

DURKHEIM AND HEIDEGGER: TWO SOCIAL ONTOLOGIES AND SOME IMPLICATIONS

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THE writings of Émile Durkheim and Martin Heidegger are marked by many unexpected similarities. This is especially true in the area of each thinker's social ontology. By this term I mean the author's definition of social existence and the set of ramifications that emerge out of that definition. Each wrote in his own way against a perceived background of malaise within the context of capitalist, nationalist Europe. Durkheim's category of *anomie* has its correlate in Heidegger's *Angst*, while Heidegger's philosophical analysis of finitude and mortality echoes Durkheim's interest in suicide. Both men were also adamant that the monadic self—posited both in post-Cartesian philosophy as an epistemological given and in popular sociological understanding as a social and moral fact—was a fiction. In both Durkheim's sociology and Heidegger's philosophy, we are reminded, in ways still fresh, that human existence takes shape only as the result of a series of *relations* and *interactions*.

Despite the similarities between Heidegger's and Durkheim's descriptions of the relational nature of what we might today call subject formation, the conclusions they reached from their analyses could hardly be more different. This essay aims to examine why that might be, bearing in mind the paradox that these two figures have exerted an enormous and simultaneous influence on much post-Second World War social thought, especially through the writings of the French structuralists and post-structuralists. The essay begins with a synopsis of Durkheim's essay, 'The Dualism of Human Nature and its Social Conditions' (in Wolff 1960), in which he

outlines his theory of *homo duplex*,¹ and Division I of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, in which he lays out his formulation of Being-in-the-World. In the second part of the discussion, I try to link the arguments to their political implications in two ways: first, by describing the social, historical, and political contexts of their production; and second, by tracing some of the logical entailments of each social ontology.

In this regard Heidegger's involvement with the Nazi party becomes neither determinative of nor inconsequential to the merits of his philosophical system, the same being true of Durkheim's involvement in secular pedagogy in the wake of the Dreyfus affair.² However, the links between the logical trajectories of each argument and their historical contexts take on a far greater significance.

Durkheim's Homo Duplex

At the end of his oral examination³ of M. Pradines' 1910 doctoral thesis, 'The Principles of Every Philosophy of Action', Durkheim challenged the student's attempt to do away with the distinction between laws and rules. I quote at length from their exchange, partly because it gives a fascinating view of Durkheim the pedagogue:

D: I say that the moralists have distinguished the generalization of what is from what ought to be, laws from the ideals.... A rule does not exist any the less merely because of men's actions: and the criminal who disobeys it shows that it is an ideal. In brief, there is a sense in which 'we' are subject to physical laws, and another in which 'we' perform the moral law: we are double.

P: I wanted to put an end to this dualism.

D: You have not succeeded. Reason, you say, unifies the tendencies in the moral law just as in the physical law it unifies natural phenomena, but do you not see that this antagonism is in us, ourselves? What difficulty is there here? How can one imagine that a dialectical trick will unify this dualism, which all thinkers

1. This notion was central to Durkheim's later work and is explicated more fully in his *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1965).

2. Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935), a French-Jewish army officer, was accused and convicted of spying for the German government. Despite evidence showing his innocence, he was found guilty again in an 1899 retrial which was skewed by strong antisemitic biases in the French military and which bitterly divided French society. Dreyfus was found innocent by the French high court in 1906.

3. Reprinted in Lukes 1973: 653–4 (Appendix B).

before you have expressed, each in his own language.... You who claim to have so keen an apprehension of complexity, how is it that you have not felt that there is always in us something which is elevating while another part of us draws us in an opposite direction?

P: It has seemed to me that classical rationalism was wrong not to put an end to this undeniable dualism.

D: Such a solution is impossible. You have found in all systems an internal opposition. You have denounced this as a contradiction; you should have seen that this contradiction is in life itself.

According to Durkheim, the student had tried to legislate out of existence a basic aspect of the human condition. As biological individuals⁴ we are partly selfish, wilful, and inherently anti-social. As social beings, we are forced to take others into account. Society is a place where moral evaluations are made, and the tension between the desires of an individual and the expectations of society provides an ineradicable poignancy for our life-courses. Durkheim puts forward this argument in an essay entitled 'The Dualism of Human Nature and its Social Conditions', originally published in 1914 in the journal *Scientia* (reprinted in Wolff 1960). In it, he gives his own, somewhat more schematic interpretation of the meaning of *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. He begins by stating that although sociology is the science of societies, it cannot help but study the individuals of which every society is composed. 'For society can only exist if it penetrates the consciousness of individuals and fashions it in "its image and resemblance"' (ibid.: 325). He continues in this vein, noting the transcultural and transhistorical belief in the separateness of body and soul, material and spiritual, sacred and profane. This notion, he continues, too universal to be purely illusory, is the result of humans' (often inarticulate) understanding that individual, biological appetites and the demands of social life are often at odds. He summarizes this insight in a sentence: 'Morality begins with disinterest, with attachment to something other than ourselves' (ibid.: 327).

Morality is communicated by means of concepts, which are representations shared within a group and which can be experienced in a manner entirely different from sensory perceptions, which are distinctive to each person. 'Far from being simple,' Durkheim argues, 'our inner life has something that is like a double center of gravity. On the one hand is our individuality—and more particularly, our body in which it is based; on the other is everything in us that expresses something other than ourselves' (ibid.: 328). This formulation builds on the schema of Cartesian mind—body dualism. Indeed, Durkheim was strongly influenced by Kant's reinterpretation of Descartes. Student that he was of categories and classification, the late Durkheim did not accept the claim that mental categories or con-

4. 'Individual', as used in this essay, indicates only a biologically distinct human being.

cepts were immanent, already given in the mind, waiting only to be discovered. Thus he sociologized Kant, emphasizing that the categories that organized thought were specific to societies, just as are languages. Even though Durkheim locates the collective in the realm of the social rather than in 'spirit' or some other part of the mind, he does retain strong traces of Kantian dualism in his notion of *homo duplex*.

The essay continues by considering several solutions that have been proposed for the problem of our experience of this duality. He dismisses what he calls empirical monism (everything is really sensation) and idealistic monism (everything is really concepts), which deny that any such duality exists. If duality is an illusion, why, after so many millennia of human existence, do we still experience it so acutely? As he writes later in the essay, 'if society were only the natural and spontaneous development of the individual, these two parts of ourselves would harmonize and adjust to each other without clashing and without friction' (ibid.: 338).

Durkheim also considers and rejects explanations offered by Plato and Kant to explain this antimony. He closes the argument by taking up the theme of religion and gives a synopsis of his explanation of how communication of the *conscience collective* occurs during heightened moments of ritual, festivals, and ceremonies. Through participation in the effervescent activities of a society's sacred realm, the individual is imprinted with a template of that society's ideals. Consciousness of these ideals may fade with time, but it does not disappear, and it is the frictions between these (social) ideals and the individual's own desires that underlie the experience of 'the dualism of human nature'.

I will not comment extensively on Durkheim's resolution of the problem of dualism,⁵ as my focus here is on its constitution as such, i.e. as a question of ontology. Here I would like to draw attention to three aspects of Durkheim's argument. First, he emphasizes the fact that even in our innermost feelings and experiences, we only belong partly to ourselves. The intrusion of the social into our inner worlds is a source of pain and conflict. Secondly, he stresses the simultaneity of the two aspects of human nature. He asks, 'How can we belong entirely to ourselves and entirely to others *at one and the same time?*' (ibid.: 328, my emphasis; see also ibid.: 334, 337). A third aspect of his account is the argument that each individual is embedded in, and takes part of her or his significance from, a social and moral system. The system both constitutes and is constituted by each individual in such a way that it becomes meaningless to talk about an individual's 'meaning', 'intentionality', or 'agency' separately from the framework of the system (i.e. the other individuals to whom the individual is related in various ways). This model of relationality, similar to the notion of signification developed

5. Developed with greater subtlety in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*.

by Ferdinand de Saussure,⁶ posits society (like Saussure's *langue*) as an identifiable whole. This whole can change and shift over time, but as it is an aggregate, no individual can effect a significant shift, and the system always exists before and after any constituent member.

Heidegger and the Problem of Dasein

There are three reasons why a comparison of Heidegger can be useful in drawing out some of the significance of Durkheim's social ontology. First, Heidegger's notions of the individual in society represent a second major stream in European thought on this subject. While Durkheim's later work resembles the Judaeo-Christian notion of degraded man kept in check by the strictures of society (a model that has its apotheosis in Hobbes' analysis of the social contract), Heidegger's system has affinities with the biblical myth of the Edenic fall from grace (rearticulated by Rousseau).⁷ This narrative of organic purity sullied by worldliness links Heidegger's philosophy to many of its strongest (yet subtly encoded) influences, such as the folkloric cultural nationalism of Herder and Ernst Junger, and the rise-and-fall historiography of Oswald Spengler.

Secondly, as noted above, Heidegger's work has exerted an enormous influence on twentieth-century continental thought. Interpretations of his work have been interposed between the Saussurean-Durkheimian roots of structuralism and a hybrid end-product, as is notably the case in the work of Lacan and Derrida. Heidegger also helped shape the development of two of the twentieth-century philosophical schools that have been of greatest interest to anthropologists: French phenomenology (Sartre, Merleau-Ponty) and hermeneutics (Gadamer, Ricoeur). Thus he has paradoxically been invoked by both the most anti-humanist and the most individualist-humanist currents in twentieth-century European thinking about society and history.

Finally, Heidegger provides us with a particularly good example of what may be the political entailments of a theory of ontology. The politics (namely his involvement with the Nazi party) and the philosophy are by no means reducible one to the other, but we can trace a series of links, as I will try to do in the next part of the essay, between a particular line of argument about the nature of human ontology and the sort of politics that may logically follow from it.

6. Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* was published in Geneva in 1915 (thus immediately after the publication of Durkheim's article), but was a posthumous reconstruction of his students' lecture notes from the period 1906–11.

7. I thank Professor David Parkin for this insight.

Heidegger believed that the discipline of philosophy had only one genuine problematic: understanding the meaning, or the being, of Being. This branch of philosophy is known as ontology, and ontological studies have been permanently transformed by Heidegger's work. Heidegger's exegesis of Being is best known from his first book, *Sein und Zeit* (1927), published in English in 1962 as *Being and Time*. This book is comprised of only the first two of what were meant to be six divisions. Division I is the analysis of *Dasein*, while Division II explores the relations between *Dasein* and temporality.

Dasein literally means 'being there', but for Heidegger it tends to mean self-aware human existence or being.⁸ This reflexive existence, characteristic of humans only, naturally seeks the answer to the only question Heidegger deems fundamental: 'why is there something (or anything), and not nothing?' This question, deceptively naïve-sounding, has been shunted aside not only by 'common sense', but also by the whole history of philosophical thought which has, according to Heidegger, followed a wrong path—that is, the path of metaphysical inquiry—and ended up in a philosophical cul-de-sac. Indeed, the last three (unpublished) divisions of the work were intended to serve as what he called the 'destruction of the history of ontology', with a chapter each deconstructing the philosophical systems of Kant, Descartes, and Aristotle.

Given Heidegger's claim that every other philosopher in history had missed the ontological boat, how does he propose that we come to an understanding of our existence? I will give below a very brief outline of that part of *Being and Time* of greatest interest to us here. As well as being partial, my reading will also be paraphrased, as Heidegger's language is very nearly impenetrable.⁹

In Division I, entitled 'Preparatory Fundamental Analysis of *Dasein*', Heidegger sets out to understand the nature of human, (potentially) reflexive being—*Dasein*—both because it is a privileged type of general Being, and because it is the only means *we* have of gaining knowledge about more general Being. I would break Division I into three parts: (1) the preliminary discussion of 'Being-in-the-World' (sections 9–24); (2) the problematic of 'everyday Being' (sections 25–38); and (3) the attribution of 'Care' as the nature of *Dasein* (sections 39–44).

8. Although his use of the term often verges on the connotations we might attribute to 'consciousness' he was careful to avoid this term because of the very Cartesian notions of subject and object that have typically been affiliated with it.

9. To the Heideggerian faithful, the notion of translating his work, let alone paraphrasing it, has about as much validity as the idea of translating the Koran has for religious Muslims. For those who doubt the advisability of a paraphrase, I will simply offer a taste (in translation) of the authentic text. These are the last six lines of the 500-page work:

The existential-ontological constitution of *Dasein*'s totality is grounded in temporality. Hence the ecstatic projection of Being must be made possible by some primordial way in which ecstatic temporality temporalizes. How is this mode of the temporalizing of temporality to be interpreted? Is there a way that leads from primordial *time* to the meaning of *Being*? Does *time* itself manifest itself as the horizon of *Being*? (Heidegger 1962).

In sections 9–24, the primary distinctions are between the ‘ontic’ and the ‘ontological’, and between ‘presentness-at-hand’ (*Vorhandenheit*) and ‘readiness-to-hand’ (*Zuhandenheit*). That which is present-at-hand may be contemplated, known about, and identified, resulting in the kind of ‘ontic’ knowledge that scientists, for instance, have about things in the world. The kind of knowledge that emerges from our ready-to-hand relations with the world around us is exemplified by one of Heidegger’s favourite metaphors: the carpenter and his hammer. For the person who uses it as a tool, the hammer becomes almost invisible as a thing, though it is an essential part of that person’s projects in shaping the surrounding world. Readiness-to-hand, then, is defined by organic, instrumental relations between *Dasein* and the object, as well as the kind of practical knowledge we would recognize as ‘techniques of the body’ in Mauss, habitus in Mauss and Bourdieu, or ‘practical consciousness’ in Giddens.

Such embodied, instrumental knowledge is pre-ontological or pre-theoretical to begin with, but is also the necessary basis for properly ontological (as opposed to ontic) knowledge. This happens, for instance, when the head of the hammer comes loose, compromising its transparent usefulness to the carpenter. The carpenter could now make a series of statements about ‘hammer-ness’ that could never result from a dictionary definition, a detailed description of the hammer’s shape and dimensions, or information about how it was manufactured (all ‘ontic’ descriptions for Heidegger). In this way, both the practices of the community into which we are ‘dropped’ and our daily projects and habits overdetermine all our ways of seeing/interpreting the world. Heidegger’s interpretation of this point encompasses both Durkheim and Mauss’s notions of cognitive categories and Mauss’s analysis of techniques. Heidegger emphasizes that we can build a picture of the world from the knowledge we derive from the ready-to-hand, later inserting second-hand, or ontic, knowledge. However, we cannot work in the other direction, from the ontic toward the ontological.

He develops this distinction in sections 25–38, where he describes the problematic of ‘everyday Being’. Our Being-in-the-world is characterized by ‘being withness’ (*mit-sein*), which we could gloss as sociality, and the sayings and actions of ‘*das Man*’. This latter term has been translated ‘the They’ in *Being and Time*, but also carries the multiple connotations of the French pronoun *on*, which can mean we, one, or they, according to usage. *Mit-sein* and *das Man* are neutral in themselves but represent, in Heidegger, the perils of ‘everyday Being’. In the course of ordinary life, authentic,¹⁰ ontological, and ready-to-hand knowledge and

10. Authenticity is a key concept for Heidegger, as it became for existentialism in general. Like many of the other terms and metaphors he uses (e.g. ‘natural’, ‘organic’), this term would be considered highly problematic by most anthropologists. Heidegger’s usage is never simply an uncritical reproduction of contemporary folk theories, and he renders many terms idiosyncratic via arcane etymologies and wordplay. Nevertheless, his terms always operate in tandem with the folk categories of their twins and feed parasitically on them. First Adorno (1973) and later Bourdieu (1991) have explored the complex politics of language in Heidegger’s work.

relations tend to become sedimented over by the common sense of 'the They'. When one follows everyday practices unthinkingly, they are neutral. However, when one does something because it is 'the done thing', one has started slipping into inauthenticity. Of course, when faced with a conscious decision, *Dasein's* authentic choice is to 'Be-one-self'. Heidegger describes myriad pitfalls in the way of authentic *Dasein*: 'idle talk' and gossip, 'curiosity', which he describes as a kind of frivolous lust for novelty, and generally 'fallenness', which results from becoming caught up with the past and what 'the They' are doing.

In sections 39–44, Heidegger describes Care (*Sorge*) as the Being (we could say, 'true nature') of *Dasein*. This care, concern, or interest that *Dasein* takes in everything around it can be manifested as a reflexivity about its own existence, but it can also take the form of 'solicitude' for others or instrumental interest, for instance in the tools one requires to be ready-to-hand. This care is also neutral: it is simply *Dasein's* natural relation to the world. However, it too can lead to inauthenticity. For instance, solicitude for others (which some of Heidegger's interpreters have read as a euphemism for social welfare and the welfare state) robs them of their authenticity.

Division II of the book is entitled 'Dasein and Temporality'. Having sketched his description of *Dasein*, Heidegger goes on to analyze its relation to time and temporality. This relationship was meant to give the clue that would allow Heidegger to decode the nature of all Being, but that part of the book was never written. I will trace this section much more quickly, as it is less important for our present argument. Authentic *Dasein*, according to Heidegger, has an intimate relationship with temporality. Temporality is not time for Heidegger. As he notes, 'now' can be the instantaneity of snapped fingers, or it can be the hour-long period during which we share a meal. Similarly, what we commonly understand as the separate realms of past, present, and future are also relative, each one constituting the others. What is important to Heidegger is that care, as the natural attitude of *Dasein*, has differing aspects in relation to temporality. Most important to note is the fact that because of its basis in subjectivity and thus the human life-span, each individual's *Dasein* has objective limits, beginning some time after birth and disappearing at death. Acknowledging this fact (namely that of one's mortality) is the basis for all sorts of good Heideggerian things: 'Being-a-whole', the sense of totality, and ultimately 'resoluteness'.

'Resoluteness', for Heidegger, denotes an openness toward temporality (the mutually-constituting past-present-future), with an emphasis on open anticipation of the future. Care, which is *Dasein's* nature, may be divided into three interrelated parts, each of which has a temporal correlate:

CARE

'projectiveness'/existence
'thrownness'/discourse
'fallenness'

TEMPORALITY/RESOLUTENESS

'Being-ahead-of-itself'/future
'Being alongside'/present
'already-Being-in'/past

According to Heidegger, it is the intermeshing of these three forms of care with their temporal modes that gives us the key to understanding the totality of human Being.

I hope I have conveyed the ambivalent, cautious, but ultimately disdainful position Heidegger takes toward the 'everydayness' of 'the They'. It would be inconceivable for an individual to live in any way other than 'Being-in-the-world', yet that individual's important—and moreover transcendent—decisions and discoveries will come from her own struggle to come to terms with her relation to authentic temporality, especially as embodied in the totality of her mortality. The person interacts with others in her everyday modes, but is inward-looking when she is most authentic (though in Heidegger's terminology, this introspective state is termed 'openness'). As for the notion of society that emerges in *Being and Time*, it is implicitly bounded and distinct from other societies, thus providing the specificity of the individual's 'thrown' circumstances. Heidegger's views on the distinctiveness of societies emerges more clearly from comments scattered throughout his works, particularly in his condemnation of 'rootlessness' and 'cosmopolitanism', two qualities of modern urban society that he seems to have considered characteristic of Jewishness.¹¹

The Politics of Ontology

Turning from the theoretical formulations of the last two sections, I would now like to consider both the context of production and some of the political implications of the work of the early Heidegger and the late Durkheim. A theory of being, or ontology, is significant because of its ramifying entailments. Because all humans are inextricably part of the world around them, any theory of human ontology implies, through its definition of what human existence is and is not, a theory of subject formation and of society. I will begin by outlining what I feel to be the relevant points of similarity and difference in each author's social ontology, then continue by looking at aspects of *fin-de-siècle* French and inter-war German societies for information that may add to our understanding of the mutual influence of theories of society and their historical context.

I suggested above that Durkheim's notion of *homo duplex* is related to the need for society to place restrictions on 'naturally' anti-social individuals. Christopher Herbert, in his *Culture and Anomie* (1991), has refined this notion in such a way that we can see more clearly the relation between Durkheim's concept and some of his wider concerns regarding the French society of his day. Herbert suggests that a primary impetus behind the nineteenth-century formulation of what has become known as 'the culture concept' was the doctrine of eighteenth- and

11. This point is brought out clearly by Adorno (1973).

nineteenth-century evangelical Christianity. During this period, John Wesley described original sin as a state of boundless, destructive desire. He accompanied this picture with a call for restrictive social-religious control. Herbert argues that Victorian English ambivalence toward desire was a crucial catalyst in the development of proto-cultural theory (as one reaction, along with the development of political economy) which was to crystallize in Durkheim's model of society, solidarity, and religion.

Regardless of the lines of influence, we should make a distinction between the unreconstructed narrative of a fall from grace into moral degradation checked only by vigilant Protestant discipline and the model Durkheim proposed. In the latter, the work of socialization—mediated by collective representations, classificatory categories, and ritual—installs a moral *conscience* (in both senses that the French term retains) that largely bypasses the need for strict control of individual life by church or state.¹²

In this regard, it may be useful to consider the influence of the Dreyfus affair on the formation of Durkheim's practical and theoretical sociology. As Lukes and others have argued, Durkheim's activities alongside the Dreyfusards was restrained but concerted. The more important consequence was a strengthening of his commitment to scientific sociology and to a pedagogy of secular morality in France. Durkheim's importance in the training of teachers in the Third Republic (especially through his courses on the history of French pedagogy at the *École Normale Supérieure*) was closely connected with the French movement toward secularization.¹³

Durkheim's thought emerges more clearly against this background. The rifts in French society highlighted by the Dreyfus affair must be seen as a crucial historical setting for the development of Durkheim's later work. *Homo duplex* appears as the problematic that has most preoccupied French thinkers in the twentieth century: in a fragmented society, how is it possible to make the individual want to do what he or she *must* do in order for the society to keep limping along? In this light, the practical consequences of Durkheim's life's work seem both massive and poignant. With the memory of defeat in the Franco-Prussian War still vivid, and the internal splits attested by the Commune and the Dreyfus affair even more so, his reification of society seems to be as much the work of wish-fulfilment as a heuristic device.

The concern with explaining how the individual subject is inserted into an implicitly fragmentary society has continued in France with Mauss (consideration of the history of the notion of the person and of bodily techniques), Lévi-Strauss (deep structures), Lacan (the symbolic realm and the 'Word of the Father'), Alt-

12. There are striking parallels between Durkheim's notion of the *conscience collective* and Freud's late development of the agency of the superego—another internalized mechanism of control—interposed between unconscious drives and the conscious ego.

13. This culminated in the Loi Combes of 1905, officially separating church and state.

husser (ideological interpellation), Foucault (*episteme* and disciplinary practices), and Bourdieu (*habitus*), right up through the Derridean shift to turn structuralism on its head.

The reticence of many of these academics to insert their work into the socio-political public sphere—again following Durkheim's lead—becomes more comprehensible when we consider the underlying notion of the relation between the system and its constituents. For the notion of *homo duplex* is, as I have noted above, based on a distinction similar to the Saussurean one between *langue* and *parole*. As Durkheim writes in his essay, 'neither the vocabulary nor the grammar of a language is the work or product of one particular person' (Wolff 1960: 327). Thus individual political gestures are unlikely to have a significant effect on objective relations in the world. Each individual, like each signifier in a system of communication, takes on most of his or her meaning through relations with other individuals within the total system. The fact that we are not phonemes but self-conscious beings is the basis of the *dualism* of human experience. This notion (particularly as it has been mobilized against the Sartrean conception of radical free will) links much of French twentieth-century social thought, along with social anthropology, to Durkheim's insight.

We must also consider the logical entailments of Durkheim's model of social existence. What might be its political ramifications? Because Durkheim, in his essay, locates the origin of social existence in the recognition of other persons, he takes the next step to argue that this recognition involves not just agreeing to their existence, but also taking account of them morally. Because he also emphasizes the pathos of this recognition and the tensions it institutes with our selfish desires, we understand that the recognition is not simply intellectual or jural, but affective as well (a point brought out yet more clearly in *The Elementary Forms*). Like the baby who, in Lacan's psycho-social model, enters the realm of language, or the mirror stage, the person who sees himself as he is seen, has entered a *de facto* understanding of the bundle of social and ethical responsibilities that accompany membership of a social group. We now recognize the potentially reactionary political content in the late Durkheim's notion of ritual and society, perhaps better than Durkheim himself did—as Mauss said, were not the Nuremberg rallies the apotheosis of a society's worship of itself through public rituals? Nevertheless, 'The Dualism of Human Nature', while it presents much of the argument of *The Elementary Forms* in telescopic form, is intent on bringing this ethical element into the foreground: the social is equated with the morally evaluative, and thus no practice, no matter how functional or solidary, would be exempted from such evaluation.

As for Heidegger, the facts of his political life are fairly clear, but their proper interpretation is not. Heidegger was a member of the Nazi party in 1933–4, an affiliation that was coterminous with his rectorship at the University of Freiburg. During that time, he made a number of ideologically loaded speeches, curtailed academic freedom in some respects, and defended it in others. Privately, he acted at times as a Nazi informer, expressed a piquant antisemitism and anti-democratic

élitism, and showed himself to be personally opportunistic. After the war he was banned from teaching during the denazification hearings but reinstated as professor emeritus in 1951. Most significantly, during his politically active period, he explicitly connected many of his abstract philosophical concepts to the political events of the period and the ideology of National Socialism.¹⁴ This has led many to interpret both his pre- and post-war work as containing an encoded political content which is reactionary if not fully fascist. Others (including Heidegger himself, but also Richard Rorty and other professional philosophers) insist on the work's radical separateness from its author's biography and dismiss such readings as spurious.

It seems that there are two lines of argument one can take in analyzing the links (or lack of them) between Heidegger's philosophy and his politics. One can carry out a close reading of Heidegger's texts in relation to the vocabulary and tropes of Nazi rhetoric, executing a kind of discourse analysis. This method has been combined with a social-historical contextualization by a number of authors, including Adorno (1973) and Bourdieu (1991). They make a powerful argument, especially in their discussions of the connections between *Being and Time* and the writings of such 'conservative revolutionaries' as Spengler and Junger.

In this regard, it seems highly probable that the anti-technological nostalgia and the romantic pastoralism of much of Heidegger's writing were influenced by and part of this proto-fascistic rhetoric. These aspects of his thought were combined with a stiff and unrepentant nationalist pride. Philosophy, he said and wrote on a number of occasions, could *only* be thought in ancient Greek or German. With regard to the Nazi period, then, it seems that his affiliation was not so much *Blubo*-ist,¹⁵ or biological, as culturalist (though the two clearly intermingle). The nation that produced Kant and Nietzsche, Bach and Beethoven, Goethe and Holderlin, must not allow itself to be dragged down by the cultural mixing exemplified by urban cosmopolitanism (a term of scorn for Heidegger), nor by the 'levelling-down' resulting from democracy.

The second line of argument seems to me possibly more fruitful. Following our approach above, what can we say about the logical entailments of a system such as Heidegger's interrogation of Being that might tell us something about the kind of politics that would necessarily follow from a set of 'ontological' premises? Here I think it is Heidegger's discomfort with the relation of the individual's *Dasein* to the world around that is of central importance. Heidegger argues that the individual is inextricably connected to surrounding people and things and that

14. For instance, he attributed 'authenticity' to a German-Alsatian patriot who was killed for refusing to acknowledge the French authorities' claim to sovereignty over his village, but 'inauthenticity' to academic colleagues' calls for a reinstatement of academic freedom of expression under the Nazi government. He praised Hitler's 'resoluteness' in his withdrawal from the League of Nations, and claimed that the Nazi youth labour service would introduce German youth to proper modes of *mit-sein* and *mit Dasein*.

15. From *Blut und Boden*, or 'blood and soil'.

Dasein emerges authentically through—indeed *is*—the interaction between the subject and the things ‘out there’ in the world. However, the ‘things’ that facilitate authentic *Dasein* are always either inanimate objects (like hammers) or abstract psychological-philosophical entities, like temporality, mortality, and nature. Other humans are invariably the source of impurity and existential degradation. For Heidegger, the recognition of the Other is both a necessary precondition for our being-in-the-world and the immanent source of inauthenticity. Ultimately, the Other seems to elicit horror (think of the picture of Hell painted by Heidegger’s disciple Sartre in his play *Huis Clos*—an eternity spent with average, alienated others, engaging in ‘idle chatter’).

The comparison with Durkheim is stark. For Durkheim, the recognition of the Other is the very origin of morality. Though he, too, had misgivings about modernity and the social relations it had spawned, this anxiety seems to have been balanced by the tragic acceptance of the dualism of the human condition. This outlook seems to me to be the basis for his mistrust of politics and any easy or ‘final’ solutions it might propose.

Conclusion: Theories of Being and the View from Nowhere

What seems to me to be significant about both Durkheim’s and Heidegger’s models of human existence is that they strike profound blows against foundationalist notions of meaning. Durkheim emphasizes, as Saussure did, the relational nature of all meaning. Locating his description in the realm of society rather than language, he also emphasizes that meaning-making (one possible gloss on ‘solidarity’) requires constant and precarious *work*. Heidegger’s attention to *Dasein*’s interaction with and appropriation of the phenomenal world also emphasizes the dual processes of relationality and work. Yet both aim at an elegant closure that relies on different uses of the notion of boundedness. In both cases, as suggested above, we can trace rather clear lines between this move and aspects of the political context of its production.

I have presented the problematic in Heidegger’s analysis of *Dasein* as originating in the move from the notions of ‘readiness-to-hand’, ‘being-withness’, and ‘everyday *Dasein*’ in Division I of *Being and Time* to the ‘totality’ of ‘authentic’ being in Division II. This constitutes Heidegger’s attempt to encompass *Dasein* within temporality and thus reconstitute the messy and imperfectly limited phenomenal world within a bounded whole (that is, the self-aware passage of *Dasein* between birth and death). Emmanuel Levinas has criticized this latter move toward totalization because of what he calls the ‘egotism’ of Being’s preoccupation with itself and the grasping, appropriating, and assimilating practices through which ‘authentic’ Heideggerian *Dasein* experiences the world. What Levinas describes as ‘ontological imperialism’—the reduction of otherness to the sameness

of the self—is a philosophical and phenomenological critique, but its wider application in the human sciences will not be lost on anthropologists.¹⁶

Thus Heidegger's attempt to transcend the everydayness of Being is just the problem. His emphasis on care, curiosity, readiness-to-hand, and the phenomenology of (social) Being in Division I might have been developed rather than dismissed. I have already pointed to the parallels between these notions and those of techniques of the body, habitus, and practical consciousness. Yet the move from phenomenology to *transcendental* phenomenology, the virtual equation of everydayness with inauthenticity, and the drive toward totality foreclose the possibility of such a project. We can imagine a conversation between Durkheim and Heidegger in which Durkheim corrects the philosopher, as he did the graduate student: 'Such a solution is impossible. You have found in all systems an internal opposition. You have denounced this as a contradiction; you should have seen that this contradiction is in life itself' (in Lukes 1973: 654).

If we prefer Durkheim's unbounded, always already ambivalent individual, must we then pay the price of the society cognitively and affectively bounded by a shared set of collective representations?¹⁷ I think Durkheim would again caution us against simply banishing the latter notion by edict. The logical entailment of *homo duplex* is that there must be a coherent system of representations—a comprehensible basis for intersubjectivity—in order for that side of the individual's dual nature to have a hold on him.

Heidegger gives us a clue as to how we may find our way out of his problem: he persistently reminds us that there is no way to get outside the phenomena that impinge on us; there is no 'view from nowhere'. This has been a persistent theme of twentieth-century philosophy which has continually come up against the problem that however encompassing the frame of reference (the text, the historical era, the language, the domain of descriptive terms), there is always a supplement. Whether figured as desire, *différence*, or *anomie*, it seems to extend just beyond the limits of the posited system. This insight has been applied only spottily to our notions of culture and society.

Perhaps we, both as analysts of and participants in Being-witness (or sociality, as Simmel called it), are to some extent always incapable of accounting for this excess. Yet we feel ourselves always to be located between intentions and identities that are 'our own' and others that derive from the expectations and demands of other people. How, then, can we reformulate our analyses so as to acknowledge the dualism of human nature¹⁸ without reifying the cultural?

16. This argument is elaborated in Young 1990.

17. The late Durkheim's resolution is the turn toward the sacred, a move formally similar to, though conceptually quite different from Heidegger's turn to finitude and temporality.

18. Perhaps now replacing the term 'dualism' with the idea of 'doubleness', as in W. E. B. DuBois's 'double consciousness'.

That is a topic for another essay. It is a paradox we are left with after mining Durkheim and Heidegger's writings. But we might make two observations in closing. First, we may take a cue from Mauss's relatively open conception of societies, one that emphasizes the movement of techniques and practices across space and time. We can well appreciate his insights and methods without necessarily utilizing them to construct total systems at still higher levels of organization, à la Lévi-Strauss. From a completely different angle, we may find it useful to focus on the *dialogic* interaction among individuals and social forms. Bakhtin's concept of the dialogic interposes an intermediate level between the dialectically interacting *langue* and *parole*, structure and process, speech community and utterance.¹⁹ The notions of voice and of speech genre, as potentially migratory as Mauss's techniques and just as ready-to-hand as Heidegger's 'equipment', move through and across both individuals and groups. They may be ventriloquized,²⁰ channelled unconsciously, or utilized intentionally to create and invoke inter-subjective understanding. Yet they are not rooted 'primordially' to specific places and times. There is much work yet to be done in extending this useful linguistic metaphor to further empirical research.

19. See, for example, his *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981); also Mannheim and Tedlock 1995.

20. Durkheim himself recognizes the aptness of this metaphor, as evidenced by his observation about collective ideals: 'Although they are our own, they speak in us with a *tone and an accent* that are entirely different from those of our other states of consciousness' (Wolff 1960: 337, my emphasis). Durkheim's usage here, as opposed to Bakhtin's, is explicitly figurative.

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