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The Problem of Authenticity in Heidegger and Gadamer

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ABSTRACT

In *Being and Time*, Martin Heidegger claims that one can obtain an authentic identity by way of the resolute anticipation of death. With this proper relation to one's finitude, one's understanding will no longer be obscured by entanglement in the world, and the world can be genuinely seen as it is according to the tradition that supports one's understanding. Following Charles Taylor in *The Ethics of Authenticity*, I argue that Heidegger's account of authenticity fails to incorporate the necessary role of recognition by the community in the formation of an authentic identity. Because of the deeply personal nature of one's relation to one's death, authenticity cannot be recognized by the community; therefore, the distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity appears meaningless to others. In *Truth and Method*, Hans-Georg Gadamer is able to satisfy Taylor's recognition requirement for the formation of authentic identity. I argue that for Gadamer, one obtains an authentic identity if one is able to 'fuse horizons' with another. For Gadamer, authenticity is not a magical transformation of one's understanding that takes place with the anticipation of death; rather, one can understand the world authentically when the prejudices that block understanding are worked out in the process of understanding itself. When we encounter those that are different or other, we must struggle to understand and recognize them on their own terms (and vice versa) by working out our prejudicial limitations in a process of genuine dialogue and discourse with these others. This is what Gadamer calls fusing horizons. I argue that this fusion of horizons satisfies Taylor's recognition requirement since the genuine mutual recognition of others, and by others, is necessary work in achieving authentic understanding and identity.

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INTRODUCTION

Gadamer presents a concept of understanding in *Truth and Method* that is very similar to Heidegger's concept of understanding in *Being and Time*. And although Heidegger's discussion of authenticity is important to his concept of understanding, Gadamer manages to avoid the problems that I find with Heidegger's distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity.[1]

For Heidegger, authenticity is obtained by relating to one's death in the proper way. In this proper relation to death, one discovers death in a deeply personal way as the necessary limit to one's own existence. By discovering this, one is compelled to reject the limitations to one's being that are imposed by others, and one can learn to live for one's self and not for others' approval. Therefore, in order to be authentic on Heidegger's account, one must turn away from the world of the 'they' (the community) and turn inward toward oneself.

On Charles Taylor's account of authenticity in *The Ethics of Authenticity*, one cannot turn away from the community in order to develop authentically. For Taylor, the role of the community in the formation of an authentic identity is to recognize the legitimacy of others within common 'horizons of significance.' Through these shared horizons of significance, individuals can understand themselves in terms of what they also recognize in others. According to Taylor, without this recognition, our authentic identity is meaningless.

Following Taylor, I argue that Heidegger's account of authenticity fails to consider the role of recognition by the community in the formation of a meaningful authentic identity. For Heidegger, with the resolute anticipation of death, one sheds the 'they self' (the self prescribed to one by the community). In shedding the they self, one loses touch with the community of others as well as what these others find meaningful. However, despite that loss of meaning, an authentic individual must still exist in the community and live out his or her finite existence like everyone else.

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[1] Although Heidegger did change his position on this issue in his later work, I can only deal with *Being and Time* in the scope of this paper.

The problem that I find with Heidegger's account of authenticity is that the community cannot tell the difference between what is authentic and what is inauthentic. As I will explain, in requiring that one turn away from the community and toward oneself in order to be authentic, Heidegger demands that the authentic individual cut itself off in some way from the community's shared 'horizons of significance.' The horizon of significance that gives meaning to an authentic individual must be formed outside of the community's shared horizons, since it is something deeply personal (i.e. the understanding of one's death as the limitation of one's own existence); because of this, what makes one authentic cannot be recognized as meaningful by the community. Due to the absence of recognition by the community on Heidegger's account, one's authentic identity has no meaning.

Gadamer modifies Heidegger's account of understanding in a way that avoids the problems that I find with Heidegger's authenticity/inauthenticity distinction. For Heidegger, authentic understanding is a matter of letting being freely reveal itself. Others can limit this understanding, but we must shed these limitations in order to be authentic. For Gadamer, authentic understanding is a matter of seeing the world as it is within a tradition that we rely on to understand (an account that is very similar to Heidegger's). For Gadamer, this mode of being is only possible by way of what he characterizes as the 'fusion of horizons.' This means that things in the world will reveal themselves within a shared meaning structure (what Taylor would call a common horizon of significance). For Gadamer, we make sense of others in a genuine way through a back and forth play of dialogue and discussion; this dialogue and discussion weeds out the prejudices that limit our understanding by finding and grasping the common traditional and cultural prejudices that allow the other to speak for him or herself in an authentic way. This common tradition and culture is realized and grasped in the fusion of horizons, which produces authentic self-understanding through recognition of the other along common (community rooted) horizons of significance. This fusion provides a means of recognition between an authentic individual and the community that gives one's authentic identity meaning. On Gadamer's

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account, the community is necessary for authentic understanding, and not a just a hindrance to it in the way that it is for Heidegger. Because Gadamer's concept of authentic understanding as fusing horizons accounts for community recognition in the formation of a meaningful authentic identity, Gadamer avoids the problems associated with Heidegger's distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity.

This paper will proceed as follows. 'Chapter One' will discuss the problems of the authenticity-inauthenticity distinction in Heidegger's *Being and Time.* I will then sharpen my criticism by drawing on Taylor's *The Ethics of Authenticity*. 'Chapter Two' will discuss Gadamer's idea of authentic understanding as the fusion of horizons in *Truth and Method*, and how this fusion satisfies Taylor's criterion of recognition. *Finally,* I will sum up my argument in a short Conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE

Being and Time is Heidegger's work on the meaning of 'being.' To avoid confusion we can distinguish between two senses of the term being. What I call being [das Seiende] is simply what something is. For Heidegger, the being [das Seiende] of a thing is what that thing does, or the function it performs. For example, the being [das Seiende] of a hammer is hammering, i.e. what the hammer does. Being [Sein] on the other hand is characterized as that which makes beings [das Seiende] intelligible or understandable as what they are. It is the frame within which we encounter things. So being [Sein] is what allows the being [das Seiende] of hammer to be intelligible as what it is (a thing that hammers) in our encounters of it. For Heidegger meaning is "that wherein the intelligibility of something maintains itself" (Heidegger, 2010, p.146-147). So Heidegger is trying to find that wherein the intelligibility of what it is that makes beings [das Seiende] intelligible as beings [das Seiende] maintains itself. We could also say that he is trying to make sense or find the meaning of what it is that allows for a hammer to be encountered intelligibly as a thing that hammers. In other words, he is trying to make intelligible that which makes beings [das Seiende] intelligible. Therefore, Heidegger is trying to find the meaning of being [Sein][2]

In his interpretation of the meaning of being [Sein], Heidegger tries to undermine what he calls the 'metaphysics of presence' because he believes that the metaphysics of presence has obscured the meaning of being [Sein]. The metaphysics of presence is an understanding of being [Sein and das Seiende] in terms of a subject-object relation. One can describe the 'metaphysics of presence' in terms of an objective, physical world of material objects that exists along with a subjective mind that transcends or is somehow separate from this world. In Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* for example, the mind can know the world by synthesizing representations or concepts of things in the world; these concepts make the world intelligible to the mind. The problem for Heidegger is that this ontological distinction tends to place that which makes beings

[2] For the rest of the paper 'Sein' and 'das Seiende' will only be differentiated if necessary.

[das Seiende] intelligible in the abstract 'space' of the mind, while ordinary physical objects are placed outside of the mind in the 'real' world, thereby removing being [Sein] from the world. This division between subject and object goes back at least to Plato and the distinction he makes between 'idea' (subject) and 'appearance' (object). With Plato, that which makes things intelligible (the form of the Good) exists in a completely separate ontological realm than the world of appearance (making their interaction a problem). Heidegger's tortured language in *Being and Time* is meant to try to avoid these sorts of distinctions, which are deeply entrenched in the history of Western philosophy.

In order to reconstitute or rediscover the meaning of being [Sein], Heidegger analyzes certain features of the human experience (the human being) in a particular way. This (human) being [das Seiende] is the being [das Seiende] with the ability to understand the meaning of being [Sein] and then form an account of this understanding. In other words, human beings have the being [Sein] for which beings [das Seiende] are intelligible as beings [das Seiende]. Therefore, in order to find the meaning of being [Sein], Heidegger must analyze human experience in a way that does not rely on the subject-object binaries of the metaphysics of presence.

By doing away with the metaphysics of presence, it follows that Heidegger must also do away with the transcendental knowing subject as a field for his analysis of the human experience. For Kant, the transcendental subject is the part of the human being that makes knowledge of things in the world possible, but is nevertheless somehow separate from the world as it exists in itself outside of the subject's empirical experience of it (outside of what can be known). What Heidegger turns to instead of the transcendental subject to find an appropriate way to investigate the meaning of being is 'Dasein.' According to Sherman, "to describe human being as Dasein is an attempt to leave behind philosophical notions of the individual as subject, and more broadly, the subject-object duality of the individual and the world, that is, interior consciousness juxtaposed against an objective world outside of it" (Sherman, 2009, p.1).

What makes Dasein different from the transcendental subject found in the traditional metaphysics of Western philosophy is the way that Dasein exists in relation to the world. This world does not consist of objects that are objectively present, in the same way that Dasein is not a transcendental subject that knows or experiences these objects through concepts or representations. For Heidegger, Dasein and the world are not separate. Rather, Dasein – characterized as 'being-in-the-world,' is absorbed in the world through everyday practical involvement in it.

Dasein's absorption in the world through practical involvement is what Heidegger calls 'care,' which is the being[das Seiende] of Dasein. This practical absorption into the world is Dasein's mode of being in a common or everyday way and is characterized by Heidegger as 'everydayness.' For Heidegger 'care' and 'self' are more or less synonyms. Much like the hammer, Dasein's being is practical, and who Dasein is (its self) is found in what it does. "Dasein initially finds 'itself' in *what* it does, needs, expects, has charge of, in the things at hand which it initially *takes care of* in the surrounding world" (Heidegger, 2010, p.116). For Heidegger, a human being is brought forth or made as a kind of *poēsis* that is characterized as care. This practical activity of care brings forth Dasein's various modes of being by means of a vast array of 'useful things.' For example, a hammer is used to bring forth the mode of being a carpenter; this mode of being is brought forth when a carpenter uses the hammer in the construction of a shed for instance. Commonly, a hammer is understood as an inanimate object that is used by an animated subject to hammer things. This subject is what animates the hammer and the hammer is dependent and manipulated by the subject that uses it. However, this formulation of the metaphysics of presence reduces the being of the hammer to its material status as an object dependent on subjects to build and make use of them. For Heidegger, rather than understanding useful things as objectively present tools, we should see useful things as beings that help bring forth Dasein's being. So instead of understanding the hammer as an inanimate object that is used by a carpenter subject to bring forth a shed, the carpenter and the hammer are one in taking care

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of the shed (bringing forth the being of Dasein in the mode of carpenter). For Heidegger, the hammer is 'freed' to be what it is when it is engaged in the act of hammering, which is its being and function. At the same time, the carpenter is freed in the mode of being a carpenter to be what it is when he or she uses the hammer. Neither the carpenter nor the hammer exist without one another; their being depends on one another. So Dasein's various modes of being are dependent on a vast array of useful things and vice versa. This means that there is no subject that is distinct from objects in the world, there is only the practical bringing forth of Dasein's modes of being in the activity of care.

For Heidegger, care is only possible if the world has a horizon of intelligibility that makes sense to Dasein. This intelligibility relies on a network of meaning and practicality that Heidegger calls the 'worldliness' of the world and characterizes as the 'totality of relevance and significance' in the world. Remember, the world for Heidegger is not physical space occupied by various physical objects that can be manipulated by subjects; rather, the world for Heidegger is the way that Dasein meaningfully structures it via relations of relevance and significance. All beings in the world, including Dasein, are related to one another. This relation is what Heidegger calls 'reference,' which is characterized by 'in-order-to.' He writes "a useful thing is essentially 'something in order to…'. The different kinds of 'in order to' such as serviceability, helpfulness, suitability, handiness, constitute a totality of useful things. The structure of 'in order to' ['um-zu'] contains a *reference* [*Verweisung*] of something to something" (Heidegger, 2010, p.68). The hammer is used 'in order to' hammer. This hammer is used along with other useful things like nails, tape measures, planks, and etcetera when building a shed. These things refer to one another and are understood as a totality of useful things used to build a shed. Understanding these referential relations in the mode of being a carpenter is what Heidegger calls 'circumspection' (Heidegger, 2010, p.69).

These referential relations are structured by 'relevance.' "Beings are discovered with regard to the fact that they are referred, as those beings which they are, to something. They are

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relevant *together with* something else" (Heidegger, 2010, p.82). The hammer, nails, boards, and other tools and materials are relevant together in the construction of a shed. "To be relevant means to let something be together with something else" (Heidegger, 2010, p.82). These referential relations structured by relevance are part of a larger interconnected web of practicality that Heidegger refers to as the 'totality of relevance.' This totality structures the relevance of useful and functional things. For example, the construction of the shed exists within a larger overall system or context of the construction industry, which provide standard hammers, nails, boards, and etcetera along with the training and know-how to make these things relevant in the mode of being a carpenter that is building a shed. "The total relevance which, for example, constitutes the things at hand in a workshop in their handiness is 'earlier' than any single useful thing" (Heidegger, 2010, p.82-83).

All relevance is given value by Dasein, the 'for-the-sake-of-which' this totality is organized. For example, the shed that I built in the mode of being a carpenter was constructed (for example) to keep my lawn mower sheltered from the elements; this lawn mower is important to me and has significance and value to me in the mode of being a responsible home owner. Therefore, I am encountered in taking care as that 'for-the-sake-of-which' the work is done. "The for-the-sake-of-which always concerns the being of *Dasein* which is essentially concerned *about* this being itself in its being" (Heidegger, 2010, p.83).

The fact that the totality of relevance is structured for the sake of Dasein means that this totality must also be intelligible or make sense to Dasein. In order to take care of the shed, Dasein must 'signify' all of the necessary referential relations to itself. Heidegger writes "the for-the-sake-of-which signifies an in-order-to, the in-order-to signifies a what-for, the what-for signifies a what-in of letting something be relevant, and the latter a what-with of relevance. These relations are interlocked among themselves as a primordial totality" (Heidegger, 2010, p.85). All of the relations between Dasein and useful things are significant for Dasein and relate to one another intelligibly by means of this signification. "We shall call this relational totality of signification

significance" (Heidegger, 2010, p.85). Dasein is the only being that has significance and gives value to relevant relations. Together with the totality of relevance, the totality of significance constitutes the worldliness of the world, which is the intelligible network of relations of value and function that make taking care possible (i.e. make Dasein's being possible): "Innerworldly beings in general are projected upon the world, that is, upon a totality of significance in whose referential relations taking care, as being-in-the-world, has rooted itself from the beginning" (Heidegger, 2010, p.146).

Dasein encounters more than itself and useful things in the world; it also encounters other Dasein (Heidegger, 2010, p.115). Because Dasein is in the world with other Dasein, its mode of being is characterized by Heidegger as 'being-with.' This 'being-with' has nothing to do with being physically close to others; rather it is a mode of being of Dasein, and a structural component of its being that is shared with others. In steadfastly avoiding the subject-object distinctions of the metaphysics of presence, Heidegger cannot make the claim that there is a self – understood as a self-identifying and transcendental 'I' – that is distinct from the community at large (other Dasein). This would oppose the self (subject) to the community (objects). "The positive interpretation of Dasein that has been given up to now already forbids a point of departure from the formal givenness of the I if the intention is to find a phenomenally adequate answer to the question of who" (Heidegger, 2010, p.113). Instead of this I, Heidegger's answer to the question of 'who' is the larger community of other Daseins. For Heidegger, therefore there is nothing of Dasein that is not a particularization of the larger community of others. The effects of the community on Dasein's being can be seen in the language that Dasien speaks, its clothing, what it eats, and etcetera. Culture and community can be identified and recognized in virtually every aspect of Dasein's mode of being. Others are therefore not people that are different from me, but those in whom I see myself. "'Others' does not mean everybody else but me – those from whom the I distinguishes itself. Others are, rather, those from whom one mostly does *not*

distinguish oneself, those among whom one also is" (Heidegger, 2010, p.115). In this way, Dasein's being is being-with.

Where Dasein encounters useful things in taking care, it encounters other Dasein in what Heidegger calls 'concern.' (Heidegger, 2010, p.118). Heidegger discusses two kinds of concern. On the one hand there is 'leaping in,' where others do for Dasein what it can do for itself. When others leap in for us, they remove some of the responsibility of existence by taking care of the things that we should take care of ourselves. In other words, we allow others to determine our being for us, which is ultimately our responsibility. "In this concern, the other can become someone who is dependent and dominated even if this domination is a tactic one and remains hidden from him" (Heidegger, 2010, p.119). On the other hand, if others 'leap-ahead,' they demonstrate to Dasein its potential to be responsible for itself. Heidegger writes, "there is the possibility of a concern which does not so much leap in for the other as *leap ahead* of him in his existentiell potentiality-of-being, not in order to take 'care' away from him, but rather to authentically give it back as such" (Heidegger, 2010, p.119). Leaping-ahead is an authentic relation that helps to free others to be authentic, whereas 'leaping-in' takes away Dasein's being (care) by taking care of things that are its responsibility.

Being-with is the social dimension of worldliness; this social dimension sheds further light on the way that Dasein's being is determined by being-with: "The structure of the worldliness of the world is such that others are not initially present as unattached subjects along with other things, but show themselves in their heedful being in the surrounding world in terms of the things at hand in that world" (Heidegger, 2010, p.120). We can grasp the social worldliness of being-with if we return to the example of building a shed. In order to build that shed, I must go to Home Depot and buy the building materials, and building tools, like hammers, nails, and etcetera. So the shed itself – as well as my being a carpenter for that matter – depend on other people working at Home Depot to stock these products and have them available to me: "The others who are 'encountered' in the context of useful things in the surrounding world at hand are not

somehow added on in thought to an initially merely objectively present thing, but these 'things' are encountered from the world in which they are at hand for the others" (Heidegger, 2010, p.115). Dasein exists for others and others exist for Dasein. In taking care together, Dasein relies on other Dasein and it cares for-the-sake-of-other Dasein. Therefore, the 'for-the-sake-of-which' that structures the totality of relevance is more or less a 'for-the-sake-of-others.' In other words, taking care and concern are intertwined: "As being-with, Dasein 'is' essentially for the sake of others. This must be understood as an existential statement as to its essence" (Heidegger, 2010, p.120).

Once my own shed is built, I can show concern about my neighbour and leap in to build him a shed, since he must also protect his lawn mower from the elements in the mode of being a fellow responsible home owner. By the same token, I can leap-ahead and we can build the shed together. Either way, the shed is something that is significant to both Dasein and Dasein's neighbour in the mode of being a responsible home owner that they share. We can see that Dasein shares an understanding of the world of relevance and significance with other Daseins: "The previously constituted disclosedness of others together with being-with thus helps to constitute significance, that is, worldliness" (Heidegger, 2010, p.120). This shared understanding is a shared being of Dasein, since what is taken care of is more or less significant and intelligible in the same way for Dasein as it is for others. Because of this, it will be understood in a similar way: "The relation of being to others then becomes a projection of one's own being toward oneself 'into an other.' The other is a duplicate of the self" (Heidegger, 2010, p.121). We can see here for Heidegger the extent to which we are more or less particularizations of our social world or community understanding and the way that Dasein necessarily shares meaning and value in common with other Dasein.

However, when Dasein is absorbed in the world as a particularization of the community, it is not technically itself according to Heidegger: "In being absorbed in the world of taking care of things, that is, at the same time in being-with toward others, Dasein is not itself" (Heidegger,

2010, p.122). For Heidegger, this absorption initially and for the most part causes Dasein to limit

its potential to take care of things and be responsible for that which one ought to be responsible

for. So instead of being responsible for itself and leaping ahead, Dasein is inauthentic initially and

for the most part, allowing others to leap in for it. "The various possibilities of being of Dasein

themselves mislead and obstruct being-with-one-another and its self-knowledge, so that a genuine

'understanding' is suppressed and Dasein takes refuge in surrogates" (Heidegger, 2010, p.122).

What Heidegger calls 'averageness' is the way of life prescribed by the 'they' (the

nebulous group of others) and the condition of limitation of Dasein's being. The being of the they

is what Heidegger calls 'publicness.' This is the common or everyday mode of being of Dasein.

This averageness is a mode of being that avoids the responsibility to be oneself and to leap ahead,

and can be characterized as conformity and inauthenticity. He writes,

> In utilizing public transportation, in the use of information services such as the newspaper, every other is like the next. This being-with-one-another dissolves one's own Dasein completely into the kind of being of 'the others' in such a way that the others, as distinguishable and explicit, disappear more and more. In this inconspicuousness and unascertainablity, the they unfolds its true dictatorship. We enjoy ourselves and have fun the way *they* enjoy themselves. We read, see, and judge literature and art the way *they* see and judge. But we also withdraw from the 'great mass' the way *they* withdraw, we find 'shocking' what *they* find shocking. The they, which is nothing definite and which all are, though not as a sum, prescribes the kind of being of everydayness

(Heidegger, 2010, p.122).

If we rely on news pundits in the mass media to form our opinions on various political matters,

we not only avoid the responsibility of forming our own opinions and thinking for ourselves, but

we also end up with the same common or average opinion as all the others that form their opinion

in the same way: "The they is everywhere, but in such a way that it has always already stolen

away when Dasein presses for a decision. However, because the they presents every judgement

and decision as its own, it takes the responsibility of Dasein away from it" (Heidegger, 2010,

p.124). For Heidegger, in this average condition Dasein is 'leveled down' to the lowest common

denominator so that "the self of one's own Dasein and the self of the other have neither found nor

lost themselves. One is in the manner of dependency and inauthenticity" (Heidegger, 2010,

p.124). In this condition Dasein does not take responsibility for its own being. However, Dasein is ultimately responsible for its being. When 'they' assume responsibility for Dasein's being, "the they *disburdens* Dasein in its everydayness" (Heidegger, 2010, p.124) when Dasein allows the they to leap in. It does this by making things easy for it, which then further entrenches Dasein in the easy common sense inauthenticity of the they. When Dasein is in this average mode of being, it allows others to set limits to its being.

This self that is dependent on the they is what Heidegger calls the 'they-self;' the they-self is juxtaposed to the 'authentic self.' (Heidegger, 2010, p.125). The they-self is constituted by an understanding of the world that limits Dasein's being: "If *Dasein* is familiar with itself as the they-self, this also means that the they prescribes the nearest interpretation of the world and of being-in-the-world. The they itself, for the sake of which Dasein is every day, articulates the referential context of significance." (Heidegger, 2010, p.125). This prescription limits Dasein's being by making it average via the way that the world is made intelligible to Dasein. As discussed above, this intelligibility is necessary for Dasein to exist in its various modes of being. The world must be intelligible for Dasein in order for Dasein to take care of things in it. The they limit Dasein's being (i.e. care), via the way that the worldliness of the world is disclosed to Dasein: "The world of Dasein frees the beings encountered for a totality of relevance which is familiar to the they in the limits which are established with the averageness of the they" (Heidegger, 2010, p.125). The alternative is the authentic self, which is not limited by the interpretations of the world prescribed by the they, and therefore sees the world as it is.

We can see here that, although being-with is a necessary aspect of being-in-the-world, the average or everydayness of this being-with nevertheless sets limits to Dasein's potential being in undesirable ways. This brings us to the problem of the possibility of removing these limits while remaining a part of the community that set or prescribed them. Heidegger's solution to this problem is authenticity. It is assumed that the authentic self is a modification of Dasein's everyday mode of being that allows Dasein to see the world as it is by freeing Dasein from the

inauthentic understanding prescribed by the 'they.' It is important to keep in mind that being-with is not the source of inauthenticity such that being authentic means removing oneself somehow from the community: "*Authentic being a self* is not based on an exceptional state of the subject, detached from the they" (Heidegger, 2010, p.126). Authenticity is rather a modification of Dasein's everyday being-with others so that one's existence is the community with others is chosen rather than prescribed. By choosing itself rather than allowing itself to be prescribed, Dasein takes responsibility for itself and is supposed to shed the limitations of the they-self. In fact, for Heidegger, there are indeed forms of authentic community, which are different from the average everydayness described above. Heidegger describes an "authentic alliance" where "being-with-one-another is based initially and often exclusively on what is taken care of together" (Heidegger, 2010, p.119). This seems similar to the example I gave above regarding carpenters and their relation to Home Depot. In taking care of things that Daseins find meaningful and valuable in common, Dasein's being-with does not limit its being, in fact, it facilitates its actualization. Inauthenticity is found when the 'they' limit Dasein's being through the average levelled down way of understanding the world that Dasein adopts for itself when it allows others to leap in and take the responsibility of taking care away from it. Authenticity then is a way of being with others in which Dasein chooses to take responsibility for itself and take care of itself.

In order to better understand the way that they limit Dasein's being, and how authenticity modifies this being in order to overcome these limitations, I will need to discuss Heidegger's concept of 'disclosure.' This discussion will also provide an account of Heidegger's concept of understanding, which I argue is modified by Gadamer.

According to Wheeler, 'Dasein' can be translated into English as both 'there being' and 'open being.' For Heidegger, "the being which is essentially constituted by being-in-the-world is itself always its 'there'" (Heidegger, 2010, p.129). This openness to the 'there' is what Heidegger calls 'disclosedness.' Disclosed literally means opened. What is disclosed to Dasein is its' there (the phenomenon of being-in-the-world), which is more or less the totality of existence. He

writes, "Dasein exists, and it alone. Thus existence is standing out, into and enduring, the openness of the there" (Heidegger, 2010, p.129).[3] This disclosure is an opening that allows for the 'illumination' of understanding, which frees beings to be what they are within this opening or clearing, thereby allowing for the projection of Dasein's various modes of being. In saying that Dasein is illuminated, Heidegger means "that it is cleared in itself *as* being-in-the-world, not by another being, but in such a way that it *is* itself the clearing [Lichtung]. Only for a being thus cleared existentially do objectively present things become accessible in the light or concealed in darkness" (Hiedegger, 2010, p.129). This clearing, which allows for the world to be illuminated, is the very being of Dasein; "*Dasein is its disclosedness*" (Heidegger, 2010, p.129). This is why Wheeler refers to disclosure as care. This openness or disclosure can be authentic or inauthentic. There are three dimensions of disclosure: thrownness, projection and fallen-ness (Wheeler, 2016). Authenticity is a modification of this structure of disclosure into thrown-projection.

Dasein's thrownness is disclosed in attunement, which is characterized by Heidegger in terms of Dasein's mood. This mood for Heidegger is not something that is purely subjective, but is rather like the atmosphere within which aspects of the there are disclosed to Dasein, or Dasein is "brought before its being as the there" (Heidegger, 2010, p.131). When Dasein is in a good mood, what is disclosed is light and easy going. In a bad mood, Dasein is disclosed as something burdensome: "Mood makes manifest 'how one is and is coming along.' In this 'how one is' being in a mood brings being to its 'there'" (Heidegger, 2010, p.131).

Dasein is 'delivered over' to its there in attunement, meaning that it has no choice in the matter. The way that Dasein is delivered over to its there is characterized as 'thrownness.' Dasein is thrown into the being of its there; "it is thrown in such a way that it is the there as being-in-the-world." (Heidegger, 2010, p.131). The there that Dasein is thrown into is submitted to and it assails Dasein. In this way, attunement discloses Dasein's 'disposedness' to the there that Dasein is thrown into. That it is delivered over and disposed means that what is disclosed in attunement

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[3] This quote is found in the footnote section of p.129.

is determined outside of Dasein's control; this is similar to the way that the trajectory of a rock that I throw is determined outside of the control of the rock. This does not mean that it is outside of Dasein, just outside of its control like height, hair color, place and date of birth, and etcetera; these are finite facts of Dasein's being; these facts can only be objectively present to Dasein that is thrown into the 'facticity' of its existence that ontologically presupposes these facts: "*Facticity is not the factuality of the* factum brutum *of something objectively present, but is a characteristic of the being of Dasein*" (Heidegger, 2010, p.132). What is disclosed in attunement is characterized by Heidegger as "that it is and has to be" (Heidegger, 2010, p.132). Because I am attunened to the world, I am disposed to the facts of the situation (i.e. the 'facticity' of my existence): "The expression thrownness is meant to suggest the *facticity of its being delivered over*." (Heidegger, 2010, p.131-132). This thrownness is an important part of Dasein's finitude. Dasein is a finite being with finite limitations imposed by the there that Dasein is thrown into.

What matters or what is significant to Dasein (what Dasein will inevitably care about) is also disclosed in attunement: *"In attunement lies existentially a disclosive submission to world out of which things that matter to us can be encountered"* (Heidegger, 2010, p.134). Heidegger discusses fear as a mood to demonstrate the way that what matters to Dasein is disclosed in attunement. With fear, we are afraid that something will happen to damage us or someone else will be damaged. For example, a carpenter working on the roof of a shed may suddenly realize that he or she is not at a safe distance to the ground and become afraid of injury due to falling. One's mood throws one out of the circumspection of building a shed in the mode of being a carpenter, and into the fear of falling. That the shed built by Dasein in the mode of being a carpenter is encountered in a circumspect way therefore also depends on Dasein's attunement. In this mood shift, certain aspects of life lose significance while others gain it. In this way, what matters is disclosed in attunement.

The way that Dasein is brought before its there is described as an 'evasion' and 'turning away:' "*Attunement discloses Dasein in its thrownness and, initially and for the most part, in the*

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mode of an evasive turning away" (Heidegger, 2010, p.132-133). Dasein feels the responsibility

to be what it is, which is a being that cares. This responsibility might be burdensome, so Dasein

will look away from itself in order to find itself; it will look to make or create itself

inauthenticially by allowing others to leap in for it and prescribe its existence rather than

choosing it. As discussed above, absorption into the world and the common sense of the 'they' is

the way that Dasein is initially and for the most part in its everydayness: "Dasein is continually

surrendered to the 'world' and lets itself be concerned by it in such a way that it, in a certain

sense evades itself. The existential constitution of this evasion becomes clear in the phenomenon

of entanglement" (Heidegger, 2010, p.135). In entanglement, we end up evading responsibility

(i.e. turning away from ourselves) and become caught up in the world and the publicness of the

they through 'idle talk,' 'curiosity' and 'ambiguity.' These things distort beings and cover them

over with the common sense interpretation of the they.

     In order to further investigate this problem of Heidegger's distinction between

authenticity and inauthenticity, I will discuss the second way that the 'there' is disclosed to

Dasein: understanding. For Heidegger, understanding cannot be thought of in the traditional way

because this way presupposes the metaphysics of presence. Traditionally, understanding was seen

as a faculty of the mind that produces concepts that allow us to know things about the world. For

Kant, knowledge is acquired through judgments that consist in attaching subjects to predicates.

For example, I understand the concept of hammer as a tool that is hard and heavy and good for

hammering things. 'Hard,' 'heavy' and 'good for hammering things' are predicates, which I

attach to the subject 'hammer' using the faculty of my judgment. As opposed to producing

abstract concepts, the understanding for Heidegger is seen as a mode of being of Dasein that lets

beings 'show' themselves freely as they are in themselves. Understanding is being [Sein] in the

sense that it is what allows beings to be what they are.

     For Heidegger, understanding is practical. "We sometimes use the expression 'to

understand something' to mean 'being able to handle it,' 'being able to do something'"

(Heidegger, 2010, p.139). The understanding provides a clearing whereby beings are free to be what they are in themselves. In other words, it allows beings to reveal themselves in terms of what we can do with them practicality, which is their handiness or their being. In so doing, we are able to use the tools for our practical ends of care and concern or to do the things that matter to us.

Heidegger characterizes the understanding as the 'sight' of Dasein, because of the way that it discloses or brings into the light certain practical aspects of the world such as handiness, relevance and significance. Our encounters with useful or handy things would be merely objectively present (having only the ontological status of an object) if not for the disclosure of the sight of the understanding. Heidegger writes that the sight of the understanding "contains in itself the explicitness of referential relations (of the in-order-to) which belong to the totality of relevance in terms of which what is simply encountered is understood" (Heidegger, 2010, p.144-145). Think about, for example, how strange a hammer would look if you did not know what it was. For you, the hammer would be just metal and wood (the raw facticity of the situation); in other words, it would be 'objectively present' (having the ontological status of a thing or an innerworldly being) but it would not reveal itself in its being (handiness). While this example does not represent a possibility for Heidegger (since both being and objective presence of a thing are disclosed simultaneously), it serves to illustrate the importance of human understanding for the worldliness of the world. Without seeing the handiness of the hammer, and the other referential relations that are significant to Dasein in the mode of being a carpenter, what is encountered and at hand is not understood within the totality of relevance and significance that Dasein relies on for the meaningful activity that produces itself and thereby constitutes its very being. Therefore, in understanding, "not only is the world, qua world, disclosed in its possible significance, but innerworldly beings themselves are freed, freed for *their own* possibility" (Heidegger, 2010, p.140). Understanding the hammer means that the hammer is brought into the

light (so to speak) where it is free to reveal itself to Dasein as what it really is (its possibility) via Dasein's use of the hammer in taking care.

Understanding is importantly characterized by Heidegger as a 'projection.' Wheeler remarks that projection represents an ontological surplus in Dasein, which allows it to 'leap ahead' of itself and be more than it is. Heidegger writes, "because of the kind of being which is constituted by the existential of projecting, Dasein is constantly 'more' than it actually is" (Heidegger, 2010, p.141). To project is to bring forth Dasein's being. One does not just pick up a hammer to become a carpenter; it takes years of practice to bring forth this mode of being. However, even before Dasein is in the mode of being a carpenter, it has the potential to be a carpenter. It always has the potential to be more than it is. In the activity of project and care, we actualize that potential and become more than what we are.

As was touched on above, this project is necessarily limited by one's 'facticity,' which is disclosed in attunement. We are thrown into a world that presents a more or less limited range of possibilities upon which Dasein can project its being. An important aspect of this thrownness is the worldliness of the world that we are thrown into. The understanding is the potential to project one's being and to actualize these possibilities. Attunement determines the range of possibilities that the understanding can actualize. This is why authentic Dasein is described by Heidegger as 'thrown possibility,' or thrown-projection. Heidegger writes,

> As essentially attuned, Dasein has always already got itself into definite possibilities. As a potentiality for being which it *is*, it has let some go by; it constantly adopts the possibilities of its being, grasps them, and sometimes fails to grasp them. But this means that Dasein is a being-possible which is entrusted to itself, it is *thrown possibility* throughout.

(Heidegger, 2010, p.139).

We are attuned to certain possibilities that we are thrown into, and we actualize these possibilities in the practicality of taking care thanks to the sight of the understanding: "In the mode of 'being attuned' Dasein 'sees' possibilities in terms of which it is. In the projective disclosure of such possibilities, it is always already attuned. The project of its ownmost potentiality of being is

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delivered over to the fact of thrownness into the there" (Heidegger, 2010, p.143). Dasein's being is necessarily limited by the possibilities that it is thrown into. The projection of the understanding actualizes these possibilities.

The understanding develops explicitly in interpretation, which can be understood as understanding in action. Interpretation makes understanding explicit in terms of the 'as' structure of understanding. For Kant, 'as' was used to connect subjects like 'hammer' to predicates like 'heavy' in order to facilitate understanding (i.e. the hammer is understood as heavy). However, for Heidegger, the 'as' structure functions to let beings show themselves 'as' what they are: "What is disclosed in understanding, what is understood, is always already accessible in such a way that in it, its 'as what' can be explicitly delineated. The 'as' constitutes the structure of the explicitness of what is understood; it constitutes the interpretation" (Heidegger, 2010, p.144). For example, the hammer is understood 'as' its handiness when it is used or freed in the mode of being a carpenter. The explicit handiness of the hammer is the way that understanding develops from ambiguous understanding into explicit understanding.

Interpretation is already in place before things are revealed, and the way that the world is revealed to us or freed within the open space of the understanding depends on this interpretation. This is what Heidegger calls the 'fore-structure' of interpretation. This perspective within which we judge is the worldliness of the world that Dasein is thrown into. It is based on what Heidegger calls 'fore-having,' since it exists prior to the understanding and the interpretation that grasps it explicitly: "As the appropriation of understanding in being [Sein] that understands, the interpretation operates in being toward a totality of relevance which has already been understood" (Heidegger, 2010, p.145). Because of this fore-structure, interpretation is a circle, and one will always understand things in the way that is set up and structured in advance (the structure of the worldliness of the world) of the act of interpretation.[4] This hermeneutic circle is not to be avoided

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[4] This idea of one's understanding being determined before the act of understanding is similar to what Gadamer calls prejudice.

by splitting the world into a subjective observer and the objective observable world. "What is decisive is not to get out of the circle, but to get into it in the right way" (Heidegger, 2010, p.148). We "get into" the hermeneutic circle by projecting the meaning of the whole on the basis of our understanding of a part. We must keep this partial interpretation open to revision. The "circle" is the expanding scope of understanding produce by on-going revision of partial interpretations. However, this proper way to get into the circle is only grasped in a genuine way "when interpretation has understood that its first, constant, and last task is not to let 'fore-having,' 'fore-sight,' and 'fore-conception' be given to it by chance ideas and popular conceptions" (Heidegger, 2010, p.148). To interpret the world in advance based on chance ideas and popular conceptions would be inauthentic, since these chance ideas are not chosen but prescribed.

The third aspect of the structure of disclosure is 'falling prey.' This aspect of disclosure is the result of turning away from oneself and becoming entangled in the world. For Heidegger, understanding and interpretation can be either authentic or inauthentic. One can either understand oneself in terms of the world, or one can understand oneself in terms of Dasein, the 'for-the-sake-of-which' of the world: "Understanding *can* turn primarily to the disclosedness of the world, that is, Dasein can understand itself initially and for the most part in terms of the world. Or else understanding throws itself primarily into the for-the-sake-of-which, which means Dasein exists as itself" (Heidegger, 2010, p.141). While thrownness represents necessary limitations, Dasein is also initially and for the most part subject to the unnecessary limitations imposed by the they. These unnecessary limitations are characterized by Heidegger as 'entanglement' and 'falling prey.' The they have a specific way of understanding and interpreting the world; this way produces the everyday and average mode of being in the world. In order to maintain this inauthentic mode of being in the world, we must turn away from ourselves; when we turn away from ourselves we have already fallen prey to the they and become entangled in the world; for Heidegger, inauthenticity "constitutes precisely a distinctive kind of being-in-the-world which is completely taken in by the world and the Dasein-with of the others in the they" (Heidegger, 2010,

p.169). Based on this reading of Heidegger, it seems that one has to be in the world in such a way that one is not outside the world, but neither is one completely absorbed in the world. If we spend too much time entangled in the world, we become average and just like all the others: "The understanding of Dasein in the they thus constantly *goes astray* in its projects with regard to the genuine possibilities of being" (Heidegger, 2010, p.168). When it goes astray, it does not interpret the world in a way that would allow Dasein to live up to its potential of being; in other words, it puts limits on Dasein's potential to care and project its being by covering over or obfuscating being.

As I have tried to reiterate, inauthenticity is how all Daseins initially begin and how they are for the most part. In order to break free of entanglement and project our being in an authentic way, Dasein must go through an existential crisis that consists of several steps, which I will quickly go over. First of all, Dasein – absorbed in the they – must experience 'anxiety.' Anxiety is a mode of attunement in which Dasein is thrown into the world wherein the common sense interpretation of the they no longer discloses any meaning or intelligibility. In this anxiety, one is able to disclose to oneself an understanding of death as the existential limit of Dasein's possibility. Death is the necessary limit of possibility and projection. Death is the one thing that no other Dasein can leap in and take care of for Dasein; one's death is one's own. In anticipating this limitation, Dasein is able to understand something that is personal and necessary. Dasein's experience of death is the way that it grasps its finitude. This finitude is understood in a very personal way as the resolute anticipation of one's inevitable death (one's ownmost possibility of being).

When one experiences anxiety and anticipates death in this way, one is able to hear the call of conscience. To hear the call of conscience, Dasein has to be attuned to listening to itself and not the they. At this point, Dasein begins to turn away from the world and the they, and toward itself. The call of conscience allows Dasein to recognize its lostness in the they and the way that this lostness unnecessarily limits its being by making it average: "The call introduces the

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fact of constantly being-guilty and thus brings the self back from the loud idle chatter of the they's common sense" (Heidegger, 2010, p. 283). The call reveals to Dasein that it is guilty of limiting its being by allowing itself to become entangled in the world and fall prey to the they. The way that the they limit Dasein's being makes it irresponsible. It is guilty therefore of being irresponsible.

When Dasein decides that it will be responsible, and no longer wants to be lost in the they, it is resolute. Heidegger writes, "resoluteness brings the self right into its being together with things at hand, actually taking care of them" (Heidegger, 2010, P.285). Resolute is how Dasein is when it is authentic and therefore free from entanglement to project according to its own potentiality of being within the finite limitations of its thrownness. In other words, Dasein, no longer limited by the they interpretation, is able to project its being (i.e. take care) properly and authentically.

However, it is unclear how the anticipation of death would make a difference in Dasein's everyday existence. Authenticity is a modification of Dasein's being that affects the motivation for action, but not necessarily the content of action. If – for example – Dasein is a Christian as opposed to an atheist that anticipates its death resolutely, Dasein still takes care of things in the world in relatively the same way; i.e. the content of their actions are the same. A Christian Dasein still raises children, goes to work, takes out the garbage, loves his wife, builds a shed, cuts the lawn, and etcetera. The reason why is because these are things that authentic Dasein has in common with inauthentic Christian Dasein. They are things that they both care about and that matter to both of them. It is again unclear how the anticipation of death makes any sort of meaningful difference in Dasein's potential to take care and project its being; this is the case despite Heidegger's insistence that the call of conscience is the call to care. He writes:

> *Conscience reveals itself as the call of care:* the caller is Dasein, anxious in thrownness (in its already-being-in…) about its potentiality-of-being. The one summoned is also Dasein, called forth to its ownmost potentiality-of-being (in its already-ahead of itself…). And what is called by the summons – out of falling prey to the they (already-being-

together-with-the-world-taken-care-of) – is Dasein. The call of conscience, that is, conscience itself, has its ontological possibility in the fact that Dasein, in the ground of its being, is care

(Heidegger, 2010, p.267).

Does this call to care, which can only be heard by authentically attuned Dasein, indicate that inauthentic Dasein does not care to the fullest of its being? The Christian Dasein and the atheist Dasein may have different motivations for their actions, but the content of their actions is not necessarily affected by modifying Dasein's disclosure with the resolute anticipation of death. That one is authentic and one is not is only a meaningful distinction to the one who has experienced the resolute anticipation of death. From the outside observer (to the community of Daseins), since the content of authentic Dasein's actions are more or less the same as the content of inauthenitic Dasein's, the distinction is meaningless.

We can see the same meaningless distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity if we re-examine the example of Home Depot presented above. Although the Home Depot example is of an authentic community, all of the various carpenters and Home Depot staff can easily be inauthentic (behaving in prescribed rather than chosen ways) and the scenario would play out the same way. Individuals make choices everyday and take care of things in common everyday, whether they are authentically chosen or inauthentically prescribed. Heidegger claims that inauthenticity limits Dasein's being by allowing others to take care away. However, it is unclear how this limitations translates into the everyday activity of taking care that constitutes Dasein's being-in-the-world.

As I touched on early in this chapter, Dasein – as being-in-the-world – is a unified whole of Dasein and world. This is something that Heidegger makes very clear and which serves as the basis of his critique of the metaphysics of presence. However, despite this insistence, Heidegger still describes Dasein as something that turns toward the world to be inauthentic and away from the world and toward itself when it is authentic. In turning toward itself, Dasein is turning away

from the community and the they interpretation that covers over its being, which on a certain level is impossible due to the fact that Dasein's thrownness and Dasein's being-with are inescapable components of its existence. As discussed above, Dasein is always a particularization of the larger community. I do not think that it can turn away from those that prescribe its being in order to choose its being for itself when Dasein's being is necessarily determined by the historical and cultural meaning and value systems that it was thrown into. Thrownness assails Dasein and it is outside of its control. Part of this thrownness is a particular worldliness of the world that Dasein relies on for the meaningful engagement with the world that brings forth its being. So thrownness must be a level of social and cultural tradition that necessarily prescribes Dasein's being. Authenticity would then be grasping the level of social and cultural tradition that is necessary for Dasein's existence to have any meaning, and dismissing the aspects of the they interpretation that limit its existence. However, it is unclear how turning away from the world and toward oneself (a self that is necessarily conditioned by the social and cultural meaning systems that it was thrown into) will free Dasein from the social and cultural meaning systems that limit it and make it inauthentic.

Heidegger thinks that turning toward oneself means that Dasein can hear the call of conscience; this is only possible if Dasein cannot hear the common sense of the they, which it will not hear if it has turned away from the community and toward itself. When anxiety discloses a meaningless and unintelligible world, Dasein must find something else to make its being intelligible. This something else must be Dasein itself. To the extent that the structure of significance based on Dasein itself is incongruous with the common sense of the they, authenticity cannot be recognized by the community. It cannot be recognized by the community because whatever it is that makes authenticity intelligible to Dasein (the call of conscience) cannot be shared with the community. Considering what Heidegger says about being-with and thrownness, authenticity must mean responsible community membership and authentic Dasein must share significance with other Dasein in the community. However, given what Heidegger

says about taking responsibility for oneself as someone distinct from the they – and the way that taking responsibility for oneself involves Dasin being cut off from the meaning that it shares with others – this idea of authenticity as responsible community membership is incoherent.

In general, authenticity is a relation to the self in which one is true to oneself. For Charles Taylor in *The Ethics of Authenticity*,[5] one does not turn away from the community in order to be true to oneself. Rather, one's authentic identity must develop through community interaction. For Heidegger, with the resolute anticipation of death, one is 'born again' authentically and the 'they-self' is overcome and replaced by the authentic self. Because this transformation is so personal, Heidegger cuts the individual off from the community in a way that makes it impossible for the community to recognize what it is to be authentic. Taylor writes, "the genesis of the human mind is in this sense not 'monological,' not something each accomplishes on his or her own, but dialogical" (Taylor, 1999, p.33). In Heidegger, we do not find a dialogical genesis of authenticity. It is instead monological, since it involves looking inward and understanding or grasping death as something that is deeply personal, which nobody can leap in and take care of for you. Taylor writes, "we become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining an identity through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression" (Taylor, 1999, p.33). Through these rich human languages of expression, we are able to authentically express ourselves and develop our authentic identity through our various community interactions: "My discovering my identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internalized, with others" (Taylor, 1999, p.46). Through these discursive community interactions, one's identity can be recognized as authentic and meaningful.'

Following Taylor, I argue that without this recognition by the community, authentic identity has no meaning. For example, former NAACP president Rachel Dolezal is predominantly of European descent. Nevertheless, she identifies as black. However, the black community failed

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[5] While Taylor does not mention Heidegger or Gadamer, his discussion of authenticity – and its development in the recognition of others – is the basis for my critique of Heidegger.

to recognize her as a black person; because she is not recognized as black, her identity is inauthentic and has no meaning. Taylor writes, "the thing about inwardly derived, personal, original identity is that it doesn't enjoy this recognition a priori. It has to win it through exchange, and it can fail" (Taylor, 1999, p.48). While Dolezal's struggle to be recognized as black failed, many do not. Olympic gold medalist in the 1976 men's decathlon Caitlyn Jenner was thrown into a man's body but nevertheless identifies as a woman. Unlike Dolezal, the community recognizes Jenner's identity and she is able to live her life as a woman. Therefore, her identity is authentic and has meaning within the community that recognizes it.

For Taylor therefore, authenticity requires agreed upon rules and values for what is legitimate and recognizable; Taylor claims that without this common set of criteria, identity recognition descends into cultural relativism in which all idiosyncratic features of identity are accepted as legitimate. "There must be some substantive agreement on value, or else the formal principle of equality will be empty and a sham…Recognizing difference, like self-choosing, requires a horizon of significance, in this case a shared one" (Taylor, 1999, p.52). In other words, there are agreed upon standards for what can be recognized as authentic. 'Black' and 'woman' are examples of meaningful categories that we can choose to identify with; this identity must be recognized as such for this identity to obtain authenticity. Important to keep in mind is that these community criteria are not totally based on one's genetic heritage or chromosomal configuration. It would be disingenuous to say that Caitlyn Jenner is biologically a woman but Rachel Dolezal is not descendent from Africa. These categories must be at least in some part social constructs. These social constructs are some of the shared meanings that we use to make sense of the world and ourselves. They are part of our community horizon of intelligibility that we must necessarily use to form our identity. "It follows that one of the things we can't do, if we are to define ourselves significantly, is suppress or deny the horizons against which things take on significance for us" (Taylor, 1999, p.37). Just like Heidegger, Taylor understands that we share interpretations and significance with others and we cannot define ourselves in any meaningful

way outside of a shared horizon of meaning that has value to the community. We need a meaningful horizon of things that matter in order to define ourselves in a non-trivial fashion.

In the second chapter I will discuss how Gadamer's concept of understanding as 'fusing horizons' provides a more comprehensive account of understanding and authentic identity formation. Gadamer's account is more comprehensive than Heidegger's because it demonstrates and develops the role of the necessary recognition of others and by others in the constitution of genuine or authentic identity as well as the way that authenticity might modify the content of our actions.

CHAPTER TWO

I have argued that Heidegger's account of the distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity is self-undermining because it cannot distinguish between the two opposed dispositions. It cannot because it is a purely inward disposition; but authenticity, as Taylor argued, is an identification that must be recognizable by the community. In the following chapter, I will argue that Gadamer's account of understanding as 'fusing horizons' further develops Taylor's idea that authenticity must be recognized by the community in order to be meaningful in the life of the individual.

Gadamer's concept of understanding that he develops in *Truth and Method* is borrowed and modified from Heidegger's account in *Being and Time*. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Heidegger's interpretation of understanding is that it is the clearing within which beings are free to reveal themselves to Dasein as what are. However, what they are revealed as (the way that we interpret them) is determined in advance by the fore-structure of understanding, which is what Gadamer would call 'prejudice.' Prejudices means pre-judgement, i.e. the anticipation of the meaning of the whole on the basis of interpretation of the parts. Gadamer stresses the importance of Heidegger's recognition that "all understanding inevitably involves some prejudices" (Gadamer, 1986, p.239). On Heidegger's and Gadamer's account, understanding depends on the necessary prejudices that Dasein was thrown into – specifically the historically and culturally determined worldliness of the world that Dasein relies on to make sense of the world.

 Horizons are always structured by language. Communication and meaning are understood as a part/whole relation in which the totality of the parts make up the whole, and each individual part only makes sense within the context of the whole. The fore-meanings that make understanding possible are constituted as a part/whole relation in which particular things are understood against a total background of intelligibility (what Heidegger would call the 'worldliness of the world'). As I touched on in the previous chapter, a particular hammer is understood in the context of the construction industry (the worldliness of the world), and the

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construction industry is composed of countless particular functional tools and materials that compose the whole. We could also say that the hammer exists as a part of the language of the construction industry that makes it intelligible. Just like particular letters in the alphabet, these particulars are meaningless outside of the totality of letters, a totality which they themselves compose. The movement of understanding is circular in this way, since what is understood as a particular constitutes and is determined by the whole.

> The anticipation of meaning in which the whole is envisaged becomes explicit understanding in that the parts, that are determined by the whole, themselves also determine this whole…Our task is to extend in concentric circles the unity of the understood meaning. The harmony of all the details with the whole is the criterion of correct understanding

> (Gadamer, 1986, p.259).

If something is out of place or alien (i.e. if something does not make sense), we must struggle to incorporate it into our horizon (unless we reject it as meaningless); so the struggle for genuine understanding circles from part to whole until the part is incorporated meaningfully into the whole.

Just like Heidegger, for Gadamer there are productive prejudices (one's thrownnesss for Heidegger) that are necessary for understanding, and there are arbitrary prejudices (one's entanglements for Heidegger) that limit understanding when we fail to notice or take account of them. Describing Heidegger's hermeneutical understanding, Gadamer writes "all correct interpretation must be on guard against arbitrary fancies and the limitations imposed by imperceptible habits of thought and direct its gaze 'on the things themselves'" (Gadamer, 1986, p.236). Genuine or authentic understanding on both accounts is grasping one's productive prejudices and dismissing those that inhibit understanding or cover the world over.[6] When we are free of the biases that inhibit understanding, we understand ourselves authentically (i.e. as beings

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[6] Although Gadamer does not use the term 'authentic,' it can be understood as the mode of being that allows for beings to reveal themselves as they are understood within a finite historical or cultural tradition. For Gadamer, authentic understanding is only possible via the fusion of horizons.

that exist within a finite historical and cultural tradition that give our lives and the lives of others meaning and value) and we can form an authentic identity based on this self-understanding.

While both Heidegger and Gadamer agree that arbitrary prejudices make one inauthentic, they differ on the way that these prejudices are to be weeded out and dealt in order to make one authentic. For Heidegger, one can only be authentic and free of entanglement if one anticipates death resolutely. For Gadamer, prejudices are distinguished in the work of understanding itself when we struggle to understand something new and foreign to our horizon; this forces us to adapt our fore-meaning to suit the alien thing that we are trying to understand within the tradition that we use to understand things. "The prejudices and fore-meanings in the mind of the interpreter are not at his free disposal. He is not able to separate in advance the productive prejudices that make understanding possible from the prejudices that hinder understanding and lead to misunderstanding" (Gadamer, 1986, p.263). That they cannot be separated in advance means that they must be separated out in the present, as we work to understand something that is difficult to assimilate into our meaning structure. I suppose that the more something evades an interpretation, the more the interpreter struggles to interpret it. In order to understand something difficult, we are forced to deal with the prejudices that block understanding. Things that we already understand do not provide the opportunity to struggle in order to fit these things into our horizon. This struggle is described as a filtering process with a positive value for understanding. This process "not only lets those prejudices that are of a particular and limited nature die away, but causes those that bring about genuine understanding to emerge clearly as such" (Gadamer, 1986, p.266). Therefore, working out our prejudices does not mean abandoning the community horizon that has given one's life meaning, rather "all that is asked is that we remain open to the meaning of the other person or text" (Gadamer, 1986, p.238). Everyone has a perspective that is rooted in their finite and constantly changing tradition and culture; however, we must be open to questioning and modifying our prejudices in order to identify the productive prejudices that have been passed down by this tradition. In being open to tradition, we become open to ourselves as beings shaped

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and defined by that tradition; and we therefore understand ourselves in an authentic and meaningful way. This kind of openness involves "the conscious assimilation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices. The important thing is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text may present itself in all its newness and thus be able to assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings" (Gadamer, 1986, p.238). When someone's horizon is closed, their prejudices are not questioned, they are unaware of their bias, and understanding is hindered. "It is the tyranny of hidden prejudices that makes us deaf to the language that speaks to us in tradition" (Gadamer, 1986, p.239). Instead of the anticipation of death, authentic self-understanding for Gadamer is achieved with an open attitude and a willingness to struggle with something that is difficult to understand. In this struggle, we become open to ourselves and form an authentic identity rooted in a finite, shared, historical tradition.

In order for authenticity to exist therefore, it must have something to work on. For Gadamer, a difficult text from the past provides a good way to facilitate the process of openness and interaction that produces authentic self-understanding. When we interpret a historical text, we are engaging with a horizon from the past that may at first appear strange or alien to us in the present. Accounting for this difference involves grasping the tradition that is shared between the text and the interpreter. It involves questioning idiosyncratic prejudices to find the common ground that will allow the text to speak for itself or reveal itself freely in an authentic or genuine way. Accounting for these differences and understanding the text amounts to a fusion of horizons between past and present. This not only allows the text to be understood in a genuine way, but opens one up to oneself and the tradition that is shared between the text in order to understand that this shared tradition gives meaning to the existence of both: "Time is no longer primarily a gulf to be bridged, because it separates, but it is actually the supportive ground of a process in which the present is rooted" (Gadamer, 1986, p.264). An encounter with a text from the past stimulates the examination of our prejudices (just as our encounters with others). As we work through the text and make sense of it, we may be forced to deal with prejudices that inhibit our

understanding, while never doing away with those that facilitate it and therefore give authentic meaning to our own lives and work.

In describing the proper mental attitude toward the text that will produce authenticity, Gadamer makes a distinction between 'historical consciousness' and 'effective historical consciousness.' Historical consciousness is the awareness of the difference between the horizon of the text and the horizon of the present, and then trying to grasp the horizon of the text objectively. Gadamer criticizes historical consciousness for being blind to the bias of objectivity that it carries with it, making historical consciousness inauthentic understanding. Effective historical consciousness is the awareness of the fact that we cannot totally do away with our prejudices and must therefore find common cultural ground with a text in order to understand it. "In the process of understanding, there takes place a real fusing of horizons, which means that as the historical horizon is projected, it is simultaneously removed. We described the conscious act of this fusion as the task of effective-historical consciousness" (Gadamer, 1986, p.272-273). For historical consciousness to become effective historical consciousness, it must "take account of its own historicality. To stand within a tradition does not limit the freedom of knowledge but makes it possible" (Gadamer, 1986, p.324). Effective historical consciousness is 'effective' in so far as it furthers the common tradition of the interpreter and the text by keeping it alive and not treating it as a dead scientific artifact. "In a tradition this process of fusion is continually going on, for there old and new continually grow together to make something of living value, without either being explicitly distinguished from the other" (Gadamer, 1986, p.273). One must take account of one's own experience and horizon in order to recognize what is common with the text. If one is not open to experiencing the text in this way, one will not recognize the common features between the text and the interpreter that give meaning to one's life. "Someone who is open in this way to tradition sees that the historical consciousness is not really open at all, but rather, if it reads its texts 'historically' has always thoroughly smoothed them out beforehand, so that the criteria of our own knowledge can never be put in question by tradition" (Gadamer, 1986, p.325). Effective

historical consciousness on the other hand remains open to the claims encountered in the text. It understands the text as a living source of meaning and tradition; this tradition defines both the text and the interpreter and orients them both in the world; this tradition is not fixed or dead, but can instead be seen as alive and constantly changing along with one's self-understanding. The attitude of effective historical consciousness is the proper attitude toward a text to produce genuine or authentic self-understanding in the struggle to grasp what the text is saying. This struggle is the process whereby we come to an authentic understanding of ourselves as beings that exist in a common historical culture.

Gadamer's critique of Hegel's concept of experience helps to further illuminate the importance of coming to terms with one's finite historical condition for genuine or authentic self-understanding. For Hegel, in *The Phenomenology of Mind,* experience is the back and forth movement of consciousness as it tries to understand something (Gadamer, 1986, p.310). This dialectical movement ends with the total and absolute identification or unity of consciousness and object. Charles Taylor in "Gadamer on the Human Sciences" claims that for Gadamer "experience is that wherein our previous sense of reality is undone, refuted, and shows itself as needing to be reconstituted. It occurs precisely in those moments where the object 'talks back'" (Taylor, 2002, p.128). As opposed to Hegel, Gadamer believes that experience as the movement of consciousness will never reach a final perfect end point. For Gadamer, there is no absolute knowledge that we can attain that overcomes our finitude and thrownness. What is instead gained in experience is an understanding of limitation and finitude, i.e. the tradition that supports one's horizon. This understanding is the task of effective historical consciousness and the only path to achieving authentic or genuine self-understanding for Gadamer. He writes,

> real experience is that in which man becomes aware of his finiteness…'To recognize what is' does not mean to recognize what is just at this moment there, but to have insight into the limitations within which the future is still open to expectation and planning or even more fundamentally, that all the expectation and planning of finite beings is finite and limited. Thus true experience is that of one's own historicality

> (Gadamer, 1986, p.320-321).

There is no absolute knowledge that overcomes one's finitude and thrownness. This is something that experience teaches us. The experienced man is one that is open and ready for experience despite these finite limitations: "It is the historically experienced consciousness that, by renouncing the chimera of perfect enlightenment, is open to the experience of history. We described its realization as the fusion of the horizons of understanding" (Gadamer, 1986, p.340). Being open to our finitude is being open to the prejudices that necessarily give meaning to our lives and inform our identity. As discussed above, for Heidegger, coming to terms with one's historical finitude means anticipating death resolutely. For Gadamer, coming to terms with one's finitude is something that must be struggled over and worked out in the activity of understanding itself; i.e. in the back and forth struggle whereby we allow something to speak for itself or reveal itself on its own terms and in a way that has meaning for us and that we recognize. We therefore do not become aware of ourselves as beings that are going to die, but as a member of a community and historical culture with content and meaning.

The fusion of horizons also describes the result of a process whereby we have genuine and authentic human relationships within which we develop authentic self-understanding in the mutual recognition of authentic identity. Gadamer argues that the proper way to understand someone and have a genuine relationship is not in a way that dominates and objectifies the other, but is rather in a way that enters into an open conversation with someone in order to find common ground. "The claim to understand the other person in advance performs the function of keeping the claim of the other person at a distance." (Gadamer, 1986, p.323). This distance is what we find to be caused by petty racist stereotypes that objectify and dehumanize others. For example, recognition of black dignity and humanity is what the civil rights movement struggled for. This dignity and humanity was not generally recognized in black people by segments of society due to the predominance of arbitrary racist prejudices that blocked genuine understanding. In all genuine human relationships there is a back and forth struggle for mutual recognition that must necessarily take place on both sides. This recognition requires the fusion of horizons. The civil

rights movement forced many people to examine the petty racist prejudices that objectify and dehumanize others. By holding racist prejudices, many of us are being inauthentic, since we do not conform to the community standard of human treatment that many of us claim to value. Although this standard is not shared by everyone, it is held by many in our society. This community standard of human treatment is also shared by many black people, since they would not demand it if it was not important to them. Many of us who live in this society value equal treatment of all people, being true to this tradition – a tradition that is new and still contested by many – means doing just that. However, this is not possible if one is blinded by racist stereotypes that dehumanize others. We see the fusion of horizons when black people are recognized authentically (as human beings that value treating all human beings with dignity) within a common (to some) cultural tradition of treating all people with dignity and respect. At the same time, one deepens one's own understanding of oneself as a human being that values treating all human beings with dignity and respect. This is only possible by dealing with the prejudices that block understanding and make one inauthentic by valuing the equal treatment of all people, but treating certain racial groups poorly. Authentic identity on Gadamer's account is an identification of oneself that is free from prejudices that hinder our understanding of ourselves and others. So it is an understanding of oneself that is true to oneself and to the cultural tradition that provides meaning and content to this identity. This authentic identity must be recognized by others along a common horizon of significance and values in order to be meaningful. One's identity is meaningless if one is not understood authentically and genuinely by others; by the same token, one cannot be authentic, open, and genuine if one is blind to one's prejudices. "In human relations the important thing is, as we have seen, to experience the 'Thou' truly as a 'Thou,' ie not to overlook his claim and to listen to what he has to say to us. To this end, openness is necessary" (Gadamer, 1986, p.324). With this openness to questioning our prejudices, we initiate a process whereby we fuse of horizons with another person within a shared cultural tradition, and our authentic identity as well as theirs can be mutually recognized in a meaningful way.

One's horizon language must be articulated if one is to be understood. Articulation here is similar to translation. When we speak to make ourselves understood, we articulate or translate our horizon language into verbal language, which can be understood by others. Without the common forms of articulation that we share, recognition would not be possible, since dialogue and discourse with others would not be possible. Civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X articulated their position in a way that forced people to examine the prejudices that blocked them from understanding black people as human beings. The fusion of horizons only takes place with dialogue and discourse, perhaps arguments, with the other that one does not at first find meaningful; this is done not in order to dismiss the other as insane or meaningless, but to genuinely understand the other and to allow them to speak for themselves in a meaningful way. To recognize this other is to struggle to incorporate the articulation of their horizon into yours and to recognize the common historical culture that informs the existence of both parties. In order to do this, one must put one's prejudices at risk in order to find the common language that will allow for one to find what the other is saying to be meaningful and valuable. When this happens, horizons are fused and the other is no longer other. "Without this kind of openness to one another there is no genuine human relationship. Belonging together always also means being able to listen to one another" (Gadamer, 1986, p.324).

As I discussed in the previous chapter, for Taylor, one's authentic identity does not have any meaning for others if it is not recognized within a common horizon of signification. Because the horizon of the they is meaningless to an authentic individual on Heidegger's account, this individual cannot be recognized along a common horizon of significance and meaning. Without this common horizon, one encounters the other as meaningless or other. This recognition is only possible if one is open and authentic, allowing the other to freely reveal him or herself and speak for him or herself. Genuine understanding of oneself is grasping one's finitude and the tradition that one relies on to make meaning in the world. This is achieved by fusing horizons, which recognizes another within the common tradition and culture that give meaning to the lives of both

parties, but only as the result of a struggle with one's prejudicial fore-structure of interpretation and the aspects of this that limit understanding.

We can also see on Gadamer's and Taylor's accounts the importance of recognition for one's day to day existence. People fight to be recognized because their authentic identities are essentially valuable to them. Returning to the examples of Heidegger's account of day to day authenticity (Home Depot and Christian Dasein), there was no real meaningful difference in the day to day lives of authentic people. However, for Caitlyn Jenner, Rachel Dolezal and millions of black people, authenticity and its necessary recognition is very important. While these struggles are not over, amendments to laws that prohibit racial demonstrate the impact that this sort of recognition has made over the last fifty years in the day to day lives of many black people. This failure of recognition has real consequences to the way that Dolezal lives her life and takes care of things that matter to her; when the black community that she was a part of discovered that she is actually a white lady, she was forced to resign her position with the NAACP. While I do not agree that Dolezal's claim is valid, we can see the impact that not being recognized has for her day to day life. Unlike in Heidegger, we can see here the consequences of authentic identity in the everyday lives of people that struggle to be recognized.

CONCLUSION

As discussed above, authenticity for Heidegger means that being is no longer closed off by entanglement, but rather beings are free to reveal themselves to Dasein as they are according to the fore-structure of understanding that Dasein is thrown into. Authenticity is an openness of understanding, which is no longer closed off by the ways that Dasein falls prey. This openness or authenticity comes about via an anxious flash of insight at the moment that we anticipate death resolutely. When we do this, our understanding is opened and things reveal themselves genuinely (i.e. Dasein's being is authentic).

For Gadamer, we must also be open in order to genuinely understand or be authentic. The important thing is that this openness is achieved for Gadamer in the working out of our prejudicial limitations in a process of open and questioning dialogical or dialectic exchange of discourse. Taylor writes "the road to understanding others passes through the patient identification and undoing of those facets of our implicit understanding that distort the reality of the other" (Taylor, 2002, p.132). Because of the way that authenticity or genuine understanding is achieved for Gadamer, authenticity is not something absolute like it is for Heidegger; it is not something that one turns on like a light switch. Rather for Gadamer authenticity admits of degrees; the process of genuine understanding never reaches a final end point, and one's tradition is always alive and in constant change and flux as it is bound up with collective self-understanding within the horizon of a meaningful cultural tradition. Instead of Heidegger's stark authentic/inauthentic distinction, for Gadamer, our understanding changes and broadens with experiences of the other that force us to work through and struggle with our prejudices in order to grasp the aspects of tradition and culture that give meaning to our lives and the lives of others.

Following Charles Taylor, I argued that one's authentic being must be recognized by others if it is to have any meaning. I ~~identifie~~ argued that this recognition is missing from Heidegger's account of authenticity because of the deeply personal and internal disposition of the resolute anticipation of one's death. Because this anticipation effects the motivation for action

and not the content, there is no way for the community to know whether or not another Dasein is authentic. By the same token, because the common sense interpretation is meaningless to authentic Dasein, he or she does not identify him or herself in a way that makes sense to the; this is the case despite the fact that authentic Dasein must continue to live out its finite existence it amongst these others that it was thrown into.

Gadamer builds on Taylor's ideas about meaningful recognition. In order to fuse horizons, one's horizon must be recognized by the other within the same process as one tries to understand this other in a genuine or authentic way. This recognition takes place via the articulation of one's horizon in dialogue and discourse with the other. This articulation in discourse allows for the struggle for recognition to play out. The struggle to recognize the other forces one to put one's prejudices at risk and find the common ground or language (what Taylor calls a 'shared horizon of experience') that will allow the other to speak for him/herself and express him/herself in a genuine or authentic. The end result of the fusion is that the other is able to freely reveal him or herself in a genuine or authentic way and we see ourselves more authentically as finite historical beings within a shared culture or tradition. Understanding others "always involves the attainment of a higher universality that overcomes, not only our own particularity, but also that of the other. The concept of the 'horizon' suggests itself because it expresses the wide, superior vision that the person who is seeking to understand must have" (Gadamer, 1986, p.272). The only way to achieve this wider and more open horizon (what Heidegger would call authentic understanding), is to enter into dialogue with the other and put one's prejudices at risk as one struggles to understand what does not fit into one's horizon language.

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