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On Being as a whole and Being-a-whole

Many—probably most—interpreters react to the fact that *Being and Time* is merely a ‘torso’¹ by setting aside ‘the Question of Being’. Instead they set about stripping the body for what might yet prove to be assets in the context of some project or other of their own. In contrast, John Haugeland boldly insisted that

Everything in Being and Time has to do with the question of being ... [For example, t]he existential concepts are introduced for this reason and this reason only. Our task as readers is to understand how. (Haugeland 2000, 66)

I confess that this strikes me as a pure act of faith on Haugeland’s part. I have argued elsewhere that we have plenty of reason to wonder whether the best reference point by which to understand Heidegger’s early thought is ‘the Question of Being’ and, with it, ‘the Being and Time project’—as I will call it—the broader project to which the published book was declared to be contributing.² That project is only one of a number of ‘frames’ that Heidegger sets around his work in the 1920s and one that he abandons within a couple of years of the book’s publication.³

He does so seemingly because of continuing dissatisfaction with his own efforts to bring it to fruition. A case could be made for thinking that we have much of

¹ This is Spiegelberg’s well-known description, quoted in, e.g., Kisiel 2005: 189.

² Cf. McManus 2012: ch. 9.

³ As the two available translations of *Sein und Zeit* also give the pagination of the German original, I will give references to the latter, though generally I will follow the translation of Macquarrie and Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962). I use the established translations of Heidegger’s works in most cases, but diverge from them on occasion.

the material that might have made up Part Two of the completed book. But there are fewer reasons for such optimism with respect to Division Three of Part One. Retrospectively Heidegger talks of that division being ‘held back’ (LH 231) and—as early as 1929 (EG 105 n. b)—he identified the 1927 *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* lectures as a ‘new elaboration of the Third Division of the First Part of *Being and Time*’ (BP 1). These comments suggest that, in essence, the work was done but never reached quite the publishable form Heidegger sought; and that may seem to be confirmed by Heidegger’s report in 1941 that—through conversations with Jaspers in December 1926 and January 1927—‘it became clear to me that the elaboration of this all important Division (I, 3) drafted up to that point had to be incomprehensible’.⁴ But in the same letter, he continues:

Of course, at the time I thought that in the course of the year everything could be said more clearly. That was a delusion.

So Heidegger’s opinion in 1941 suggests that nothing he had written since *Being and Time*—*Basic Problems* included—quite added up to that missing division.⁵

Having said all of the above, I have also argued elsewhere that interesting possibilities may still open up if we do take seriously the ‘Question of Being’ and the particular framing of Heidegger’s early thought that we find in *Being and Time*. In particular, I have offered an account of the project to which that book was devoted, the work left to Division Three, and the importance of that work, along with—however—reasons to think there may be problems of principle that prevent such a completion.⁶ According to that account, Heidegger envisaged the *Being and Time* project as solving a problem that Aristotle revealed and that Heidegger’s own insights—into the diverse forms that the Being of entities takes—exacerbated. The problem is that there is reason to think that the very possibility of the discipline of ontology

⁴ Translation quoted from Kisiel 1993, 486

⁵ There are also clear indications in *BP* itself that he feels the task he set himself there remains unfinished. Cf, e.g., *BP* 308.

⁶ Cf. McManus 2013b.

presupposes that there is sense to the idea of ‘Being in general’ and reason to think that there is no such sense. What I want to do here is suggest one way that the account I have offered might be filled out, in particular, by sketching a way in which the discussion of authenticity in *Being and Time* might have been structurally significant for the above project.

1. Phenomenology, ontology, and diversity

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger bemoans the baleful influence of the “priority of the present-at-hand [*Vorhanden*] in traditional ontology” (SZ 147), “the domination of the ontology of the ‘substantial’” (SZ 320 n. xix).⁷ He argues that we must instead recognize diverse forms of Being, distinguishing, for example, *Vorhandenheit* from *Zuhandenheit* (readiness-to-hand), from the mode of Being of the world within which entities of those sorts are found, and from that of the entity that encounters them in that world, *Dasein*.⁸

Heidegger maintains that the “priority” of the *Vorhanden* exists in a symbiotic relationship with a corresponding and similarly baleful “priority” of “pure beholding [*puren Anschauen*]” (SZ 147); for this reason, a recognition of the diverse forms that our understanding of entities takes may also help to break up prejudices about the ‘objects’ of that understanding, a kind of phenomenological reflection on the ways in which those objects are grasped revealing the diverse ontological forms that they take.⁹ So, for example, though we may grasp the *Vorhanden* through “pure

⁷ This equation of the *Vorhanden* with substances is often made—see e.g. Guignon 1983: 101 and 144, and Dreyfus 1991: 71—but is problematic. McManus 2012: ch. 3 discusses these worries but I set them aside here.

⁸ Other forms of Being that Heidegger seems to entertain but which he does not discuss at any length in *Being and Time* include those instantiated by animals, God and truth. I discuss the second of these briefly in a moment and the third in Sec. 8.

⁹ Or so I argue in McManus 2012.

beholding,”¹⁰ we grasp the *Zuhanden* by being “occupied with it in using it” (*HCT* 191) and other *Dasein* through “Being-with” (*SZ* 113); and recognizing this diversity—in what Heidegger at one stage calls ‘subject-correlates [*Subjektkorrelate*],’¹¹—helps us “broaden the idea of objectivity,” the latter “exhibited in its content in the investigation of the corresponding intuition” (*HCT* 72). We tend to overlook the diversity such ‘intuitions’—such ‘subject-correlates’—take too but, by remedying this *Verstehensvergessenheit*, we can expose the symbiotically-related *Seinsvergessenheit*.¹²

There may seem to be a circularity in this approach: one would seem to need a grasp of *Zuhandenheit*, for example, if one is to identify which mode of understanding of ours *is* our understanding of the *Zuhanden*. But Heidegger believes we have such a grasp anyway: “Being is never alien but always familiar, ‘ours’” (*MFL* 147). The problem is that—in a sense—we ‘forget’ it. As *Dasein*, our mode of existence is one of “understanding Being” (*SZ* 12). But that understanding—which is manifest in our adept everyday dealings with the variety of entities we encounter—fails to inform our reflections on such entities and such understanding. Instead we fixate on entities possessed of a particular mode of Being—‘the substantial’—and its ‘subject-correlate’—‘pure beholding’. The phenomenological response described above is a technique to aid ‘recollection’ of other modes of understanding and, through that, of other modes of Being.¹³

An early example of this recollecting reflection in action can be found in Heidegger’s lectures on St Paul and St Augustine. There Heidegger approaches “the

¹⁰ For complications I will not discuss here that concern Heidegger’s understanding of how we grasp the *Vorhanden*, see McManus 2012: chs. 3 and 8.

¹¹ Cf., e.g., *IPPW* 37, *PRL* 240, 241 etc.

¹² The connection between phenomenology and ontology that I sketch here is looser than that which Heidegger seems to defend in *SZ*. (Cf., e.g., *SZ* 35 and 38, and for one interpretation, see Braver, introduction to this volume.) But I will set that worry aside here.

¹³ For further discussion, see McManus 2012, sec. 1.1, and of this notion of “recollection” in particular, McManus 2013c

task ... to determine the sense of the objecthood of God” (*PRL* 67)—“[t]he sense of the Being of God” (*PRL* 84)—by starting “from the modes of access”, from a proper appreciation of the “original region of life and performance of consciousness (or feeling), in which religion alone realizes itself as a certain form of experience” (*PRL* 222, 243). By placing such a ‘subject-correlate’ first in our thinking, we may shake off the temptation to fall into thinking of God “by analogy with the theoretical and the constitution of the object of cognition”, a temptation that distorts our “experiential comportment to God” into a “holding-as-true” and God into “simply a special object” (*PRL* 232, 149). By reflecting instead on God as the “correlate of the act-character of ‘faith’” (*PRL* 252)—as the recipient of prayer, love and service¹⁴—we resist the corresponding ontological assimilation and open up the possibility of recognizing God’s “originary objectivity [*Objectität*]” (*PRL* 252).¹⁵

But while his early work stresses such diversity, Heidegger also insists that “the *question* that determined the way of [his] thought” is ‘what is the simple, unitary determination of Being that permeates all its manifold meanings?’ (*LR* x) The “quest” for an answer to this question became—as Heidegger retrospectively put it—“the relentless impetus for the treatise *Being and Time*” (*CV* 9); “[t]he question of the possible *multiplicity of Being* and therewith at the same time that of the *unity of the concept of Being in general*” was for him “urgent”, “demand[ing] to be raised” (*BP* 120, 282). So why?

2. Diversity and fragmentation

In the 1924-25 lecture series on Plato’s *Sophist*, Heidegger celebrates Parmenides’ formulation of ‘the seemingly trivial principle’, ‘beings are’ (*PS* 303). This, Heidegger proposes, represented ‘the very first decisive inception of ontology’ (*PS* 307):

¹⁴ Cf. *PRL* 79, 107, 234, and 254.

¹⁵ For further discussion of this example, cf. McManus 2012: sec. 1.2 and, in greater detail, 2013a.

The ancients tried to clarify and make intelligible beings ...—what is already there—by deducing them from particular beings. [But] Parmenides ... considers beings as such, i.e., he sets apart the whole of beings in an ontic sense and says that ‘they are’. (PS 302)

Parmenides’ breakthrough was to attempt to ‘enter into the dimension of the *Being* of beings’ (PS 305), to reach—so to speak—for a concept of ‘Being’, for a ‘feat’ or feature that all entities share in simply by virtue of the fact that ‘they are’.

But his successors recognized the true difficulty of that venture, Plato insisting that ‘there must be *manifold Being*’ (PS 307) and Aristotle that ‘Being is said in many ways’ (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Γ 2 1003a33). The difficulty is not merely that such ontological diversity would seem to call for a general ontological theory of greater complexity; it may also seem to cast doubt on the very possibility of such a theory, by casting doubt on whether there is a singular subject-matter for any such theory to address.

Heidegger reports that he found the “urgent” question of “the *unity of the concept of Being in general*” “concealed” in Aristotle (LR x);¹⁶ and there are several ways in which the latter’s thought can raise the above doubt. G. E. L. Owen spells out one.¹⁷

In [Aristotle’s] view, to be was to be something or other: for a threshold, he says, ‘to be’ means “to have such and such a position,” for ice it means “to have solidified in such and such a way.” And at the level of greatest generality, to be is to be either a substance of some sort or a relation or a quality or a member of some other category. There is no general sense to the claim that something exists over and above one of the particular senses. (Owen 1986, 181)

¹⁶ Cf. LR x, CV 9 and TB 74 on this and the important role that Brentano’s study of Aristotle (Brentano 1975) played in revealing that question’s presence to Heidegger.

¹⁷ McManus 2013b: sec. 3 spells out another.

If there is no such general sense that subsumes the particulars—and hence “no class of *existing things* which will embrace men and miles and modesty” (Owen 1986, 216)—then “a single synoptic science of all existing things” (Owen 1986, 278) would seem to lack a topic.

Heidegger’s own stress on ontological diversity makes such a worry over the “the disintegration [*Zerfall*]” of Being (*AM* 23) more vivid still. When one says a *zuhanden* item exists, a *vorhanden* item exists and another *Dasein* exists, one says—roughly speaking—that something is useable for some purpose, that something occupies a certain space, and that we share an understanding of the world with someone¹⁸ But what entitles us to think that these are variations on a single “achievement” or “feat”—“existence”, “Being”? Even if the most pressing “task” for ontology is “classifying the whole of Being into regions” (*PRL* 41)—“partition[ing] the totality of beings” (*PRL* 39)—there must still be such a “totality”—such a “whole”¹⁹—if such a partitioning is to be a contribution to something that merits the name ‘ontology’—“a science ... [that] stud[ies] all things that are, *qua* being” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Γ 2 1003b 15-16). If there isn’t “any single unifying concept of Being in general that would justify calling these different ways of Being ways of *Being*” (*BP* 176), then whatever distinctions we may be marking, they will not be entitled to the label ‘ontological distinctions’.

This worry can show up in other ways: for instance, as a worry about the perspective from which the ontologist might draw her distinctions. If we grasp the *Vorhanden* through “pure beholding” and the *Zuhanden* by being “occupied with it in

¹⁸ Cf. *BP* on how a *Zuhanden* item is individuated not by ‘space- and time-position’ but by ‘its equipmental character and equipmental contexture’: ‘functionality’ is ‘exactly what makes [such a] thing what it is’ (*BP* 292, 164). ‘[T]o exist’, which is *Dasein*’s distinctive mode of Being, on the other hand, ‘is essentially ... to understand’ (*BP* 276).

¹⁹ I will treat the expressions, ‘Being in general’ and ‘Being as a whole’, as interchangeable here. Though there may be issues here, Heidegger’s own note to *SZ* 37 (published in the Stambaugh translation of *SZ*) would seem to sanction this.

using it”, through which ‘subject-correlate’ might one have the difference between such entities in view? We may come to worry that there is no single unifying concept of ‘understanding’ or ‘grasping’ entities that would justify calling ‘pure beholding’ and ‘being occupied with something’ ‘ways of understanding or grasping’, or any perspective from which the difference between these entities—that such ‘ways of understanding or grasping’ understand or grasp—might be understood or grasped.

Polt has suggested that ‘Heidegger assumes’ that, although “Being takes various forms”, “all the varieties of Being cohere, ... so that we can ask what it means to be in general” (Polt 2005, 2). It would be fairer to say not that Heidegger makes this assumption, but rather that he believes both that we all make this assumption—‘if we conceive of philosophical cognition as something possible and necessary’ (SZ 16)—and that this is an assumption to which we must show we are entitled.²⁰

3. The Being and Time Project

Aristotle offers one way of meeting the latter need, proposing that, though “there are many senses in which a thing is said to be, ... all refer to one starting-point”:

²⁰ Another way of thinking of the importance of identifying such a unifying sense arises out of Heidegger’s description of philosophical confusion as our using words whose meaning has descended into “indeterminate emptiness” (HCT 269). Just as Heidegger worries—for example—over whether (and, if so, how) “*the possibility of being itself*” is “attested” in *Dasein*’s lived experience, so too one might wonder whether ‘Being in general’ has a “demonstrable meaning” (SZ 23, 59). “The fundamental concepts of metaphysics” might then “amount to nothing more than the possession of words”, having “a neutral, faded content” by virtue of not “originally aris[ing] from” any determinate “sphere of experience” (PRL 246, IPR 7). (For discussion, cf. McManus 2013c.) In response, the account below would identify—‘attested’ in the life of *Dasein*—an ‘experience’ from which an idea of ‘Being in general’ might ‘arise’.

[S]ome things are said to be because they are substances, others because they are affections of substance, others because they are a process towards substance, or destructions or privations or qualities of substance, or productive or generative of substance, or of things which are relative to substance, or negations of one of these things or of substance itself. (*Metaphysics* Γ 2 1003b 5-18)

As Owen glosses this view, “[t]he primary sense’ of ‘Being’ “is that in which substances ... exist” and the “others ... are variously derivative”, in that the notion of substance “reappear[s] as a common element in our analyses of the existence of non-substances such as colours or times or sizes.” (Owen 1986, 217)²¹ But for Heidegger, this view precisely exhibits “the domination of the ontology of the ‘substantial’”.

The project to which *Being and Time* was to have contributed offered an alternative response: something *else* is to play the kind of role that substance plays for Aristotle, namely, time. Heidegger’s “provisional aim” in *Being and Time* is “the interpretation of *time* as the possible horizon for any understanding of Being” (SZ 1): “[w]ithin the horizon of time the projection of a meaning of *Being in general* can be accomplished” (SZ 235, italics added). If so, time “enabl[es] ... the thematic interpretation of *Being* and of its articulation and manifold ways,” and “thus makes ontology possible” (BP 228).

But we cannot leap straight to this conclusion—not least, because we cannot claim to know what it means once Heidegger has warned us that the “time” in question is not time as it has been “ordinarily understood” (SZ 17). Indeed Heidegger sees the latter as yet another expression of “the domination of the ontology of the ‘substantial’”: through a process of “levelling off”, time is itself rendered a sequence of ‘nows’ that are “somehow *vorhanden*” (SZ 422, 423). Considerations of what Being in general is face similar prejudices to those that blind us to the nature of the *Zuhanden*, *Dasein*, world etc. So even if we have the sophistication to think that Being in general has something to do with time—perhaps in recognition of time’s

²¹ Heidegger discusses this view at *BCAP* 126-27, 133-36 and 222, and *AM* 27-39.

having acted throughout philosophy's history as an "index" for the differentiation and delimitation of domains of Being as such' (*HCT* 5)—here too "the domination of the 'substantial'" is waiting in the wings in the form of the 'ordinary conception of time'.

So how then are we to proceed? I will tentatively suggest that Heidegger employs here too the approach that Sec. 1 sketched. We saw there how Heidegger seeks to break our ontological prejudices through a phenomenological re-duction—literally, a leading back to the ways in which entities show themselves to us. This approach frees up our ontology of *x* by asking what understanding *x* 'looks like'—what the subject who intends *x* has to be like. We see this in *Being and Time*'s reflections on how we grasp the *Zuhanden*, the *Vorhanden* and other *Dasein*; and my suggestion here is that the overarching Being and Time project might perhaps be seen as extending this treatment to the particular and metaphilosophically crucial case of Being in general: it would free up our vision of Being in general by asking what understanding Being in general 'looks like', what the subject who intends Being in general has to be like. Though, in one sense, all *Dasein* grasp Being in general constantly, I will suggest that—for Heidegger—we only see what this actually amounts to when we consider the demands of authenticity: there is a further sense in which a condition of *Dasein*'s acknowledging Being as a whole is *Dasein*'s having achieved a kind of wholeness itself, a wholeness that only the authentic achieve.

4. Division Two and the question of *Dasein*'s wholeness

Heidegger opens Division Two of *Being and Time* with a discussion of the question of what it is for *Dasein* to be a whole. But this discussion can seem odd and under-motivated. He claims that we cannot speak of *Dasein* as being 'whole' in the ways that, for example, we may speak of a *zuhanden* object being whole;²² we may imagine striving to grasp *Dasein* when it is 'complete', for example, but that would be

²² Cf. *SZ* sec. 46-48 and *HCT* 311.

to ‘grasp’ it when it is dead and gone. Seemingly on the basis of such failures, he then drives us into a consideration of death and Being-towards-death.

But it is easy to feel uncomfortable with this. Fleischer, for example, sees no real need as being met when Heidegger presents the investigations embodied in Division Two as necessary by virtue of our not having yet grasped *Dasein* as a whole, since Heidegger has already offered the notion of “care” as encapsulating what it is for *Dasein* to be in its entirety (Fleischer 1991, 39, 196). Why isn’t this an adequate form of wholeness for our analysis to have achieved? Heidegger may very well have reasons to move us on to discuss Being-towards-death; but is this lack of wholeness —“the question of arriving at the wholeness of *Dasein*” if we are to “mak[e] *Dasein* available as an object for consideration” (*HCT* 310)—a good one?

Heidegger as much as accepts this worry later in the book. In the light of his analysis of death, conscience, guilt, etc.,

[T]he question of *Dasein*’s potentiality-for-being-a-whole ... slough[s] off the character indicated at the beginning [of Division Two], when we treated it as if it were just a theoretical or methodological question of the analytic of *Dasein*, arising from the endeavour to have the whole of *Dasein* completely “given”. (*SZ* 309).

As he puts it in *HCT*, that question “is the secondary difficulty”:

The primary one is whether *Dasein* is the entity which one oneself is and which of *its essence* entails that it *be in each case mine*, and whether this entity has the possibility *to be* its wholeness. It is only on the basis of this possibility of being that we could have the further possibility of experiencing this self-being of *Dasein* in its wholeness now also in an explicit fashion. (*HCT* 310-11)

The ‘primary difficulty’ then is establishing the sense in which *Dasein* can *be* whole, the ‘secondary difficulty’ being the ‘methodological’ question of whether we can get

such a whole in view. But why then bring the ‘secondary difficulty’ up in the first place? Why give the question of *Dasein*’s wholeness such importance in introducing Division Two’s deepening analysis of authenticity into the work of the Being and Time project?

In an effort to elucidate one possible way of understanding why authenticity matters to that project,²³ and of seeing a genuine methodological necessity in turning to reflections on *Dasein*’s wholeness, I propose that those who ‘flee’ from the above “possibility of [*Dasein*’s] being” a whole also ‘flee’ from a disclosure of ‘Being in general’. There is a sense, which I will explain, in which it is only those who realise that possibility that ‘condense’ into unified perspectives on things; and by grasping the formal structure of their mode of existence—the structure it has by virtue of being a unified perspective on things, whatever ‘content’ that perspective might have—we uncover what could be called the “horizon” within which “the projection of a meaning of *Being in general* can be accomplished”.²⁴

5. Authenticity as the ‘Subject-Correlate’ of Being as a Whole

In the *Sophist* lectures, Heidegger considers Socrates’ description of the true philosopher as one who “looks down upon life from above”; “[t]hat implies”, Heidegger tells us,

that the philosopher himself, in order to be able to carry out such a possibility in earnest, must have attained a mode of existence guaranteeing him the possibility of such a look and thereby making accessible to him life and existence in general. (*PS* 168)

²³ The basis of others can be found in McManus 2012: sec. 9.2, and 2013c.

²⁴ What follows draws on a broader understanding of authenticity that I cannot defend here. I present aspects of this in McManus (forthcoming-a), (forthcoming-b) and in as-yet-unpublished work.

Dasein's mode of being is, of course, one of *Sein-bei* entities—being amidst them (SZ 54)—and hence it does not “look down upon life” even when it grasps Being in general. But that is not to deny that it does indeed—“somehow”—grasp it:

As surely as we can never comprehend [*erfassen*] absolutely the whole of beings in themselves we certainly do find ourselves stationed [*gestellt*] in the midst of [*inmitten*] beings that are revealed somehow as a whole. (WM 87)

Our efforts to comprehend particular kinds of entities bring with them, however, a kind of concealing of this whole. “The originary disclosure of beings as a whole” is an “open[ing] up [of] the open region [*das Offene*] for every measure” (OET 143)—for each particular way in which we may classify or evaluate what we find around us. But when such a ‘measure’ “lets beings be in a particular comportment that relates to them and thus discloses them, it conceals beings as a whole” (OET 148). Any such measure embodies “only *one* kind and possibility of making manifest of entities” (*EP* 203) and, therefore, in adopting it, one forfeits the possibility of addressing other aspects of the world. “So much for the ‘revelation of beings somehow as a whole!’”, one might say. But Heidegger’s discussion of authenticity can be seen as pointing to a mode of existence in which we do acknowledge this whole and do so precisely by being a whole ourselves.

Reminding ourselves of the terms in which Heidegger describes inauthenticity may make this proposal—which I can no more than sketch here—seem at least a little less odd. The life of the inauthentic, let us recall, is one of “dispersal”, “distraction” and “disconnectedness” (SZ 390, 347, 371). It is a life of “inconstancy [*Unständigkeit*]”, in which one is “absorbed in the everyday multiplicity and the rapid succession of that with which one is concerned”, “the endless multiplicity of possibilities which offer themselves as closest to one” (SZ 337, 321, 384). In the midst of this “jumble of hovering possibilities”, the inauthentic person “drift[s] back and forth between ‘worldly’ possibilities which it has not seized upon” (SZ 342, 344).

At the same time though, it is a life of fixation or “falling”, one in which we “cling” to “what is proximally at [our] everyday disposal”: the inauthentic person

“[b]usily los[es] *himself* in the object of his concern” (SZ 195, 410). All “other possibilities” are “crowded out” or “closed off” and what remains—those objects so understood—“becomes the ‘real world’” (SZ 195). Similarly—to introduce a temporal theme to which we will return—there is a sense in which inauthentic *Dasein* “always live[s] in the present” (WDR 169): it “orients its concerns to the now” (WDR 170), “leap[ing] away from its authentic future and from its authentic having been” (SZ 349).

We may “drift” then from one mode of “losing ourselves” to the next in this “rapid succession of that with which one is concerned”; but we do so in a mode of “tranquilization” (SZ 189). It can be ‘tranquil’ because, in this “inconstancy”—this *Unständigkeit*—we do not achieve the authentic person’s “steadfastness [*Standfestigkeit*]”—her “having achieved some sort of a position” [*Standgewonnenhaben*]” (SZ 322)—a position from which such inconstancy might manifest itself to us. The authentic person achieves a single over-arching perspective—or ‘position’—on life, a general view of things that might be called her own, and which expresses—though typically only implicitly—an assessment of which of the ‘multiplicity of possibilities which offer themselves’ to her are most worthwhile. The possibilities on which the inauthentic person acts, on the other hand, change as he moves from role to role and context to context. As a result, he is recognizably “dispersed” and does not live life *as a whole*. Instead his actions express a shifting and fluctuating conglomeration of perspectives, with none of which he can be identified. “[T]he inauthentic Being of *Dasein*” is *Dasein* “*als unganzes*”—as “*less than a whole*”, or as Stambaugh puts it, “fragmentary” (SZ 233).

Heidegger describes the inauthentic person’s “losing *himself* in the object of his concern” as a “levelling off of *Dasein*’s possibilities to what is proximally at its everyday disposal”, and as “a dimming down of the possible as such” (SZ 195). The authentic person’s ‘having achieved some sort of a position’ may evoke a closing down of possibilities—a narrowing of view; but, in fact, as we will see below, it is in their acceptance of the *need* for ‘some sort of a position’ that we see a take on things in general emerge, an experience that one might tentatively identify with one of ‘Being in general’ or ‘as a whole’. One might articulate this proposal in a number of

different ways and the next two sections will explore how Heidegger's discussions of 'guilt' and 'Being-towards-death' might be seen to do so.

6. Guilt

To return to the terms used in OET (quoted above), the adoption of one 'measure' at the exclusion of others expresses—one might say—an evaluation of "beings as a whole", in this adoption's taking one particular aspect of beings as worthy of comprehension. Indeed one faces the problem of unifying one's understanding of the world in this way whenever one acts: there may be many principled demands arising out of a situation and, when we act, we select among those demands, thereby expressing an assessment of what *overall* is most important. To be *an* actor we must condense the multi-dimensional world that we confront into *a* world. In doing so, we—as finite creatures—cannot avoid the possibility that the act we perform will not address all the demands that we may recognize. As a result, our existence is marked by an "ontological" or "absolute" "guilt".

Heidegger explains his notion of 'guilt' by reference to two 'nullities', according to the second of which

in having a potentiality-for-Being [*Dasein*] always stands in one possibility or another: it constantly is *not* other possibilities, and it has waived these in its existentiell projection. ... Freedom ... *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)

In WDR, we read:

Every action is at the same time something marked by guilt. For the possibilities of action are limited in comparison with the demands of conscience, so that every action that is successfully carried out produces

conflicts. To choose self-responsibility, then, is to become guilty in an absolute sense. Insofar as I am at all, I become guilty whenever I act in any sense.
(WDR 169)

There is nothing one can do to alleviate such ‘guilt’, as it is inherent in our nature as finite creatures—creatures who cannot be in two places at once. But—in a way that the next section will make clearer—inauthenticity is a way of ‘fleeing’ this ‘guilt’—of pretending it is not a fact of life—and authenticity a way of acknowledging it. When authentic, I achieve a unifying perspective on things, to which corresponds a ‘horizon’ against which I project what one might provisionally call an understanding of ‘Being in general’: an appreciation of the aspect of things revealed by the measure upon which I act, the indefinitely many other aspects of things revealed by the measures upon which I do *not* act, and the fact that when I act—indeed “[i]nsofar as I am at all”—I express an evaluating unification of that multiplicity. But any such unification rests on a further unifying understanding in light of which the authentic live and which—by virtue of that further depth—has a better claim to be the ‘horizon’ we are seeking to ‘recall’.

7. Death and ecstatic temporality

In taking passages like WM 87 as presenting a picture of grasping ‘Being as a whole’, I overlooked, of course, its explicitly concerning beings as a whole; this might seem to be a prime example of *Seinsvergessenheit*, and my talk of the possibility of a unified ‘take on things’ might be seen as augmenting this confusion. But following the clue of OET 143 and 148, I used the latter expression to refer to a unifying ranking of ‘measures’ and—thereby—of those aspects of things upon which one might act, the ways in which they may be. For that reason, I have so far taken such a ranking as a not-unreasonable approximation for a ‘grasp of Being in general’. But can this first approximation be trusted, or might it itself rest on a deeper disclosure more deserving of such a label? ‘[A]ll ontological interpretations are more

like a groping about than an inquiry clear in its method' (BP 322), and might we have not yet got to the bottom of the influence on our reflections of 'the domination of the substantial'?²⁵

Recognition of ontological guilt yields a unification that gives one sense to authentic *Dasein*'s 'Being-a-whole'—yielding a kind of synchronic wholeness in the many 'ways of being' upon which one might act. But this presupposes a kind of diachronic wholeness and hence temporality—and a particular kind of temporality—now comes to the fore.²⁶ One way of looking at the dream of somehow disowning 'ontological guilt' is as an unwillingness to be someone who acts on particular measures at the cost of not acting on others. Since such a cost is an inescapable part of what it is for a finite creature to act at all, this would be a refusal to perform

²⁵ Another kind of worry one might raise concerning my 'first approximation' is whether *Dasein*'s unified grasp of the array of possibilities of action open to it can be identified even provisionally with a grasp of various modes of being—a worry one might raise in at least two different ways. (1) One might propose that, when one acts, one understands the entities upon which one acts as—and *only* as—*zuhanden*. A case can be made for such a view (cf., e.g., Rouse 1985 and Blattner 1994 for some relevant thoughts) but I have argued elsewhere (McManus 2-12: sec. 3.4) that it remains problematic: in particular, it is hard to establish an interpretation of such a view that gives it both substance and the necessary breadth. (2) One might think that the unity of Being concerns the unity of very broad ontological kinds rather than that of many different and particular 'measures' on which one might act. But if—*contra* (1)—we can indeed act on the basis of entities being so where this is not simply a matter of their *Zuhandenheit*, then the unified grasp of entities being so that is necessary for action must be capable of encompassing all the different ways that such entities can be so; the 'horizon' against which entities—as understood through many different 'measures'—are projected must also be one against which the many—though presumably fewer—ontological kinds that they instantiate are projected.

²⁶ Though I concentrate here on one particular notion of diachronic wholeness, I do not discount the relevance of others, such as that explored in various ways in the work of Charles Guignon. Cf., e.g., Guignon 2000.

determinate acts, a refusal to be a particular person; it would be a denial of one's having a particular identity in favour of a dream of being "everywhere and nowhere" (SZ 177, 347). Now this clearly is a dream and a 'tranquilizing' one at that; but to see how one might come to dream it, let us note how a certain denial of death plays its part.

The thought is simple. "Freedom" is not "the choice of *one* possibility" and "tolerating one's not having chosen the others" *if* one can make up for that choice by acting on those others later; "the possibilities of action" are not "limited in comparison with the demands of conscience" *if* one can meet later the demands one does not meet now. But clearly this assuages our (ontological) guilt only on one condition, namely, that "[t]here is still plenty of time" (CTR 69). "Death certainly comes, but not right away" (SZ 258) is the inauthentic person's characteristic "pushing away and suppressing [of] 'the thought of death'" (PIRA 118): he "pushes away the indefiniteness of death"—"the possibility that it can come at any moment"—"into the realm of postponement" (WDR 167, HCT 317).²⁷ Such a 'pushing away' denies the need for a singular (unifying) response to the situation in which we find ourselves obliged to act, and the attendant 'ontological guilt' it brings with it. For such a pseudo-agent, "all doors are open"; "everything is within its reach" as it "float[s] unattached" and "uprooted", "*never dwelling anywhere*" (SZ 177, 170, 173).

In this way, inauthenticity brings with it a certain denial of one's past—of one's thrown, determinate situatedness through which one can live in only a single way—and one's future—in particular, the certain "possibility of impossibility", the possibility that one may not be able to make up for some of the choices one does not make, and the necessity that one cannot make up for all. Acknowledgement of this 'finite temporality' (SZ 348) of ours is then, in contrast, the living of life against the horizon of what Heidegger calls an "ecstatic temporality", our being "held out" into our past and finite future; when authentic,

²⁷ Cf. also SZ 253, 255 and HCT 315.

the Present is not only brought back from distraction with the objects of one's closest concern, but it gets held in the future and in having been. (*SZ* 338)

This is the (diachronic) 'horizon' that one must deny if one is to spare oneself the 'guilt'-laden task of achieving a (synchronic) take on one's life as a whole and its "possibilities of action". Correspondingly, this is the horizon that the authentic acknowledge—live in the light of—by being-a-whole, by resisting the temptation to be the "dispersed" everyone and no-one that is the They-self. Whatever content one's take on things in general may be—whatever 'position one achieves'—this is the 'horizon' against which that such a take will be 'projected'.

There is, I think, a certain architectonic aptness to the idea that *Dasein* does not acknowledge Being as a whole unless it itself is-a-whole, an aptness which Heidegger's picture of the inauthentic person as being "*less than a whole*" makes vivid.²⁸ Such a person "clings" to particular possibilities while all others are "dimmed down"—a 'fragmentary' *Dasein* encountering only a fragment of the world. The authentic person, in contrast, embodies an appreciation of that full range of possibilities and a recognition of the need to unify them not only if she is to act but "[i]nsofar as [she is] at all". But we then dug deeper and saw how the inauthentic must "liv[e] always in the present". By thinking through what is implicit in the

²⁸ Heidegger identifies authentic Being-a-whole with 'individualization' (cf., e.g. *SZ* 266) and the importance that my reading assigns to our understanding the unity of the subject that intends Being in general for our understanding of Being in general and its unity makes unsurprising connections such as that proposed in the following: "Being, as the basic theme of philosophy, is no class or genus of entities, yet it pertains to every entity. ... *Being is the transcendens pure and simple*. And the transcendence of *Dasein's* Being is distinctive in that it implies the possibility and the necessity of the most radical *individuation*." (*SZ* 38) There are also clear Kantian echoes here and my reading suggests connections with themes in the discussion of transcendental apperception, to which a number of Heidegger's comments on *SZ's* unwritten sections allude (cf., e.g., *SZ* 319 n. xvi). (McManus 2013b: sec. 6 identifies other Kantian aspects of the Being and Time project.)

authentic person's synchronic grasp of 'Being in general'—as we might be tempted to describe such a unifying grasp of "possibilities of action"—we uncovered a further diachronic horizon in acknowledgement of which it is distinctive of such a person to live, that of an "ecstatic" time in which one is "held in the future and in having been". Elucidating that horizon—and at least part of the work that Division Three was to do was surely that—is elucidating what it is that those who live in the light of such a synchronic grasp of Being in general live in the light of, the further diachronic 'horizon' against which their distinctive form of understanding is 'projected'.

8. Concluding thoughts

The devil, of course, is in the detail. The above discussion is without doubt speculative, has passed at great speed over a lot of very difficult terrain, assuming a host of interpretive decisions without justification, raising as many questions as it is answers, and no doubt inviting many objections. In this last section, I will consider one such objection. Responding to it will help clarify the proposal that my discussion offers but also point to limitations we must surely encounter in attempting to confirm any proposal of this kind.

For example, one might wonder how an acknowledgement of our 'guilt' can possibly set us on the road to a horizon for an understanding of Being in general. That acknowledgement may require an appreciation of the many 'measures' on which we might—but do not—act. But what does this 'many' denote? And 'we' meaning who? If it means 'we thrown, factual individuals'—presented with a finite set of measures as 'live options', to use James' expression (James 1956, 3)—then it is not clear that acknowledging *that* range of possibilities can be any analogue of the Socratic "look down upon life and existence in general".

Or might it? I suggested above that it is the form rather than the content of the authentic 'look' that matters. My proposal makes key one's escape from an inauthentic lostness in "the object of one's concern". One might understand this as the failure to recognize that this aspect of reality upon which one is acting is but *one*

possible basis for action. But this under-describes inauthentic lostness. In such a condition, one fails to recognize the aspect of reality upon which one acts as a *possibility*, one instance of a generality that is ‘ways things can be’; when all other ways that things can be are “crowded out” or “closed off”, one is left confronting not even—so to speak—*one* possibility, because the horizon against which it would show itself *as a possibility* is obscured. Instead, as Heidegger puts it, one confronts what one simply takes as the “real world”. From this perspective, the inauthentic person’s failure does not contrast with—say—the authentic persons’ (somehow) acknowledging all possibilities of every possible *Dasein*, but instead with their acknowledging the factual possibilities that they do have *as possibilities*.

The latter recognition is of a multiplicity of ways things can be and, as such, it presupposes an appreciation of a broader concept under which (what we now see as) those instances are subsumed; this appreciation is a grasp of what it is for something to *count* as a ‘way of being’, rather than some more concrete but facticity-denying familiarity with each and every instance of that broader concept. To offer (what may be more than merely) an analogy, this would be akin to knowing what counts as a reason, rather than knowing all the reasons on which it is possible for a person to act.

This might seem to leave us with a rather thin notion of ‘Being in general’. But does it? Let us recall that the horizon on to which our understanding is projected when we display a mastery of the above unity in ‘ways of being’ turns out to be that of a presupposed and, hence, deeper unity—that of ecstatic temporality. Is that a thin notion? Heidegger insists that “the idea of Being in general is just as far from being ‘simple’ as is the Being of *Dasein*” (SZ 196); and ecstatic temporality playing a key role in both would seem to confirm that.

More importantly, is the resultant idea of ‘Being in general’ likely to be *too* thin to do the work the Being and Time project requires it to do? We have a flavour of the kind of work that project was to have done in the discussion in Chapter Four of Division Two of the temporality of understanding, *Befindlichkeit*, falling and discourse. Heidegger offers this discussion as showing that these phenomena ‘*in principle* cannot be clarified in terms of the “now”’ (SZ 338). Rather

The ecstatical unity of temporality—that is, the unity of the “outside-of-itself” in the raptures of the future, of what has been, and of the Present—is the condition for the possibility that there can be an entity which exists as its “there”. (SZ 350)

He makes parallel cases concerning our “circumspective concern” with the *Zuhanden* and the “theoretical discovery of the *Vorhanden*” (SZ352, 356). In grasping them, we “make use of time”: we grasp these kinds of Being too “in their temporal constitution” (BP 291); and hence, one might see here an attempt to show that not only *Dasein* but these phenomena too only show themselves against the horizon of ecstatic temporality, a common horizon that provides a basis for our “calling these different ways of Being ways of *Being*” (BP 176, quoted above).

But any candidate concept of ‘Being in general’ needs to do significantly more than that. In criticising Aristotle’s proposal that the question, “what is Being?”, “is just the question, what is substance?” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Z 1028b4), Heidegger stresses that the “many ways” in which “Being” is “said” can be understood in narrower and wider senses. In addition to the unity that renders being *Dasein*, *Zuhandenheit* and *Vorhandenheit* ‘ways of Being’, we must also establish a unity that subsumes these *plus* Being’s further “regions” of “accidental and non-accidental Being,” “true and untrue Being,” and “potential and actual Being” (AM 9).²⁹

Can then the horizon that is ecstatic temporality—on a thin or yet-to-be-articulated thicker construal—deliver an account of ‘Being in general’ that can meet

²⁹ This echoes Brentano’s identification of the problematic diversity to be unified as that of “Being according to the figures of the categories” plus “accidental Being”, “Being in the sense of being true” and “potential and actual Being” (Brentano 1975). Recognition of the need to accommodate these further ‘regions’ gives further substance to the tentativeness of my ‘first approximation’ above (see sec. 7) of what ‘Being in general’ must subsume. But perhaps the trickiest case—of all such candidate further ‘regions of Being’—is that of the Being of the ‘horizon’ that is ecstatic temporality. See n. 34 below.

these needs?³⁰ I do not know how far one can go in resolving these matters.³¹ Heidegger himself explicitly mentions in *Being and Time* the need to ‘clarify the ontological meaning of the kind of talk in which we say that “there is truth”’ (*SZ* 214),³² but then kicks the question of how we are to handle this need into the long grass of Division Three. “Being and truth ‘are’ equiprimordially” and “Being . . . is something which ‘there is’ only in so far as truth is”; but even the “concrete asking” of the question, “What does it signify that Being ‘is’?”—let alone answering it—is possible for us “only if the meaning of Being and the full scope of the understanding of Being have in general been clarified” (*SZ* 230). And there the matter is left.

Heidegger himself suggests he had succumbed to a “delusion” in thinking he had in mind a project for Division Three that could be rendered clear;³³ I have also offered reasons elsewhere for thinking there may be a problem of principle inherent in the attempt to articulate the horizon upon which ‘Being in general’ is ‘projected’.³⁴ If

³⁰ Heidegger sees Aristotle’s discussion of substance as leaving this broader unity “obscure” (*AM* 38).

³¹ There also remains the task of convincing us that ontology as we know it has indeed played itself out—however unwittingly or confusedly—against the background that the above account tries to identify, the task perhaps of the ‘torso’s’ other missing parts, the three divisions that would have been Part Two. In making his claims about the horizon against which an understanding of Being in general is possible, Heidegger is also making a claim about “the basic theme of philosophy” (*SZ* 38)—indeed about “the inner and hidden life of the basic movement of Western philosophy” (*MFL* 154)—a claim which needs to demonstrate its historical plausibility.

³² Cf. *LQT* 23: “There are automobiles, Negroes, Abelian functions, Bach’s fugues. ‘Are there’ truths too? Or how could it be otherwise?”

³³ Cf. the letter to Jaspers quoted above.

³⁴ Cf. McManus 2013b: sec. 7. The problem concerns how we are to understand the Being of that horizon itself, indeed whether it can coherently be said to possess a mode of Being—and be said to be or to be thus-and-so—while still performing the ‘function’ Heidegger assigns it.

that problem is insurmountable, attempts to make sense of the Being and Time project must fail in the end; and a difficulty that we face in trying to understand the texts that we do have is knowing when the principle of charity—and the expectation that a good reading of those texts will make sense of them—should be set aside.³⁵

Additional Abbreviations [we will remove this later]

CTR - *The Concept of Time*, trans. I. Farin with A. Skinner, London: Continuum, 2011.

CV - “Curriculum Vitae.” Translated by T. Kisiel, T. Sheehan, and H. Siegfried. In M. Heidegger, *Becoming Heidegger*, 5-10.

EG - ‘On the Essence of Ground’, trans. W. McNeill in *Pathmarks*, 97-135.

EP - *Einleitung in die Philosophie*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996.

LR - “Letter to William J. Richardson, April 1962.” Translated by W. J. Richardson. In W. J. Richardson, *Through Phenomenology to Thought*, viii-xxiii. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963.

OET - ‘On the Essence of Truth’, trans. J. Sallis, in *Pathmarks*, pp. 136–54.

WM- “What is Metaphysics?” Translated by D. F. Krell. In M. Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, 82-96.

WDR - “Wilhelm Dilthey’s Research and the Struggle for a Historical Worldview.” Translated by T. Kisiel. In M. Heidegger, *Becoming Heidegger*, 238-74.

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