"Reasons without Reason: Anti-rationalism in Heidegger's *Being and Time*"

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Every polity—but especially a democratic polity—faces difficult questions that they must answer together. Often we settle the answers through political institutions, but sometimes the questions remain in the informal sphere of social life. On many of these questions we disagree with one another deeply, sincerely, and seemingly intractably. It is no surprise then that public discourse can be exasperating, even among friends and colleagues. Nevertheless, we should not succumb to the exasperation. However we finally resolve difficult questions—and even if we never do—it would be best if public discourse were reasonable. Even where we persistently disagree, we ought to be able to articulate the reasons we have, understand those of others, give rejoinders, and, if necessary, reconcile ourselves to a resolution. In order to continue working together as a polity, we ought to be able to have reasonable disagreements where everyone involved can acknowledge the sincerity of the reasons offered, even if the reasons are ultimately unconvincing. If public discourse is to be public reason, we must treat each other as capable of having reasons.

Unfortunately, many participants in public discourse scrutinize each other as if they were not offering reasons but some non-rational consideration. Bruno Latour describes the problem ably:

> One could say, with more than a little dose of irony, that there has been a sort of *miniaturization* of critical efforts: what in the past centuries required the formidable effort of a Marx, a Nietzsche, a Benjamin, has become accessible for nothing… You can now have your Baudrillard's or your Bourdieu's disillusion for a song, your Derridian deconstruction for a nickel. Conspiracy theory costs nothing to produce, disbelief is easy, debunking what is learned in 101 classes in critical theory. As the recent advertisement of a Hollywood film proclaimed, 'Everyone is suspect… everyone is for sale… and nothing is true!'[2]

To sum up: when reason is suspect, so is everyone else. If we believe that humans can act only non-rationally—that is to say, not on the basis of reasons but due to causes such as desires, drives, and manipulated beliefs—then we will treat others' words and deeds as expressions or outgrowths of subterranean roots, and the truth of our criticisms as the more secure, the deeper beneath the surface those roots stretch, the more inscrutable they become. Our public appearances will be interpreted in the first place as idiosyncrasy rather than potential communion. When we encounter difference or disagreement, we will tend to explain away its bearing on us and have our own explanations likewise dismissed. Most importantly, deep public questions about how we are to live together peacefully and respectfully will tend to elicit recriminations rather than answers. I expect anyone who has tried to have serious conversations

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[1] I would like to note that my work on Heidegger has been deeply influenced by my teachers, Cristina Lafont and Rachel Zuckert, although I do not reference their work in this piece. I owe them much thanks.

[2] Latour, Bruno. "What is Iconoclash? or Is there a world beyond image wars?" in *Iconoclash, Beyond the Image-Wars in Science, Religion and Art*, ed. Weibel, Peter and Latour, Bruno, ZKM and MIT Press (Cambridge, MA: 2002). The movie tagline is from 1997's *L.A. Confidential*, directed by Curtis Hanson, although I believe the last clause should read, "and nothing is as it seems."

with strangers on social media will recognize the phenomenon: the cheapness of critique erodes the soil of productive public discourse.

I do not mean to suggest that public discourse today is more fraught than it has been in the past. However, we do face a different problem today than our predecessors did. Latour's quote provides the clue that the erosion of public discourse today arises at least in part from the popularity of reductive anti-rationalist critics of rationalist thinkers. By 'rationalist' here, I do not mean the traditional notion: someone who holds that we have some central concepts and knowledge independent of sensory experience. Instead, I mean someone who holds that human beings have a faculty of reason. A faculty of reason is a systematically unified set of principles, encompassing more than classical logic, that binds each of us because it is part of us. Prominent rationalist philosophers, in my sense, include Plato, Leibniz, and Kant. Each held that reason is governed by a single principle—the good, the principle of sufficient reason, the unconditioned—and that subordinate principles align with the fundamental unifying principle as well as cohere with one another, producing a systematic set of principles for thought that a person could discover through introspection. For the rationalist, a person has a reason when she correctly subsumes her situation under the principles set out in the faculty.[3]

Anti-rationalists, on the other hand, deny that human beings have such a faculty. And anti-rationalists are reductive when they treat any appearance of having a reason as the manifestation of a proximate cause alone. Reductive anti-rationalism rose to the foreground as a final critique of Enlightenment ideals. Reductive anti-rationalists—among whom we might count Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud—worked from the premises of modern scientific inquiry to show that we do not have a faculty of reason. Even the appearance of having reasons is illusory, generated by a false consciousness of our own self-constitution. From the perspectives of history and psychology, they maintained, human considerations are too diverse, contextually embedded, and self-interested to cohere with a systematically unified set of rational principles. In light of these alternate explanations, the existence of reasons is an extraneous hypothesis.

The reductive anti-rationalists pose a serious objection to rationality and, thereby, the very possibility of public reason. One response to their challenge would be to defend the rationalist position. I will not be exploring that line of thought here. Instead, I will present a third option, which I lift from Heidegger's work in *Being and Time*. According to the schematization I have presented, Heidegger is an anti-rationalist: he presents a purportedly complete account of human existence that excludes any faculty of reason. Nevertheless, we can reconstruct from Heidegger's work a conception of reasons. To be specific, Heidegger's account of authenticity and the roles that death and conscience play in that account provide the basis for an account of when a person has a reason to do or believe something.[4] That is to say, Heidegger holds out the possibility that we might be able to accept the anti-rationalist critique of rationalism without losing reasoning from the picture of humanity. From this Heideggerian account of reasons without reason, we can look again at the question of public reason with fresh eyes.

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[3] I have drawn this account of a faculty of reason from Susan Neiman's work on Kant. (Neiman, Susan. *The Unity of Reason: Rereading Kant*. Oxford UP (New York: 1994).) The three features—universality, unity, and systematicity—are meant to be minimal conditions. They provide the beginning of a complete account of a faculty of reason but not at all the whole thing.

[4] Steven Crowell has already developed an account of rationality based on Heidegger's conception of conscience. For the basic account, see: Crowell, Steven. "Conscience and Reason: Heidegger and the Grounds of Intentionality" in *Transcendental Heidegger*. eds. Crowell, Steven and Malpas, Jeff. Stanford UP (Stanford: 2007) pp.43-62. This essay does not address that work directly but implicitly extends it.

To flesh out my interpretive assertion, I will begin with a brief overview of *Being and Time*, then present you with two key quotes that will serve as the focus for an interpretation of authenticity as the basis for having reasons. After that, I will conclude with some reflections on the relationship between Heideggerian reasons and public reason.

In *Being and Time* the central question for investigation is: what is the meaning of being? Heidegger's answer is temporality (H.1).[5] Let's take the question first. Heidegger initially demarcates being as what distinguishes entities as such from each other and what makes those entities intelligible to us (H.6). To say that temporality is the meaning of being is to say that temporality is the first basis on which entities are distinguishable. (If you are having trouble imagining what this means, consider that a basic property of matter is to persist through time despite changes in location.) His conception of temporality is abstruse and difficult to grasp, even for those who have studied it intently. At a first pass, temporality is the unfolding of past, present, and future in which the future takes priority.(§65, especially H.327-8) But Heidegger is not an eschatologist: the meaning of being is not to bring about some destined or desired state of affairs. Rather, the future is essentially what is not yet, what is possible but never actual.[6] In time, I hope to make this essential futurity clearer. But to do that we must turn to the outline of Heidegger's argument.

The crux of Heidegger's argument that temporality is the meaning of being rests on the claim that we ourselves stretch through past, present, and future, and are the fundamental source of all other distinctions among entities. We are the distinctively ontological entity, who asks the question of being and cares about answering it (H.12). In caring about that question, we open up a world of people, places, and things and find meaning within it. To pick out this distinctive character of our being, Heidegger coins the technical term 'Dasein.'[7] Heidegger uses the term—a common German noun for 'existence'— in order to distinguish the biological interpretation of humanity—*homo sapiens*—from that which makes us truly human. Dasein is being in the world (H.53) and the entity for whom being is at issue (H.12). It is not for anything in particular (H.130) and is distinctive precisely because it can interpret its own existence all the way down to the most basic concepts (H.9). Dasein is in the world by both being determined by it and determining it in return. For this reason, Heidegger calls Dasein a thrown-project (H.199). We are thrown and socialized into a world with an established order, from the past, that we now, at the present, have to project ourselves into, so as to make for ourselves a future. In doing so we inherit complex distinctions among entities that we then have to apply to our own situations and sometimes even add, edit, or discard in order to make better sense of the world and who and what are in it. When we add, edit, and discard distinctions, we do not do it for ourselves alone but anticipate that it will make better sense of future situations as well. Indeed, it would be

[5] Heidegger, Martin. *Sein und Zeit*. 19th edition, Max Niemeyer Verlag (Tübingen: 2006). I will provide references to *Being and Time* within parentheses. These will mostly point you to passages I am paraphrasing. The format for the page references is 'H.#' where the 'H' indicates the pagination of the published German text and the '#' indicates the page. In any translation of *Being and Time* you can find the German pagination along the outside margin of the pages. In a few cases, I reference not the pages but the section of *Being and Time*. In that case the section number will be preceded by this symbol: '§.'

[6] Hence, Heidegger's slogan: possibility is higher than actuality (H.38).

[7] Heidegger initially defines the term at H.7 and spends a large section of the introduction characterizing Dasein's special role in ontology.

unjustifiable to offer a purely idiosyncratic concept for others to use because Dasein lives in an always already shared world.

According to Heidegger, as we have it so far, the meaning of being is temporality because humans live by unfolding the phases of past, present, and future with each other. It is not that time is a container in which we exist but rather that humans create a past, present, and future through their interpretive social activities. According to Heidegger, the sense of time as a container is derived from the sense of time as unfolding through meaning-making (H.424-5).

How, then, does Dasein make meaning and why is meaning-making connected to time? Here is the summary answer that we will spend the rest of the talk unpacking: Dasein makes meaning for itself as a movement from inauthenticity to authenticity (*die Eigentlichkeit*), and it is enabled to make this movement by its mortality. By 'authenticity,' Heidegger does not mean what we tend to mean by it, namely, being connected to one's roots or being different for difference's sake. Rather, inauthenticity bears these descriptions just as well as authenticity because by 'inauthenticity' Heidegger means being lost in the crowd, which one can be when one is trying to reconnect with one's roots or trying to stand out just to stand out. Authenticity, at a first pass, is recovering oneself from the crowd, individuating oneself from others, and taking ownership over oneself (H.12, H.42-3). It is in this movement that Dasein becomes able to have reasons.

What then is this movement like? We must start from a structural description of what it is like for Dasein to be in the world.[8] Imagine yourself cooking dinner for your family. You are in your kitchen, surrounded by your supplies and tools. You have ingredients, a knife for cutting them, a cutting board on which to cut them, and so on. You also have a recipe that sets out the steps for cooking the meal. The meal, in turn, is the end-product of a sequence of steps or in-order-tos that employ your resources and tools. Moreover, the meal is for you and your family. You all are ends of the cooking but in a different sense than the meal is the end. You will appropriate the meal from the cooking activity to the eating activity. You are the end as consumer rather than product. In turn, the eating activity has the same structure: it serves to sustain you so that you can go on to participate in other activities. As far as this structural description takes us, it seems as though we are the executors of activities in order to be executors of other activities. Everything is for-something already given. Even you seem to be for-producing and for-consuming endlessly. But observe: this indefinite series of activities tells us nothing about how you benefit from the activities, unless we assume that merely participating in activities, whatever they are, is beneficial. Of course, that is a non-starter. A person may choose to forego eating and bring the series of activities to a close. Although it might be sad that she do so, it can nevertheless be good for her, in which case the distinction between beneficial and harmful collapses. Thus, the indefinite series of activities cannot be the whole story of our participation in these activities. Our activities cannot be merely in order to participate in other activities. We must at least be capable of participating in them for the sake of something final, something that brings the indefinite series to a third kind of end, the end of explanation or justification. In other words, we must be able to say why we participate in activities without the answer admitting of a further why-question. The world in which we live is not a holistic totality

[8] This structural description (which philosophers also call a phenomenology) is based on §§15-18. Of note: Heidegger provides very little argument that the for-the-sake-of-which must be part of the description and that is the crucial move he makes against the reductive anti-rationalists.

of in-order-tos. The world includes final ends or, in Heidegger's vocabulary, for-the-sake-of-whiches (*worumwillen*).

In this description of daily life, we discover a holistic network of tools and activities in which we can participate for the sake of something beyond the products of those activities. Consider again these activities in relation to a for-the-sake-of-which. We do not engage in these activities merely as free floating individuals without any prior entanglements. On the contrary, at every moment we occupy at least one social role, whether we have chosen it or not. We are children, parents, students, teachers, citizens, politicians, clients, lawyers, and so on. Each social role brings with it a package of norms that guide the occupant toward the appropriate behavior and away from the inappropriate. These norms manifest themselves in what an occupant counts as satisfying the duties under that role and what others expect the occupant to do to satisfy those duties. For the most part these expectations will overlap and be independent of the specific personality occupying the role. Thus, we often express these norms via the impersonal pronoun, 'one.' For example, as a child, one heeds one's elders. When entering a subway car, one waits for riders to exit before entering. As a lawyer, one does not divulge private information about one's clients. In each of these cases, it would be inappropriate to act against the anonymous expectation except in extraordinary circumstances. To do so would be a basis for censure from anyone aware of the transgression (H.126-7). What one does, then, is general in two senses: I can be the 'one' at any time and I can encounter the 'one' in others at any time. We can follow the one's norms without relating it to any for-the-sake-of-which because we can just mimic what others do. But, at the same time, I can never be the 'one' simply. I can only be the 'one' via a particular social role that establishes what is appropriate or inappropriate behavior for me at a given time. Even as the 'one' I cannot do whatever others are doing and count as following the social norms. I have always already followed certain paths rather than others.

Consequently, the 'one' is unstable. Social norms are not only the rules I follow but also how I justify my actions. For example, as a teacher, if I am asked why I am granting a student an extension when her hard drive crashes, I can cite the norm that teachers should not punish their students for circumstances beyond their control. If I were asked that question and could give no answer or merely cited what other teachers usually do, I would have failed to justify my teacherly action. Similarly, if I am asked why I am a teacher rather than something else, I ought to be able to respond with more than, "Someone told me to do it." But when we are first socialized into our social roles, that is the only answer we are prepared to give because up to that point we have simply been learning how to be guided by the 'one,' yet the 'one' does not provide the basis for an answer. Only a for-the-sake-of-which could. Precisely to this problem, authenticity provides a solution.

Let us now turn to the passages at the heart of my interpretation of authenticity as the basis for having reasons. The first passage concerns Dasein's conscience, the voice that calls Dasein back from its absorption in its everyday activities as the 'one.'

> In being a ground—that is, in existing as thrown—Dasein constantly lags behind its possibilities. It is never existent *before* its ground, but only *from it* and *as this ground*. Thus being-a-ground means *never* to have power over its ownmost being from the ground up. This *not* belongs to the existential meaning of thrownness. It itself, being a ground, *is* a nullity of itself. Nullity does not signify anything like not-being-present-at-hand or not-subsisting; what one has in view here is rather a not which is constitutive for this *being* of Dasein—its thrownness. The character of this not as a not may be defined existentially: in being its *self*, Dasein is, *as* a self, the entity that has been thrown. It has been *released*

> from its ground, *not through* itself but *to* itself, so as to be *as this ground*. Dasein is not itself the ground of its being, inasmuch as this ground first arises from its own projection; rather, as being-its-self, it is the *being* of its ground. This ground is never anything but the ground for an entity whose being has to take over being-a-ground. (H.284-5)[9]

That passage contains a lot of thought to digest all at once. I will elucidate it for you shortly. For now hold in mind these two key points. First, Dasein is a ground that it must take over. 'Ground' here could also be translated by 'reason.' And, so, we might interpret this to say that Dasein must become a reason for itself. Second, Dasein never has power over this ground from the bottom up. It lags behind its possibilities in two senses. It engages in certain activities rather than others before it ever considers whether those activities matter to it. And it is not the source of those activities. To become a ground then is precisely to struggle with which activities matter to it and how it can also be a source of them.

The second passage comes from Heidegger's analysis of death. As I mentioned above, Dasein's mortality enables it to become authentic by disclosing to it how to make a responsible choice for what to do with its life. Here Heidegger clarifies the relationship between Dasein's death and its array of choices:

> The ownmost, non-relational possibility [death] is *not to be outstripped*. Being towards this possibility enables Dasein to understand that giving itself up impends for it as the uttermost possibility of its existence. Anticipation, however, unlike inauthentic being-towards-death, does not evade the fact that death is not to be outstripped; instead, anticipation frees itself *for* accepting this. By anticipating and, thereby, becoming free for its own death, Dasein is freed from being lost in possibilities that accidentally impinge upon it with the result that becoming free for death allows Dasein to understand and choose authentically, for the first time, the factical possibilities that lie upstream and ahead of the one that Dasein cannot outstrip… As a non-relational possibility, death individualizes but only in order to, as a possibility which is not to be outstripped, make Dasein, as being-with, understanding of the capacity-to-be of others. Since anticipation of the possibility which is not to be outstripped discloses also all the possibilities which lie ahead of that possibility, this anticipation includes the possibility of taking the *whole* of Dasein in advance in an existentiell manner that is to say, it includes the possibility of existing as a *whole capacity-to-be*. (H.264)[10]

Again this passage might be overwhelming. So, again, I offer two key points to hold in mind. First, the possibilities among which Dasein makes its most fundamental choice of what to do with its life "lie upstream and ahead" of its death. In so far as Dasein understands death, those possibilities transcend it, by which I mean they can last forever even if in fact they do not. Dasein knows itself to be finite but does not know the same about its possibilities. Second, the transcendence of the possibilities puts Dasein in authentic contact with others. By becoming authentic, Dasein recognizes others as similarly capable of authenticity and able to share in

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[9] Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. tr. Macquarrie, John and Robinson, Edward, Harper & Row (New York: 1962), pp.330-1. I adjusted the translation to make it clearer.

[10] *Ibid*, pp.308-9. Again, I adjusted the translation to make it clearer. I discovered this crucial passage thanks to a comment in Page, Carl. *Philosophical Historicism and the Betrayal of First Philosophy*. Penn State Press (University Park, PA: 1995), p.141. Like Page I understand this passage as undermining the common interpretation of *Being and Time*, according to which Heidegger shows that eternal truths or goods are impossible. Unlike Page, however, I do not interpret this passage to leave open the possibility that human beings could know or understand anything as eternal.

possibilities authentically with Dasein. Let's now dig deeper into these thoughts and see how they give rise to an account of reasons without a faculty of reason.

In the first passage Heidegger describes Dasein as both a ground for its existence and having to take over its being-a-ground. Dasein, of course, is not *the* ground, like a self-caused thing would be. Dasein is caused to be in a number of ways, including parentage and socialization. Nevertheless, Dasein is one of those grounds. But a ground in what way? Part of the answer to this question comes prior to this passage. Dasein's conscience calls to it but says nothing (H.272-4). Instead, it points Dasein to its ability to become authentic and to the implicit choices it has not not yet owned. In turn, Dasein interprets the call as indicating its guilt. Heidegger does not mean "guilty" in any of its ordinary senses. Dasein's ontological guilt is not original sin, moral wrongdoing, being the cause of certain events, or debts to others. Rather, Dasein is guilty in the sense of being responsible for its choices, where 'responsible' (*verantwortlich*) takes on its etymological meaning: able to give an answer (H.280-8). By heeding its conscience, Dasein takes over being-a-ground by interpreting itself as answerable for its choices. Conscience brings Dasein into a discourse, albeit a merely internal one so far.

Intriguingly, Heidegger describes Dasein's being-a-ground as a nullity. By this he means two important things. First, Dasein does not give itself the factical possibilities for its existence. And this goes all the way down. Conscience is silent because anything it could say would be expressed in a public language that one speaks and remains inevitably ambiguous. Precisely here we might expect that a faculty of reason could provide unambiguous content. But such a faculty could only express itself in a public language, which needs interpretation in still further terms. Second, Dasein negates possibilities. That is to say, Dasein is a ground for its existence by eliminating factical possibilities for itself. Dasein chooses by means of exclusion rather than invention. For the most part Dasein excludes without realizing it and, when asked, tends to defer responsibility for its actions to some authority. When it becomes authentic, it alters its relationship to the exclusions. It connects its exclusions to the pursuit of something worth it for its own sake and ceases to defer responsibility for its actions to anyone else. In this sense we should say Dasein alters its existence as a ground from being merely a cause of events to a reason for them.

But we should not pass over these crucial and interesting claims without noticing how counter-intuitive they are. Human beings are endlessly creative. From the slightest pun to the inception of a whole new realm of activity (such as modern natural science), human beings seem to be more than merely a nullity. We do not only negate possibilities we add them. What then would justify Heidegger's counter-intuitive claim?

The answer to this question lies in the second passage. In it, Heidegger is discussing the relationship between Dasein's anticipation of death and the factical possibilities on which it resolves in becoming authentic. The concept 'possibility' as Heidegger uses it encompasses any way that Dasein could be.[11] At bottom, any description befitting of Dasein is a possibility for it.[12] For our purposes, however, we should focus on the two kinds of factical possibility that are fundamental to a life-path. The first are the social roles discussed above. Dasein occupies at least one and usually multiple roles throughout its life, and these roles govern what it does daily as

[11] According to Heidegger, when we use 'possibility' in other senses—e.g., logical possibility (not in violation of the principle of non-contradiction)—we derive the meaning of 'possibility' from its meaning as applied to Dasein.
[12] When we take note of history—the rise and fall of peoples, empires, and civilizations—we must distinguish between live and dead possibilities. 'is a samurai' is a description befitting Dasein but not live for anyone today.

well as how it organizes its weeks, months, and years. Moreover, these roles are the sort of activity it can find enriching or fulfilling. They engage its capacities in a complete way. Dasein knows this because the possibilities can draw it out of the stultifying fear that attends the anticipation of its own death and they are worth pursuing unto death. They are not merely means to other states of affairs. Rather, Dasein can engage in them until there are no more states of affairs left to it.

We might conclude, then, that social roles are the factical possibilities that we pursue for their own sake. But that would be imprecise. Social roles are constitutive of pursuing something for its own sake, but what makes a given social role a for-the-sake-of-which is not the social role itself. Instead, we find some aspect of the social role worth pursuing for its own sake. The social role engages us in charity or requires lifelong learning or puts us in contact with some other value or good that we take to be final. These values are only accessible to us through social roles but they are not reducible to them.

These are the factical possibilities that Heidegger is discussing in the second passage: social role and ultimate value combined. By anticipating death, Dasein no longer sees its possibilities merely as means to other possibilities *ad infinitum*. Observe: although a given social role can be constitutive of something worth pursuing for its own sake, it is not essentially so. For example, I can choose a career as a mere means to supporting a loving, nurturing family. When Dasein is inauthentic or "lost in its possibilities," all social roles look like mere means. The final goods that social roles can manifest remain hidden as long as Dasein ignores its own mortality. But when it confronts that mortality, Dasein reveals that aspect of social roles to itself. It frees itself for a choice by putting the social roles into a framework where a responsible choice becomes possible. Specifically, it frees itself from the condition in which nothing appears worthy of choice.

This brings us to the two crucial claims that ground a Heideggerian account of reasons. First, the factical possibilities in question "lie upstream and ahead" of Dasein's death. The German reads "*vorgelagert sind*." I've used the hendiadys "upstream and ahead" to render the double-meaning of "*vorgelagert*." The idiomatic German meaning of the adjective is "upstream" or "off the coast," but it is derived from semantic pieces that mean something like "to be camped ahead." So, we have here a metaphor for the conceptual and explanatory relationship between Dasein's factical possibilities and death. On the one hand, "lies upstream" suggests a common philosophical metaphor for explanatory priority. If a is upstream from b then a explains b or some aspect of it, while b explains no aspect of a. Thus, Heidegger is claiming that Dasein's factical possibilities explain some aspect of Dasein's own death. On the other hand, the "lies ahead" suggests that these possibilities are part of Dasein's future and, indeed, extend into the future beyond Dasein's own death. But if the factical possibilities only become available for authentic resolution through Dasein's anticipation of its own death, how can those possibilities explain any aspect of its death? And how could those possibilities transcend Dasein's death?

The answer to these two questions comes towards the end of the paragraph where Heidegger tells us that death, "as an un-outstrip-able possibility, makes Dasein…understanding of others. Recall that Dasein develops its basic capacities as it is socialized by others. Of necessity the socialization process subordinates Dasein to authorities who teach it the social norms. As a result Dasein always starts out as inauthentic and sees inauthentically the factical possibilities into which it has been socialized. However, when Dasein understands itself as capable of authenticity, it also understands that others have the same capacity. It follows that the socialization process offered more to Dasein than first met its eye. Dasein inherited factical

possibilities that set its mortality in relief. Death too is a possibility; it is distinctive as non-optional and final. Dasein's factical possibilities can fit the finality of death, but they are not non-optional. They present Dasein with a choice. Thus, the socialization process, in which Dasein inherits factical possibilities, explains how Dasein understands death as a basis for making meaning for itself and not just the cessation of its existence. Of course, the factical possibilities cannot explain the fact that Dasein dies. Nevertheless, they can explain how Dasein can distinguish death as a possibility that makes meaning possible, as opposed to impossible.

Furthermore, the factical possibilities on which Dasein can resolve are not limited by Dasein's death. Because Dasein understands them as inherited through the socialization process, it also understands that others have engaged in these possibilities authentically. And just as Dasein is the future to those who are no longer, so Dasein will hand down its authentic factical possibility to future generations. Or what is the other side of the same coin, Dasein shares its authentic factical possibility with others and knows that it can. Dasein's authentic resolution individualizes it but at the same time brings it into a community which stretches before its birth and after its death. It commits itself to a common project with others with whom it works in concert.

With this interpretation of the second passage in hand, I can now answer the above question about creativity. The answer comes in two prongs. First, Heidegger can explain creativity as a reshuffling of factical possibilities. When we seem to invent something new, we in fact draw upon a pattern or patterns from one or more areas of life and apply them to another area where the patterns had not previously applied (as far as we know). Even modern science, as Heidegger shows (§69b), is derived from possibilities already available. Thus, Dasein can be creative while merely negating given factical possibilities. Second, no factical possibility—however new—gets its content from an individual Dasein alone because every factical possibility is always already shared. Even the most innovative person offers her innovation to a community. What that offering means and whether it is a success depends not on the will and intellect of the individual innovator but rather on how the community takes it up. Thus, individual Dasein contributes no irreducibly unique content to the possibilities in a community. By itself, Dasein is a nullity.

Based on the foregoing interpretation, we can reconstruct a conception of reasons from Heidegger's conception of authenticity. A reason is a consideration in favor of forming a belief, drawing an inference, or taking a course of action. But not just any consideration in favor of something is a reason for it. I might have a desire to bash my neighbor's mailbox with a baseball bat but that is not, by itself, a reason for doing so. A reason requires further grounding. We have to be able to trace it back to a source, a principle, a good. Unlike other considerations, a reason has a pedigree. Even when I perceive my desire to bash my neighbor's mailbox as a reason to do it, it is a reason only if I can trace that desire to a principle that licenses satisfying it. (And I doubt any pedigree exists for such a desire.)

We are subject to desires and impulses throughout our daily lives. Our thoughts, bodies, and decked-out environments elicit them. In turn, we have to sort through which ones to satisfy and which to suppress. For the most part we do this in an unconscientious way (which is not to say unconscious). We follow the impulses and desires that align with our tasks and suppress the ones that do not. When we reflect on what we are doing we perceive ourselves as having reasons for sorting through our impulses and desires as we do. But we rarely trace the complete pedigree of those purported reasons such that we verify them. This omission opens up the question whether what we take to be our reasons are in fact reasons.

One way that a consideration might fail to be a reason for a person—a way central to a Heideggerian account—is that the person traces the consideration back to an external authority. For example, when I follow a recipe, I defer to the authority of the chef who wrote the recipe. The instructions for me are not reasons, as they are for the chef who can explain how and why they produce the final dish. And should the recipe fail, the chef is prepared to examine what went wrong and attempt to fix the problem. The chef, who takes responsibility for the success of the recipe, has reasons with respect to making the dish whereas I merely have considerations. Indeed, each step in the recipe, the dish, those whom the chef will serve, and the wider world of expert food-making, all manifest reasons for the chef, whereas I do not have those reasons. The world of mere in-order-tos is transformed by authenticity into a world of reasons. That transformation takes place because the chef takes herself to be an authority, in the sense that she is an author—albeit not the unique author—of norms governing proper food-making. Her authorship, however, is in no way a creation from nothing. She always engages with the norms that she has inherited, and is answerable to others who, like her, take responsibility for those same norms.

The foregoing suggests a Heideggerian conception of rationality.[13] According to it, someone has a reason for a potential action—mental actions included—when the state of affairs fits the norms governing a social role he authentically occupies. Accordingly, a reason is part of a chain of in-order-tos that someone relates to an activity worth pursuing for its own sake. This is the sense in which Dasein's conscience makes it a ground for reasons. Its conscience calls it to relate the states of affairs in the world to whatever can bring an end to a series of why-questions. Heideggerian reasons, then, are always parts of lines of reasoning that reach a conclusive end. As a part of a line of reasoning, Heideggerian reasons are discursive.

Moreover, Heideggerian reasons are constrained by publicly known norms. Since reasons are parts of responses to why-questions, they can be exchanged with others as explanations or justifications for actions or beliefs. And since the reasons are grounded by a resolution on social roles, the reasons a person may offer must be shown either to accord with publicly known norms for those roles—as, for example, a novel application of them—or improve on one or more of them—as, for example, refusing to implement corporal punishment as a teaching tool. Not just any series of statements offered to an interlocutor—even by authentic Dasein—qualifies as a line of reasoning. Dasein's autonomy is not unlimited, despite lacking the law of reason. Instead, it is answerable to those from whom it has inherited its factical possibility and to whom it will hand it down.

Heideggerian reasons are serially grounded, discursive and constrained. By contrast, mere considerations are serial but not grounded and discursive but not constrained. Consider the desire to bash a neighbor's mailbox. I can connect that to a further consideration, such as venting anger or getting revenge. But those further considerations do not bring an end to why-questions. The considerations are ungrounded. Similarly, bare appeals to authority suffer the same defect. They fail to end the series of why-questions because we must ask what justifies deferring to that authority. Mere considerations are defectively serial. They also show a symmetrical defect with respect to discursiveness. I can offer a mere consideration to someone else, and they can recognize it as something that favors my action, in the way that desires always favor their own

[13] If this Heideggerian account of reasons has reminded you of Kant's conception of autonomy there is good reason for it. In the concept of authenticity, Heidegger sought to retain the distinction between autonomy and heteronomy without relying on a faculty of reason that gives the laws for being autonomous.

satisfaction. But the consideration is unconstrained by any norms that would distinguish the desire as licit or illicit. The interlocutor cannot share in endorsing the consideration. Again, the same goes for appeals to authority. The interlocutor must wonder why the authority offered should be binding on himself. Mere considerations offer explanations for actions but not justifications.

You might be wondering why social norms offer justifications where mere considerations do not? After all, social norms are positive phenomena, instituted by human beings. Consequently, appeals to social norms seem like just another appeal to authority. Here the double-aspect of factical possibilities plays a crucial role. The social norms that constitute the social roles Dasein plays are always in service of the values that make the social roles worth pursuing for their own sake. Justifications in terms of social norms always take for granted that the norms continue to serve those values. If an interlocutor raises an objection that a norm no longer serves that value, then that breakdown must be repaired either by dispelling the objection or emending the norm.

A moment of reflection on values such as charity, friendship, equality, and liberty reveals that they are multiple and not objectively prioritized. As Dasein pursues its factical possibility it will have to weigh values against one another when they come into conflict. Heideggerian reasons, then, are ultimately grounded in a choice for how to prioritize values. At this point, the differences between Heideggerian reasons and the traditional account of rationality become clear. As noted above the faculty of reason displays three central features: universality, unity, and systematicity. None of these features apply to Heideggerian reasons. First, Heideggerian reasons are not universal because they depend on a choice to prioritize values into a hierarchy that is not itself rationally required. Even though an interlocutor can recognize that a reason is binding for her friend, given his authentic resolution, the interlocutor herself, who resolves on a different factical possibility, might find that his line of reasoning does not bind her because they prioritize values differently. Heideggerian reasons, then, are not categorially universal, although they encompass at least all those who share an authentic factical possibility. Second, Heideggerian reasons are not unified: they do not trace back to any single principle. Whereas the faculty of reason is unified by a principle embodied in a concept such as the good or the unconditioned, Heidegger's account of rationality is unified by Dasein's ability to authentically resolve on some factical possibility. This ability, as we saw, is conceptually contentless—it is a nullity, the ultimate source of negation—and each person uniquely exercises it. The conceptual content derives not from the ability to become authentic itself but rather from the possibility adopted in its exercise. When Dasein reasons, it reasons back to its fundamental factical possibility and then can offer no further reason, should a disagreement persist. Dasein makes a Lutherian commitment in whose favor it can say nothing else. In Heideggerian lines of reasoning, not all roads lead to Rome. Finally, since reasons are neither universal nor unified, they cannot be systematic. It will always be possible that two lines of reasoning will be ultimately incompatible. For example, two appellate court justices might sincerely disagree over whether the norms of constitutional interpretation permit them to rule that every application of the death penalty is a cruel punishment. That they disagree does not indicate that at least one of them is mistaking what reasons they have. They each could exhaust the reasons they have without reaching the same conclusion.

Since Heideggerian reasons are not universal, nor unified, nor systematic, Heidegger is an anti-rationalist, as I defined it at the outset. However, Heidegger is not a reductive anti-rationalist. He does not reduce the appearance of reasons to causes. Although Dasein has moods

and desires that inform its authentic resolution, its resolution is not reducible to psychological drives or self-interest. In anticipating death, Dasein's mood reveals what and who in the world matter to it. Moreover, even if Dasein's mood were caused by psychological drives, Dasein accepts responsibility for its psychological make-up when it authentically resolves. By projecting itself into a factical possibility, Dasein becomes answerable for who and how it is: it will not excuse itself through its psychological make-up, even if that make-up plays a key role in explaining or justifying its actions or beliefs. And it treats this answerability as a reciprocal expectation among Daseins. Dasein does not privilege its own authenticity over the authenticity of others. A condition of authenticity is that Dasein enables or at least refuses to impede other Daseins' ability to be authentic (H.122).[14] Thus, the usual strategies for reducing reasons to causes—power, economic interest, or psychological drives—are all rebutted by Heidegger's account of authenticity. In so far as Heidegger can treat the appearance of reasons as something like what we expect a reason to be, Heidegger has an advantage over the reductive anti-rationalist accounts.

So far, I have sketched an interpretation of a Heideggerian account of reasons. The interpretation remains incomplete because I have not addressed some key kinds of reasons—in particular, theoretical reasons—that are not obviously assimilable to Heidegger's account. Nevertheless, we have enough of the interpretation on the table to consider what conception of public reason the Heideggerian account grounds. First, anyone who has read *Being and Time* knows that Heidegger is skeptical of the value of discourse in the public sphere (H.127).[15] In the public sphere, speakers pass along claims for which they themselves cannot vouch, offer truncated lines of reasoning, and flit from one subject-matter to another without spending enough time on them for anyone to acquire a useful understanding, let alone a reasonable one.[16] Given Heidegger's account of reasons, it is no surprise that he would be pessimistic concerning the value of public discourse. Clearly, not every participant in the discourse—and possibly few or none—will themselves be authentic. Those who are not cannot offer their own reasons but can only pass along reasons others have. As a result, members of the general public cannot decide whom to trust on a matter that is important but not part of their own factical possibility. Furthermore, speakers have a plethora of self-interested considerations in favor of manipulating one's audience rather than informing them or following lines of reasoning with them. Under these conditions, we could be forgiven for suspecting that the speakers who have widespread exposure in the public sphere are bad actors, whose speeches are better explained by the theories of reductive anti-rationalists.

Although we could be forgiven, perhaps we should not let those suspicions govern our interpretations of others in public discourse, especially those with whom we disagree. It is clear that Heidegger, even if he endorsed the Heideggerian account of reasons I have reconstructed here, would deny that it can support a conception of public reason. Heidegger himself would not rescue us from the morass described by Latour. So, to Heidegger, myself and you all, I would like to pose a question about the public sphere: is Heidegger's pessimism inevitable? To be sure, even if we conceive of an ideal public sphere, replete with authentic agents exchanging lines of reasoning, we cannot imagine that the end result—even at the end of time—will necessarily be

[14] Again, those familiar with Kant will recognize this as a Heideggerian version of Kant's Formula of Humanity.

[15] The word Macquarrie and Robinson translate as 'publicness' is '*die Offentlichkeit*.' It is commonly used to refer to the public sphere and rarely to the abstract property of being public.

[16] These descriptions are a gloss on Heidegger's conceptions of idle talk, ambiguity, and curiosity, respectively.

universal consensus on the solution to every dispute. The need for public reasoning will never be complete nor even approach an end like a hyperbola to its asymptote. This essential incompleteness follows from the lack of universality and unity. Heidegger himself recognizes this essential incompleteness, which is why he describes authentic politics as a kind of struggle (*kampf*, H.384-5). When reasons inevitably run out, all that is left is non-rational means of persuading others. It would be easy to assume that non-rational means of persuasion are, a fortiori, violent in the sense that they require some people to submit to a power they do not endorse by their own lights. This assumption seems all the more justified because, without a universal conception of reason, it is unclear whether there are any norms of discourse that would undermine a public discourse that oppresses authentic voices who have reasons to offer. If there are no universal norms then we have a strong reason to believe there is no foundation for a public discourse that can legitimate public courses of action.

It might seem then that Heidegger's pessimism is inevitable. However, I would like to close by offering initial considerations that would open up an optimistic line of investigation. First, we must recall that authenticity requires reciprocity. It is possible that we could derive universal norms of participation from the reciprocity that authenticity requires. If oppression inhibits Dasein's capacity to be authentic, then authentic Dasein cannot endorse norms that oppress others. It would follow that an authentic public sphere would not prevent anyone from participating in it. Second, authentic Dasein is aware that its own authentic resolution is just one among many possible resolutions. Furthermore, it is aware that its own resolution puts it into a particular, limited perspective. Dasein does not have authentic access to all matters of public import. When it does not, it ought to be open to the reasons that others who do have to offer. By heeding the reasons that others can offer from their own authentic resolutions, Dasein accepts that rationality is not something given to us that we must discover but rather something at stake for us that we must forge. An optimistic view of a Heideggerian conception of reasons takes public reason as a collective challenge for us. And the question is: what resources does the Heideggerian conception—or any other conceptions that are live to the problem rationality poses—provide for us to meet this challenge?