**Fürsorge: Acknowledging the Other Dasein**

As we saw in chapter 5, the encounter with the originary temporality of other Dasein is acknowledged in the very fact that there are public standards to which one submits oneself. The existence of foreign nows to which I must accommodate my own originary temporality is a necessary condition for the bindingness and publicity of the norms and shared structures of meaning that characterize what Heidegger means by world. It is for this reason that worldly structures and objects speak to me of the presence of others, a point that allows Heidegger to overcome the difficulty that faced Sartre regarding how the world is experienced as shared even in the absence of concrete others. One experiences a type of Dasein-presence through worldly things—in the cultivated field, for example—and the encounter is experienced as personal insofar as particular dimensions of these worldly things are salient. Thus one does not recognize the presence of other Dasein simply through this or that expanse of dirt, but in the trace of her purposive activity; in the fact that this expanse of dirt is cultivated and thereby succeeds in meeting particular standards of purpose: “These others do not stand in the referential context of the environing world, but are encountered in that with which they have to do, in the ‘with which’ of their preoccupation as the ones who are preoccupied with it. They are encountered as they are in their being-in-the-world, not as chance occurrences but as the ones who till the field” (*HCT* 240). Other Dasein and the traces of their work are not encountered as “chance occurrences” but as practical agents expressing their attuned, projective being-in-the-world through purposive worldly roles and activities. Others are not simply part of the referential context of meaning delimited by one’s projects—another “part” of the world. Rather, they are encountered “as they are in their being-in-the-world” (*HCT* 240): thrown into the world and committed to projects that center meaningful contexts of reference. These equipmental contexts, these roles and activities, are manifestations or expressions of the care that makes them meaningful as publicly significant equipment or action. Without others who exist in this heedfulness to one another and the public
measures evoked by such heedfulness, the world qua context of significance would not be possible as such.

This being-there-too with them [the others] does not have the ontological character of being objectively present “with” them within a world. The “with” is of the character of Da-sein, the “also” means the sameness of being as circumspect, heedful being-in-the-world. “With” and “also” are to be understood existentially, not categorically. On the basis of this like-with being-in-the-world, the world is always already the one that I share with the others. The world of Da-sein is a with-world. (BT 118/118–12)

On the basis of this like-with the world is one I share with the others, not vice versa. Though the order of priority is clear—the world as public, normatively binding context of significance depends on the intersubjective encounter with particular others—we have nevertheless not yet shown that the encounter with every other Dasein involves a being-toward the other qua originary temporality. The worldly space of shared significance demands that some others be recognized as such—it requires an “open intersubjectivity”—but in order to completely refute Sartre’s critique, we must show that every other is encountered as such at least on some minimal level.

Specific Intersubjectivity and Solicitude

Fürsorge is Heidegger’s answer to this requirement. Generally translated as “solicitude” or “concern,” Fürsorge is meant to designate a mode of care specific to encountering other Dasein. Thus Heidegger insists that Fürsorge is not the same as taking care of things—“although this kind of being is a being toward beings encountered in the world, as is taking care of things” (BT 121/114). Ecstatic transcendence or “being toward” characterizes both taking care of things and solicitude for others, but the fact that in the latter case it is another Dasein to whom I am related marks an insuperable difference: “The being to which Da-sein is related as being-with does not, however, have the kind of being of useful things at hand; it is itself Da-sein. This being is not taken care of, but is a matter of concern” (BT 121/114). In concern Dasein recognizes a being that differs fundamentally from the innerworldly things experienced in Zuhanden and Vorhanden modes of encounter. Fürsorge designates Dasein’s way of being toward the others who express their originary, ecstatic temporality
in a co-constituting of the world. Insofar as it is the way of being-toward specific to Dasein, then, Fürsorge inherently acknowledges the temporalizing care operating in and through the innerworldly forms in which it is encountered. Despite Heidegger’s insistence on the basic quality of this distinction, however, the question remains: how is this concernful acknowledgment of the other Dasein experienced as such in particular instances of encounter?

For Heidegger there is a continuum of such acknowledgment, the extremes of which he characterizes as “leaping-in” and “leaping-ahead.”  

Though one pole of the Fürsorge continuum involves such a minimal level of Dasein-acknowledgment as to encompass all sorts of abuse and disregard, we will show in this chapter that every point on the continuum registers the other Dasein as a being defined by originary temporality—despite the tendency to forget this in light of everyday, “vulgar” time. To do so we will analyze the underlying structure of Fürsorge at work throughout the entire continuum and determine thereby what type of Dasein acknowledgment characterizes every intersubjective encounter.

This chapter will discuss the everyday ways in which the other is typically encountered as co-Dasein and will end with a discussion of discourse—the mode of disclosure specific to Fürsorge. It is only in the following chapter that we will examine the extremes of this continuum to demonstrate how at one extreme—leaping-ahead—one takes the other’s status as temporally particular mineness as one’s guiding directive, while at the other extreme—leaping-in—only a bare minimum of Dasein-recognition occurs.

Though the term Fürsorge or “solicitude” seems to indicate a genuine involved connection between two people, this is a technical term that Heidegger uses to characterize the range of possible ways of being toward others. Thus behaviors and attitudes that we would characterize as indicating a lack of concern are themselves different modes of concern on his account:

Being-for, against-, and without-one-another, passing-one-another-by, not-mattering-to-one-another, are possible ways of concern . . . These modes of being show the characteristics of inconspicuousness and obviousness which belong to everyday innerworldly Mitda-sein of others, as well as to the handiness of useful things taken care of daily. These indifferent modes of being-with-one-another tend to mislead the ontological interpretation into initially interpreting this being as the pure objective presence of several subjects. It seems as if only negligible variations of the same kind of being lie before us, and yet ontologically there is an essential distinction between the “indifferent” being together of arbi-
trary things and the not-mattering-to-one-another of beings who are with one another. (BT 121–22/114)

Even in behaviors and attitudes where the other is treated callously—as if he were a thing—this “as if” can never completely conceal the ontological difference between things and persons experienced in every encounter with other Dasein: “The Dasein understands, in equal originality with its understanding of existence, the existence of other Daseins and the being of intraworldly beings” (BPP 279). Note here that when Heidegger refers to Dasein’s “understanding of existence” he is not referring to some thematic “existence in general” but to the concrete having to be of Dasein’s existing here and now. Note also that he distinguishes the existence of Dasein—mine and the other’s—from the “being of intraworldly beings.” Instances in which our indifference toward others may seem to be the same as the indifference felt for objects—or simply a “negligible variation” thereof—are in fact radically, essentially distinct modes of being. There is a fundamental difference in kind between intraworldly beings and world-expressing Dasein.

Respect

Heidegger’s basic distinction between persons and things—his characterization of the intersubjective encounter as involving an ontologically based inability to experience the other as a thing—points to the ethical implications of his position. Indeed, several commentators have noted Heidegger’s similarity to Kant in this regard. Sonia Sikka argues in “Kantian Ethics in Being and Time” that

Heidegger’s agreement with Kant’s practical philosophy is not limited to some cursory remarks about “solicitude” which might seem merely to qualify, or attenuate, the dominant tenor of his descriptions. Rather, a retrieval of central Kantian ideas . . . is present in Being and Time’s account of the basic structure of Dasein and the world. As a result, Being and Time’s emphasis on the situated character of human judgment is supplemented by a definition of appropriate behaviour toward all entities possessing a certain character, where this definition is grounded in the most fundamental elements of Heidegger’s ontology.

Like Kant, Heidegger offers a characterization of encounters with other persons as profoundly different from encounters with things, a differ-
ence that is grounded in fundamental elements of Dasein’s ontology. Many commentators have attempted to read a type of Kantian moral injunction into such a distinction:

Building on the fundamental Kantian distinction between persons and things, Heidegger has differentiated that circumspective concern we display to the things about us from our solicitous comportment toward other persons. Only through solicitous behaviour do other persons enter into our experience *qua* persons (instead of things). It is toward them that we are able to exhibit moral responsibility. Reminiscent of Kant’s injunction that the prime moral responsibility is to treat them *qua* persons and to enhance *their* own free self-development, Heidegger abjured the domination of others because it fringes on their own sovereignty of care.⁵

The tendency of most such interpretations, however, is to recognize the ethical implications of Heideggerian Fürsorge solely in its *authentic* manifestations. Thus only the manner in which leaping-ahead and *authentic* modes of solicitude echo Kantian notions of respect are emphasized. In doing so, however, such accounts fail to characterize the specific other-directedness of *all* modes of solicitude as involving a type of minimal level of “recognition respect”—an acknowledgment of others as ontologically distinct from things.⁶ This seems to be the case above when Sherover implies that others only appear in my experience as persons when I treat them solicitously—but I could treat them, and thus, apparently, experience them, otherwise. Lawrence Vogel’s reading also fails to recognize the type of Dasein-acknowledgment that is operative in all modes of Fürsorge, emphasizing instead only the *authentic* mode of being-with and its possible interpretation as an “existential basis for the second version of Kant’s categorical imperative.”⁷ In a similar attempt to link Heidegger to Kant’s ethics, Julian Young counts only authentic solicitude as a “moral relationship . . . for what it amounts to is the fundamental Kantian principle of respect: never treat humanity either in your own person or that of another as a mere means, but always as an end-in-itself.”⁸

The problem with such comparisons to Kant’s notion of respect is not only their failure to consider the extent to which the entire Fürsorge continuum involves a being-toward the other *qua Dasein*, but their related tendency to collapse several different morally relevant dimensions of intersubjective encounters under a single term. In failing to differentiate the basic structures of solicitude from one of the modes in which it can be realized, such accounts confuse the following essential moments:
(1) the immediate recognition of the other as a being with a way of existing different from that of things, (2) the corresponding obligation or claim that I limit or accommodate myself to the other who is so acknowledged, (3) the responsiveness to the claim—the degree and manner in which the claim is heeded or evaded through self-limiting or its lack, and (4) the role that explicit self-ownership and responsibility play in all of the above. Despite the tendency in discussions of the moral implications of Heideggerian intersubjectivity to give pride of place to (4), this approach is misguided. Though Heidegger’s own interest in authenticity seems to justify this emphasis, I will argue below and in the following chapter that the degree to which the other-responsiveness articulated in aspects (1) through (3) requires a prior authenticity is highly questionable, and should not simply be assumed as a necessary condition when elaborating the moral dimensions of the social encounter. The reason for this is that basic aspects of the moral encounter—the acknowledgment of the other Dasein’s status as fundamentally distinct from a thing and the moment of claim inherent in this acknowledgment—lie deeper than authentic/inauthentic ways of being in the world. Indeed, we have already seen that the temporal accommodation that constitutes the acknowledgment of the other Dasein’s claim on me is the very basis on which world has its being.

Though the requirement of a prior authenticity is an issue to which we will be returning, then, the other three requirements seem to be necessary structural dimensions of the minimally ethical encounter: recognizing the other’s personhood, the immediate claim that the other’s personhood makes on me, and the capacity to respond or avoid responding to this claim. “I respect you” means that I not only acknowledge your ontological status as another Dasein and am obligated in some way in and through this acknowledgment, but that I take on this obligation through self-limiting. The ability to subsequently deny or turn away from the initial acknowledgment of the other’s claim—that is, the possibility that one can fail to meet one’s moral obligations—is what makes the relation normative and one for which an agent can be held responsible. Such turning away can only be understood as a failure, however, insofar as there is a preexisting claim that is first acknowledged as such on some level. Though there is more to morality than acknowledging the other’s humanity and experiencing a certain type of limit or claim in light of this acknowledgment—one must respond to this claim appropriately in order to be moral—the foundational elements of acknowledgment and claim within the interpersonal encounter are necessary dimensions of morality. These elements characterize the entire Fürsorge continuum, however, not
just the authentic forms in which the responsibility for an appropriate reply to these claims is explicitly owned as such.

For the purposes of the current discussion, then, we will be focusing on these structural elements and examining the relationship between acknowledgment and claim in order to come to a better understanding of the extent to which Heidegger’s account of Dasein-specific modes of encounter involve a call for one Dasein to accommodate itself to another. Such a limiting moment must be a necessary dimension of all Fürsorge if we are to show that every encounter with the other involves an immediate—though often subsequently forgotten—acknowledgment of her concrete temporal particularity. As Olafson puts it in *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics*, we have to show how others subject us to constraints “from which we cannot release ourselves simply by choosing to do so.”

Even in instances that appear to be cases of this self-release, the claim and its acknowledgment must be shown to remain on a minimal level.

It will become evident in our discussion that Heidegger’s general hostility to the language and approach of traditional ethics is not a failure to recognize or accept this obligating dimension of the Dasein-to-Dasein encounter. This is a common way to read Heidegger, however, of which Herman Philipse’s claims are representative: “Heidegger locates all moral norms on the ontical level. His ontology of human existence cannot contain a substantial ethical theory because, he says, it merely investigates the ‘existential condition for the possibility of the “morally” good and for that of the “morally” evil.’” Contrary to Philipse’s assertions that Heidegger’s hostility to lists of particular moral laws precludes him from providing a genuine ethics, such hostility must be seen as arising in response to the tendency to characterize such laws in terms of a type of objective presence that is incompatible with Dasein’s way of being qua temporalizing care. Thus in *The Essence of Human Freedom* Heidegger will claim that “what is crucial for understanding the moral law, therefore, is not that we come to know any formula, or that some value is held up before us. It is not a matter of a table of values hovering over us, as if individual human beings were only realizers of the law in the same way that individual tables realize the essence of tablehood.” What he rejects in his renunciation of “ethics” is the philosophical tradition’s attribution of an inappropriate ontological status to these moral laws and the beings who are meant to realize them. As Olafson argues, the tradition “simply postulates that there is a model—an archetype—of some kind to which our actions are to conform. As it is typically understood, this model has a distinctly thinglike or *vorhanden* character.” Though Olafson intimates that the problem with this model is the understanding of temporality with
which it is operating—since it cannot account for the character of repetition at work when ethical norms direct one to repeat “the same action in the same circumstances”—he fails to examine these temporal dimensions in any detail. In the following discussion it will become clearer how the appropriate model for understanding the ontological constraint that the other’s presence places on me—a constraint from which I cannot simply choose to be released—is based on Dasein’s originary temporality coming into ecstatic contact with the temporality of the other.

Ends in Ourselves

How, then, do we experience the fundamental thing/person distinction, and in what way does the encounter with the latter always involve both a dimension of particularity and a type of unavoidable claim? Heidegger’s reference to the difference between a living other and a human corpse is interesting in this regard, for it demonstrates both his general failure to discuss Dasein’s embodiment and, perhaps, why he feels justified in doing so: the distinction between the corpse and the living other seems not to be a physical difference, but an ontological one. In death the way of being of the other—the presence of the other qua Dasein—is gone. And the objectively present bodily remains provide—perhaps better than anything else—an example of the immediate experience of the difference between Dasein and thing. When the other dies,

their being-in-the-world is as such no more. Their still-being-in-the-world is that of merely being on hand as a corporeal thing. The unique change-over of an entity from the kind of being belonging to Dasein, whose character is being-in-the-world, to a bare something which is still only on hand is especially evident here. This “still being on hand” is the extreme counterinstance to the foregoing kind of being of this entity. Strictly speaking, we can no longer even say that something like a human body is still on hand. We must not deceive ourselves. For with the dying and the death of others, an entity is indeed still on hand, but certainly not their Dasein as such. (HCT 310)

The corpse’s on-handness provides an “extreme counterinstance” to its prior way of being, but what exactly distinguishes the two? It cannot be movement, since any horror-movie fan can attest to the fact that moving corpses do not a person make. Indeed, the example of horror movies may help us, interestingly, since what horrifies us in the spectacle of
animated corpses is precisely the amalgamation of thing-like body with the remnants of meaningful behavior. These monsters are engaged in purposive action, but it is no longer anchored in the finite care that gives it its human meaning. The source of discomfort in this type of horror movie, I would argue, lies precisely in its violation of this ontological distinction between person and thing. Being exposed to such ontological hybrids creates not simply fear but a kind of deep existential unease.

Horror movies aside, we can see that Heidegger follows Kant quite closely in answering the question of what distinguishes Dasein from things: it is not its body or its status as “rational animal”—that is, simply its capacity for purposive action, as the zombie example indicates. Rather, the corpse and the person are differentiated primarily by the existential self-givenness—the care-defined first-person having to be—that leads Kant to characterize persons as purposive “ends in themselves” and prompts Heidegger to describe Dasein in terms of mineness or being-for-the-sake of itself: “The essence of person, the personality, consists in self-responsibility. Kant expressly emphasizes that the definition of man as rational animal does not suffice, for a being can be rational without being capable of acting on behalf of itself, of being practical for itself” (EHF 179–80). Heidegger is in agreement with Kant on this—as on so many things—noting that it is only in the structure of the for-the-sake-of that Kant can gain the possibility of “distinguishing ontologically between beings that are egos and beings that are not egos, between subject and object” (BPP 138). It is this character of mineness that accounts for the sharp distinction between persons and things: “The Dasein exists; that is to say, it is for the sake of its own capacity-to-be-in-the-world. Here there comes to be the structural moment that motivated Kant to define the person ontologically as an end, without inquiring into the specific structure of purposiveness and the question of its ontological possibility” (BPP 170).

For the most part, then, Heidegger agrees with Kant’s person/thing distinction and the basis on which he makes it—Dasein’s purposive mineness. At the end of the day, however, Heidegger is troubled by Kant’s failure to examine the underlying structures of this existential responsibility. As a result he reaches the conclusion that despite Kant’s best efforts to sharply distinguish between person and thing, he ultimately fails to do so and treats the person as another kind of natural entity. Heidegger’s analyses in Being and Time are aimed at overcoming this failure by showing Dasein’s status as an “end in itself” to be grounded in its ecstatic, finite, temporal particularity. The finitude and particularity of Heideggerian self-responsibility are therefore in sharp contrast to the anonymity of Kant’s law-giving universal rationality. John Llewelyn notes
that “the Kantian account of personality is given in terms of reason and a moral law which, far from inflating the ego, deflates it to the point of impersonality... This is one reason why Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant is so significant. It offsets the threat of anonymity by underlining Dasein’s femeinigkeit and being towards death.”

Though we cannot address whether an adequate interpretation of Kant’s moral theory would be able to answer these accusations, Heidegger clearly recognized both its strengths and its seeming weakness. His reinterpretation aims at maintaining these strengths while avoiding the difficulties associated with an anonymous account of Dasein’s status as ultimate for the sake of which—difficulties which include the fact that such a position (1) cannot offer a compelling account of why one would or should take on self-responsibility for universal rationality, and (2) undermines the ability to respect the other in the concrete particularity of her being, rather than simply as an instantiation of universal reason. In this latter sense, Heidegger’s reformulation of Kant can succeed in overcoming the very difficulty that Sartre finds in Heidegger’s own position. By pointing out the temporalizing finitude and particularity that underlie Dasein’s status as end in itself, Heidegger provides a more personal understanding of this self-givenness—attempting, thereby, to continue and deepen Kant’s fundamental insights regarding the personhood that distinguishes us from things.

The Mineness of the Other

It seems clear that I am able to make such a person/object distinction when the person under consideration is me—since I am this mineness way of being that characterizes the personhood in question—but in what way can I experience the mineness of the other? The very notion seems paradoxical. Though it seems contrary to claim that I may somehow encounter the other’s mineness, Heidegger is clear that he does not mean mineness or “I-ness” to refer only to me but not to you. Rather, he is interested in articulating the structures of selfhood that characterize both the “I” and the “thou.” Thus in Metaphysical Foundations of Logic he claims that

the object of inquiry is not the individual essence of my self, but it is the essence of mineness and selfhood as such. Likewise, if “I” is the object of ontological interpretation, then this is not the individual I-ness of my self, but I-ness in its metaphysical neutrality; we call this neutral
I-ness “egoicity” . . . I-ness does not mean the factual ego distinguished from the thou; egoicity means, rather, the I-ness at the basis of the thou, which prevents an understanding of the thou factically as an alter ego . . . a thou is what it is, only qua its self, and likewise for the “I.” Therefore I usually use the expression “selfhood” [Selbstheit] for metaphysical I-ness, for egoicity. For the “self” can be said equally of the I and the thou: “I-myself,” “you-yourself,” but not “thou-I.” (MFL 188)

Though he does not pursue the matter in any detail, to experience another Dasein as Dasein would involve experiencing him as a self. Thus, I must in some sense encounter the concrete and particular “having to be-ness” of the other’s existence. This does not mean, then, that I apply some abstract category “selfhood” to the other and attempt to ascertain if he meets its parameters. Nor does it imply that I must experience the individuating mineness of the other’s existence as in some sense mine—just as I do not experience the equipmentality of equipment by existing in some sense as equipment. Such talk of egoicity and selfhood and mineness also cannot be read as amounting to a Cartesian subjectivism that Heidegger simply failed to escape, as thinkers like Jacques Taminiaux have argued. While Taminiaux acknowledges that Heidegger’s critique is aimed at overcoming the weakness of Descartes’s approach—he notes, for example, Heidegger’s recognition of the fact that there is a “nonradical element remaining in the Cartesian sum . . . the character of ‘mineness’ of the sum, its Jemeinigkeit, is somehow neutralized”—Taminiaux nevertheless claims that Heidegger fails to radicalize this “nonradical element,” despite his efforts to do so. Though Taminiaux argues that such radicalizing efforts include favoring Leibniz over Descartes as an intellectual predecessor (because of the former’s emphasis on the appetitive aspect of existing), he claims that Heideggerian fundamental ontology remains a “reinforcement of the Cartesian legacy” in which Dasein is a type of exclusively self-directed transcendental subject. But emphasizing that mineness characterizes the selfhood of both the I and the thou—that both you and I exist in a first-person having to be in the world—does not amount to reinforcing the solipsism of the Cartesian legacy. If this were indeed the case, it would be impossible to experience the other as such. But the nature of the individuation that the notion of mineness picks out does not signify that “Dasein is always engaged in the care of itself, and of itself alone, and that Dasein wills itself exclusively.”

Indeed, Heidegger argues that interpreting the claim that Dasein exists for the sake of itself as a type of solipsistic egoism is to completely misunderstand his meaning: “In fact, if this were the sense of the claim of the ontology of Dasein, then it would indeed be madness. But then neither
would it be explicable why one would need an analysis of Dasein in order to assert such outrageous nonsense” (MFL 186).

As we have shown in the previous chapter, Dasein’s mineness—its existential self-responsibility—can only be understood in terms of the temporal structures that define its way of being since “temporality makes possible the Dasein in its ontological constitution” (BPP 280), and “every character of the being of Dasein is governed by this fundamental determination” (HCT 154). Thus Heidegger not only uses the term Jemeinigkeit to refer to the fundamental character of Dasein as mineness, he also uses the term Jeweiligkeit in order to more explicitly express its temporal meaning:

The fundamental character of the being of Dasein is therefore first adequately grasped in the determination, an entity which is in the to-be-it-at-its-time. This “in each particular instance” [je], “at the (its) time” [jeweilig], or the structure of the “particular while” [Jeweiligkeit] is constitutive for every character of being of this entity. That is, there is simply no Dasein which would be as Dasein that would not in its very sense be “at its time,” temporally particular [jeweiliges]. This character belongs ineradicably to Dasein insofar as it is. (HCT 153)

As we have already noted, however, this temporal specificity is far from being solipsistic in structure—on the contrary, it is defined by a sameness brought into ecstatic relation with the otherness of past and future, of worldly events, of other Dasein, and of structures of significance. Though time is, for Heidegger, the “true principle of individuation”21—it is an individuation that occurs in relation not only to the finitude of its being-toward-death, but also in relation to the alterity of other Dasein. Indeed, Heidegger makes clear at the very outset of Being and Time that Dasein’s being is an ecstatic that nevertheless permits individuation: “The transcendence of the being of Dasein is a distinctive one since in it lies the possibility and the necessity of the most radical individuation” (BT 38/34).

Understood in terms of temporality, then, it becomes clearer how it is possible for one transcending Dasein to encounter another being so defined by temporalizing mineness: “Facticity and individuation are grounded in temporality, which, as temporalization, unifies itself in itself and individuates in the metaphysical sense, as principium individuationis. But this individuation is the presupposition for the primordial commerce between Dasein and Dasein” (MFL 209). Indeed, Heidegger will claim elsewhere that this temporal particularity is what differentiates a “who”
from a “what”: “Belonging to this being, called Dasein, is the \textit{temporal particularity of an I} which is this being. When we ask about this entity, the Dasein, we must at least ask, \textit{Who} is this entity?, and not, \textit{What} is this entity?” (\textit{HCT} 236–37). Encountering the temporal particularity of another now-saying I—and the world-constituting manner in which I take heed of such encounters—is endemic to Dasein’s most basic temporal structures. Thus in \textit{The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics}, Heidegger attempts to answer three questions—“What is world? What is individuation? What is finitude?” (\textit{FCM} 171)—all of which turn out to be unified because “our three questions themselves reach back into the \textit{question concerning the essence of time}” (\textit{FCM} 171). And since these temporal structures are characterized by both individuating originary time and by the temporal self-expression that brings this individuated selfhood into ecstatic contact with otherness, Taminiaux’s interpretation of existential mineness is off the mark. Mineness is not solipsism. Rather, Dasein is given to itself as a particular finite way of being in time that is always already heedful of the presence of other particular finite beings in time.

As Alfred Schutz notes in his analysis of the mutual immediacy of the we-relationship, there is the “pure awareness of the \textit{presence} of another person. His presence, it should be emphasized, not his specific traits.”

Though I meet others through the worldly activities and objects with which they are concerned—their specific traits—they do not thereby take on the innerworldly within-timeness that characterizes things—“they are not encountered as objectively present thing-persons” (\textit{BT} 120/113). They are defined, rather, by the transcending, world-expressive toward-which of Dasein’s ecstatically temporal way of being: “These others do not stand in the referential context of the environing world but are encountered . . . in the ‘with which’ of their preoccupation (field, boat) as the ones who are preoccupied with it. They are encountered as they are in their being-in-the-world” (\textit{HCT} 240). Others are resistant to being encountered as mere innerworldly entities and Heidegger is quite explicit that this is so:

The worldhood of the world appresents not only world-things—the environing world in the narrower sense—but also, \textit{although not as worldly being}, the co-Dasein of others and my own self. (\textit{HCT} 241–42, emphasis mine)

This being of others, who are encountered along with environmental things, is for all that not a being handy and on hand, which belongs to the environmental things, but a \textit{co-Dasein}. This demonstrates that even
in a worldly encounter, the Dasein encountered does not become a thing but retains its Dasein-character and is still encountered by way of the world. (HCT 239)

The others, though they are encountered in the world, really do not have and never have the world’s kind of being . . . The possibility of the worldly encounter of Dasein and co-Dasein is indeed constitutive of the being-in-the-world of Dasein and so of every other, but it never becomes something worldly as a result. (HCT 242, emphasis mine)

The other Dasein always retains her Dasein-character—her way of being as originary temporality speaking itself out in a shared world-forming—despite being encountered from the world. As Heidegger says, the world itself is “what happens in being-with-one-another” (HCT 278). This distinction between the innerworldly thing and the world-constituting other who is nevertheless encountered in the world is what ensures the ability of one Dasein to encounter the other in its selfhood, in its temporalizing being-entrusted with its own way of being in the world.

This characterization of Dasein as simultaneously world-constituting and innerworldly brings to mind Kant’s distinction between noumenal and phenomenal dimensions of the self, and returns us to our previous discussion regarding respect and the relationship between recognition and claim in Fürsorge. In keeping with our earlier comments regarding the tendency to overemphasize authenticity, commentators have attempted to map Heidegger’s notions of authenticity and inauthenticity onto these Kantian notions of the noumenal and the phenomenal. But if we consider Kant’s characterization of persons as both “intelligible beings determined by the moral law (by virtue of freedom), and on the other side as active in the sensible world in accordance with this determination,” it seems more in keeping with my distinction between Dasein’s innerworldly (Mitda-sein) and world-constituting (Mitsein) dimensions, both of which are features of the first-personal structure of Dasein’s temporalizing particularity that precede and make possible its authentic and inauthentic manifestations. In light of the fact that “mineness belongs to existing Da-sein as the condition of the possibility of authenticity and inauthenticity” (BT 53/49), these two modalities are better understood as ways of being-toward this fundamentally ecstatic, complex structure of Dasein’s worldly and world-expressive existence. Experiencing the distinction between persons and things cannot be dependent on a prior authenticity, then, despite the tendency to equate the world-constituting nature of mineness with authenticity. As Raffoul notes, “Authenticity, choosing oneself, and inauthenticity, fleeing oneself, are both possible
on the basis of primordial selfhood, which is therefore \textit{neutral} with regard to them.\textsuperscript{a}

For Heidegger, as with Kant, this having of oneself to be defines Dasein’s existence regardless of whether we have explicitly and authentically taken over or lived up to this way of being. Indeed, very few beings will succeed in counting as persons if the distinction between persons and things is limited to those beings displaying or experiencing \textit{authentic} self-responsibility. It is for this reason, Allen Wood notes, that in \textit{Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone} Kant designates \textit{humanity} as an end in itself—and not moral \textit{personality}. This seems bizarre since ‘personality seems ‘higher’ than humanity in that it has essential reference to \textit{moral} value, moral responsibility, and the ‘positive’ concept of freedom, where humanity includes none of these.’\textsuperscript{b} Kant characterizes the fundamental distinction between persons and things on the basis of humanity, however, because our obligation to preserve and respect rational nature is unconditional; it applies even when self or other is acting contrary to this rational nature. Thus Wood notes how “Kant must deal with the fact that rational nature apparently comes in degrees”: his response is to designate “anything possessing the capacity to set ends and act according to reason as an end in itself, however well or badly it may exercise the capacity.”\textsuperscript{c} It is important to note the similarity of Heidegger’s language in this regard: his emphasis is on beings \textit{capable} of explicit self-responsibility and accountability—not just on those displaying its actualized form but on those whose way of being allows for the possibility of such owned self-responsibility. The condition of being able to succeed or fail at living up to my self-responsibility—having myself to be, whether responsibly or irresponsibly—just \textit{is} Dasein’s way of being qua mineness.

The foregoing discussion regarding respect and the distinction between capacity and realization brings to mind John Drummond’s work on phenomenological approaches to respect, where—like Darwall—he distinguishes between respect for meritorious persons and respect for persons as such. According to Drummond, “Respect for meritorious persons is an affective response to the other as a rational agent committed to freely chosen and true—or at least defensible—goods,” while “Respect for persons as such is an affective response to the presence of a rational agent \textit{capable} of such a commitment.”\textsuperscript{d} The respect we feel for persons as such, Drummond argues, is derivative of “the value of the realized authentic life [which] is so estimable and central to our shared humanity that it would be incoherent not to respect the mere possession of the capacities without which that life is impossible.”\textsuperscript{e} In both kinds of respect, argues Drummond, we recognize the other as either potentially or actually a “rational free agent possessed of certain capacities for authentic
thinking, feeling, and acting” and we engage in respectful behavior because we value this nature. On Drummond’s account, though Dasein’s way of being toward the other is not limited to those who have actualized their potential for a self-responsible, authentic life, this being-toward is dependent on recognizing their capacity to do so.

Drummond’s distinction between esteem-based and person-based respect echoes Darwall’s distinction between appraisal and recognition respect mentioned above. Though both Darwall and Drummond make a similar distinction between such modes of respect, however, they articulate a profoundly different relationship between the two, and the connection between recognition and claim operative within them. Drummond characterizes respect as a response to certain “cognizable, descriptive features of the other” and “persons as such” are owed respect only on the basis of their capacity—however unrealized—to live what is truly valuable: the actualized self-responsible life. In Heideggerian language, this would imply that my obligation to respect the other is not due to her being another Dasein, but due to her potential for achieving authenticity. Darwall emphasizes, in contrast, that there is no set of features that could justify the respect that we owe to persons. This allows Darwall to avoid Drummond’s somewhat counterintuitive conclusion about recognition-respect being derivative of esteem-respect. According to Darwall—advocating a position that is highly reminiscent of Levinas—recognition respect is not derivative of some other condition but is an immediate acknowledgment of the other’s status as such. Recognition respect is not a consequence of the potential authority of the other person’s esteem-worthy lifestyle, but a second-person acknowledgment of the actual authority of the other to make particular types of claim on me. Contrary to Drummond, who considers the other’s authority to be derivative of the recognition of her potential to actualize what is truly valuable, Darwall argues that acknowledging the other’s status as co-Dasein cannot be dependent on some theoretically—but not actually—realized capacities. Rather, it must arise in the concrete immediacy of the encounter with the other as she now is. In this sense, Darwall’s reading is more in keeping with Kant’s distinction between humans and things, which is not based on the capacity for moral exemplarity, but on the reality of rational humanity. In contrast to the third-person tenor of Kant’s account, however—the anonymity of the universal rationality that characterizes his human/thing distinction—Darwall is advocating a type of second-personal picture insofar as the other’s dignity cannot be equated with the possession of a certain nature (with Drummond’s capacity for realizing the valuable life of autonomy, for example), since this “misses the authority to demand or ‘exact’ respect.” In other words, it does not account for the first-person
experience of *being claimed* that characterizes the encounter with the other: “The dignity of persons consists, not just in requirements that are rooted in our common nature as free and rational, but also in our equal authority to require or demand of one another that we comply with these requirements.”

Knowing on a theoretical level that the other belongs to a particular category—person, transcendental subject, and so on—is not a prior condition for experiencing him as a being who demands that I heed his temporalizing presence. Rather, the experience of being claimed is itself constitutive of the recognition. The manner in which recognition respect operates, then—the acknowledgment of the other’s personhood—concerns “not how something is to be evaluated or appraised, but how our relations to it are to be regulated or governed. Broadly speaking, to respect something in this sense is to give it standing in one’s relations to it.” Darwall thus expresses the way in which encounters with another person involve a moment wherein my way of being-toward that other must take him into account or “give standing” to his way of being. This moment of claim is prior to him meeting certain criteria that could be recognized from a third-person perspective; it involves, rather, an immediate experience of the limit posed by his presence. As Levinas puts exactly this point in “Is Ontology Fundamental?”: “The other (*autrui*) is not an object of comprehension first and an interlocutor second. The two relations are intertwined. In other words, the comprehension of the other (*autrui*) is inseparable from his invocation.”

As is no doubt clear, my contention is that Heidegger falls much more firmly in the Darwall/Levinas-style camp than the Drummond camp, despite the many interpreters—including Sartre and Levinas himself—who read Heidegger as claiming that the other Dasein’s claim to intersubjective partnership is only justified insofar as she possesses the set of qualities that allow her to be subsumed to the category being-with. As we have already indicated, however, Dasein’s categories must be understood in the concrete texture of Dasein’s existing, and this means that the nature of encounters between Dasein cannot be elaborated solely in their third-person aspect. While Heidegger recognizes that it is possible to engage in such abstract characterizations of Dasein and its being-in-the-world—including an articulation of the qualities through which the other is experienced as other Dasein—his intent in the existential analytic is to provide a thorough phenomenological examination of Dasein’s existing in its first-person particularity. Understood as such, a third-person account of the Dasein-to-Dasein relationship is insufficient; what is needed is an analysis of how the other is actually experienced in the immediacy of an encounter in which one Dasein meets the particu-
larity of the other. This approach, as we noted above, is evident in Heidegger’s attempt to ground Kant’s person/thing distinction in the concrete temporal particularity of this Dasein. Though Drummond may be right that there are aspects of the other’s nature that account for or justify the fact that I recognize her as other Dasein and not as innerworldly object—namely, her way of being qua originary temporality speaking itself out into the world—such justification is secondary; it is neither necessary nor sufficient for recognition to occur in the immediacy of encounter. The immediacy of the Dasein-to-Dasein acknowledgment, when characterized in terms of justification misleads us into the belief that it involves some type of inferential judgment that the other belongs to the concept or category “person.” Nothing could be further from the truth: as Heidegger notes, “When the others are encountered personally or, as we can most appropriately put it here, ‘in the flesh,’ in their bodily presence, this being of the other is not that of the ‘subject’ or the ‘person’ in the sense which is taken conceptually in philosophy” (HCT 240). Rather, the other’s way of being qua other now-sayer can only be understood insofar as it is lived through a second person being-limited or relativizing of my own now-saying. As we will discuss further below, Dasein encounters the other through the experience of being claimed—not through an abstract interpretive category.

The Other’s Claim

Recall from the previous chapter the manner in which the ecstatic encounter with other Dasein occurs on the most basic level: in the mutual taking heed of the other’s temporalizing in the originary present. Other Dasein require me to accommodate my temporalizing to their temporalizing through the establishment of binding public standards. “One orients oneself toward it [a public measure], so that it must somehow be available for everyone” (BT 411/378). Dasein’s temporalizing essentially involves an ecstatic encounter with the temporalizing of the others whose now-saying I must take into account. All of Dasein’s time-reckonings, regardless of its care-driven projects, “must still be in conformity with the time given by the others” (BT 418/384). For Heidegger, then, the other’s presence involves a type of demand that I accommodate myself to it, and this experience of claim is prior to, and a condition for, public norms and universal definitions of human nature. Indeed, the heedfulness characteristic of the intersubjective encounter—shared temporal measure—is responsible for instituting the very publicity and universality that such
third-person accounts make use of. The immediacy of recognition that occurs on the most fundamental level of the Fürsorge encounter does not involve an explicit cognizing or reflection, then, but occurs in the very way we navigate time in light of the other’s presence. The limitation of the I by the other occurs in the most primordial dimensions of Dasein’s ecstatic temporality, in its pre-reflective and immediate taking heed of the other’s temporal expression. This limiting and relativizing of my now-saying by the other is, we can recall, the essential requirement for the establishment of the sequentiality of everyday time, since sequentiality depends on the recognition of times other than my own—nows other than this now. Experiencing a now that is simultaneous but transcendent to my own could not be accomplished as a type of third-person imaginative variation on my own—since this presupposes the very temporal alterity that is instituted in the encounter with the other.

On Heidegger’s account, then, such encounters involve a type of immediate claim to temporal acknowledgment—an acknowledgment that involves some minimal degree of heedful self-limiting. The notion of limit is fundamental here, for it allows us to reconcile the dimensions of recognition and obligation mentioned above. What distinguishes the encounter with the other Dasein is the experience of the other as a particular type of check or boundary: “What constitutes the nature of the person, its essentia, and limits all choice, which means that it is determined as freedom, is an object of respect” (BPP 138). Such an interpretation is echoed in Heidegger’s invocation of Kant’s notion of the personalitas moralis, where he quotes Kant: “Rational beings are called persons because their nature . . . singles them out already as ends in themselves, as something which may not be used merely as a means, and hence in this degree limits all arbitrary choice (and is an object of respect).” Respect, for Heidegger, is a type of encounter that involves an openness and responsiveness to the experience of being limited and claimed: thus Heidegger will characterize “Kant’s notion of ‘having respect for’ as being-open for the Ought as the moral law’s mode of being-encountered” (EHF 22). I experience the other person as a person through the limiting of my own temporal expression in the face of her temporal alterity—and respect is the name of this experience.

This is an uncommon way in which to read Heidegger, considering the many Levinas-inspired interpretations claiming that, despite Heidegger’s assertions to the contrary, Dasein’s fundamental egotism is evident in the solipsism of mineness. As Levinas claims, for example, “In the finitude of time the ‘being-toward-death of Being and Time sketches out—despite all the renewals of handed down philosophy that this brilliant book brings—the meaningful remains enclosed within the imma-
nence of the *Jemeinigkeit* of the *Dasein* that has to be” (“DR” 115). I hope to have shown that this is a false reading of Heidegger’s position, however; a falsity, one may argue, that is likely rooted in a hyperbolic effort on Levinas’s part to distance himself from a position that was in many respects similar to his own. Understanding the encounter with the other as involving temporal alterity shares similarities with Levinas’s idea of diachrony or the “time of the other”—the fact that the other has a past that will never be available to me as a present. As Levinas claims of the relation to the other in “Diachrony and Representation,” “This way of being avowed—or this devotion [to the other]—is time. It remains a relationship to the other as other, and not a reduction of the other to the same. It is transcendence” (“DR” 115). If we recall the profound debt that Levinas acknowledged that he owed to Heidegger’s thought, these similarities no longer seem so bizarre. Though there are clearly significant differences between Heidegger and Levinas’s positions, it is my contention that despite the many attempts to portray them as fundamentally at odds with each other—both by Levinas and by others—Levinas and Heidegger (and indeed Husserl) should be understood as existing much more on a continuum characterized not by unbridgeable divides but by a gradual progression toward understanding the nature of time as “a relationship to the other as other.” Heidegger’s relationship to Levinas’s notion of the diachrony of the intersubjective encounter becomes an area for further investigation, then, once we recognize that the Heideggerian self must be understood in terms of a temporal particularity in heedful relation to the temporal particularity of others—despite Levinas’s many attempts to portray *Dasein* as fundamentally solipsistic. Though these are clearly controversial claims that cannot be adequately argued for here, Heidegger’s position can and should be read as advocating a position on temporality somewhat similar to Levinas’s own: namely, that “time itself refers to this situation of the face-to-face with the Other.”

Though Heidegger’s characterization of the encounter with other *Dasein* as a type of *originary limit* on my temporal self-expression is still a far cry from a fully articulated sense of moral obligation, he falls into the Levinas/Darwall camp—though on a much more minimal level, admittedly—insofar as he characterizes the intersubjective encounter as an experience of always already having responded to the demand that I accommodate my temporizing self-expression to that of another. Despite the tendency to conceal the particularity of *Dasein*’s way of being behind the anonymity of general standards, then, this particularity is evident in every encounter with other *Dasein*. This is clear insofar as we are limited by the presence of the other’s temporal alterity and seek to overcome this limitation through establishing and maintaining public measures to level
down the difference—the most obvious being vulgar time’s imposition of clock regulations for all life. Despite such efforts, however, the other’s originary temporality always continues to speak itself out in and through these worldly norms.

Everyday Modes of Acknowledgment

Such heedful acknowledgment of the other’s temporalizing presence does not generally involve explicit cognizing or reflection, then, but occurs in our very relationship to time. This being-limited by the other’s now is evident not only in the world-constituting establishment of worldly norms, but in every Dasein-to-Dasein encounter. This is so because even in the most basic modes of encounter the presence of other Dasein is structured in terms of their temporal ecstasis. Each of us is unique in our temporal particularity and in the past experiences and the future anticipations that this particularity generates. The consequence of this fact is that any attempt to predict the other’s behavior can never be completely successful. As James Mensch notes in Ethics and Selfhood: Alterity and the Phenomenology of Obligation: “If it were, the other would be my double.” The other Dasein’s selfhood is rooted in the finitude and uniqueness of its originary temporality and though this temporality always speaks itself out into the shared world, its ecstatic character makes itself known in a past that I can never fully access and a future that I can never entirely predict. With every experience of the other’s resistance to perfect predictability, I am forced to acknowledge the existence of a temporal stretch that is not my own. The other’s excessiveness to my expectations—whether registered in delight or fear or in greater efforts to control and manage—reveals the other’s temporal alterity. “Alterity shows itself in the fact that the other shows himself as other than what I project from my perspective. He or she exceeds the intentions that are based on this . . . this very exceeding manifests the openness of the future.” Thus the other’s temporal alterity gives her projects and attunements a foreignness and unpredictability constitutive of my experience of her as something other than me and as something other than mere thing in the world. My continuous failure to entirely control what the future brings is testament to the fact that being-in-the-world is a constant project of heedfully acknowledging a temporalizing presence other than my own. The other person’s presence thus makes it impossible for me to understand the world solely in my own terms—an experience that Mensch refers to as “decentering”: “The fact that the determinants of this action—his
memories and anticipations—do not appear prevents me from reducing the anticipated future to my projections of my past. His presence in other words, is that of the future in the sense of the new. It is that of the contingency and openness of the future.” Characterized thus, we can see how Dasein’s very experience of time is shot through with the presence of the other—an experience that shifts Dasein’s self-understanding from the simple confines of the I to the complex, heedful responsivity of the we.

Accounting for the experience of the other as a kind of “decentering” is reminiscent of Sartre and his claim that the contingency and alterity of the other subject creates a shift in my relationship to my own possibilities. In the presence of the other, he argues, my possibilities become mere probabilities (BN 352–55). Unlike Sartre, however, Heidegger recognizes that it is a temporal alterity that is responsible for this decentering experience. And because of the simultaneity of our now saying—a temporal expressiveness that is both shared with the other and expressive of each Dasein’s originary temporality—the Heideggerian account can accommodate a decentering experience that arises without the subject/object dialectic characteristic of Sartre’s approach. For Heidegger, both Dasein are simultaneously engaged in the project of speaking themselves out into the world, and it is this very simultaneity that gives rise to the demand for heedfulness. In opposition to Sartre’s position, then, Heidegger’s emphasis on the “double visage” of time accounts for a Dasein-to-Dasein experience of the other’s ecstatic subjectivity that does not require a corresponding experience of one’s own objectification. Though such an encounter is an experience of one’s temporality being limited and placed in relation to the other, this is not a destruction of one’s status as ecstatic subjectivity, but an essential element of its very structure. Dasein encounters the others as those who it must heed in its temporal self-expression—but in so doing this expression finds the richness of shared time and worldly meaning. The others do not simply objectify Dasein, then, but help create the very arena in which its selfhood can be meaningful; the arena of shared time that “first makes possible the being of the factual existing self, that being which, as is now well understood, is the meaning of care” (BT 419/384–85).

Because we are, so to speak, at the mercy of the others qua temporal co-constituors of the world—they make a claim on me that I must accommodate, and my very way of being depends on them to find its worldly expression—Heidegger often uses the language of “binding” and “dependence” to characterize being-with others:

Being-with is not being on hand also among other humans; as being-in-the-world it means at the same time being “in bondage”
We will be analyzing the notion of a “co-enactment in concern” in our discussion of discourse below and examining the “cultivation” of being-with that occurs in listening in greater detail in chapter 7. The point of import here, however, is the fact that on the most fundamental level the others are present in and through the public sphere as those who one must heed; those to whom one is obligated—“in bondage”—and upon whom one is “dependent.” This presence is not merely to others in general but to the specificity of the particular other whose presence claims me: “The existential relationship cannot be objectified. Its basic essence is one’s being concerned and letting oneself be concerned. [It is] a responding, a claim, an answering for, a being responsive on grounds of the clearedness of the relationship” (ZS 185). Indeed, Heidegger explicitly notes that it is this immediacy of involvement or dependence that distinguishes the concrete presence of a particular other from mere open intersubjectivity: “The distinction between a personal meeting and the other’s being gone takes effect on the basis of this environmental encounter of one another, this environmentally appresented being-with-one-another. This with-one-another is an environmental and worldly concern with one another, having to do with one another in the one world, being dependent on one another” (HCT 240).

For the most part, however, we do not explicitly acknowledge the other’s temporal alterity or the manner in which we are dependent on it. Just like everybody else, we simply engage in the worldly structures that give our behavior the very predictability that allows for the smooth, uncomplicated interaction that defines our everyday practices. We drive immediately into the intersection because the light has turned green, for example—trusting our lives to the fact that others will stop on red (except in Houston). It is, in fact, rare for others to entirely escape our predictions in such a way that we are forced to explicitly acknowledge their alterity. But for Heidegger, this is not because this originary temporal particularity and unpredictability does not characterize our experience of the other Dasein’s being, but because we specifically design standards and practices to accommodate and manage it. Heidegger therefore generally characterizes our dependence on the others in terms of

[hörig] to the others, that is, “heeding” and “obeying” them, listening [hören] or not listening to them. Being-with has the structure of belonging [Zu(ge)hörigkeit] to the other . . . This listening to one another, in which being-with cultivates itself, is more accurately a compliance in being-with-one-another, a co-enactment in concern. The negative modes of enactment, non-compliance, not listening, opposition, and the like are really only privative modes of belonging itself. (HCT 266)
the anonymity and averageness of public norms—ways in which we have institutionalized this dependence to such an extent that we no longer recognize it as such. However, though we often fall into an inauthentic way of thinking that encourages us to view the standards governing self and other as thinglike, unchanging, and perfectly predictable, they do not thereby achieve a law-like hold that necessitates conformity—despite the inauthentic belief that they do or Heidegger’s own hysteria over the recalcitrance of the average. Underlying this averageness is the alterity of the other’s temporal ecstasis. And it is the very foreignness of the other’s experience, memory, anticipations, motivations—rooted in the finite particularity of his way of being qua *Jeweiligkeit*—that necessitates the imposition of these public standards.

The Other Self

One may wonder, however, if the very transition to the shared public world distorts or conceals the specificity of the other Dasein. Is the other’s mineness some type of private inner state that is ultimately inaccessible, disappearing into anonymity as soon as the other Dasein participates in public roles and norms—leaving only a kind of trace or absence? Mensch suggests such a view when he claims that “in the common world, inner time gives itself as not being able to be given. It gives itself as something that, from the perspective of the common world, appears as a disruption of the given.” Despite acknowledging the accessibility of the other by the I, then, Mensch ultimately characterizes the other’s temporality in terms of “disruption” because “the temporality of the ‘I can’ is based on elements that cannot appear in the objective world.” Is Heidegger’s position condemned to a similar conclusion—that the other is never entirely accessible because an inner core of private subjectivity remains that is incapable of being translated into the shared world? Does Dasein’s mineness mean that it is characterized by a kind of radical privacy such that one Dasein can never fully experience the other as a self?

If we recall the discussion of intentionality and mineness from chapter 2, it will become clear why such questions are misguided. The world-constituting presence of the other—her temporizing particularity, her mineness—shines through the common world and its anonymous public roles. Just as chapter 2 distinguished between the individuating mineness that is the source of one’s commitment to norms and the public meanings and measures that provide these norms with their form and content, so too is this distinction operative in Fürsorge. Though the
other is encountered in terms of the publicly available roles and meanings delineated by the shared world, the existential self-responsibility that is a necessary condition for the binding force of these norms—the fact that the other Dasein is committed and responsive to them—is an expression of that individual’s care for who she is to be. “’I’ means the being that is concerned about the being of the being which it is” (BT322/296), and this concern is expressed in the other Dasein’s purposive commitment to the various meanings and measures that will allow it to assess its success in being. Thus as we noted in chapter 2, Dasein’s subsumption to these shared norms must not be read as a sort of absence of self in everydayness—either of the self, or of the other. The other’s responsive commitment to the same public measures allows one to recognize that others too orient their behavior according to standards of appropriateness—a possibility grounded in Dasein’s basic way of being as an entity that strives to meet, maintain, and develop these standards because it cares about succeeding in its having to be. Robert Brandom makes a similar claim regarding the role others play in establishing and maintaining public norms when he notes that to recognize other Dasein as such is to treat the other’s behaviors and responses as equally authoritative over “appropriateness boundaries.” Olafson’s account in Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics also interprets Heidegger’s notion of Mitsein as involving the fact that “we must see in another human being someone whose observations are in principle relevant to a determination of truth (and falsity) in just the way our own are.” Experiencing the other Dasein’s responsive commitment to meeting and establishing norms of appropriateness that can be publicly instituted—and that do not simply flow from the “private” constraints of a means/end rationality—is the everyday way in which I can experience the other Dasein’s mineness and temporal particularity—not just as a disruption of the world, but as a creative source of its significance. Recognizing another Dasein as Dasein does not arise through a perception of some actor “behind” the actions—it involves understanding particular events as actions; in other words, as commitments to possible ways for this other to be his or her own self.

It is important to be clear, then, that it is not simply through conformity to public standards that one Dasein encounters the other as such—since this might imply that those who challenge or subvert accepted standards are unrecognizable as other Dasein. Rather, a distinction must be made between the care for self that commits one to public norms, and the source of the norms to which one is committed. This distinction is evident not only in the self, but also in the encounter with all other Dasein. Though our everyday way of being encourages unthinking interpretations of self and others in terms of ready-made public measures and
meanings, and the inauthentic tendency is to simply focus on the content of these standards—the responsive committedness that always operates in and through these standards is the public, worldly expression of the other’s existential self-responsibility and the temporal particularity on which it is grounded.

Dasein’s responsiveness to others as beings committed to public standards is evident, for example, when Heidegger speaks of *distantiality*—that tendency to seek and maintain averageness. Even as representatives of *das Man*, the co-Dasein of others and their efforts to succeed in living out their own care are recognized on some minimal level. Thus distantiality generally involves a heedfulness to particular others in light of anonymous public norms:

The others are environmentally there with us, their co-Dasein is taken into account, not only because what is of concern has the character of being useful and helpful for others, but also because others provide the same things of concern. In both respects to the others, the being-with them stands in a relationship to them: with regard to the others and to what the others pursue, one’s own concern is more or less effective or useful; in relation to those who provide the exact same things, one’s own concern is regarded as more or less outstanding, backward, appreciated, or the like. (*HCT* 244)

In other words, Dasein assesses itself not only in terms of generalized standards of success and failure, but always in terms of the comparative successes of the particular others who are also attempting to live up to these standards. Though it is true that to a certain extent these others just are “the They” comprising these generalized standards, it is important to be clear that Heidegger differentiates between the averageness comprising these generalized standards, Dasein’s impulse toward averageness, and the “distance” from the average that Dasein can assess in itself and the other individuals it encounters. Indeed, despite his emphasis on the “averageness impulse,” he discusses people who are motivated by ambition and intent on maintaining themselves in not being average (see *HCT* 244–45). Such an acknowledgment of the particular other’s striving to meet a public norm need not be positive in order for it to count as such acknowledgment:

At first and above all, everyone keeps an eye on the other to see how he will act and what he will say in reply. Being-with-one-another in the Anyone is in no way a leveled and indifferent side-by-side state, but far more one in which we intensely watch and furtively listen in on one another.
This kind of being-with-one-another can work its way into the most intimate relations. Thus, for example, a friendship may no longer and not primarily consist in a resolute and thus mutually generous way of siding with one another in the world, but in a constant and prior watching out for how the other sets out to deal with what is meant by friendship, in a constant check on whether he turns out to be one or not. (HCT 280)

It is because the other individual’s self-responsible commitment to these shared standards is always operative that it is possible to be with another as other—despite the averageness of the roles through which she is encountered.

None of the above can be taken to imply, however, that I can experience the other’s being in the same way that she can. Though Heidegger speaks of the Dasein-to-Dasein encounter in terms of “self-transposition” into the other’s being,

self-transposition does not mean the factual transference of one existing human being into the interior of another being. Nor does it mean the factual substitution of oneself for another being so as to take its place. On the contrary, the other being is precisely supposed to remain what it is and how it is. Transposing oneself into this being means going along with what it is and with how it is . . . [but] this self-transposition does not mean actually putting oneself in the place of the other being and displacing it in the process. (FCM 202)

The other remains other throughout the concernful being-toward that grants access to her. Such talk of “transposition” does not mean some type of “projection” of oneself into the other, then. Indeed, such an understanding is precisely the problem with traditional theories of empathy: “The ideas of empathy and projection already presuppose being-with the other and the being of the other with me. Both already presuppose that one has already understood the other as another human being; otherwise, I would be projecting something into the void” (ZS 162). Rather than explaining how or why such projection into the other is possible or necessary, such accounts tacitly presuppose the status of the other as a subject into whom such projection is possible—thereby assuming what they pretend to prove.

This conception of self-transposition, one which is also widespread in philosophy, contains a fundamental error precisely because it overlooks the decisive positive moment of self-transposition. This moment does not consist in our simply forgetting ourselves as it were and trying our
utmost to act as if we were the other being. On the contrary, it consists precisely in we ourselves being precisely ourselves, and only in this way first bringing about the possibility of ourselves being able to go along with the other being while remaining other with respect to it. There can be no going-along-with if the one who wishes and is meant to go along with the other relinquishes himself in advance. (FCM 202–3)

Thus the self-transposition into the other is always a particular way for me to be. And the more I understand the nature of my own being as temporalizing the more I will be able to understand the nature of my heedful relationship to the other Dasein who share the world with me.

As we will discuss in the next section, “going along” with the other in shared attempts to meet, maintain, and institute worldly meanings and measures—a going along with in which we always remain other—is definitive of the mode of disclosure that Heidegger refers to as discourse. Discourse is the everyday way in which a type of shared being-in-the-world with other Dasein is accomplished; a sharing in which the temporal particularity and commitment of the participants are nevertheless implicitly respected and maintained. I understand the other through the world in which I encounter her, but because of her status as co-constitutor of this world and its “remarkable possibility”—“that it lets us encounter Dasein, the alien Dasein as well as my own” (HCT 242)—I understand her as more than worldly. It is for this reason that Heidegger will say, in critiquing theories of empathy: “I do not understand the other in this artificial way, such that I would have to feel my way into another subject. I understand him from the world in which he is with me, a world which is discovered and understandable through the regard in being-with-one-another” (HCT 243). In light of Heidegger’s existential reformulation of understanding, to say that one “understands” the other Dasein is to say that one is skillfully responding to and participating in its mode of being.47 As our discussion of discourse will demonstrate, the world itself is made available to me—it is discovered and understandable—through my being with other Dasein. “Dasein-with means not only: being also at the same time, even simply qua Dasein, but rather the mode of Being of Dasein first brings authentic sense to the ‘with.’ ‘With’ is to be grasped as participation, whereby foreignness as participationlessness is only an alteration of participation. The ‘with’ therefore has an entirely determined sense and does not simply mean ‘together,’ nor the being-together of such that have the same mode of Being. ‘With’ is a proper way of Being.”48 My everyday way of being with others is to participate in their being or existing like I do—a notion that is essential for understanding what Heidegger means by discourse.
Discourse: Disclosing Mitsein

Discourse is the everyday way that particular Dasein are disclosed as concrete individuals co-constituting the world—a mode of disclosure that is only accomplished by taking part in the other’s purposive, committed way of being. To more fully determine the everyday way in which one encounters others in solicitude, then, we must examine Heidegger’s account of discourse as a type of co-participation in the other’s being-in-the-world.

Heidegger seems to imply at times that unlike understanding and attunement, discourse is not one of the equiprimordial modes of disclosure. For example, in the introduction to the section on discourse (section 34) he claims that “the fundamental existentials which constitute the being of the there, the disclosedness of being-in-the-world, are attunement and understanding” (BT 160/150). Indeed, he frequently refers to Dasein only in terms of these two modes of disclosure—leading one to doubt that discourse is one of three modes of disclosure equiprimordially disclosing Dasein’s being-in-the-world. He claims, for instance, that “it is only because being-in-the-world as understanding and concerned absorption appresents the world that this being-in-the-world can also be concerned with this appresentation of the world explicitly” (HCT 211). Does discourse, then, fail to “appresent the world” as understanding and “concerned absorption” do? This conclusion must be questioned, however, when we recognize that elsewhere he specifically says that “in our previous interpretation of attunement, understanding, interpretation and statement we have constantly made use of this phenomenon [discourse], but have, so to speak, suppressed it in the thematic analysis. Discourse is existentially equiprimordial with attunement and understanding” (BT 161/150). As we have seen him do elsewhere in Being and Time, Heidegger begins with certain facets of Dasein’s way of being—facets that provide an easier way in to the analytic—and later introduces dimensions that must be taken as equiprimordial despite the fact that their complexity demands a more careful introduction. Discourse receives the same treatment and the reason becomes clear when we recognize that it is the mode of disclosure specific to other Dasein. Though each of the different modes of disclosure—attunement, understanding, and discourse—disclose Dasein’s being-in-the-world, they bring this to light in different ways; if this were not the case, Heidegger would have no basis for differentiating disclosure into three modes. Though the different modes are equiprimordial dimensions of Dasein’s unified care structure, then—and thus intimately linked—nevertheless they can be considered in thematic separation. In doing so we have noted that attunement is the mode of disclosure belonging most specifically to Dasein’s thrownness,
while understanding discloses being-in-the-world primarily in terms of its character as project and possibility. Discourse is the mode of disclosure specific to being-in-the-world qua being-with. Heidegger describes discourse as the “articulation of intelligibility” (BT 161/150). “Articulation” generally means expression, verbalization, communication, as well as marking or being marked by joints. These meanings can be unified; an “articulate” person pronounces or expresses words or ideas such that distinguishable parts are clearly defined or communicated. Since intelligibility is holistic for Heidegger—each particular thing is meaningful in terms of its place in a system of reference—the articulation of intelligibility will involve disclosing the particular thing under consideration as well as the referential context that makes it intelligible as the thing it is. “Making manifest through discourse first and foremost has the sense of interpretive appresentation of the environment under concern” (HCT 262). Heidegger also claims that discourse is the “existential-ontological foundation of language,” while language is its worldly mode of being (BT 161/150). To understand discourse, then, requires showing how it both (1) articulates holistic contexts of meaning and (2) provides the basis of language. Before proceeding to these matters, however, it will be necessary to examine several readings that mischaracterize Heidegger’s notion of discourse by overemphasizing only one of these two requirements. Such interpretations either reduce discourse to language or simply assimilate it to Heidegger’s concept of understanding. This tendency results, I believe, from a failure to give due weight to the communicative dimension of discourse. As we will see below, this communicative aspect makes it possible to share with others the intelligibility that arises through one’s practical, affective activities—a sharing that is ‘institutionalized’ in language but is on the most basic level a pre-linguistic encounter with the other Dasein as temporal co-constitutor of the world. In this sense, discourse is the foundation for language but irreducible to it because it first makes possible the co-appropriation of meaning necessary for the publicity of the world’s significance and the linguistic forms in which this is normally communicated. Or in Heidegger’s words: “There is language only because there is discourse” (HCT 265).

Language

The close connection between language and discourse has led some to simply identify them. In Heidegger, Language, and World-Disclosure, Cristina Lafont argues that language is itself the articulation of intelligibility:
Dasein always understands itself and the world in terms of possibilities, and because there is “a symbolic medium that ‘controls and distributes’” (BT, p. 211) the realm of determinate possibilities”—namely, language as a system of sign-relations—this understanding is fundamentally linguistic (HLWD 47). Lafont seems to believe that Heidegger’s claim that Dasein’s originary mode of being is understanding implies that “Dasein has a symbolically mediated relation to world (or that it ‘is’ in a symbolically structured world)” (HLWD 33fn27). Dasein always understands itself and the world in terms of possibilities, and “owing to the existence of a symbolic medium that ‘controls and distributes’ (BT, p. 211) the realm of determinate possibilities” (HLWD 47), Dasein’s understanding must be articulated through this symbolic medium: language as a system of sign relations. In a footnote to this claim, Lafont argues that “there is no doubt that ‘possibilities’ can be ‘given’ only in a symbolic medium . . . ‘being open upon possibilities,’ can arise only on the level of culture, which is characterized by symbolic structures” (HLWD 47fn). In other words, Dasein’s understanding always encounters entities as a this or a that, and this “as” is constituted by symbolic language structures and sign referentiality, which stipulate all the possible “thisses” or “thats” according to which an entity can be encountered. Thus Lafont argues that Dasein’s capacity to intend objects “as” must be understood as a symbolic, linguistic articulation of the world and that there is no “understanding as” that can be characterized as a type of pre- or even non-linguistic practical articulation of the world. Indeed, Lafont claims that “world”—the articulated totality of significance—just is language for Heidegger: “The most important point is that meaning is always already articulated, that it constitutes a totality of significance that is given to Dasein, and with respect to which Dasein comports itself ‘understandingly.’ This system of sign-relations (which Heidegger here calls ‘world’ and later will call ‘language’) is not reducible to the subject-object schema of the teleological model of action” (HLWD 42–43fn40).

But as Mark Okrent correctly notes, even if such linguistic idealism is consistent with the later Heidegger, it is not present in Being and Time. There Heidegger explicitly rejects the idea of world as a system of sign relations. Instead, “Heidegger analyzes signs as a determinate kind of equipment,” that is, as something that depends upon the world as a context of significance. In response, Lafont suggests that characterizing signs as “equipment” cannot account for a sign’s public, worldly meaning. Linguistic significance differs from pragmatic significance, she argues, since it does not derive from the activities of particular agents. The pragmatic reading therefore fails, according to Lafont, because it characterizes intelligibility as “something brought about by the individual” (HLWD 41). Lafont’s
response misconstrues the pragmatist position, however. Arbitrarily treating a book as a desk does not turn it into one. For Heidegger, equipmental reference—like linguistic reference—relies on worldly contexts of meaning, not on individual practices. As Okrent puts it: “Such holistically integrated functional systems of tool types are articulated independently of and prior to the activity of any given agent . . . [by] the system of assignments which define how we are supposed to act with what things in which situations.”

The normativity of appropriate use inherent in the significance of particular things is not determined by my activities, but by inherited public practices and institutions establishing how “one” ought to do things. As we have seen, Heidegger generally refers to this public normativity delineating possible ways to be and do—and the intelligibility arising through them—as das Man, a term meant to capture precisely the anonymous publicity of these shared meanings. What Lafont has not shown, then, is that the public possibilities articulating norms of appropriate use and meaning can only be “transferred” through the symbolic medium of language.

Rather, language appears to make explicit a more basic shared context of meaning—what Heidegger refers to as world.

Articulation

Since discourse is the “articulation” of structured intelligibility, and this articulation need not be linguistic, it is tempting to follow John Hauge-land and Hubert Dreyfus in translating Rede not as “discourse” but as “telling,” which has “to do with distinguishing, identifying, and even counting—such as telling apart, telling whether, telling what’s what, telling one when you see one, telling how many, and so on”—as Hauge-land claims—“these latter senses clearly echo the image of articulation, and are plausibly prerequisite to the possibility of putting things into words.” Dreyfus further notes that one “manifests” these prior articulations “simply by telling things apart in using them.” On this interpretation, we can clearly see how discourse is an “articulation of intelligibility” that grounds—but is not reducible to—language.

The problem with such a view, however, is the fact that discourse thereby becomes indistinguishable from Heidegger’s notion of understanding. We can note, for example, how Dreyfus claims that “ontological telling” “refers to everyday coping as manifesting the articulations already in the referential whole which are by nature manifestable.” Such a reading of “telling” obscures a distinction Heidegger makes between an
articulation inherent in understanding itself—which he calls “interpretation”—and the kind of articulation that belongs to Rede as distinct from understanding. The former is the cultivation of meaning possibilities disclosed through understanding. Of the articulation occurring in discourse, however, Heidegger says that through it “the meaning highlighted in interpretation becomes available for being-with-one-another” (HCT 268). Thus the former includes no reference to other Dasein while the latter is defined in terms of it. This distinction between interpretation and discourse is further clarified when Heidegger claims that “the mode of enactment of understanding is interpreting, specifically as the cultivation, appropriation, and preservation of what is discovered in understanding. The meaningful expressness of this interpretation is now discourse” (HCT 265). While interpretation simply articulates what the understanding has uncovered, discourse expresses Dasein’s interpretation in a meaningful way. For this reason Haugeland and Dreyfus’s reading of discourse as “telling” things apart cannot be right; it does not do justice to the connection with telling others about this “telling apart.”

In a variant of this reading, Blattner’s Heidegger’s Temporal Idealism attempts to accommodate this social dimension of discourse. Blattner notes that the elements essential to discourse are “the about-which,” “what is discoursed as such,” and “communication” (HTI 71).57 Dasein’s activity delineates a particular context of significance based on possible ways for it to be in the world, and elements of this context are that “about-which” discourse discourses. The differentiation and relation of these elements are “what is discoursed as such.” It is the communicative element of discourse that is of particular import for our discussion, however, since we have seen that it is what distinguishes discourse’s differentiation and interrelation of the context of significance from that belonging to understanding. Though Blattner acknowledges that “communication is a more difficult element to grasp,” he nevertheless argues that because “Heidegger links communication with ‘making known’ or ‘making manifest’ (Bekundung),” we can conclude that “to communicate is simply to make something publicly available” (HTI 72).

The problem, however, is that there is nothing simple about the “making publicly available” that discourse accomplishes. Indeed, it is precisely this communicative dimension of discourse as making public that has been consistently overlooked or misunderstood by Heidegger scholars, primarily because it seems to conflict with the view that the intelligibility to be articulated is always already public insofar as it is delineated by worldly meanings or language. This stance is evident, for example, in Blattner’s example: “As Smith walks on the sidewalk . . . he differenti-
ates sidewalks from roads . . . the very act of walking on the sidewalk offers the differentiation publicly . . . Every act of walking on the sidewalk tends publicly to communicate, that is, make known, that sidewalks are to be walked upon” (HTI 73). On this reading, walking on sidewalks is a form of discourse. Indeed, everything I do must be discourse: insofar as my activities differentiate the world, and these activities always occur in the public realm, all my actions “offer the differentiation publicly.” On such a view, however, we have not escaped the reduction of discourse to understanding that afflicted Dreyfus and Haugeland. However, Blattner is right to point to the communicative dimension of discourse as the way in which Dasein’s interpretive differentiations are made publicly known. The consequence being that the distinction must be maintained between communication’s ability to “make public” and the fact that “communication requires a public domain” in which to “affirm” the articulations that are essentially already public (HTI 73).

The question, then, is how we are to understand the making public that occurs in discourse without reducing it to the mere endorsement of some dimension of what is already public—the articulated possibilities available to understanding. The answer emerges if we recall that, for Heidegger, “all discourse . . . is, as a mode of the being of Dasein, essentially being-with. In other words, the very sense of any discourse is discourse to others and with others” (HCT 263). Discourse is not simply the articulation of the intelligibility of being-in-the-world, it is an articulating of intelligibility to and with and in terms of others that reveals my existence as always imbued with the presence of the others who share in this intelligibility. It is this presence that I actively share in discourse: “Being-with is ‘explicitly’ shared in discourse, that is, it already is, only unshared as something not grasped and appropriated” (BT 162/152).

This point can be better understood when we recognize that the communicative aspect of discourse is nothing more than a sharing with the other of that about which the discourse is, through what is said (HCT 263). The saying is merely the medium through which communication—sharing with—is accomplished. This sharing cannot simply be understood as people experiencing something in the world simultaneously, however, since it includes an essential reference to them as partners in the meaning event. It is not communication if we just happen to be directed toward the same thing. Rather, this is a mode of sharing that makes possible a co-directedness toward the same thing: for Heidegger, communication “means the enabling of the appropriation of that about which the discourse is, that is, making it possible to come into a relationship of preoccupation and being to that of which the discourse is . . . The understanding of communication is the participation in what is manifest.
All subsequent understanding and co-understanding is as being-with a *taking part*” (*HCT* 263).

Recall that it is precisely this co-participation in what is manifest that characterizes the publicity of temporal expression—Dasein speaks itself out into a shared world time by *participating* in the other’s reckoning with time. Everyday instances of communicative encounter demonstrate this same structure of taking part in the world’s meaning together. As we saw in chapter 5, Dasein’s taking care is “essentially determined by the structure of appropriateness . . . the character of ‘time for . . .’ or ‘not the time for’” (*BT* 441/381). These appropriateness contexts are unified in the notion of world by heedfully attending to the “taking care” of other Dasein. This same structure is operative in discourse: my attuned understanding orients me to a particular situation such that certain options matter and certain aspects of the context become salient. Discourse refers to Dasein’s sharing of these orientations with others. According to Heidegger, for me to share my orientation to a particular situation with another Dasein—its being time for this and not time for that—involves a type of a “co-enactment in concern” in which our care becomes unified (*HCT* 266). Through communication multiple Dasein become oriented toward the same things that matter, they become responsive to the same “structures of appropriateness.” In communication, our mineness can be brought into alignment, so to speak.

An example may help illuminate the matter under consideration. Imagine I run into the room yelling “Where is my baseball bat?” followed by a huge strange man. There are a number of different orientations to this situation that are available: for example, you could assume that I am keen to play ball with my new friend. You could also assume that I am being threatened by a sinister character and am desperate for a weapon. Communication is the way of being in the world together such that I *enable* your participation in my stance or orientation to the particular situation so that you share my sense of what would count as an appropriate response to that situation. The terror in my face, the jerky speed with which I stagger about the room, the hostile look of the stranger—among a thousand other “cues” attuning you to my situation—provoke you to turn immediately toward the room as a context offering or failing to offer weapons or safety. I have communicated to you the sense that it is “time for” defensive action—and not time for a game of ball. Note that your participation in my orientation need not involve language; my panicked flailing about would be enough to provoke a shared orientation such that we both experience the situation as *mattering* in a particular way.

This creation or evocation of co-orientation is what Heidegger means by the communicative moment in discourse; communication is
“discourse expressing itself. Its tendency of being aims at bringing the hearer to participate in disclosed being toward what is talked about in discourse” (BT 168/157). This participation in disclosure—the sharing of the “actual mode of attunement” or what matters in a particular situation—is generally accomplished through what Heidegger calls “expression,” which is found in “intonation, modulation, in the tempo of talk, in ‘the way of speaking’” (BT 162/152). When I whisper I express to you that it is “time for” secrecy, intimacy, caution—that a certain way of being in the world together is now appropriate. In so doing, we can understand the fourth element of discourse that we mentioned above: *Bekundung*—making manifest, or making known. Despite Blattner’s equation of this element with the communicative, Heidegger is clear that there are four structural moments characterizing discourse, and in *manifestation*—the fourth moment: “Dasein itself and its disposition are co-discovered. Discoursing with others about something as speaking about is always a *self-articulating*. One oneself and the being-in-the-world at the time likewise become manifest, even if only in having the disposition ‘manifested’ through intonation, modulation, or tempo of discourse” (HCT 263). The specificity of self in its particular worldly orientation is manifested in *Bekundung*—a point that is essential for recognizing how discourse can be characterized as the everyday way in which particular Dasein encounter each other as such. In discourse one does not act with the other merely in terms of some public, anonymous standard that is already in place. Rather, discourse is a sharing with the other of *which* orientation ought to be taken in this situation—a sharing that offers to the other the stance that the particularities of self and context strike one as eliciting. In discourse multiple Dasein don’t just experience each other through some public role or norm, then—rather, they *share* with each other their way of being as responsive to situations in and through such roles and norms.

Such sharing can only occur because Dasein is not an isolated Cartesian subject “broadcasting” information from its inner space, but is always speaking itself out in the world in such a way that others can participate in its way of being: “Da-sein expresses itself not because it has been initially cut off as ‘something internal’ from something outside, but because as being-in-the-world it is already ‘outside’ when it understands” (BT 162/152). Discourse does not simply “point” to particular entities in a context of significance, but enables Dasein to inhabit or exist in specific worldly modes of transcendence together; it “brings about the ‘sharing’ of being attuned together and of the understanding of being-with” (BT 162/152). In communicative discourse I share not only the particular worldly entities under consideration, then, but the particularity of the attuned, understanding way of being that *allows* this consideration to
occur. Note Heidegger’s assertion that in the self-articulating that characterizes manifestation, the temporal specificity of one’s “being-in-the-world at the time” is what becomes manifest. Discourse is a mode of disclosure that makes known not only the worldly thing under consideration, but Dasein’s way of being-in-the-world in its specificity. Such a characterization of discourse therefore allows Heidegger to accommodate our intuition that it involves a type of sharing of the unique particularity of one’s being with the other, without characterizing communication as somehow giving “access” to the inherently private domain of my mental cabinet. On the contrary, discourse is a sharing of one’s being-in-the-world, and “is not to be regarded as if it involved a reciprocal relation to one’s own inner experiences, which somehow become observable through sounds” (HCT 264). Because communication and the self-manifesting that is its correlate is “a situation where the being-with-one-another is intimately involved in the subject matter under discussion” (HCT 263), what I am given to understand also cannot be characterized as neutral “information”—the matter communicated receives a particular shape and meaning through communication. In other words, how I am with somebody deeply affects what they mean—and communication includes the sharing of the “how we are together.”

Communication does not mean the handing over of words, let alone ideas, from one subject to another, as if it were an interchange between the psychical events of different subjects. To say that one Dasein communicates by its utterances with another means that by articulating something in display it shares with the second Dasein the same understanding comportment toward the being about which the assertion is being made. In communication and through it, one Dasein enters with the other, the addressee, into the same being-relationship to that about which the assertion is made, that which is spoken of. Communications are not a store of heaped up propositions but should be seen as possibilities by which one Dasein enters with the other into the same fundamental comportment toward the entity asserted about. (BPP 210)

We can see now that the understanding given in discourse—understanding in Heidegger’s sense of ways for me to be in the world—can therefore be characterized as a type of participation in the other’s meaningful, committed activities of existing. Particular ways of being in the world are not simply mine, but ours. Thus Heidegger asserts that being-with “belongs” to discourse, “which maintains itself in a particular way of heedful being-with-one-another” (BT 161/151)—a heedful being together that allows the articulated intelligibility of the world to manifest to us because
of our shared involvement in this manifestation. Discourse is being-with made explicit, and the explicitness refers to how I am this being-with as particular ways in which I take part in the existing of particular others as co-constitutors of the world and its meaning.61

Though we are often attuned to particular situations in the same way, then, this is not necessarily so, and attunements can and do change. We do not always control such changes—I cannot simply choose to be exultant rather than terrified, for example—and attunements can be changed for us, as the communication of my fear in the above example indicates. The sharing of attuned understanding accomplished in discourse is often a giving or receiving of orientation—a point that will have particular import in the following chapter when we discuss the call of conscience and authentic being-with. This communicability of one’s orientation in the world is quite common; we seek out people in a good mood to “infect” us with theirs; we avoid restaurants with oppressive atmospheres, and so on. Our behavior manifests an implicit awareness of the way others enable changes in our orientation to the world.62 It is abundantly clear that others infect us with their orientations, and this possibility of infection is necessary not only for the communication of mood, but also for the entire normative structure of significance that constitutes world. The essence of discourse is to place us “in the dimension of understandability . . . discourse gives something to be understood and demands understanding” (FCM 306). This emphasis on social participation—which acknowledges the relationship between individual care-laden responsiveness to norms and the publicity and anonymity of these shared measures—allows us to account for the fact that these norms must and can be learned: that children are socialized into responding to particular standards of meaning and behavior.63 The notion of specific shared orientations between particular Dasein therefore points to a way in which we can better understand how Dasein achieves access to these particular das Man understandings, a difficulty that has received insufficient attention in the literature. Communication’s ability to orient others toward particular ways of being in the world can go a long way toward understanding how children grow into themselves as Dasein. The articulation of intelligibility that defines discourse, then, is not the same as the articulation of meaning contexts that arises through the practical roles and activities of understanding. Though public norms will determine the possible ways in which communication succeeds as such, communication is governed by different norms than understanding.64 The difference in these domains of normativity demonstrates how Dasein can help others achieve access to das Man understandings without having to presuppose that they are already available or operative.
A similar conclusion must be reached with regard to the linguistic interpretation found in Lafont. Though language and equipment have a unique normative structure, neither can we conclude that discourse is simply governed by language norms. On the contrary: discourse norms govern language since it is language that is grounded on a more basic norm-sharing and co-instituting that defines the publicity of world. What the above discussion allows us to conclude, then, is that discourse is an expression of Dasein’s particular orientation to the world—a mode of expression that enables other Dasein to come to share in this orientation. And as Heidegger claims in Introduction to Phenomenological Research, the very unity of the world lies in its potential to be shared with others:

Only on the basis of possible communication can one succeed at all to make a unitary fact of the matter accessible to several individuals in its unitary character. The λόγος is at work here as a communicating λόγος. By means of it, the world becomes accessible in its unitary articulation. That is the primordial function that the λόγος has insofar as it communicates. If I make an assertion about a specifically perceived fact of the matter, doing so in the public world of existence, then “communication” [Mitteilung] in the precise sense means making what is spoken of so accessible to someone else that I share it with him [mit ihm teile]. Now we both have the same thing. Attention should be paid here to the middle-voiced meaning of ἀποφαίνεσθαι. (IPR 21)

Though language is the form of such communication par excellence, its efficacy rests in the structure of the types of creatures that we are—beings defined by the presence of the others who share the world and understand its meaning through temporalizing commitments and comportments that we can come to share.

Idle Talk

Despite the irreducibility of language to discourse, Heidegger believes that language in some sense encourages us to misconstrue the nature of its ontological grounding in discourse. The tendency, he argues, is to distort our everyday way of discoursing by covering over its communicative dimension and concealing the recognition of other Dasein inherent in it. The reason for this, Heidegger claims, is because within language “lies an average intelligibility; and in accordance with this intelligibility, the discourse communicated can be understood to a large extent with-
out the listener coming to a being toward what is talked about in discourse so as to have a primordial understanding of it . . . what is talked about is understood only approximately and superficially” (BT 168/157). Heidegger refers to this superficial discourse as “idle talk,” in which I am “given” the matter under consideration without engaging in a prior genuine orientation toward it. The ontological “uprootedness” of discourse from the communicative element grounding it within particular attuned understandings therefore leads Heidegger to describe idle talk as “disoriented” discourse (HCT 269) in which Dasein is “cut off from the primary and primordially genuine relations” (BT 170/159) to self, world, and others.

Language is the mode of discourse particularly prone to obscure its communicative and self-manifesting dimensions because it plays up the other constitutive factors—what discourse is about and what is said as such. As Heidegger notes, “Some of these factors can be lacking or remain unnoticed in the factual linguistic form of a particular discourse” (BT 163/152). In our everyday way of being, the factors that most often go unnoticed are the communicative and the self-articulative. In The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics, for example, Heidegger specifically examines apophantic discourse as the mode of shared understanding dedicated to the kind of “pointing out” found in propositions and statements. This mode of discourse is the subject matter of logic and most philosophies of language, and because of this, Heidegger analyzes it in more detail. Indeed, he often seems to equate all discourse with apophantic discourse and much of the confusion regarding the nature of Heideggerian discourse is a failure to recognize that apophantic sharing is only one type—and the type most conducive to the groundlessness of idle talk.

The danger of idle talk’s linguistic form lies in the fact that it allows us to assume that it succeeds as communicative discourse—since in its structure “speaking in itself makes a claim to communicate” (IPR 29) and implies that there has been a genuine “giving to understand” (BT 271/251) of the situation—whereas it only takes the form of doing so. “For what is said is initially always understood as ‘saying,’ that is, as discovering. Thus, by its very nature, idle talk is a closing off since it omits going back to the foundation of what is being talked about . . . because it presumes it has understood” (BT 169/158). So, Heidegger claims, “While the matter being spoken of thus slips away with the absence of the understanding relation of being . . . what is said as such—the word, the sentence, the dictum—continues to be available in a worldly way” (HCT 268–69). Language allows an empty co-orientation to the words—not a full sharing of the affective, practical stance—such that only a residue of genuine communication remains. What is most worrisome about this
mode of “communication,” however, is the fact that it encourages Dasein to be complacent in this emptiness: “Even when Da- sein repeats what has been said, it comes into a being toward the very beings that have been discussed. But it is and believes itself exempt from a primordial repetition of the act of discovering” (BT 224/206). Such a “free-floating interpretation, which belongs to everyone and no one” (HCT 270) is, as we will see in the next chapter, characteristic of inauthenticity, in which the “unowned” now of vulgar time forgets the world time on which it is based—including world time’s structures of intersubjective normativity.

However, though language is conducive to inauthenticity because it enables shared orientations without demanding a primordial repetition of the act of discovering or a complete acknowledgment of the other Dasein, it does not condemn us to it. The ability to communicate in the absence of a fully shared orientation also allows for modes of “giving to understand” across time and distance in a way that would be otherwise impossible. Lafont makes note of this in a recent article, arguing that despite the common tendency to do so, one need not conclude that “there is a necessary connection between social externalism and inauthenticity in Heidegger’s account of linguistic communication.” According to Lafont, Heidegger recognized that some concepts are not individuated by laymen but by experts, and “though everyday communication requires this structure of deferral of authority . . . by its very nature it opens up the possibility of Dasein’s inauthenticity.” Nevertheless, though the deferral of authority “opens up the possibility” of inauthenticity, it does not amount to condemning us to it. Indeed, characterizing such forms of communication as a “deferral of authority” indicates the type of basic—though unrecognized—intersubjective acknowledgment of other Dasein operative even here.

Though linguistic giving can tend toward a superficial, inauthentic giving to understand, then, it is not always or necessarily so—and it can, in fact, serve the opposite tendency: “The discoveredness of Dasein, in particular the disposition of Dasein, can be made manifest by means of words in such a way that certain new possibilities of Dasein’s being are set free. Thus discourse, especially poetry, can even bring about the release of new possibilities of the being of Dasein.” The fact that language gives new understandings to others in this way therefore opens up the possibility of expanding the opportunities or manifestations of genuine appropriation available to other Dasein. Indeed, as we will note in the following chapter, leaping-ahead and its corresponding modes of discourse—hearing and acting as the call of conscience for the other—are the modes of encounter that explicitly acknowledge and encourage the other to take an appropriate existential responsibility for her own
selfhood. In this sense, it is a communication that acts as a “release” of the most profound possibility of the being of the other Dasein. The understanding found in discourse—understanding in Heidegger’s sense of ways for me to be in the world—is therefore a type of participation in the other’s existence that can make available to him particular ways for him to be in the world—authentic or inauthentic. Discourse’s structure as a sharing in the other’s being in the world means, however, that even in the most inauthentic modes of encounter—in which the communicative, Dasein-manifesting dimensions of encounter are overlooked or ignored—these dimensions and the Dasein-acknowledgment they express are nevertheless always operative: “The four structural moments belong together in the very essence of language, and every discourse is essentially determined by these moments. The individual moments in it can recede, but they are never absent” (*HCT* 264).

**Concluding Words**

The key contribution of discourse lies, then, in this: it discloses the everyday way in which we participate in the other’s way of being qua existential selfhood. The public world designates which public, average roles, norms, and contexts of meanings it is generally possible to share, whereas the communicative dimension of discourse refers to the actual sharing itself, a sharing that brings to light the other’s shifting commitments and stances on these possibilities as well as the selfhood that makes such norm-responsiveness possible. In order to communicate that now it is the time for this or time for that—to communicate to the other the appropriateness of my orientation to a situation—I must experience her in the temporal specificity of a being who says now and cares about the appropriateness of its expression, a care rooted in her commitment to her own existence. Though the other is encountered in terms of the publicly available roles and meanings delineated by the shared world, then, the other’s existential self-responsibility for these norms—the fact that the other Dasein is committed and responsive to them—is a necessary condition for the sharing of world operative in Fürsorge and the discourse that is its everyday expression. Recall the baseball bat example; though fleeing coward, indifferent observer, or courageous defender are all worldly possibilities available for me to be, I am only one of them through my commitment to the norms of appropriateness inherent in the chosen role, and I share this commitment with the others to whom I communicate my way of being in the world. The innerworldly categories and mean-
ings through which I encounter the other thus reveal self and other in the particularity of our existential commitment to our own being in the world. Because such commitments are rooted in the fundamental self-responsibility or mineness that expresses Dasein’s originary temporality, in the encounter with the other’s commitment to her own existence I encounter her in her concrete individuality.