as, “I am a philosophy student,” or “I am a son,” or “I am a boyfriend,” or “brother,” “friend,” etc. But if you were to have asked me in the first instance, “what are you doing?” rather than “who are you?” I should have no such trouble answering; I would answer straight-away: “I am going to the post office to deliver a package to my friend. He lives out of town.”

The upshot of this hypothetical analysis of an average and everyday ontical situation is that, proximally and for the most part, I am aware of myself as *that which I am doing*.

But let us draw our hypothetical analysis out even further: imagine the following exchange taking place between you and I: you ask, “why are you sending your friend this package?” Once again, at first I might be put off by your unexpected probing. However, I reply with: “it is his birthday. I thought I would do something nice for him.” But your interrogation is not over still; you ask “why, if it is his birthday, did you think to send him this package?” Finally at this moment, I find myself truly perplexed. I answer, “because that is what a good friend should do,” and quickly walk off in a huff, away from you and your incessant questions.

The above situation is illustrated to provide an example of the ontical occurrence of ‘a probing that probes too far,’ and the resultant perplexity on the part of the probee. Once again, as we have already sketched, the above encounter reveals that proximally and for the most part,

my understanding of myself lies in my immediate *concern*, which is constituted by a ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ and an ‘in-order-to.’ In this average and everyday *projection*, I understand myself as that which I am in the process of doing. However, these immediate, instantaneous projections take place in light of a pre-instantaneous and non-immediate understanding. In other words, *beyond proximal, everyday understanding of myself, there lies more primordial understanding as contextualizing and constituting the proximal*. But this primordial understanding of myself is darkened from my sight; I cannot retrieve it; I walk off in a huff when you probe me too deeply about it.

In order to Interpret this primordially in my understanding of myself, let us consider the phenomena of ‘success’ and ‘failure,’ and see if they might give us some phenomenal access to this meaning. Recall: the world (in its worldhood) manifests itself in references and assignments constituting a totality of equipment as an ‘in-order-to’ on the basis of some ‘for-the-sake-of-which.’ However, this ‘for-the-sake-of-which,’ in turn, is itself part of an ‘in-order-to’ towards a more fundamental ‘for-the-sake-of-which.’ And even this further ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ is a piece of equipment towards some *even further* end.

Now consider the following situation: I am a student who is preparing for a comprehensive exam. Soon, I take the exam. And by the next class, the results are in: I have passed—and with flying colors! In response, I find myself as relieved: the load from my worrying is released. Moreover, I find myself as filled with joy: my parents will surely be happy with the result and proud of their son; my grade is boosted and thus my transcripts will look better, and so I have a better shot of getting into Harvard Law School and becoming a rich lawyer. Of course, finding myself in joy, I do not necessarily have the conscious experience of these thoughts as present-at-hand ‘in’ my mind; rather, what is clear is that the ‘relief’ and ‘joy’

reveal a *network of projections that I am projecting-along*. In other words, this event's outcome *matters* to me because it is an 'in-order-to' towards a 'for-the-sake-of-which,' which in turn is an 'in-order-to' towards a more fundamental 'for-the-sake-of-which,' etc. There is a *continuum* of projections, with each further-along projection reaching ever *closer* to fundamentality as it stands in connection with the others.

To illustrate further, consider the previous case, but with the crucial exception that rather than passing, I have *failed* the exam. Thus, in this instance, I am filled with dread: my parents will be disappointed; my grades and therefore transcripts will suffer as a result, and therefore I will not be getting into Harvard Law School, and I will not be getting that top-flight job with the high salary that I dreamed of. Once again, whether or not these thoughts are present-at-hand in my mind or not, my state-of-mind reflects my corresponding projections, but not as *standalone* projections; rather, my projections are revealed as *projection-continuums*. Thus, my thrownness is accompanied by a projection, and my state-of-mind by understanding: I understand myself as either *moving farther along* or *moving further away from* my fundamental projections on my projection-continuum. In success, I am understandingly disclosed as *moving-forward-towards*; in failure, I am understandingly disclosed as *moving-backwards-from*.

For the sake of economy, we might render as a placeholder for any given 'for-the-sake-of-which' the variable (x). Thus, in success, I am moving-forward-towards- x ; in failure, I am moving-backwards-from- x ; what matters is that in both cases, my movement *is* as a *relation to x*. In my states-of-mind, I find myself (in the above cases) as 'doing well' or 'doing poorly' on the basis of my *thrownness into having to project-along a continuum*. I find myself as 'doing-well' or 'doing-poorly' as thrown into understanding myself in virtue of x .

How might we more generally indicate the phenomenon of the ‘projection-continuum?’

We might state that in this projection-continuum, I understandingly project myself as ‘going-towards-*x*.’ In this instance, *x* represents any given projection *within* a network of projections or *along* a projection-continuum—that is to say, *x* represents any *particular* projection that *is* as *within* a series of interrelated and increasingly fundamental projections. Thus, in any given moment, I *am* as a going-towards-*x*. Proximally and for the most part, I understand myself as my *nearest-by* and *most immediate* projections; *primordially*, however, I understand myself as my most fundamental (and thereby ‘farthest ahead’) projections. Thus, at this stage we might appropriately introduce the phenomenon of a ‘fundamental’ projection: a *fundamental* projection is the most fundamental ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ of a projection-continuum; it is a ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ that is fundamental in such a way as to *automatically generatively constitute the continuum itself*. In other words, in *fundamentally* projecting, I *always automatically am projecting along more proximal, non-fundamental possibilities*. Thus, consider the following example: if I am as going-towards-becoming-a-professional-philosopher, then this ‘becoming a professional philosopher,’ as being done for no other, more fundamental ‘for-the-sake-of-which,’ but as being the *ultimate* for-the-sake-of-which that I am projecting-upon, thus is my *fundamental* projection; and as being my fundamental projection, it automatically *gives birth to a whole projection-continuum*. This projection-continuum might, for instance, include such for-the-sake-of-which(s) as ‘deeply immersing myself in excellent philosophy courses,’ ‘getting good grades,’ ‘going to a top-flight philosophy Ph.D. program,’ etc. These *automatically included* projections along a projection-continuum we call *contingent* projections, as they are *contingent upon a fundamental projection*. Henceforth, as a way of differentiating between fundamental projections and contingent projections, we will designate the former as *x_{fundamental}*,

henceforth simply x_f ; to indicate our contingent projections, we will retain our previous x in its simplicity. Therefore, formally speaking, a projection-continuum is a going-towards- x_f that involves *many* goings-towards- x . Therefore, I primordially understand myself in my $x_f(s)$, although I proximally understand myself in my $x(s)$.

However, before we move along further, we ought to clarify one glaring ambiguity: the question might be raised, ‘can one project-along more than one continuum at one time?’ The answer to this question is of course ‘yes’; at any given moment, I am going-towards-various- $x_f(s)$, and thus, my concerned projections will be on many different continuums, and will not be quite so uni-linearly-understandable. There is not one ‘ultimate’ fundamental projection that ‘rules them all’; and thus, my Being is spread out over various continuums, and my understanding of myself is thus also as such *scattered*.

Thus, we have discussed the human’s phenomenal thrown projection into the ecstasis of future, disclosed via the modes of state-of-mind and understanding; nevertheless, there is still the issue of investigating whether, and if so how, the human projects into her past. We also have the task of analyzing the human’s phenomenal *thrownness* into her ecstases of future and past. And lest we forget, the pesky phenomenon of ‘the ecstatic present’ must be treated in some fashion or other.

III.2. Projection into the Ecstasis of Past

Above, we have stressed that I am, in every instance, as a going-towards- x_f consisting in many contingent and interrelated goings-towards- x as in-order-to(s) oriented towards my x_f , my fundamental and ultimate for-the-sake-of-which.

It is important to note, however, that my Being is not simply a movement *forwards*; it is concomitantly a movement *circling backwards*. This ‘having-been’ of Heidegger’s we will designate according to the (admittedly connotatively encumbered) more traditional term as ‘Past.’⁵⁷ What is the Being of the Past, as a constituent of my Being?

An analysis of the Past might seem simple: some might deem it as nothing other than the present-at-hand (reaching backwards as far as my birth, and as close-by as a moment ago) set of happenings that are behind me in time, and which lead up to my present. But this ordinary Interpretation of the Past fundamentally obscures its true Being as constituting my Being.

We state that the Being of the Past is as ‘that-which-brought-me-to-where-I-am-now-as-going-towards- x_f .’ How might we phenomenologically justify our Interpretation?

Consider the following ontical scenario: I have had a ‘long day at the office,’ and I come home, exhausted. After I get in the door, I take my coat off, drop my things down, and walk into my living room. My wife is there, and she loves me; therefore, she is interested in my life, and asks me: “how was your day?” I respond, “fine,” and grunt, feeling the weight of my exhaustion. She pursues: “what happened today at the office? What were you up to?” Thus, what follows in this exchange is a sequential rehashing of events, explained in terms of each other (e.g., ‘I worked until lunchtime, then got a bite to eat with Bill and Susan, then we all went back to the office’) and running-up until this very moment of speech. Thus, my proximal Past

⁵⁷ We capitalize ‘Past’—thus differentiating it from the ordinary usage—in order to indicate the systematic way in which the Past fundamentally *is* as constituting human Being.

has a Being that corresponds to the phrase, ‘that-which-brought-me-here-now.’ That is to say, my proximal Past is *automatically understood and interpreted as* ‘those-happenings-that-brought-me-here.’ Importantly, this is *not* to say that, primarily, my Past is as a present-at-hand set of happenings that are temporally behind me; rather, my Past *simply is* a ‘*bringing-me-here*’; without a ‘*bringing-me-here*,’ the phenomenal Past ceases to *be* entirely.

But thus far, we have only analyzed the *proximal* Past; what can we say about the *distant* or *whole* Past? Indeed, the whole Past has a *vastness* to it that seems overwhelming. Is there some way that this all-consuming vastness of the whole Past can be deeply related to a ‘here and now’ as my proximal Past has been shown to be? Indeed, we can say that our whole Past is related to our ‘here and now,’ but in a much more *fundamental and primordial manner* than our proximal Past. Indeed, we can say that, *primordially*, the Being of the Past is as a ‘that-which-brought-me-here-now-as-going-towards- x_f .’ That is to say, my Past is always understood as *along my projection-continuums*.

For example, consider the following case: say that my x_f , in this case, is ‘becoming a lion-tamer.’ Therefore, my Being is, on this one projection-continuum, a ‘going-towards-becoming-a-lion-tamer.’ Thus, what relationship does my Past stand in to this continuum? My Past is, namely, my ‘how-I-got-to-be-going-towards-becoming-a-lion-tamer,’ or rather, ‘that-which-brought-me-here-now-as-going-towards-becoming-a-lion-tamer.’ Therefore, say that you were to direct me, “tell me about your past”; I respond as understanding my Past as the following: I tell you that I was ‘born to become a lion tamer,’ or rather, that I was born ‘not understanding my destiny as becoming a lion-tamer’; in progressively telling you my ‘story,’ I cite my first trip to the zoo wherein I saw the majesty of lions for the first time, and knew that I had to be nearer to them than beyond this caged pen; I cite my childhood enthrallment with *The*

Lion King, my first trip to the circus, wherein I saw a ‘lion tamer’ in action for the first time; I cite my first job sweeping up the feces from the circus animals with Barnum & Bailey, my eventually joining the troupe and leaving home, etc. When you ask me about my *whole* Past, I answer with a sequential description of interconnected events, *all understood in relation to my fundamental projection or projection-continuum*, understood as *bringing-me-here-now-as-going-towards-x_f*.

But now consider that I no longer want to become a lion tamer; that is to say, consider that my x_f has changed from ‘becoming a lion tamer’ to ‘developing a lifelong romance with Maxine the trapeze artist.’ Suddenly, my whole understanding of my Past is uprooted: now when you ask me to explain my Past, I might explain the history of my romantic entanglements and heartbreaks as leading to my romantic engagement with Maxine. I would now answer by saying that ‘I was born a romantic,’ describing my pre-school girlfriend Kirstie as my first romantic self-expression, following that up with an account of my first date with Natalie at 13, when I got my first kiss; I might explain the significance of my first viewing of *When Harry Met Sally* as speaking such deep truths to me about myself and romantic love that could not be denied; finally, I would describe my first encounter with Maxine: seeing her gracefully do twirls and backflips on the trapeze, the way time slowed down to reflect her balletic movements; ‘this,’ I would tell you, ‘was the first time that I knew, truly, that I was in love, and that this was the woman I would marry.’ When you respond by inquiring into my lost dream of becoming a lion-tamer (‘what ever happened to that?’), I will simply brush this former x_f off as a ‘flight of youthful fancy’ or a ‘distraction from my true dream of marrying Maxine.’

Thus, the primordial Being of the Past, as it is a constituent of my primordial understanding of my Being, is as a ‘that-which-brought-me-here-now-as-going-towards- x_f .’ But once more before moving on, we must pause to clear the air of any confusions that might arise.

Some might say that our descriptions have portrayed my projected Past as ‘too simplistic’ or ‘too linear,’ objecting that, if someone were to ask me about my Past, I would not have such a ready-to-hand line of interconnected events to narrate. However, this over-simplification we admit; it was merely for the sake of starkly illustrating our point. But what is pertinent from our analysis should be the following: one’s *understanding* of the Past is always constituted *in relation to one’s going-towards- x_f* ; one’s Past is *always already understood as a bringing-onself-to-one’s-presently-going-towards*. Therefore, it is likely that any ambiguities in answering the request to ‘explain one’s Past’ arise not on the basis of one’s understanding being something other than this, but rather on the basis of one’s $x_f(s)$ being various and disparate; thus, as one’s projected *Being* is scattered across manifold projection-continuums, so one’s understanding of one’s Past is similarly scattered.

III.3. Thrownness into the Ecstasis of Past

We now will phenomenally attest to the human's thrownness into her Past. What Heidegger briefly mentions as "tenaciousness" (SZ 264) will provide a clue for our analysis to come. Nevertheless, we will Interpret this phenomenon differently, and thus, we will accord it a new term, so as not to confuse it with Heidegger's Interpretation: namely, we will discuss the phenomenon as *entrenchedness*.

What is the Being of one's thrown Past as necessarily related to one's going-towards- x_f ? The phenomenon of entrenchedness provides a clue. Entrenchedness is a mode of Being-towards one's Past. When Heidegger mentions this same phenomenon with the term 'tenaciousness,' he discusses it as a mode of *fallenness*, in the sense that one's authentic potentiality-for-Being is concealed as one 'grips onto' one's Past.

When *we* discuss this phenomenon, however, as 'entrenchedness,' we will treat it not as a mode of *fallenness or inauthenticity*, but rather, as a basic mode of Being-towards one's Past, one that is entirely due to the human's constitutive thrownness into her Past (i.e., my having-to-have-a-Past). Thus Heidegger's analysis is not so much *denied* as it is re-Interpreted, in line with the aims of our project as uncovering the Being of ethics.

When we say that the human is *entrenched* in her Past, we state something like the following: the human is highly invested in her projected Past (i.e., in her particular that-which-brought-me-here-as-going-towards- x_f)—whose basis, as discussed, lies in her projection-upon-possibility into the ecstatical future (i.e., her particular x_f)—and thus, is *resistant to* give up her current x_f and project-upon some new possibility, giving her a new x_f , and thus, a new that-which-brought-me-here. The state-of-mind by which the mode of Being underlying the phenomenon of entrenchedness as our Being-thrown-into-having-a-Past is disclosed to us is

reluctance. This term implies two senses, both of which obtain in it as a state-of-mind: (1) a sense of being reluctant *towards* something (i.e., reluctant to do something), and (2) a sense of being reluctant *from* something (i.e., on the basis of something). We are reluctant *towards* some new possibility-of-Being, or rather, towards some new fundamental possibility of Being implying a wholly new projection-continuum; we are reluctant *from* (on the basis of) our Being entrenched in our Past—that is to say, our Being-invested-in-our-current-that-which-brought-me-here-as-going-towards- x_f . In reluctance, the Being of the Past as entrenchedness is disclosed.

To illustrate the above analysis, consider an example: Esther and I have been dating for the last nine years, and during most of that time, she was the love of my life—the woman I thought I surely would marry. But recently, I met Jennifer, and I am enthralled by her. In fact, I am so enthralled by her that I am seriously considering the possibility of being with her. But in order to be with Jennifer, I would have to break up with Esther. I find myself resistant to the idea of this—I think about all the moments Esther and I have enjoyed together, I consider the years that we have been together, the dreams long-held of our future marriage. Thus, I am *entrenched* in my Past in such a way that I am *held to* my projection upon the possibility of marrying her.

Of course, we must keep in mind that this phenomenal ‘entrenchedness’ does not in principle refer to anything like some present-at-hand psychological state; rather, it refers to one of the human’s ontological structures—one of the true constituents of her Being (which, as we have discussed, is as a going-towards- x). Namely, the constituent of her Being that entrenchedness signifies is ‘that-which-holds-me-to-my-current- x_f .’ This is a mode of thrownness in that, although it has to do with projection (in the sense of keeping me projecting,

holding me to my current x_f), our focus in discussing it specifically is that *it is an influence on one's projection on the basis of one's being thrown-into one's Past.*

However, our discussion of our Being as constituted by thrownness into our Past is not yet complete: the phenomenon of entrenchedness, and our revealing its mode of Being as a 'that-which-holds-me-to-my-current- x_f ,'⁵⁸ requires further clarification.

As noted above, the phenomenon of entrenchedness reveals to us both a Being-entrenched in the sense of *holding-onto* one's Past, and a Being-entrenched in the sense of *holding-off-from* a change in one's x_f (i.e., one's projection-upon some fundamental possibility that generatively constitutes a whole *continuum* of dependent projections, acting as a sort of 'roadmap' to attaining one's fundamental possibility-of-Being). The latter of these senses of Being-entrenched has been demonstrated sufficiently: namely, that one holds-off-from a change in one's x_f on the basis of one's holding-onto one's current Past. However, the former of these senses (holding-onto one's current Past) has been taken merely as a given, and has not yet received its due treatment. Below, we undertake this treatment.

What does it mean to say that one is entrenched in one's Past in the sense of *holding-onto* it? On what basis does one hold-onto one's Past? To begin answering these questions, let us call to mind a common saying: 'I am my Past,' or 'you are your Past,' or 'we are our Pasts.' Now, connect this to some other common sayings: 'we are what we do,' or 'we are our deeds,' or 'in the end, we all are judged on what we have done,' or 'actions speak louder than words.' Of course, these common sayings are murky and confused in what they actually signify.

⁵⁸ For the sake of reminding the reader: recall that x_f does not simply refer to a fundamental projection—as in, some free-floating fundamental possibility-of-Being. But recall that the *basis* for calling this projection a 'fundamental' one is that it is *fundamental to a projection-continuum*. That is to say, it is the ultimate and culminating possibility-of-Being embedded within a series of dependent possibilities-of-Being.

Nevertheless, these bits of passed-down ‘wisdom,’ when properly clarified, offer us an entryway into the phenomenon of ‘holding-onto’ our Past.

What these bits of ‘wisdom’ all point towards is the importance of an *attestation to my existence*. Since my Being is phenomenally characterized by its *being an issue for me*, it therefore is constituent of my Being that I look to *resolve* this issue. Now, recall what this issue precisely is: namely, a sort of *unfinishedness* or *indefiniteness* in my Being—in other words, I am constituted as such that I must *make* something of myself, and I must make something of myself *newly again at every moment*. Any ‘making-something-of-myself’ will always be concretized as *existentiell*. Thus, *existentially*, I am ontologically constituted so as to resolve myself *existentielly*. Thus, in Being-existentially-thrown-into ‘resolving’ this issue, I look for something *existentiell, complete, and definite*. Where do I look for this? Not to my future—for my future is the most seemingly mutable part of my Being: I could always project on some new possibility, I could always do something different—in fact, I haven’t even *yet done anything that I can conceive of with any definiteness*. Certainly not to my present: for the present is the most ephemeral phenomenon in my existence—where can I even *find* the present? It is not *now*, for this ‘now’ that I speak of has already happened, and has slipped into my Past; and it is not ‘soon to come,’ for this lies in my future. Thus, I cannot speak with any *certainty* or *existentiell definiteness* about my present.

But should I then look to my Past? Phenomenally, I find that the Past is given to me as ‘that-which-brought-me-here’; but another way of phrasing this is as ‘that-which-I-have-done-to-get-here’ (indeed *consciously*, it is conceived of as this latter interpretation; however, concretely and proximally, it tends towards the former interpretation). And since, phenomenally, one finds one’s Past—or rather, the Being of the Past in general—is ‘behind me,’ my Past is therefore my

existentiell Being that is behind me, and thus, as being behind me, is ontically ‘immutable.’ Thus, while the other temporal constituents of my Being are disclosed to me as ‘ephemeral,’ or ‘mutable,’ or ‘indefinite,’ I do not proximally look existentially towards them as a means to resolving the issue of my existential-ontological Being. Rather, I look towards my ontical-existentiell Past, which *as being behind me* is immutable, solid, and inflexible: that is to say, it is disclosed to me as *a certainty, a rigid definiteness*. Thus, my Past is the ‘well that I draw from’ in order to resolve the issue of my Being; or rather, its Being is as an *attestation to my existentiell Being*. But this entails one further implication: my ontical-existentiell Past is my ‘objective’ Being; it is disclosed not only *existentially, but also existentielly* as outside of my control, as that which I am *thrown-into*. I ‘carry’ my Past *existentially* as *existentielly*: my *throwness* is utterly disclosed as having-to-have-a-Past; since my Past is behind me, it is something that is disclosed to me in my everyday experience as *outside of my ‘control.’*⁵⁹ There is an element of truth to this: the ‘things that have been done’ certainly cannot be undone; I can never ‘move backwards’ in time. However, this truth is distorted when I interpret the phenomenon of my Past in my existentiell everydayness: because I cannot *be* as going-backwards in time, I interpret the Past as *wholly* immutable. What is thus covered over in my everydayness is the complete mutability of the *meaning* and *significance* of my Past. And since, as we discussed above, the Past is primordially my ‘that-which-brought-me-here,’ it *fundamentally can be changed, insofar as my ‘that-which-brought-me-here’ changes with every relinquished and newly added x_f*.

⁵⁹ Sartre develops an interestingly different position on the objectification of the existing human from herself. While we state that the existing human is always *existentielly* ‘outside of her own control’ based on her *purely own* existential-ecstatico-temporal-ontological structures, Sartre states that the existing human’s ‘self’ is objectified only in the encounter with the *Other’s* freedom: “the Other does not constitute me as an object for myself but *for him*” (BN 275). Thus, while we assert that our ‘objectified’ human Being is disclosed as *unchangeably rigid*, we do not assert, as does Sartre, that ‘that-which-is-objectified’ is a “stranger [to me]” whom “I accept responsibility for” (BN 274).

Nevertheless, in entrenchedness, the true Being of my Past as a mutable ‘that-which-brought-me-here’ is disclosed, for in my Being-entrenched, I am pre-theoretically aware of the fact that a new x_f entails a new Past. And as we saw above, my pre-theoretical awareness of this is the basis of my holding-off-from a new x_f . But this basis, above conceived of as a ‘holding-onto,’ need not imply the illusory understanding of Past as immutable; rather, in my holding-onto-my-Past, it is implied that *I can lose my Past*, and thus, my Past as mutable is concretely disclosed to me. Previously, this ‘holding-onto’ was in need of clarification, but the immediately foregoing stands-in as this clarification: this ‘holding-onto’ has its basis in the Being of my Past as *that-which-attests-to-my-existential-Being*. Thus, I hold onto my current Past because in relinquishing it, I also relinquish this attestation to my existential Being, and thus, the key to the resolution of my existential Being. The state-of-mind associated with this prospective relinquishing is *lostness*.

Finding myself in such lostness, my thrownness into my Past as an attestation-to-my-existential-Being is disclosed to me in the mode of my not-being-able-to-attest-to-myself. In this state-of-mind, I find myself thrown into my Past as needing-to-attest-to-my-existential-Being, yet I am unable to find any reliable sense of myself that would allow me such an attestation. In such a state of mind, my Being is indicated by the following phrases: ‘I don’t know who I am anymore,’ ‘I feel so lost,’ ‘what should I do?’

As an illustration of lostness and the Being of the Past that it discloses as that-which-attests-to-my-existential-Being, consider the following example: I am sitting at my desk in my cubicle in the office building of the Fortune 500 company that employs me, reviewing various reports. As usual, these reports are dry, boring, and make me feel quite dead inside. Suddenly, I put them down, and stare off into the dull, gray wall of my cubicle: it occurs to me that I could

do something else. What else should I do? My thoughts run rampant, but don't alight on anything in particular; nevertheless, what is at once starkly clear is that I ought to quit this job, and find something else to do. Soon, however, my thoughts drift from this open future towards my Past: but I have worked at this company for fifteen years, but I have run faxes, constructed proposals, sold projects, made alliances, defended the quality of my work, achieved several promotions, and now make a fat salary; I have come to this office five mornings per week for the last fifteen years; I have poured my blood, sweat, and tears into this job—how could I give it up?⁶⁰ I once again consider this future possibility of quitting my job, which now seems dimmer and dimmer: what would I do? Who would I meet? What kind of person would I become? I find myself as disconnected from my Past, and I feel lost. I decide, for the moment, not to consider such possibilities anymore; I pick up the reports again, I feel comfortable, safe, and *rooted* in this task. I am *entrenched* in my Past; I can attest to my existentiell Being; I hold onto my projection into the future along the same x_f (that of being an executive at a Fortune 500 company) that currently constitutes my existentiell Being.

Thus, I have attempted to demonstrate the Being of the Past as regards thrownness. To recapitulate: my Being as thrown into my Past can be characterized as entrenchedness: this entrenchedness comprises my Being-entrenched in my Past (holding-onto my Past), which is based on the Being of the Past as *that-which-attests-to-my-existentiell-Being*, which is disclosed by the state-of-mind of lostness, wherein I find myself as not being able to attest to myself; this Being-entrenched in my Past also keeps me from sighting and projecting upon possibilities other than my current x_f (i.e., holding-off-from-new-possibilities). I am *thrown into* my Past as a that-

⁶⁰ The reader should note, as is always the case, that it is not important that these thoughts are explicitly spoken or present-at-hand in my mind; rather, it matters that my Being at this moment is oriented around this looking-to-attest-to-myself.

which-attests-to-my-existential-Being; in needing to resolve my *existential* Being, I am thrown into my Past as an-attestation-that-holds-me-to-my-current[existential]- x_f .

Remember that one must keep in mind the above discussion in section III.2 of my projection into my Past: namely, I project into my Past as the that-which-brought-me-here in my going-towards- x_f . This is disclosed to me via my *understanding* myself as going-towards- x_f and then *interpreting* my Past as that-which-brought-me-here-now-as-going-towards- x_f .

III.4. Thrown Projection into the Ecstasis of Present

In everyday parlance, we speak of things that we term ‘orientations.’ What is an ‘orientation?’ In this everyday parlance, an orientation might be considered some present-at-hand ‘perspective’ or ‘way of perceiving’ or ‘meaning and value-laden approach’ to the world. Indeed, statements such as ‘I have [this or that] perspective’ imply a predication-relationship: I primarily ‘am’ and secondarily am predicated-upon by the property of ‘orientation.’ But can the phenomenon of ‘orientation’ be interpreted as primordially existential-ontological, as a constituent of my Being as constituted by a thrown projection into the ecstatical future and Past?

To be oriented is not simply to be imbued, or to have inhering in oneself, an ‘approach’ to ‘life’ or ‘reality.’ If the concept of ‘orientation’ keeps falling back on this idea of an ‘approach’ is there some basis for its falling back on this? Indeed there is. Consider: one might rephrase ‘I have an orientation’ as ‘I am oriented,’ or rather, ‘my Being is constituted by my Being-oriented.’ Therefore, we might ask: what is the meaning of Being-oriented? In answering this question, let us dissect the operant terms: ‘Being’ and ‘oriented,’ in reverse order.

‘Orient’ with all its subsequent suffixes indicates something like ‘to arrange,’ ‘to locate,’ ‘to determine a direction.’ Thus, how can we understand one’s Being-oriented as one’s Being ‘arranged,’ ‘located,’ or ‘directionalized?’ To be arranged is to be *organized*, to be located is to be *found* somewhere, to be directionalized is to be *facing* somewhere. A unitary indication of ‘orientation’ might be phrased, then, as the following: ‘found as in an organized context facing towards something.’

What about *Being-oriented*? This piece is simple and redundant: to be humanly is to be existingly—that is to say, to be in such a way that one’s Being is an issue. In this regard we are following Heidegger in our analysis, but re-Interpreting Heidegger’s existential analytic in

regards to an existentially-ontologically constitutive projection-continuum: to exist as a going-towards- x_f -brought-here-now-by-an-attestation-to-my-existential-Being. Thus, my Being is constituted by a thrown projection-continuum consisting in a 'where I have been' and a 'where I am going,' with the two being basically connected.

Thus, my Being-oriented is my finding-myself-along-a-projection-continuum. The 'organizing context' of my Being is this continuum: my world and my Being *are* in relation to this continuum; they are organized around my x_f . The 'foundness' or 'locatability' of my Being consists in my 'placement' along my projection-continuum: as a becoming x_f , what has brought me here? How far, or what more, must I 'go' or 'undergo' until I become x_f ? Finally, my *facing* somewhere is my facing *forwards* to my future as towards- x_f and my facing *backwards* towards my Past as the 'that-which-brought-me-here[-as-going-towards- x_f].'

Therefore, we can appropriately designate one's Being-oriented as one's thrown projection into one's ecstatical present. For what *is* the present other than my *instantaneous* 'being-brought-here-now-by-an-attestation-to-my-existential-Being-as-going-towards- x_f ?' In other words, my present is as a Being-arranged[-within-an-existential-projection-continuum], Being-locatable[-as-'where-I-am'-in-terms-of-distantiality-between-my-Past-and-future], and Being-directionalized[-as-brought-here-as-going-towards- x_f]. Thus, my Being-oriented is the existential-ontological expression for my Being-thrown into projecting as ecstatically present.

III.5. Conclusion

Ultimately, I am an entity with a unitary Being. While heretofore, we have discussed the constituents of my Being in separate sections, we must always keep in mind that all along we have had the entirety of my Being in mind. Now to recapitulate and reformulate: my Being-towards my Past is indicated by the following: ‘that-which-brought-me-here-now-that-attests-to-my-existential-Being.’ My Being-towards the future is indicated by the following: ‘going-towards- x_f .’ My Being-towards the present is indicated as ‘Being-oriented.’ Our ‘ x_f ’ is a signifier used to stand-in for the concept of a fundamental projection. What is a fundamental projection? Namely, some ultimate or culminating possible state-of-Being embedded in an implicit projection-continuum that comprises a series of dependent possibilities-of-Being that lead me to this fundamental possibility-of-Being.

Thus, what is a unitary statement of my Being? **Namely, I am as a ‘Being-oriented-as-a-going-towards-a-fundamental-projection-along-a-projection-continuum-brought-here-now-by-a-that-which-brought-me-here-that-attests-to-my-existential-Being.’** Of course, this is a highly cumbersome—both uneconomical in terms of space, and unintuitive in terms of indicative ability—statement of my Being. Therefore, to stand in as an indicative signifier for the unitary conception of my Being as stated and demonstrated above in (III.1-4), I will henceforth employ the term ‘*Narrative*.’ **I am existentially as narrative. My existential Being, the *unity* of the *structures* constituting my existential narratives, is Narrative-Being.**

I have chosen to designate the unitary phenomenon of human Being as *Narrative* because this term unitarily indicates human Being: consider that ontically, we speak of ‘narratives’ as ‘narrative lines,’ or rather, plotlines. A plotline consists in a series of depicted events connected by virtue of their leading to some culminating state of affairs (the end of the narrative line). At

any given moment within a narrative line, the depicted events are portrayed and understood as leading-to-some-culminating-state-of-affairs, or rather, *as bounding towards the ending of the narrative line.*

This indicates human Being: at any given moment within its endpoints, a ‘narrative’ is as a *going-towards-the-endpoint*. The present is understood as an *oriented-going-towards-the-endpoint*; the future (that-which-is-to-come-narratively) is understood as a *going-towards-the-endpoint*. It is only a narrative’s *endpoint* (i.e., the final state-of-Being towards which the depicted events are bounding) and thus its *future* that makes its unitary structure intelligible *as a line*: for it is only a ‘line’ insofar as it is the unitary ‘that-which-brings-the-narrative-to-the-endpoint.’ And as such a ‘bringing-towards-the-endpoint,’ we can therefore say that what we ontically speak of as a ‘narrative line’ is analogous to the ontological structure of the projection-continuum.

While the immediately foregoing discussion has explicitly focused on how ‘narrative’ indicates human Being as regards the ecstatic *future*, it has done much of the analysis for us as regards indicating human Being temporalizing itself via the ecstatic *Past*: a ‘narrative line,’ as being a projection-continuum of sorts, is the that-which-brings-the-narrative-to-its-endpoint. Thus, in its backwards-facing Being—i.e., at any given point within the narrative, whatever lies behind as ‘having already been told/read/seen/narrated/etc.’—the narrative line is as a *that-which-brought-the-narrative-here-now-as-going-towards-the-endpoint*. Thus, ‘narrative’ indicates the disclosive *Past* of the human. Additionally, while a narrative’s future—although the driving and organizing force of the narrative in general in the manner described above—is always an indefinite and undecided thing (i.e., it is never clear exactly *how* or *where* the narrative line will go, even though it is inevitable that it goes somehow and somewhere), a narrative’s Past

is disclosed as definite, decided, and constitutive for the Being-here-and-now of any given moment within the narrative (constitutive in virtue of its Being that-which-brought-it-here-now). Therefore, the narrative's Past also *is* (its Being is) as *attesting-to-the-narrative* (the 'narrative' *qua* its *particular* narrative *line*) at any given moment. Thus, the unitary statement for the Being of 'narrative' is as follows: oriented-going-towards-the-endpoint-along-a-projection-continuum-brought-here-now-by-a-Past-that-attests-to-the-narrative (*qua* its particular narrative line).

Therefore, the term 'narrative' signifies this Being that we have formerly Interpreted as essentially *human Being*. Moreover, this term's connotations usefully indicate the essential structure of human Being as *interpretive* or *hermeneutical*. Just as the primary relationship that receivers of narratives hold to the narrative is *interpreting the narrative* [text, scenes, depictions, etc.], the primary relationship that human Being has to itself is also interpretive: in *projecting-upon an x_t* , our Being is already-automatically organized and interpreted around this projection in the form of a continuum of contingent projections that, in projecting-upon x_f , one necessarily also projects-upon.

However, this also leads us to one disclaimer that we must state with regard to the analogy between human Being and what we ontically call 'narratives: it is important to distinguish that, in the latter, the meaning-givers are neatly (if indefinitely) divided amongst author, character, and audience; meanwhile, in the former, the individual human (each *Dasein*)—while in some sense only a 'character,' with one's cultural heritage functioning as one's 'author' and one's society functioning as one's 'audience'—is fundamentally *at once author, character, and audience*: we 'write,' 'act out,' and 'analyze' our Being from our individualized standpoint. To be human is to be at once author, protagonist, and critic. But this matter does not concern *this*

project; rather, *our project* focuses on the fact that **my *existential-ontological Being* is**
***Narrative-Being*, my *existentiell projection-continuums* are my narratives or narrative lines.**

IV. Narrative and Ethics

IV.1. Staking out our Grounds

Having Interpreted human Being existentially-ontologically—that is to say, primordially—we have now laid the foundations for a thorough and systematic discussion of the existential-ontological Being of ethics.

But then, the first question that must be asked is the following: is ethics, truly and properly considered, an *existential*? In other words, is ethics something essential to our existential Being? Would it perhaps be more proper to discuss ethics as a *cognitive* phenomenon? Or perhaps as an *objectively* (i.e., mind-independently) encounterable set of entities?

There are several related responses to this initial roadblock that should quiet all such objections: (A) ethics is phenomenally encountered by the human—whether or not it is *essential* to her Being is an open question, until demonstrated thoroughly one way or the other; however, it should be noted that *all phenomena*, as being encountered by us, *must have some connection to our fundamental Being, even if that connection is trivial*. Thus, our task of Interpreting ethics in relation to our existential-ontological Being is still appropriate and indeed necessary if we are to gain any clarity as to the Being of this phenomenon. (B) Discussing ethics as either a merely ‘cognitive’ phenomenon, or rather as an ‘objective’ phenomenon pre-supposes an ontological Interpretation of the human being as having some ‘mental’ feature—as Heidegger discusses at length,⁶¹ this ontological Interpretation of the human as a ‘mental’ thing problematically assumes an inside-outside relationship between the human and reality. What is a ‘mind?’ Why must we characterize reality as ‘that which is outside the mind?’ This Interpretation of the human being is

⁶¹ Cf. SZ 62.

(1) reliant on a problematic metaphysical tradition which Interprets the meaning of Being as ‘presence-at-hand,’ and (2) *disconnected from its ontological roots*—it considers these ‘cognitive’ or ‘objective’ features without considering how these ontical ‘features’ are grounded in a particular ontological Interpretation. Thus, our analysis of ethics, if undertaken phenomenologically (that is to say, *primordially*), must in the first instance rid itself of these linguistic constructions that our current conceptualizing of ethics is stuck in. We must go back to the phenomenon itself, and inquire into how it is related to our Being as Narrative. Although it is possible that our analysis will, in the end, reaffirm our inherited understanding of ethics as ‘inside the mind’ or ‘outside the mind,’ it must *demonstratively* do or not do this.

Having cleared the ground of these initial worries, we can proceed with confidence in our analysis. Recall: our question is: what is the Being of ethics, as it relates to our essential Being, which we have Interpreted as Narrative? As with any analysis or inquiry, we must be guided by a pre-theoretical understanding of ‘what-is-to-be-analyzed’ or ‘what-is-to-be-inquired-about.’⁶² Our fore-having is the horizon of our fore-sight and fore-conceptualizing. Thus, when speaking of ethics, we understand phenomenally something that we have formerly deemed as ‘normative,’ or ‘imperative,’ or ‘universally imperative,’ or ‘good and evil.’ However, these ontical senses of ethics are loaded with implicit and presupposed ontological meanings handed-down through tradition, and as such, we will for the moment reject them as *explicative* of ethics; however, they are nonetheless *indicative* of ethics. Since ‘ethics’ is thus ontically manifest in reality, even these perhaps improperly grounded ways of speaking about ethics must light the way to the original, *primordially-encountered* phenomenon.

⁶² “Every inquiry is a seeking. Every seeking gets guided beforehand by what is sought” (SZ 5).

Thus, how can we characterize the phenomenon primordially? It must be exhibited in relation to my Being as Narrative, which signifies my Being-oriented-as-going-towards-x_f-brought-here-by-a-Past-that-attests-to-my-existential-Being. We will thus, in our efforts, analyze phenomenal *immorality* through the phenomena of *antagonism* and *underminingness*.

IV.2. Immorality via Antagonism

In the phenomenon of antagonism, I find myself thrown into a situation understood as opposing or standing against me. That which I understand as standing against me I sometimes understand as ‘being in my way,’ and other times as ‘going against me.’ In the first instance, what is antagonizing me is *blind to its opposing me*; in the second instance, what is antagonizing me is *purposive in its opposing me*; nevertheless, in both modes, my situation is disclosed as ‘opposing me.’

But my situation can only *oppose* me if I am *trying for something*. And of course, *I am always trying for something: my Being as Narrative is fundamentally constituted by a going-towards-xf*. At every moment, I am a project who projects-upon certain possibilities-of-Being. I *understand myself* (am primordially disclosed to myself) as working-towards (or going-towards) actualizing these possibilities; thus, that-which-stands-against-me is more formally stated as that-which-opposes-my-becoming-xf. My thrownness into ‘Being-opposed’ is disclosed via my state-of-mind: this might take the form of ‘irritation,’ ‘outrage,’ etc.; in any case, I find myself as ‘having-to-deal-with’ that-which-opposes me.

Consider the following example: having left the house a few minutes later than usual, I am driving to work, anxious that I might be late. Instantaneously, I *am*, and proximally understand myself, as a *going-towards-getting-to-work-on-time*. As I am pulling out of my neighborhood and heading towards the highway, I look ahead: red brake lights and honking horns—indeed, I have left too late, and will be stuck in rush hour traffic. But this ‘traffic’ *is not* primarily as a present-at-hand mass of cars that is secondarily ‘imbued’ with the property of opposing my ends; rather, it truly (i.e., phenomenally) *is* as a standing-against-me. I find myself as ‘irritated’ or ‘exasperated’ in the face of it: I understand myself as going-towards-getting-to-

work-on-time, and thus, I am thrown into confronting this opposition. In other words, my world is *automatically organized around this proximally projected-upon possibility-of-Being*: that which *assists* me is ‘good,’ ‘to-be-sought-after,’ or ‘to-be-followed’; that which *opposes* me is ‘bad,’ ‘to-be-avoided,’ or ‘must-be-overcome.’ In my everyday concern, my *evaluations* are automatically organized around my projections [my *x(s)*]; that which is *antagonistic* automatically *is* as ‘bad.’

‘But,’ you might object, ‘you have only discussed the general phenomenon of finding-things-valuable; what you have neglected to distinguish between are different kinds of value: namely, prudential, moral, and aesthetic. It seems to me that you have only discussed *prudential* value, and have left moral value unaccounted-for.’

There are two responses to this: even in my everyday, non-fundamental projections and understandings of myself, that which *antagonizes me* is not only ‘to-be-avoided,’ but also is ‘unfair,’ ‘ought not to be the case.’ Consider that when I am mired in this traffic, the seconds tick by, and the unlikelihood of my getting to work on time increasingly dawns on me, and thus so does the likelihood of my impending *failure* to fulfill my proximal projection. As this occurs, I find myself ‘fuming,’ ‘furious,’ ‘upset,’ or ‘in control of my emotions.’ These states-of-mind disclose my thrownness, my having-to-deal-with the situation; however, it is notable that, proximally, these states-of-mind that I find myself in all take a similar character: I am ‘fuming’ or ‘furious,’ ‘upset’ or ‘in control of my emotions’ *in the face of this traffic*; but what my states of mind are *about* is my failing to become that which I narratively project-upon Being; they all *are* in relation to this projection. Thus, the ontological structure of my reaction to the phenomenon of antagonism is as follows: outrage against some thing or situation on the basis of

its *cutting me off from whom I am as going-towards*; that is to say, on the basis of its destruction of my existentiell narratives.

I am outraged not merely because something is in my way that is non-advantageous, as would be the case in a phenomenon corresponding to something like ‘prudential value’—it is not the case that I *rationally evaluate* my situation, find it to ‘not be prudent,’ and then direct my outrage outwards towards that which impedes me as a way of psychologically purging myself, or as a way of *prudently asserting myself*. Rather, I am outraged *on an ontological basis: my very existentiell Being is at stake; my narrative faces impending destruction*; in my outrage at that which antagonizes me, the world is disclosed to me not as merely ‘unsuitable to my aims,’ but rather as ‘unfair to my existentiell Being’ (i.e., as antagonizing *my* given going-towards- x_f).

But it is important to bear in mind that this projection of ‘getting to work on time’ is not free-floating: rather, it is a projection *embedded* within a projection-continuum, or narrative line: I am not upset about being late to work as such; I am upset about being late to work as this being late e.g., puts me in bad standing with my boss, or makes me a bad employee, or will result in my being fired. And these bases for being outraged about being antagonized are not free-floating themselves, either: they are, in turn, based on more fundamental projections.

Thus, in the phenomenon of antagonism, that which antagonizes me is proximally disclosed as ‘unfair’ or ‘ought-not-to-be-the-case’; this unfairness and ought-not-ness, in turn, is based on its destruction of my existentiell Being in the form of my narrative(s). The phenomenal value that I encounter in the world is automatically organized around my Narrative-Being.

But the other response we might give is that perhaps it seems that we have obscured the analysis of this issue by instancing a projection-upon an x rather than an x_f ; as such, it might seem that my outrage at my situation can hardly attain to the lofty status of ‘moral’ outrage.

Indeed, although I have attempted to demonstrate the great phenomenal difference between ‘prudential’ values and those which I am interpreting, it might still be thought that what the foregoing analysis of ‘antagonism’ merely shows is a sort of unreadiness-to-hand that is accompanied by a state-of-mind like ‘frustration’ that attests to my thrownness into a world that is unready-to-hand for my concern.

However, we have attempted to show that my outrage in the face of antagonism, even in trivial everydayness, stems from a threat to my very *existentiell Being* (*which Being can only consist in narratives*). Nevertheless, this will become clearer below, when the threat to my narrative is not a threat to some trivial and contingent aspect of it (namely, a mere *x*), but rather to its fundamentally constituent element: namely, my *x_f*.

In projecting-upon some fundamental possibility of Being, I author my narrative: I *am* as going towards this fundamental possibility. And of course, a fundamental possibility is, as being fundamental, not proximal—it is ahead of me in the deepest sense, it is the horizon of my Being as becoming. In any given moment, what I am becoming is not proximally what I am concerned with—that is to say, if I concern myself with ‘fixing my broken-down car,’ my Being does *not* fundamentally lie in the fixing of this car; rather, it lies in *being able to get around where I need to go*. However, even this ‘being able to get around’ is contained within a narrative line (or projection-continuum): I *need* to be able to get around because I have something to get around *for the sake of*—e.g., going to the store, driving to class, going to see my girlfriend across town. And I do each of these things for other reasons—I go to the store to buy food, which I eat in order to satisfy my hunger; I drive to class so as to learn and attest to my learning in the form of high marks, which I hope to receive in order to get into a top-flight graduate program, which I desire to attend in order to be a well-trained professional philosopher; I drive to see my girlfriend

in order to connect deeply and romantically with another human being, which I hope remains an abiding theme in my life.

Ultimately, it is not important that these fundamental projections are ‘psychologically’ present-at-hand in my mind while I am proximally concerned with tasks along their respective narrative lines; what is important is that there are projections that lie at the horizon of my projecting (if only tacitly so) as the furthest ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ that a line extends towards as an ‘in-order-to.’ As such, therefore, my Being truly is constituted by an x_f , and not merely an x .

Thus, can ethics be exhibited phenomenologically through an existential description of *antagonism*, which description could only be properly existential if it concerned my most fundamental and authoring projections? What ontical phenomenon can attest to our analysis?

In analyzing this antagonism to my x_f , let us call upon another phenomenon: namely, the phenomenon of ‘cruelty.’ When I encounter cruelty in the world, ‘what’ is it that I encounter, and how do I encounter it? To illustrate, let us begin with an example: as I am walking home from work one night, I pass (as I usually do) through the ‘bad part’ of town. Generally, although I am fearful, nothing of note happens as I pass through here: usually, there is nothing but the empty sounds of city streets at night—scattered voices, the touch of a breeze, doors opening and closing. On this night, however, I hear something peculiarly different: occasional cries and yelps, broken by the sounds of laughter and whispering. I hope the sounds will go away, but they only grow more apparent as I move nearer. Soon enough, I am next to the outlet of an alleyway, and the cries, and laughter, and curses are surely down a few yards, within the alley. Quickly, as I walk past, I sneak a glance down the alley: there is a group of men, laughing, cursing, surrounding a solitary, trembling man. I recall the reports that I’ve heard in the news of

‘gang initiations’ going on in the city this month. At once, I am flooded with understanding, and terror, and outrage: when I am a block away, I quietly get my cell phone out of my pocket and call the police, alerting them of what I’ve seen, where I’ve seen it, and the urgency of them arriving.

This situation is meant to illustrate an everyday encounter with cruelty. The standard way of interpreting such a scene would be the following: the scene is constituted by a present-at-hand situation (namely: the group of men surrounding a solitary man) that contains the present-at-hand property of ‘suffering’ or ‘ill will’ or ‘unvirtuous behavior’; these properties are, moreover, simultaneous with my present-at-hand intuition of the cruelty of this gang initiation scene. In other words, a present-at-hand *subject* leaps transcendently outwards to a present-at-hand *object* (in this case, the situation), judging this object to be ‘cruel.’ Although later⁶³ we will briefly turn our attention towards this standard Interpretation, attempting to uncover *why* such an Interpretation is institutionally dominant in Philosophy, for the moment we can preview this forthcoming discussion by stating that the dichotomous ‘objectivist’/‘subjectivist’ (or alternatively, ‘absolutist’/‘relativist’) focus of ethical reasoning stems from the ontologico-metaphysical basis of this Interpretation.

For the moment, we have pointed out the ordinary way of Interpreting this phenomenal encounter in order to point out the deficiency such an Interpretation bears to the existential-ontological Being of the human. Indeed, in order to analyze this encounter existentially, we must Interpret it in regards to our Narrative-Being, which is constituted by the temporalizing ecstases of future, present, and Past, into all of which I project and am thrown.

⁶³ Cf. section V below.

As I am initially walking homewards, my proximal Being is my going-towards-getting-home; if you were to ask me ‘who are you?’ at this point, I would be baffled at the question; but if you were to ask me ‘what are you doing?’, I would be able to clearly provide you with an answer: ‘I am going home.’ Of course, this proximal projection-upon the possibility of getting home is merely an x embedded along a narrative line that is implicitly founded-upon and culminates with an x_f ; nevertheless, concretely, my x_f is not present-at-hand in my mind. Soon, however, my x changes: I hear suspicious noises, and I now am as a going-towards-avoiding danger. However, once it becomes apparent that the suspicious noises are emanating from a ‘gang initiation’ situation, my x once again changes: I now am as a going-towards-alerting-the-authorities. My initial x of getting home no longer concerns me: the ‘object’ of my concern now is ‘justice’ or ‘helping the innocent, stopping the guilty.’ This indicative phrase clearly conveys moral import: phenomenally, the situation (in this case, a gang initiation) *is* cruel. That is to say, this situation is primordially disclosed to me *as unjustly cruel*: it is not *primarily* a perception of various agents and motives, and *secondarily* a ‘judgment’ of cruelty—there is no cognizing or conscious judging or intellectualizing to be done. Phenomenally, this situation *is* unjust and cruel.

But this phenomenon of *cruelty*, as encountered by me, must be encountered only in relation to my existential-ontological structures. This is the case because I myself, whose Being we have followed Heidegger in describing as ‘existential,’ *am* not as a present-at-hand substance with present-at-hand properties superadded on to it, nor am I the unitary sum of various compiled present-at-hand properties—in short, we cannot describe my encounter with cruelty as some free-floating or otherwise present-at-hand property or sum of properties, as would be the case in a ‘biological’ or ‘psychological’ analysis. Rather, the Being of the human being we have,

following Heidegger, characterized as ‘existence,’ which signifies, as we said above in section I: a Being that is in every case mine own, that is problematical and calls for a resolution, and that is disclosed as such (i.e., disclosed as my project to solve). The problematic, for Heidegger, is that I am the null basis of a nullity: I am at every moment a possibility-negating ‘not-yet’ who is ever-bounding towards a constantly impending ‘nevermore-to-be.’ However, this problematic is not a damning one: although it cannot be *escaped*, it can be *resolved*: Thus, implicitly my Being is as a project aimed at the implicit optimum of *resolution*. This resolution is my authentically Being-a-whole, the basis of which lies in anticipatory resoluteness: taking hold of myself while at the same time leaving myself open to withdrawing myself in the face of my impending death. While we here have not *disagreed or contradicted* Heidegger in our conception of human Being, we have *emphasized* our Being-a-whole differently: our Being-a-whole has its basis in our Narrative-Being: projecting ourselves (understanding ourselves) upon some *fundamental* possibility-of-Being, which has its basis in our Being-*continuously-towards-a-horizon*. The fundamental projection is our Narrative horizon, and we project-along a continuum that holds open this horizon: this continuum, when existentially concretized, we have indicated by the term ‘narrative.’

How can we describe the encounter with cruelty in relation to my Narrative-Being? How is my encountering cruelty related to my narrative, which is as an existentiell route-towards-*x*? The clue to this answer lies in our above analysis of antagonism in the most banal everydayness. In that analysis, we demonstrated that antagonism is disclosed as a standing-against-my-going-towards-*x*: this involves projection (namely, my *x* that I am going towards) and thrownness (being thrown-into projecting-upon *x*, in virtue of which I must overcome that which stands against me), which in turn are equiprimordially disclosed via understanding (I proximally see

myself as going-towards- x) and state-of-mind (I proximally feel my having-to-deal-with that which stands against me).

If there is any moment in my existentiell encounter with cruelty wherein I proximally *am not* my mere x , but rather my x_f , then this will provide a clear route to understanding the relationship between my encountering cruelty and my existential Being-a-whole as Narrative-Being: if this relationship mirrors the phenomenal antagonism in my banal everydayness, then we must be able to demonstrate how my encounter with cruelty is, primordially, as *antagonistic-to-my- x_f* .

In order to demonstrate this, it is helpful to call forth another phenomenon for Interpretation: namely, the phenomenon of conscience. In undertaking our Interpretation of this phenomenon, however, it is important that we first recall Heidegger's analysis of the call of conscience and relatedly Being-guilty, in order to underscore whereupon we concur with and diverge from his Interpretation of this phenomenon. Conscience calls us forth to our ownmost Being-guilty, which discloses our problematic to us (our being the null basis of a nullity), which problematic can only be resolved in anticipatory resoluteness: sighting and projecting-upon our death, and taking hold of ourselves as an authentic whole.

Although we have hitherto shied away from discussions of inauthenticity and authenticity, we have nevertheless described our own understanding of an implicit optimum in my project of Being: namely, my becoming x_f . Although my x_f is always an integral constituent of my Being (as *constituting* the narrative that I am projecting-along at any given moment; as Being the basis of each mere x upon-which I project), at any given moment we can nevertheless bear different proximal relationships towards it: there are times when, proximally, my concern is directed towards a given contingent x , and other times when my concern is directed towards x_f

itself; and indeed it is possible that my concern be directed at a given x that is either closer to or further away from x_f .

Proximally and usually, I project-upon and understand myself merely as the given x that lies closest to me: generally my concern is directed straight ‘in front of’ me; in fact, my x_f , my horizon, is so far ahead that the smog of life usually conceals it entirely. Despite the fact that my Being as going-towards- x has its basis in my Being as going-towards- x_f , I only understand myself as the former. Although my full understanding of myself as going-towards- x_f ‘lurks somewhere in the back of my mind’—for, as being the basis of my x at all, I must implicitly operate as oriented-towards- x_f —proximally, it is beyond my comprehension. Consider the following example to illustrate:

In this instance, let us call my x_f ‘becoming a professional philosopher.’ Automatically, my narrative is born: before me lies a series of dependent projections that function as ‘in-order-to[s]’ as in, ‘in order to become a professional philosopher.’ This series of projections involves, among others, my Being philosophically inspired, my achieving highly at an undergraduate level, my sincerely searching for the proper graduate program, my being accepted, Being-inspired, finding a niche, achieving highly, gaining recognition, looking for employment, getting hired, teaching and publishing at a high level. These projections lie dependently on a narrative line, culminating with my fundamental projection; they are implicit *in* this fundamental projection. However, at a given moment along this narrative line—e.g., in my projecting-upon being a successful undergraduate—I generally ‘lose’ myself. That is to say, my Being is so absorbed in projecting-upon this x , this ‘becoming a successful undergraduate student,’ that I *lose myself* in this contingent projection—I am *torn away* from myself as ‘going-towards-becoming-a-professional-philosopher.’ Although I am deeply and pre-theoretically in

understanding of myself as going-towards- x_f , since it is only in virtue of x_f that I project-upon x at all (e.g., it is only in virtue of my going-towards-becoming-a-professional-philosopher that I am going-towards-becoming-a-successful-undergraduate), I nevertheless proximally understand myself as nothing beyond the x that instantaneously occupies my Being. This Being-lost in my contingent x is equiprimordially disclosed by a state-of-mind: this state of mind we signify by the term *despair*.

Thus, factually in my everydayness, I am absorbed in my contingent $x(s)$, losing sight of my constitutive $x_f(s)$: that is to say, I am proximally absorbed in my close-by projections, losing sight of my horizontal-projections and thereby my Being as *Narrative*. Thus, how can we Interpret the phenomenal call of conscience? Namely, as a *calling forth* of me *from* my proximal everyday understanding of myself as my close-by x to my proximally understanding myself as my horizontal and constitutive x_f . The call of conscience discloses to me and preserves me in my existentiell narrative, thus *holding-me-to the implicit optimum of my Narrative-Being as becoming x_f* . How can we make this phenomenally concrete?

Taking our above example (the ‘gang initiation’ witness) as our first, let us sketch several more examples, so as to, in a comparison of said situations, make clear the existential-ontological structures of conscience.

Example #2: my x_f is finding lifelong romantic love. However, I have another x_f , as well: namely, financially supporting my lifestyle. As projecting-upon this latter narrative, I have been working as a long-distance trucker, making cross-country shipments for an electronics company. Today, I stopped by a road house for a quick meal on my way to delivering a shipment of printers to Oregon—I am running a few hours behind, and I will need to wolf something down quickly in order to have a chance of making up the lost time. As I sit down at

the bar, I glance at the woman seated next to me—she is wearing the hat of my favorite sports team! I decide to let her know about our mutual interest in this sports team, and before I know it, a deep and lasting conversation is upon us. We talk about our lives, our pasts, our futures—we’re both single, but not planning on being so for long. However, the alarm on my watch goes off—it’s time to go, and I’ve barely eaten my charred burger and stale fries. Hastily and with reluctance, I say my goodbye and run out of the restaurant. Jumping in my truck, I realize I can make it on time if I go a few ticks above the speed limit. Before I know it, I am back on the highway, heading northwesterly. But I can’t stop thinking about this woman—we connected in a way I never thought possible. What if I didn’t have to make this shipment, if I called it off and decided to give things a try with her? But no—my bosses would be angry, and in either case, I have this shipment to make. Still, continuously the thought scratches the back of my mind: *will I ever forgive myself if she is ‘the one,’ and I missed her for a shipment?* Suddenly, I pull over, call Oregon and tell them their shipment won’t be coming in today. I turn around, and drive back towards the road house—with any luck, she will still be there.

Example #3: My x_f is helping rid the world of economic injustice, being a leading source of progressive change. Thus, this automatically births a narrative line, which in this case involves my becoming employed at a top-level Washingtonian think tank. There is one think tank that I especially want to work for: and with my Ph.D. from UC Berkeley in neo-Marxist socioeconomic justice, I am a top candidate, and should be primed to easily get the job. On the way to patting myself on the back, however, I receive a phone call: it is the hiring manager for the think tank, and he is thanking me for my interest, but advising me that I should try and apply again next year, since the job has been offered to another candidate. Shocked, I gulp down a ‘thank you’ and hang up. Soon, however, I gain hold of myself and direct my fury: how could I

not have been hired? I am as high-level a candidate as can be found, after all. I decide that something must have been wrong with the process—yes, something underhanded must have occurred, since I am extremely qualified, after all. I decide to make some calls and see if I can figure out who was hired in my place. Within a few hours, I find out that a woman named Jane Doe was hired. With a little bit of web research thrown in, I discover that Ms. Doe is black and, of course, female. Now, being the white male that I am, I immediately surmise what has to be the truth: I was racially profiled—Ms. Doe was hired simply for the sake of ‘diversity!’ Furious, I brood for hours, considering what to do. It dawns on me that I should pick up the phone and call that hiring manager back and give him a piece of my mind! But suddenly I recall something: my dissertation on neo-Marxist socioeconomic justice involved some pretty heavy research into racial and gender disparities in America with regard to socioeconomic opportunities: indeed, my conclusions were none other than affirmative action is far from outdated—indeed, it is imperative to bridge the still embarrassing opportunity gap between white males and the rest of society. Indeed, I realize that Ms. Doe, being a black female from South Central Los Angeles, must have overcome incredibly enormous odds in order to be competitive for such a prestigious position. *Embarrassed, guilt-ridden, I put the phone down, and resolve to check myself and my privilege evermore.*

Example #4: My x_f is becoming a leading philosophical voice and source of pride for my nation. My narrative is born around this fundamental possibility-of-Being, and involves rising to prominence in the country in which I was born, raised, and trained—let’s call this country ‘Germany.’ It just so happens, however, that Germany at this time is undergoing a massive and controversial shift in its political climate: the newly elected executive of the nation has some controversial but nonetheless popular anti-Semitic and nationalistic views; already, the

nation is dividing along cooperative and resistant lines: if I wish to remain comfortably in my native Germany, I must act quickly: and indeed, I join the this leader's controversial party. My becoming a member being celebrated, and with the party's nationalistic ideas bearing some relationship to my views about the importance of history and tradition, I begin a systematic integration of my philosophical concepts with the party's; from my now authoritative position in the nation's academia, I denounce several Jews, fail to provide support for my Jewish mentor, and sever relationships with some Jewish colleagues with whom I previously enjoyed great professional and personal relationships. Throughout, I turn a blind eye to the ongoing genocide inflicted against the Jewish people by the leader I have so publicly supported. Before long, however, it dawns on me that in my everyday dealings of maintaining and developing my reputation amongst the ruling class in Germany, I have become despised by the professional community elsewhere in the world, including by my former colleagues; indeed, it is clear to me that I am an embarrassment to my people, rather than a source of pride. *I have lost sight of my x_f in projecting upon my x .* Although I attempt to regain myself in my x_f , it is too late: I will forever be an embarrassment.

These four examples are meant to illustrate the existential-ontological structures of conscience: in each case, my conscience discloses my Being-lost in x at the expense of x_f . What is the character of this disclosure? As Heidegger tells us, it is a voiceless, wordless, uncondemnatory phenomenon: I am not called 'bad' by my conscience, but rather, *lacking*—my existentiell narrative as going-towards- x_f has been attacked, but attacked by me: I am the basis of my straying from my narrative, and thus of my *closing-myself-off-from-my-Narrative-fulfillment*. As such, I am 'guilty' in that I am *indebted to myself*: I have failed to *be* as the narrative within which I deeply and primordially understand myself as Being.

Each example is different, and different in several ways: Example #1 involves a relatively ‘uncontroversial’ ethical picture: I witness something that is in the main considered morally deplorable, and I answer the call to do something about it in the way my society has provided for me (namely, I call the police); however, the x that initially distracts me from my x_f is not on the same narrative: namely, my x concerns simply getting-home, which exists on the narrative of, e.g., ‘live a comfortable life,’ while my x_f involved in calling the police is something more like ‘be a positive social agent.’ Example #2 involves a situation that might seem less ‘moral’ but nevertheless ‘ethical’: I am not phenomenally in contact with any ‘moralizing,’ but I am nevertheless called by my conscience—although it is once again the case that in example #2 my x lies on a separate narrative from my x_f . In examples #3 and #4, however, my x and x_f lie on the same narrative, and in both cases, I encounter something like an ontical injustice, and am called-upon to comport myself properly towards it.

Thus, what we hope is clear is *not* that these differences are overly significant: rather the hope is to illustrate how *in spite of these ontico-existential differences, the phenomenon of the call of conscience is identical, existentially-ontologically speaking*. Namely, the call of conscience *calls me forth from* my proximal Being-lost in my close-by and everyday $x(s)$, *to* my proximally understanding myself as the x_f that I primordially *am*: in the call of conscience, I am summoned to my narrative and disclosed as *needing-to-be-in-such-a-way-as-to-remain-in-my-existential-Being*. My conscience ‘alerts’ me to something or someone standing in the way of my primordially Being-towards- x_f , antagonizing the implicit optimality of my Narrative-Being as *fulfillment*. This ‘thing’ could be a ‘not-doing-this-or-that’; this ‘someone’ could be ‘me.’ Nevertheless, my conscience alerts me to an *antagonism* to my narrative, and calls upon me to *take action against and overcome* this antagonism. The understanding associated with this

phenomenon is an *understanding of my existentiell Being itself: my particular x_f*. The state-of-mind equi-primordially attesting to this phenomenon is *guilt*: in guilt, my ‘that-I-am’ as ‘failing-to-be-existentially-whole’ or ‘failing to live up to myself’ is disclosed to me.

Thus the phenomenon of ‘antagonism’ has provided us a route to understanding the Being of ethics as ‘holding-me-to-my-existentiell-narrative-as-imperativizing-me-towards-Being-existentially-Narratively-optimal-as-fulfilled.’ But at the beginning of this section, we pointed out *two* phenomena central to getting a hold on the Being of ethics: namely, antagonism and *underminingness*. Having articulated our Interpretation of the former, we move on to the latter.

IV.3. Immorality via Underminingness

The phenomenon of ‘underminingness’ is meant to signify my existentiell narrative’s being undermined, thus also undermining the implicit optimality of my existential Narrative-Being. This phenomenon provides a route to understanding one of the constituents of the Being of ethics. But how can we unpack this phenomenon? We will, below, Interpret ‘evil’ as that-which-undermines-my-Being.

As in every other theme within our discussion of my Narrative-ethical-Being, we must begin by recalling the existential-ontological structures of human Being: namely, Narrative, which we have tirelessly unpacked as Being-oriented-as-going-towards- x_f -with-a-that-which-brought-me-here-that-attests-to-my-existentiell-Being. In other words, future-oriented-Being-carrying-with-it-the-Past—this ‘line’ of Being stretching from the Past through the present to the future we have Interpreted as a projection-continuum, and signified it in its existentiell modality by the term ‘narrative [line].’

Our previous discussion, centered around what we termed ‘antagonism,’ Interpreted ethics as a holding-me-to-my-existentiell-Being, in the sense of providing me with an imperative to ‘live up’ to my optimality of Being—one might say, alternatively, that the discussion focused on ethics as ‘*directing myself* ethically.’ But what about the phenomenon of *finding the world valuable*? It is to this phenomenon that we turn our attention in our Interpretation of evil as undermining.

In my everyday dealings in the world, I am proximally projecting-upon x —that is to say, rather than x_f —and thus encounter the world as organized around this x that I am going-towards. For illustration, recall the ‘traffic on the way to work example’ referenced at the beginning of this section: the traffic is disclosed to me as ‘bad’ or ‘ought not be the case’ or ‘to be overcome.’

In these kinds of everyday and trivial instances, wherein proximally I understand myself as the mere x that I am going-towards and conceal my Being as primordially going-towards- x_f —my Being is, instantaneously, threatened and/or compromised. How this is the case in terms of *the imperative to overcome antagonism to my existentiell Being* has already been discussed; but how this is the case in terms of a *value-laden undermining of my existentiell Being as undermining my existential-Narrative optimum has hitherto been neglected*. Such discussion will, as focusing on a contingent and trivial x , be succinct, and moreover provide a framework for Interpreting my essential Being as going-towards- x_f to be constitutive of the ontological structures of ethics.

Consider: in projecting-upon ‘getting-to-work-on-time,’ I proximally and concretely *am* as a going-towards-getting-to-work-on-time. Therefore, my world is organized around this projection: things are *meaningful* and *valuable* insofar as they relate to this possibility. That which *stands-against-this-possibility* is ‘bad’ and ‘to be overcome.’ But ‘standing against’ is tantamount to *antagonism*. However, what about that which *nullifies* this possibility? Indeed, the phenomenal ‘to-be-overcome’ implies ‘can-be-overcome,’ no matter how remote this ‘can’ is. But *nullification* implies ‘cannot be overcome,’ or ‘destructive to the foundations,’ or ‘*essentially undermining*.’

Let us clarify: when I project-upon a possibility x , my world is disclosed to me as relating-to- x . Phenomenally, this is made clear in how I find things meaningful and valuable in relation to my x . But indeed, this ‘finding things *valuable* as they relate towards x ’ means the following: in my encounters with entities, they can be disclosed to me as either *good* or *bad* with regard to my going-towards- x . This is to say that entities can either *contribute to* or *undermine* conditions conducive to my going-towards- x . Thus, in projecting-upon x , reality is disclosed to me as *conditioned*. Thus, looming in the background of reality as constituted by any x is the

nullification of itself: namely, the possibility of the conditions ‘failing to obtain,’ or the possibility of the impossibility of my going-towards-*x*. This is *not* meant to convey a ‘list of necessary present-at-hand factors that must obtain in order for me to get-to-*x*’; rather, these ‘conditions’ we speak of are fundamentally an ‘conditioning-my-existential-Being-as-going-towards-*x*.’

Various things can nullify my Being as going-towards-getting-to-work-on-time: *viz.*, the clock striking ‘9:01,’ my being still stuck in traffic at 8:50 30 miles away, my car breaking down, my getting pulled over for road rage and reckless driving, etc. In these instances, *the utter impossibility of my becoming x is manifest*; my Being as going-towards-getting-to-work-on-time is nullified; now, I *must* (i.e., my *thrownness* dictates that I) project-upon (understand myself as) some other possibility: e.g., going-towards-not-being-too-late; going-towards-having-a-good-excuse, etc. As my existential Being is nullified—in this case, my going-towards-getting-to-work-on-time—I am thrown-back on myself existentially; I am *existentially-ontically* disclosed to myself as *an existential-ontological being*: my narrative is disclosed to me, and disclosed as *null*; as such, *I instantaneously understand myself as a thrownness-onto-projecting, whose Being consists essentially in projection*. In these most ephemeral moments, all my entrenchedness in my Past is voided—properly speaking, I am now *displaced from* my existential Past, since my Past is my that-which-brought-me-here-now-as-going-towards-*x*, and yet my going-towards-*x* has been nullified.

Thus, the immediately foregoing discussion provides us with a map and a clue as to how our Interpretation of Narrative-Being (as fundamentally constituted by going-towards-*x*) in regards to the phenomena of underminingness and evil constitutes the Being of ethics. However, some confusions might have arisen in this discussion due to the contingency of *x* as opposed to

the utterly fundamental, generative constitutiveness of x_f ; this might have led some to believe that our previous discussion was of only side interest to ethics, and it certainly obscured any connection with the phenomenon of evil that we will Interpret as constituted by this projection-conditioned world whose nullification is possible.

Existentially-ontologically, my Being is as Narrative: I am an ongoing, unfolding project implicitly aimed at the fulfillment of existentiell narrative lines, or implicitly *aimed* at becoming one or more fundamental possibilities [$x_f(s)$] of Being. Recall our above analysis of ‘Being-oriented’ as the meaning of my Being-towards the ecstatical present: we understood this phenomenon of ‘orientation’ to consist in a *locatability*, an *arrangement*, and a *Being-directionalized*. But we also understood ‘orientation’ to mean, in everyday parlance, something akin to a ‘meaning and value-laden perspective or standpoint.’ While above, we neglected to dwell on this ‘meaning-ladenness’ of orientation, this now will become a theme for investigation. Indeed, *ontically*, it is said that our ‘ethical systems’ are fully comprised within these ‘orientations.’ How can we make sense of this?

The ontical understandings permeating our everyday *logos* state that orientation is an ‘approach’ or a ‘meaning and value-laden perspective on the world.’ While both of these conceptions are troublingly mingled with the metaphysical tradition of presence (i.e., they presuppose an unexamined ‘inside-outside’/‘subject-object’ relationship between the human and the world), they nevertheless ‘point-towards’ the implications of our existential analysis: insofar as I am *ecstatically-temporally facing* my Being (whether forwards or backwards), I have an *approach*; as Being-oriented-along-a-narrative, I ‘go forth’ as *located within a narratively-organized world* towards my x_f ; moreover, I ‘go forth’ as Being brought-here at every moment. As Being-oriented, I ‘approach’ my existence at every moment.

As Being-oriented, as well, my world is primordially meaningful and valuable. But this is to assert only a redundancy in light of our previous analysis: as Being-oriented, I am located within an existentially *narratively organized world*. What is the nature of this ‘narrative organization?’ Namely, the Being of reality as *towards-my-narrative*, or *towards-my-x_f*. Entities within the world primordially *are* as *(un)ready-to-hand for my becoming x_f*.

But why have we undertaken the foregoing analysis? Is it only to redundantly recapitulate that which we already Interpreted *ad nauseam* above? Indeed, with apologies to our readers for our exhaustion of the topic, we have recapitulated our above analysis. However, this recapitulation was done as a means to making-accessible the phenomenal bridge between ethics and Narrative-Being. For indeed, it is not at all uncommon to hear statements relating morality and one’s ‘orientation’ or ‘standpoint’ or ‘perspective.’ And having phenomenologically unpacked the signified Being of these terms (and steered clear of the perverting effects of our linguistic and metaphysical tradition), we can now phenomenologically unpack the signification of Being implicit in statements such as ‘you only believe that [some moral position] because of your perspective,’ or ‘if you had a different orientation, you wouldn’t believe that.’

Statements such as these are generally made as talking points in debates between moral absolutists and relativists in defense of the latter position; the standard formula is picking out two cultures’ (or individuals’) divergent moral positions on a certain subject—e.g., honoring the deceased by ‘burial’ vs. ‘burning’—and then stating that these positions are entirely ‘subject’ to one’s ‘orientation,’ or ‘perspective,’ or ‘standpoint,’ whether individually or culturally based. Although for the moment, this ‘debate’ won’t occupy our attention,⁶⁴ what is nevertheless

⁶⁴ A thorough critique of this position and the common moral debate in general is outwith the bounds of this project and certainly of this section. However, a provisional critique of the current ‘dialectic’ on morality will be undertaken below (section V).

important to our present purposes is phenomenologically unpacking the meaning behind such ‘relativist’ statements.

While the purpose of such statements often consists in *reducing* morality to some non-real or non-absolute phenomenon, the premise that the relativist considers *damning* for an absolutist ethics is the relationship between ethical value and orientation. This relationship is the following: factually, one’s held-to ethical precepts/beliefs/propositions are *dependent upon* one’s orientation. Indeed, having Interpreted ‘orientation’ to signify my ‘Being-located within a narratively-organized world, temporalizing ecstatically forwards and backwards,’ we have nothing left but to unpack the Being of ethical value in order to understand these statements. But of course, the Being of ethics is precisely the unitary focus of this project, and is a phenomenon far too problematical to be tackled all at once. Thus, in unpacking these statements, let us phenomenologically unpack an ontical manifestation ontically considered to bear on the very *nature* of ethics: namely, *evil*.

In Interpreting any phenomenon, we might technically analyze its disclosedness: how is it equiprimordially disclosed via the projectival understanding and thrown state-of-mind? Recall that understanding has its basis in projection—either future (going-towards- x) or Past (that-which-brought-me-here) focused—while state-of-mind has its basis in thrownness—either future (that-I-must-project) or Past (that-I-am-attested-to) focused. Thus, how do I understand evil? What is my state-of-mind in encountering evil?

Formally, I understand evil as that-which-*threatens*-my-existential-Being. But what is the nature of this ‘threat?’ Do I understand the ‘threat’ of evil as I understand the ‘threat’ of a wild, hungry bear in the woods? Indeed, concretely, my understanding of evil can appropriate itself as ‘something that threatens my Being-present as such,’ in the way that the wild, hungry

bear does. However, *primordially*, evil is not that which threatens the simple fact of my Being-present-at-hand for myself; rather, evil is understood as that which *threatens my world*. That is to say, evil does *not* primordially threaten my being-here-as-such (i.e., my Being present-at-hand) in the world; rather, evil primordially threatens *the world's Being-here-for-me*. The wild hungry bear is not primordially disclosed as evil because the wild hungry bear leaves my *world* untouched—rather, she simply threatens *my Being-present within the world*.

Consider the following ontical examples of ‘evil’ drawn from literature and history: in J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Sauron is undoubtedly the epitome of ‘evil.’ But what is the Being of Sauron *as* evil? Is it his *being a threat to the characters’ lives within the novel*? This manifestly is not the case: the Fellowship (i.e., the band of protagonists attempting to rid the world of Sauron and his evil as embodied in ‘the ring,’ consisting of Frodo, Aragorn, Gimli, Boromir, Legolas, Sam, Merry, Pippin, and Gandalf) sets off on its journey *in full awareness of its risking the ontico-biological death of all of its members*. In fact, their *confronting evil* entails their acceptance of a significantly heightened risk of their no-longer-Being-present-at-hand-in-the-world. Thus, Sauron manifestly is not evil on the basis of his threatening many individuals’ Being-present-within-the-world. Therefore, on what basis can it be claimed that Sauron is ‘evil?’ Manifestly, it is only on the basis of his *threatening the world as such* that Sauron is evil. This is phenomenally manifest, indeed. Consider: what is the Being of the trilogy’s *heroes* (e.g., Frodo, Aragorn, Sam, Gandalf) *qua heroes*? The answer to this question might be the most ontically conspicuous but ontologically inconspicuous of all: namely, the heroes *are* heroes insofar as they *risk their own Being-present-at-hand-for-themselves* for the sake of *saving the world*. To put it plainly, why is Frodo the novel’s hero? Because he risks his own life to save the world.

Before we move on to discussing the implications of this phenomenal truth, let us first sketch another example, drawn from ‘real’ history this time, for the sake of those readers who think literary illustrations unpalatable.

To draw-forth the most trite, overly-referenced instance of historical evil, consider Adolf Hitler and his Nazi regime, eugenically inspired to cleanse the world of all non-Aryans, primarily focusing on Jewish and Romani peoples. Often, Hitler is taken as *the* most evil individual in recent history, if not in all of history. But on what basis is Hitler considered evil as such? What is the Being of Hitler *qua* evil? Certainly, he murdered many people—at least 6,000,000 Jewish peoples alone, and many millions more Romani peoples, homosexuals, disabled peoples, communists, certain religious sects, etc.—and that is only discussing his responsibility for those who died in The Holocaust. When one considers the countless millions lost to the warfare that he caused in the world, his ‘death toll’ is absurdly, astronomically, tragically high. But is it the ontico-biological deaths of these people that in and of itself comprises Hitler’s evil? Indeed, intuitively this is a more difficult case than that of the literary Sauron: when the people who died and suffered *were real people who you or I might have known*, their deaths confront us far more tragically and radically than the deaths of fictional characters.⁶⁵ But let us examine more closely Hitler’s evil: is it simply the fact of those many millions of people no-longer-Being-present-at-hand that constitutes Hitler’s evil? When we speak of Hitler’s evil, what do we proximally imply is the *Being* of him *qua* Being-evil? Indeed, in everyday discourse on the subject, people frequently cite the numbers of people who were killed as an attestation to his evil. Primordially, however, that which Hitler threatened (and for some, even as a mere *specter*, continues to threaten) is not, at its basis, the Being-present-at-hand of millions of people—*for many millions*

⁶⁵ Certainly, as a person of Jewish descent, I have long been keenly aware of and affected by the historical decimation of my peoples.

more would have willingly risked their lives in the fight to stop him. This is to say, *if Hitler had killed nobody at all, his Being-evil would remain Being-evil, only no longer extensionally ready-to-hand qua quantifiable.* What is fundamentally evil about Hitler, what is threatening about him, is not merely the staggering number of murders and deaths traceable back to his hands; rather, it is *the basis for these murders*: namely, the *narrative* that he foisted upon the world. This we discuss as his dreams of a ‘Third Reich’; his understanding of the *going-towards-Being-the-Third-Reich* involving ‘The Final Solution’; Hitler’s evil is phenomenally *a threat to the world*. Today, the quantifiable ‘numbers game’ of the murders and deaths traceable to his hands serves as a stark and sobering reminder of *the lengths that he went to in order to ‘take over the world’—i.e., establish his narrative as supreme.* The numbers remind people of the specter of his evil: the world was closer to *the brink of a ‘new world order’ than ever before.* But this reasoning might still seem callous to our readers, who think we are concealing the true evil of the incomprehensible numbers of deaths and murders. Perhaps this final line of discourse will ‘pick up’ our readers where our previous analysis might have ‘put them off’: whom did Hitler pose the most serious threat to? Certainly, the Jewish peoples. *What is the nature, however, of this threat?* Is it the possibility of the no-longer-Being-present-at-hand of the Jewish peoples? Is it the ‘threat of extinction’ that Hitler posed to the Jewish peoples, one of whom I surely would have been? This is not the case; this Interpretation of Hitler’s threat to the Jewish peoples interprets us as merely a *present-at-hand entity*. We are not merely a ‘race’ contained within the physical bounds of that spheroid that we fondly refer to as ‘Earth.’ Rather, we are *existents*; we exist. And as is the case for all other existents, we *are* as existentially constituted by existentiell narratives. As Narratively-Being, our *world is* as our ‘wherein’ in which *we are*; that is to say, our projection-along a narrative line automatically organizationally constitutes reality: it gives us

the home in which we can *be*. To destroy one's world is coextensive with destroying one's narrative; to destroy one's narrative is to *really destroy one's world*—although one will certainly, so long as one *is*, project-along another narrative line and thus find oneself *thrown into* a world organized around that narrative. Thus, what shall we say Hitler's threat is to the Jewish peoples? It is the *specter of the annihilation of our world*—Hitler disclosed and enforced a narrative that left the Jewish peoples 'without a home' in the world. This is only to say that Hitler represents the prospect of *the annihilation of the world for the Jewish peoples*. Our world thus annihilated, so are our narratives. But to say that 'our world' and 'our narratives' are prospectively annihilated is just to say that we are *presented with the prospective threat to our very optimality of Narrative-Being*. Even more formally, we may describe the encounter with evil as 'threatening-my-existential-narratives-and[-thus]-my-existentially-optimal-Narrative-Being.' What is at stake in our encountering evil—what was at stake in the world's encountering Hitler—is not the 'potential ontico-biological extinction (i.e., no-longer-Being-present-at-hand) of the human (e.g., Jewish) peoples *qua* animals'; rather, what is at stake is the openness of the possibility of my implicitly optimal existential-Narrative-Being.

Thus, we have Interpreted the phenomenon of evil as 'that-which-threatens-my-world.' However, we have furthermore followed Heidegger in Interpreting 'the world' out of the clutches of the metaphysics of presence, rather positing that the Being of the world is the 'wherein' of my Narrative-Being. It is the space in which my narrative *is*—that is to say that phenomenally, the world is the 'wherein' of my narrative's concretely spatially investing itself.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Some people might object to this statement regarding a perceived 'ambiguity' in it. However, the basis for sighting this 'ambiguity' lies in the metaphysics of presence: the critical reader might ask 'but is the narrative *inside the mind*, or *out there in the world*?' Or to phrase it more formally: 'is one's narrative *subjective* or *objective*?' But this very question presupposes the mutual presence-at-hand of a subject contained within an 'object.' We answer, following

Therefore, evil as ‘that-which-threatens-my-world’ is more primordially understood as ‘that-which-threatens-my-narrative-as-going-existentially-towards- x_f ’ and still more primordially understood as ‘that-which-threatens-my-existential-optimum-of-Narrative-Being.’ But this is to say that evil is understood as the potential annihilation not just of my existentiell *future* (as going-towards- x_f), but also of my existentiell *Past*: for if I am no-longer-going-towards- x_f , then I no longer *am* as the that-which-brought-me-here that I was before. In the face of evil, the potential *is there* for the annihilation of my *very Being*: my going-towards- x_f is disclosed as a distinct impossibility; my narrative, constituted by a future, present, and Past, is void.

Our foregoing analysis of evil, moreover, can be attested-to by our *states-of-mind*, which equiprimordially with the understanding disclose the phenomenon of evil (however, in terms of our *thrownness* as opposed to our *projection*). These states-of-mind might be indicated by the signifiers of ‘terror,’ ‘forlornness,’ ‘dumbfoundedness,’ and ‘outrage.’ What is it in the face of which I am terrified, forlorn, dumbfounded, and outraged? Namely, some manifest evil—e.g., Hitler—or the fact of a manifest threat to my world, a potential annihilation of my spatially-invested world. But what is it *about which* I am terrified, forlorn, dumbfounded, and outraged? Namely, the looming threat to my existentiell Being as the potential annihilation of my existential-Narrative optimum of *fulfillment*. Terrified, I find myself anticipating the utter destruction of my narrative; forlorn, I find myself as ‘abandoned’ by the world that I had formerly found a ‘home’ in; thrown, forced, and folded back upon the existential structures of my Being, I find myself as dumbfounded, lost in nullity—when my existentiell Being (i.e., my narrative) is destroyed, *who* and *how* am I? Outraged, I tenaciously fight against this potentiality

Heidegger in *SZ* 62, that ‘the mind’ is always *already-outside-alongside* the world. There is not a subject-object distinction: the mind *is* as *dwelling, cohabitating within the world*. There is no transcendent leap required: the world simply *is* as the mind *is*: namely, narratively.

of annihilation. My ‘that-I-am’ is disclosed as ‘having-to-exist-in-the-face-of-a-threat-to-my-narrative.’

Thus, having Interpreted evil as the ‘potentiality-for-the-annihilation-of-my-existential-narrative-in-the-face-of-which-I-am-thrown-back-upon-my-existential-Being-as-Narrative,’ we might more economically say that the Being of evil is *undermining-my-narrative*.

Having reached this point in our analysis, we might retrace our steps so as to reorient ourselves to the holistic goal of this section. Consider, we have now explicated the Being of evil as ‘that-which-undermines-my-narrative.’ The ‘way in which it undermines’ is via disclosing an utter threat to my existentiell narrative, folding me back upon my unfulfilled existential Narrative-Being. This utter threat takes the form of ‘that-which-might-annihilate-my-narrative-as-utterly-invested-in-the-world.’ My Narrative-Being, of course, can be more formally indicated by the term: ‘Being-oriented-as-going-towards- x_f -brought-here-now-by-an-attestation-to-my-existential-Being.’ But now recall our earlier analysis of ‘underminingness’ in my going-towards- x , which was meant to provide a clue for the analysis to come. Let us see if that earlier analysis of x makes more sense as applied to x_f . There, we discussed ‘underminingness’ as the potential nullification of my going-towards- x , which potential nullification is phenomenally disclosed as the potential nullification of my conditioned world as *holding open the possibility of* my going-towards- x . This possibility is ‘held-open’ on the basis of the possibility of becoming- x —for, since my going-towards- x is only on the basis of my projecting-upon x , if the impossibility of projecting-upon x is disclosed to me, then not only is my *projection-upon x* nullified, but thereby also nullified is my narrative as going-towards- x . Thus, we said that in my Being-thrown out of my existentiell Being, I am thrown back upon my existential *Being*.

Formerly, as our analysis took as its ‘subject’ my mere and contingent going-towards-*x*, this ‘underminingness’ seemed at quite a distance from moral import. Although we analyzed reality as meaning and *value*-laden, it might have seemed that the ‘towards-*x*’ organization of the world around my projections is only one of *prudential* value. But with our thematic analysis of ‘underminingness’ to my fundamentally and constitutively going-towards-*x_f* through the phenomenon of evil, the conditioned value-ladenness of the world as *holding open my onto-ontological fulfillment* is something far from ‘merely prudential’: there is nothing ‘contingent’ or ‘conditional’ or ‘hypothetical’ about the undermining of my *narrative itself*, of my optimal Narrative-Being, as going-towards-becoming-*x_f*, for this concerns not some *contingent* projection along my narrative ineffectual against my existential-Narrative optimum, but rather the *whole of the narrative itself, utterly undermining of my existential-ontological optimum of fulfillment*.

Thus concludes our thematic discussion of the Being of immorality as that-which-undermines-my-existential-Being-as-going-towards-*x_f*. But in order to finally conclude our hermeneutical analysis of the Being of ethics, we must first demonstrate our hitherto undemonstrated claim that the underminingness of immorality, in addition to undermining my existential Being, *throws me back upon my existential Being*.

Being-thrown-out-existentially-and-thrown-back-upon-existentially is phenomenally disclosed to us as ‘disorientation.’ How might we describe the existential-ontological structures of disorientation? To begin with, let us refer back to our prior discussion of Being-oriented: above, we described our Being as Being-oriented as ‘finding-myself-along-a-narrative-line.’ Moreover, we unpacked this as stating that it is my ‘finding-myself-as-located-within-a-narratively-organized-world-facing-forwards-futurely-and-backwards-Pastly-towards-my-Being.’ But we determined this to mean ‘my-Being-locatable-as-within-a-narratively-and-

coextensively-organized-existential-Being-and-world.’ Thus, what does it mean to be disoriented? Namely, it means my ‘not-Being-locatable-as-within-a-narratively-and-coextensively-organized-existential-Being-and-world.’ In *disorientation*, I am *thrown out of* my existential locatability within a narrative, and into the depths of my existential Being as thrown projection (i.e., *having-to-have-a-narrative*). Disoriented, I cannot find myself existentially; I confront myself as a *needing-to-existentially-manifest-existentiality*. And this is tantamount to stating that I find myself as existential—i.e., *having-to-have-a-narrative*. What is it that ‘throws me out and folds me back?’ Obviously, our foregoing Interpretation of evil attests to this disorientation: evil *is* as a ‘that-which-threatens-my-world,’ which we analyzed to more fundamentally mean ‘that-which-threatens-my-existential-Narrative-Being.’ In the encounter with evil, my world and therefore, equiprimordially, my Being is disclosed as *threatened by annihilation*. The possible nullification of my Being as I know it (i.e., existentially) is disclosed to me. As such, I find myself *disoriented*. I am disclosed as a *potentiality-to-existentially-perish*. This disclosure throws me out of my ontico-existential Being, and forces upon me my Being ontico-ontologico-existentially: since my existential Being is so utterly disclosed as *threatened by null-ification*, I disclosed to my bare existentiality. I am disoriented—that is to say, my thrownness into my Being is disclosed via the state-of-mind of *disorientation*. As disoriented, I am *ontically* ontological.

Thus, we are now in a position to unpack the ‘relativist’ statements mentioned above linking one’s ‘ethics’ to one’s ‘orientation’ as the final phenomenal key to our understanding the Being of ethics as an existential. Despite the perverting effects of our inherited philosophico-linguistic tradition of a metaphysics of presence permeating statements such as these—they attempt to ‘deny’ the ‘absoluteness’ of ethical statements on the basis of their being ‘not

objectively present-at-hand’—we can nevertheless understand them as relating a primordial understanding of *ethics* to *orientation*. Let us now recall: my Being-oriented is an ontological constituent of my Being. The implicit optimum of my Narrative-Being is narrative completion—fulfilling my narrative line. Along my narrative line at any given moment, I am *presently oriented*. Orientation, that is to say, is *existentially-ontologically required in my fulfilling my existentiell-ontical narrative*—so long as I am existing along my given narrative lines, I am oriented. As Being-disoriented, however, I am *torn away from my existentiell-ontical narrative*, and so all possibility of fulfillment is closed off.

In order to preserve my implicit imperative in existence—which we have Interpreted as fulfillment of a narrative line—I must be oriented. Disorientation, which arises on the basis of the annihilation of my existentiell Being, throws me out of my orientation and closes off the implicit optimum of existence. Thus, the Being of ethics is constituted by ‘that-which-keeps-me-oriented’ as Being ‘that-which-holds-open-my-existentiell-narrative-fulfillment.’

Consider, the standard ‘relativist’ line that we have taken as a[n admittedly corrupt] clue to our analysis here generally states something like ‘psychological considerations—either located biologically, socializationally, or volitionally—determine one’s ethical system, rather than putatively *metaphysically moral* matters.’ In one sense these statements are entirely beside the point—they seek *causal explanations*—i.e., metaphysical explanations—of ethical phenomena; we however, are interested in no such hifalutin metaphysical matters. Rather, we are interested in ethical phenomena *as they are constitutive of my existential-ontological structures of Being*. In another sense, however, these statements are deeply indicative of our present theme of discussion: my Being, as an existentiell particular within the existential universal, is constituted by existentiell narratives as instantiations of my existential Narrative-Being. These narratives

are fundamentally constitutive of my Being at any given moment as *oriented-within-a-narrative*. This *orientation* primordially is as ‘within the bounds of my narrative.’ What lies *outside the bounds of my narrative is disorienting*. How does something lie *outside the bounds of my narrative*? Namely, by *threatening to undermine my narrative, understood as closing-off-the-possibility-of-my-becoming-x_f*. Therefore, the discordant-with-me Being of ethics is as ‘undermining-my-narrative.’ What then, might we say is the accordant-with-me-Being of ethics? Namely, ‘reinforcing my narrative.’

We can better demonstrate this Being of ethics by referring to our earlier analysis as coupled with Heidegger’s analysis of the ‘worldhood of the world.’ This is, namely, organizing the meaning and value of my experiences with entities within-the-world around my existentiell projections, which we have Interpreted as narrative lines. That which is *discordant* to my narrative, my temporal line of Being based on a going-towards-x_f, is meaningful and valuable as ‘bad’ or ‘ought not to be the case.’ That which *accords* with my narrative is meaningful and valuable as ‘good’ or ‘ought to be the case.’

Consider: if my x_f is ‘becoming the world’s most prolific serial killer,’ then the detective fast on my trail and soon to catch me is phenomenally *bad*, even *evil*—she is the *force against my very Being*. She ought not to be doing this—it is unfair that she is trying to thwart me! However, the rash of potential victims lying mere feet from my clutches conveniently located next to a steep cliff-side is a *good*, it is a ‘right-that-it-is-there.’

Also consider: if my x_f is ‘leading the charge to rid the world of malaria,’ then the apathy in the wealthy, developed nations towards providing charitable support for those who need it is *bad, evil, unfair*. Meanwhile, those powerful people who support my cause are ‘righteous’ individuals, ‘morally laudable’ individuals.

These final two illustrations now take us ‘full circle’ in our Interpretation of the Being of ethics. At first we analyzed ethics via the phenomenon of ‘antagonism,’ coming to the conclusion that constitutive of the Being of ethics is ‘holding-me-to-my-existential-narrative-as-imperativizing-me-towards-Being-existentially-Narratively-optimal-as-fulfilled’ disclosed as a ‘calling-forth’ of the conscience.’ We then analyzed the Being of ethics via the phenomenon of ‘underminingness,’ coming to the conclusion that the Being of ethics is as ‘that-which-holds-open-my-existential-narrative-as-conditioning-the-world-towards-my-existential-Narrative-optimality-of-fulfillment’—i.e., the phenomenally ‘ethically bad’ closes-off my existential narrative; the phenomenally ‘ethically good’ *reinforces* my existential narrative. We have analyzed these phenomena in separate spaces, but this might mislead the reader into thinking that these are disconnected ‘properties’ inhering in a present-at-hand ethical being; in fact, nothing could be further from the truth. These two phenomena express different analytic ‘sides’ of a unitary phenomenon, a phenomenon whose Being is a constituent of my Being as Narrative. What is this unitary phenomenon of ethics? Namely, ‘conditioning-my-existential-narratives-as-holding-open-the-world-for-and-imperativizing-me-to-my-existential-ontological-Narrative-optimality-of-fulfillment.’ When I project-upon an x_f , thereby projecting-along a narrative line, equiprimordially disclosed with my future Being as ‘*where-I-am-going-towards- x_f* ,’ my present Being as ‘Being-oriented-as-going-towards- x_f ,’ and my Past Being as ‘that-which-brought-me-here-attesting-to-my-Being-as-going-towards- x_f ,’ is a constant ‘that-which-holds-open-and-holds-me-to-my-fulfilled-going-towards- x_f .’ The ethically bad *undermines and antagonizes* my Being as going-towards-fulfilling- x_f ; the ethically good *reinforces and supports* my Being as going-towards-fulfilling- x_f . In the ethically bad, my existence is primordially disclosed to me as failing-in-my-going-towards- x_f , either as potentially *nullifying* (i.e., undermining) or *stultifying*

(i.e., antagonizing) my Being as going-towards- x_f . In the face of antagonism, my conscience calls me forth, saying ‘become’ or ‘overcome!’ In the case of underminingness, my existence is disclosed to me as threatened *qua* my world’s Being-threatened. Of course, these phenomena are interrelated: as threatened, I must overcome/become or else perish (existentially) and fail (existentially); as becoming/overcoming, I am no longer threatened, and thus my world and my existential-Narrative optimality are preserved. The value (reinforcing/threatening) and the imperative (to become or overcome) are equiprimordially disclosed and phenomenally unitary.

Thus, the frustrating exhaustion of our demonstration behind us, we may Interpret with confidence the Being of ethics: namely, ‘conditioning-my-existential-narrative-Being-in-the-world-as-holding-*open*-and-imperativizingly-*holding-me-to*-my-existential-Narrative-optimum-of-becoming- x_f .’ But perhaps a more economical signifier for the Being of the phenomenon of ethics as constitutive of my Narrative-Being is *ethos*.

V. Conclusions

V.1. Objections

In this section, we anticipate and respond to some prominent objections to our analysis.⁶⁷ The objections that we will consider object to the following in our analysis above: a perceived ‘Non-Cognitivism,’ a neglect of the interpersonal dimension in ontical ethical practices, a confused treatment of the ontological difference, and a problematical *arbitrariness* in our account of the ontological structures of ethics.

Cognitivism and Non-Cognitivism

One sort of objection to our analysis objects to our advocating a stance on ethics that renders ethical phenomena as essentially ‘non-cognitive.’ Such an objector might state the we have argued that the meaning of the Being of ethics is ‘ethos,’ or ‘holding-open-and-holding-me-to-my-existential-Narrative-fulfillment-via-my-existential-narrative-fulfillment.’ But this fails to explain how it is that when we operate morally, we don’t simply ‘feel’ or ‘intuit’ ethical goodness and badness; rather, we make judgments, discuss arguments, etc. In short, ethical phenomena comprise a remarkably *cognitive* or intellectual kind of activity—such phenomena might at some level *involve* non-cognitive structuring, but they certainly more fundamentally are constituted by the *intellect*. Thus, how is it that our manifestly *cognitive* moral activity can be made sense of from within our non-cognitivist stance?

Although Cognitivism in ethics can hardly be dismissed in a handful of paragraphs, we can reply to our objector by simply presenting an account of how it is that such a seemingly

⁶⁷ NB: this section will *not* include objections to Heidegger’s work in general, as this is beyond the bounds of this essay—this is not to say that such objections are not important, but merely that this is not the space to consider them.

cognitive activity can be fundamentally ‘non-cognitive,’ or as we prefer to say, *pre-intellectual*. How do we get from a pre-intellectual ethical *conditioning* to the indubitably intellectual activity of ‘making judgments, arguments, etc.?’

The answer to this is remarkably simple: any kind of intellectual cognizing is an ontical activity that has its roots in a pre-cognitive ontological supposition. Thus, to insist on Being-ethical as moralistically cognizing is simply to operate with a pre-cognitively pre-supposed ontology. And until this pre-supposed ontology that consists in one’s fore-having is investigated in one’s fore-sight and fore-conception, and thus lies unconcealed, one has not adequately investigated *any phenomenal field*, including the field of ethics.

Nevertheless, this ‘brushing-off’ of our objector might seem a bit brusque and premature. Our objector indeed has a good point that we have neglected to address: as ethical phenomena are manifest via *ontical* happenings, even if our investigation is primarily *ontological*, we nonetheless must not stray from the ontical manifestations that make our stance concrete, and allow it to be called an inquiry into *ethics*, rather than simply an inquiry into some other phenomenon. Ontically, ‘ethical discourse’ unfolds at the highest cognitive-intellectual level as sophisticated and civil debate, and at a lower intellectual-cognitive level as angry and belligerent confrontation. And throughout all of these activities, conceptions about ‘right’ and ‘wrong,’ ‘good’ and ‘bad’ are consciously-cognitively held. How does our ontological conception of ethics make sense of these ontical manifestations?

As Heidegger states, truth can never lie in judgments, arguments, or any sort of mode of discourse.⁶⁸ That is to say, *truth* lies in the *phenomena themselves* at which any mode of discourse at some level indicates. That is to say, what is *primary* in discourse is ‘what-the-talk-

⁶⁸ Cf. SZ 33-34.

is-about,' not 'what-is-said-in-the-talk.' Thus, even the most highly-intellectualized and explicitly-articulated modes of ethical discourse are grounded in and pointing back towards phenomenal encounters. Thus, the cognized articulated statements of types like 'y is wrong' and 'one ought to do z' (and *vice versa*) are grounded in and pointing-back-towards phenomenal encounters. Therefore, when I say 'it is wrong to steal' or 'don't steal!' or 'one ought to refrain from stealing,' I am pointing back towards a phenomenal encounter with a meaningful manifestation—in this case, 'theft'—that *is not* a present-at-hand entity secondarily 'predicated-upon' by the form of 'badness' or the like, but rather *is* through and through as 'bad,' 'not to be done,' etc. Thus, we can see why in moral debates about stealing, we often find trivial linguistic differences, e.g.: 'you say it is stealing when a poor young man takes a loaf of bread from the wealthy merchant in order to feed his family; meanwhile, I say it is justice being served, I say it is an action done for a higher good.' Such statements indicate how the very articulation of 'theft' is tied-up through and through with moral concerns, just as the more formally articulated 'taking of a thing that is owned by someone else' is loaded with all sorts of its own moral meanings. Therefore, to judge an entity (action, situation, etc.) as 'wrong,' 'right,' 'bad,' 'good,' 'ought to be the case,' or 'ought not to be the case' is to formally articulate the phenomenal givenness of these entities, actions, situations, agents, etc. as whatsoever they ethically *are*.

When we have said that the Being of ethics is ethos, we mean that constitutive of my Being is a phenomenal 'disclosing-as-ethical' that is conditioned around my x_f and its subsequent narrative. Thus, when I *ethically intellectualize*, I convert this phenomenal givenness of ethical experiences conditioned around my narrative to *articulated conceptualizations*.

Being-with and Intersubjectivity

Another sort of objection our analysis is apt to encounter asks the following: have we problematically and arbitrarily privileged an account of the human as primordially *individual* rather than *collective*? On what basis can we justify our thoroughly *neglectful* phenomenological treatment of ontically interpersonal ethical manifestations—especially considering that such interpersonal ethical manifestations constitute a *significant* amount of ontical ethical manifestations in general?

We answer this objection affirming the objector's position: our analysis has indeed been thoroughly *neglectful* of ontical-interpersonal ethical manifestations, and certainly has neglected Being-with as an existiale of human Being. This neglect certainly should arouse the reader's suspicion until properly treated.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, we have our reasons for neglecting this discussion at the current moment. Namely, we explicitly set-aside any treatment of fallenness and Being-with (and thus, any treatment of *intersubjectivity*) as ontological structures constitutive of the human on the following basis: we claim that it is Heidegger's focus on these structures that leads him to automatically pass-over a thorough phenomenological treatment of ontical ethical manifestations, instead considering them merely as ontical dealings of the purely inauthentic they-self; thus it was our *very aim* to investigate whether or not ontical ethical dealings could be made sense of as ontological constituents of the human purely by way of the ontological structures of *projection* and *thrownness*.

And indeed, even in the *thoroughly individualized human*, upon a close phenomenological analysis of these aforementioned structures, ontical ethical manifestations exhibit an ontological constitutiveness. That is to say, there is a thoroughly *intra-personal* dimension to ethical phenomena, and this intra-personal dimension is *constitutive* of human

⁶⁹ Cf. section V.2 for a sketch of the future work to be undertaken in light of our analysis herein.

Being: it is the *making-intelligible* of the world and my existentiell Being as *towards-Narrative-fulfillment*.

But none of this is to say that the Being of ethics is not *equiprimordially* interpersonal—our explicitly neglecting to phenomenologically treat Being-with and thus this ‘*intersubjective*’ dimension to ontical ethical manifestations is based upon our aim to *not automatically pass-over* ontical ethical manifestations as simply the ontical dealings of the inauthentic they-self. Having now made-secure a hermeneutic of ethics that reveals ethical phenomena to be *genuinely constitutive of human Being*, we can now safely *circle backwards* and undertake a phenomenological analysis of ethical Being-with.

The Ontological Difference

Have we held-fast the distinguishing line of the ontological difference (*viz.*, Being vs. beings (or entities)), or have we slid-back into a slippery ambiguity in our treatment of the human being’s meaningfully *Being*? Consider: our objector here might state that our analysis of the Being of ethics (namely, holding-open-and-holding-me-to-my-existential-Narrative-fulfillment-via-my-existentiell-narrative-fulfillment) is innately *infected* by a confused treatment of the ontological difference. This confusion occurs as a muddling of the distinction between existential-ontological Being (as Narrative) and existentiell-ontical manifestations (as narrative). Accordingly, can we thus say with any certainty whether the inquiry that we have tirelessly undertaken even *has any right to go by the name of ‘ontological?’* Is it possible that our inquiry has turned-out to ground the meaning of ethics *ontically* rather than *ontologically*? Moreover, has our inquiry thus revealed itself as *lacking substantive faithful commitment to Heidegger’s ‘Dasein’ and ‘care?’*

This objection, if it proves successful, would represent quite the undermining force to our work *qua* its stated aims of an ontological hermeneutic of ethics. What might we say in defense of our analysis?

Let us first relate some key terms. What we have called my ‘ontological-existential-Narrative-Being’ is a formal account of my Dasein or Da-sein. What we have called my ‘ontical-existential-narrative-Being’ is a formal account of my concretized human being (or rather: my individually-lived existence in the world). ‘Da-sein,’ as ‘Being-there,’⁷⁰ is as the *making-intelligible* of Being (*qua* entities’ ontological structures); my Da-sein is my Being as my thrownness into ontologically disclosing the ontical.

But what is peculiar about my Da-sein is the nature of its disclosing: for it discloses in a peculiar way, according to a peculiar ontological structure constituting it itself: namely, it discloses entities’ meaningfully Being in accordance with its own *existential* nature. That is to say, entities’ meaningfully Being is always disclosed as relating to my Being’s being an issue for me. To rephrase: *any disclosing discloses in connection with my existential problematic*.

But what more can we say about the nature of the existential problematic (i.e., my Being’s being an issue for me)? Namely: “[o]nly the particular Dasein decides its existence . . . [t]he question of existence never gets straightened out except through existing itself. The understanding of oneself which leads *along this way* we call ‘*existential*’” (SZ 12). Thus, as any disclosing discloses in connection with my existential problematic, we can more specifically state that *any disclosing discloses in connection with my existential existing as existentially constituted*. That is to say that any entity’s meaningful Being is always as existentially disclosed

⁷⁰ Cf. section II.1.

in connection with my existentiell existence—any existential disclosing *cannot be* otherwise than *existentielly* located.

Therefore, Da-sein can only *be itself*—i.e., make-intelligible, disclose entities’ meaningfully Being—through its existential structures as constituted by thrown projection, which structures can only *be* as concretized *existentiell possibilities*. Thus, any existential-ontological disclosing is always via ontical-existentiell be-ing.

Therefore, in Interpreting the existential-ontological structures of the human as *Narrative*, we have interpreted the existentiell-ontical be-ing of the human as consisting in *narratives*. That is to say, I am only *concretized* as the narrative existence that I am on the basis of my Narrative-Being; however, I am *only Narratively disclosive as disclosing via my concretized narrative*. Thus, my Narrative Da-sein’s disclosing always discloses via my existentiell narratives. That is to say, my existentiell narratives are *intimately* in reciprocity with my existential Narrative-Being. Thus, although the *problematic* and the *optimum* (i.e., *the resolution*) implicit in my Narrative-Being are *ontological* structures, these ontological structures can only be disclosed via, are intimately connected with, my existentiell-ontical narratives. Thus, any existential-ontological-Narrative problematic can only be *resolved* (i.e., any implicit optimum can only be attained) *via my existentiell-ontical narratives*.

Thus, what might we say to our objector? Namely, that we believe that we have *carefully held-fast* to the ontological difference, in the sense of *carefully holding-fast to the intimate relationship between my existential-ontological-Narrative Da-sein and my existentiell-ontical-narrative-be-ing*. However, we must nevertheless take care to forthrightly admit our fallibility in these matters: it is indeed eminently possible that our understanding has herein led us astray.

Arbitrariness and Normativity

Our next objector might object to our account's entailing a problematical relativism in ethical judgments and arguments. Indeed, our account seems to entail that what really is ethical is that-which-*conditionally-holds-open-as-holding-me-to-my-Narrative-fulfillment-via-narrative-fulfillment*. Since our analysis has not revealed any non-arbitrary evaluability concerning *which* narratives I ought to adopt, our objector can claim that we have, in phenomenologically analyzing 'ethics,' thoroughly 'relativized' the ethical phenomena. Thus, how can we justify typical Philosophical practice of formulating robust moral arguments replete with truth-values and conditions, and aggressively critiquing others' moral positions on the basis of their 'being untrue' or 'failing to attain to truth conditions?' To put it another way, how can we say that morality is 'absolutely normative' or 'objective' on our account? If we cannot, this viciously reduces ethical statements to relativism, in which case, our ethical conversations are revealed as useless and baseless.

This set of objections reveals a metaphilosophical understanding of truth as 'that which we all agree upon being the case,' or rather, 'that which, were all our *biases* removed, we would agree upon being the case.' As Heidegger states, our metaphilosophical understanding of truth lies in unconcealed Being rather than such universal agreeability.⁷¹ Thus, this objector objects to our analysis because it manifestly counts as *truly ethical* what are manifestly *divergent* ethical stances entailed by different peoples' existentiell narratives. Meanwhile, what is important in our conception of ethics is that we have *unveiled* its Being in relation to our general human Being.

⁷¹ Cf. SZ 33.

But we can perhaps flesh out our response to this objector, and to the traditional way in which ethics is Philosophically considered. ‘Ethics’ is often taught according to the dichotomy of ‘objectivist/absolutist’ theories against ‘subjectivist/relativist’ theories. And indeed these terms imply an ontologico-metaphysical tradition that privileges *enduring presence*, in terms of *an enduringly present mind* (i.e., subject) *encountering an enduringly present set of external entities* (i.e., objects). Thus, the ‘problem of [ethical] knowledge’ obtains: how can an *inner* subject *transcend itself* outwards to meaningfully ground itself in an *outer* object? That is to say, ‘reality’ is understood as ‘that which is *object-like or objective*, outside the mind’; ‘truth’ is understood as ‘a subject’s acts of judging that transcend her inner limits and accord *absolutely* with mind-independent entities’; and ‘knowledge’ is understood as ‘a subject’s true, justified judgments.’ Therefore, ‘absolutism’ is typically associated with ‘objectivism’ as ‘that which *absolutely and beyond justified disagreement* is real’; meanwhile, ‘relativism’ is typically associated with ‘subjectivism’ as ‘that which lacks absolute accordability with mind-independent entities’ or ‘that on which another cannot justifiably agree or disagree.’ Thus, the ‘objectivist-absolutist’ versus ‘subjectivist-relativist’ ethical dichotomies that are Philosophically considered are rooted in a metaphysics of presence that privileges ‘absolute agreeability’ (i.e., *absolute object-likeness, absolutely mind-independent presence*) as the Being of truth and reality.

Rather, we state, following Heidegger, that reality is a primordial meaningfulness of Being, and that truth is unconcealed Being; knowledge is not one’s cognitive mastery over the Being of entities, but rather one’s unveiling of Being.

Still, perhaps we can say one thing in order to once again bring our typical ontical practices into ontological clarity regarding Philosophy’s traditional treatment of ethics. We have found the metaphysical inheritance of an ontology of presence underlying the ‘objectivist-

subjectivist' distinction, and we have found that this distinction informs our understanding of 'absolute' and 'relative,' and thus tells us *why* it is important that an ethical theory be 'absolute' (i.e., because if and only if it is objectively absolute is it *real, true, and thus worth considering*), and why avoiding relativism is a philosophical problematic. But if we divorce our understanding of 'absolutism' and 'relativism' from 'objectivism' and 'subjectivism,' we can find a more apt and primordial description that these ontical terms bear for the ontological Being of ethics as *ethos*. If we consider 'absolute' to signify 'absolutely *normative or prescriptive*' rather than 'absolutely objectively-present,' and if we consider 'relative' to signify '*really* relative to one's existentiell narrative' rather than '*subjectively-arbitrarily* relative to one's standpoint' then we can attain a further grasp on the ontological constitution of ethics as *ethos*.

To be absolute as consonant with our understanding is to be 'normative or prescriptive concerning other ethically-constituted beings'; to be relative as consonant with our understanding is to be 'relative to one's existentiell narrative.' Thus, 'relativism' seamlessly fits into our conception of the Being of ethics: one's ethical understanding is *relativized* or *conditioned* around one's narratives—these terms are virtually equivalent in signification, in this case; they both indicate 'organization around *my* narrative line.' But has our previous discussion anticipated our statement that 'ethics *is* as absolute?'

Indeed it has: consider our formal statement of the Being of ethics as *ethos*: conditioning-my-existentiell-narrative-Being-in-the-world-as-holding-open-and-imperativizingly-holding-me-to-my-existential-Narrative-optimum-of-becoming- x_f . What is *crucial* to our present purposes is that the *world* is made meaningful in its holding-open my narrative fulfillment. But now consider that our world is, as Heidegger states, always as a *with-world*.⁷² Thus, our Being-with

⁷² Cf. SZ 118.

is *always already* as *ethically* conditioned as *holding-open my narrative fulfillment*.⁷³ Therefore, my Being-ethical is always-already normative: it *automatically* implicates other humans, other ethical beings.⁷⁴

But perhaps we can cast our response to our objector in slightly different terms: what our objector might call the ‘mere instrumentality’ in our account of ethics we would prefer to call an *existential* instrumentality. That is to say, since my implicit existential-ontological-Narrative optimum of *fulfillment* is an *absolute, non-relative structure*, but a *structure* whose content is inherently *open*, therefore, what is *absolutely substantive* in our account of ethics is its Being as this *ontological structure that holds-open and holds-me-to my narrative (and thus, Narrative) fulfillment*. Therefore, we might state with confidence that the truly *ethical* person, on our account, is the person who *is* as utterly *engaged* with her implicit optimum of fulfillment. Thus, her ‘instrumental’ ethics is not ‘merely instrumental,’ but rather absolutely *instrumentally* normative *qua* directing her towards her implicit optimum of Narrative fulfillment.

⁷³ Of course, our analysis here once again merely underscores our grave neglect and need to treat Being-with and fallenness as an existential-ontological structure of human Being. Thus, our brief analysis at this juncture is meant to merely *provisionally point-towards* a way that ‘normativity’ might be phenomenologically described.

⁷⁴ Cf. Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*, part 4, chapter 1, section III for an interestingly different account as to how the human’s existentiality automatically normatively implicates other humans.

V.2. Implications

This second subsection of our concluding section comprises some reflections on how this piece adds to a philosophical conversation, and the future work it implicitly calls for to be undertaken.

How might our project bear on the current Philosophical conversations regarding ethics? Certainly, it has highlighted the problems with an ‘objectivist-absolutist’ vs. ‘subjectivist-relativist’ dichotomy traditionally schematizing ethics classes; but this insight it has no claim whatsoever to contributing originally; rather, it merely underlines an already-existent conversation about the problematical ‘subject-object’ dichotomy as based on a metaphysical tradition that privileges mere and bare *presence*.

Additionally, we would like to distance ourselves from those who would claim that our position is ‘anti-realist’ with regard to ethics. This is a problematical designation: for if our conclusions are in line with our intentions, then our project has not in any way *diminished the reality of ethical concerns*. Rather, our analysis undermines the stance that ‘ethics’ and ‘morality’ comprise primarily *intellectual* phenomena that are best formulated as deductively-valid propositional arguments with robust ‘truth’ (i.e., agreeable with ‘objective reality’) values and conditions. Nevertheless, our claims do not undermine *the real phenomenal Being* of ethics. In fact, our conclusions do not even undermine the existential and philosophical importance of ethics. Rather, they *steadfastly affirm* the crucial connection that the Being of ethics bears towards the human as one of her constitutive ontological structures.

But this is only to say that our analysis has revealed phenomenologically what is ontically manifest: namely, *the utter inexorability and indispensability of ethical discourse*. As we have

found that ethics is *of its very Being* a constituent of *my Being*, to attempt to ‘avoid’ or ‘undermine’ ethical discourse—which often lurks as an inconspicuous motive or perceived ‘implication’ of ‘relativism’—is not only laughably impossible, but *existentially counter-optimal*. My Being is, as Narrative, implicitly oriented towards the optimum of narrative fulfillment. Ethics, as an ontological constituent of my Being that *conditions* my very existentiell Being as holding-open and holding-me-to my narrative, cannot possibly be outstripped—even people who think of themselves as ‘a-moralists’ are simply advocating their own *peculiar* ethics as based on their existentiell narratives. Nor ought one to ‘try’ to outstrip its influence on us: as steadfastly directing me towards my Narrative fulfillment, I ought to embrace my Being-ethical as part of the full embracing of my Narratively-Being.

What might we say concerning the future work to-be-undertaken that this project implicates? As already mentioned, in order to fully round out our Interpretation of the ontological structures of human Being as Narrative, we must now go forth and re-Interpret Narrative-Being in light of the ontological structure of fallenness or Being-with. And indeed, having held-fast the Being of ethics prior to such an analysis of ethics in connection with fallenness, we can now go forth in inclusion of this care-structure, assured that we will not slip into the trap of automatically depreciating ethical Being as a mode of the they-self’s inauthenticity. This analysis of Being-with will (indeed, must) undertake a phenomenological analysis of the ontical-interpersonal manifestations of ethics.

Our immediately preceding statement points us towards another analytic to be undertaken: namely, an analytic that considers ontical-ethical manifestations in far greater *breadth*: our analysis, as being merely *provisional*, only considered ‘conscience’ and ‘evil’; but certainly, there are far more that any ontological account of ethics must make sense of.

Therefore, in order for our Interpretation of the Being of ethics to be properly complete, we must phenomenologically analyze a greater breadth of ontical-ethical manifestations.

Finally, we must also consider the question of the possibility of my Being as Being-a-whole *qua* Being-a-unitary-project. In other words, *we must undertake a phenomenological analysis of my ontical-existential Being as meaningfully unitary*. If it is the case that I am, at any given moment, projecting-along various disparate—even possibly *contradictory*—narratives, how is it that I nevertheless primordially understand myself as a *unitary project-of-Being-as-becoming*? *Is there some super-Narrative-structure that meaningfully grounds my Being-unitary*? Will this help us make sense of my phenomenally finding myself in more intimate relationships with some $x_A(s)$ than others? Will this help us make sense of instances wherein *conflicts* that force a projective ‘choice’ between $x_A(s)$ arise?

We have put these questions and implicated analytics off to one side in our analysis, as we have been focused on gaining a merely provisional *sketch* of human Being as Narrative as a means of accessing the phenomenal field of ethics with primordially; nevertheless, these questions and analytics are pertinent to our conceptions of Narrative-Being and Being-ethical, and thus must be undertaken if our hermeneutic has any pretensions to transcending its status as *provisional* towards becoming *complete*.

V.3. In Conclusion

Above, we have undertaken a phenomenological description of the Being of ethics, as in relation to the Being of the human being. But in order to make most accessible this phenomenal field of ethics, we found that a re-Interpretation of human Being was necessary. Our re-Interpretation is fundamentally indebted to Heidegger's conception of human Being in *Being and Time*, which he indicates by the term *Existenz*, or more formally as *Da-sein*, Being-in-the-world, and care; nevertheless, although our work is a mere re-capitulation of Heidegger's conception of human Being in its substantive constituents, *emphatically* our work lies some distance away from his. We have systematically Interpreted human Being as *Narrative*, which in its existentiell-ontical manifestations takes the form of 'narratives.' This Narrative-Being involves the human's *projection* and *thrownness* into the ecstases of *future, Past, and present*. My *projection* into the future is indicated by the phrase 'going-towards- x ,' where x stands-in for any possibility-of-Being; however, more formally, my projectival-futural Being is indicated by the phrase 'going-towards- x_f ,' where x_f stands-in for any *fundamental* possibility-of-Being. Crucially, projection-upon some fundamental possibility-of-Being automatically births a 'projection-continuum,' which we understand as a network of dependent projections leading up to this fundamental possibility-of-Being as an 'in-order-to' that contingently *is* for-the-sake-of the fundamental projection. Thus, my Being-towards the future is as a 'going-towards- x_f .' My Being-towards the present is my Being-oriented, which involves my Being locatable, directionalized, and arranged. My *projection* into my Past is indicated by the phrase 'that-which-brought-me-here-now[-as-going-towards- x_f];' my *thrownness* into my Past is indicated as 'attesting-to-my-existentiell-Being.' Our unitarily existential Being as involving as constituents all of these ecstases we have re-termed *Narrative*. Existentially, our Narrative-Being manifests itself as *narrative lines* or

simply *narratives*, which are the projection-continuums stretching forwards and backwards and constituting my concretized Being.

Next, we moved on to discussing the Being of ethics as having its basis in human Narrative-Being. We undertook this discussion phenomenologically via Interpreting the phenomena of *antagonism* and *underminingness*. With regard to *antagonism* we Interpreted existentially-ontologically the phenomenal ‘call of conscience’ in a way not substantively but rather *emphatically* different than the treatment of this phenomenon by Heidegger, as ‘holding-me-to-my-existential-Being.’ In the call of conscience in the face of antagonism, the ‘ethical imperative’ is disclosed as ‘holds-me-to-my-existential-narrative-fulfillment.’ In our analysis of *underminingness*, we existentially-ontologically considered the phenomenon of *evil*. In the encounter with evil, we found that evil is essentially a threat, but a threat of a special sort: that is to say, evil is as a *threat to my world*. And threatening my world is tantamount to threatening my very *narrative Being*. Thus, evil is as a ‘that-which-threatens-my-existential-Being.’ The ethical import of evil is in its *disorienting me*. My Being, as having its basis in Being-oriented along a narrative, is thus *ethical* in its being *conditioned around my narrative*. Formally, thus, the existential-ontological Being of ethics is as a ‘conditioning-my-existential-narrative-Being-in-the-world-as-holding-open-and-imperativizingly-holding-me-to-my-existential-Narrative-optimum-of-becoming-x’; less formally, the Being of ethics might be indicated by the term *ethos*.

Thus, we have provisionally, broadly, but rigorously attempted to unconceal the Being of ethics through this phenomenological description.

Along the way in our project, we also gave a broad metaphilosophical stance, introduced and defined some technical terminology, and provided a ‘preview’ as a means of orienting our

reader in an introductory section; we undertook a broad summary of the most pertinent analysis from Heidegger's *Being and Time*; and we concluded by first raising and answering some of the more prominent objections that might be raised against our project, and finally considering some important implications of our analysis.

In any case, we have attempted to basically and provisionally sketch the Being of the human Being as *Narrative* in order to make accessible the phenomenal field of ethics, which we have existentially-ontologically Interpreted as *ethos*.

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