

Second Philosophy

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Title	Authenticity II: Everydayness
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INTRODUCTION

Sojourna: Last week, we discussed the notion of authenticity but were not convinced by it at all. Some thought the process of trying to be authentic was incoherent; others said consciously aiming for authenticity was rather inauthentic.

We tried to get to the heart of the matter and understand the concept via Heidegger, but that proved rather daunting. Let's give it another go tonight.

And just a few words on mysterious Heidegger who had us all confused last week (and probably still will)...

For Heidegger, the concept of authenticity is rooted in the recognition of one's own finitude in the face of one's death. Understanding that we are finite changes things for us - we realise that we have limited options in this life, limited possibilities. This changed conception (instead of thinking we are god-like and can do something that has some sort of universal meaning and value beyond us) makes us focus on what we have, what time we have, and what we can do.

All of this is based in our historical situation. We have to make sense of the historical situation in which we are born/thrown/live in. Within this situation we need to make sense of what can be meaningful for us and what matters to us. When we do this we should set goals to achieve whatever is significant to us and live with commitment and with passion toward achieving these goals.

Though Heidegger wouldn't use such pop-psych terms as goals and life plans...

But Heidegger does say that we have a certain disposition that makes us seek out or notice things of importance to us. Also, we think and talk and articulate these things. Finally, we have a tendency to pursue things for the sake of some future goal or plan or event.

We are always already acting in this fashion, right? Is this what it means to be authentic? Remember, for Heidegger, authenticity refers to the attitude in which I engage in my projects as my own.

Oswy:

Are You Authentic? Debate 2: In Praise of Everydayness

Last week we debated the notion of authenticity as a specific concept in Heidegger and as a broader term related to Bad Faith in the wider Existential Movement.

I want to challenge Sojourna and others this week by questioning the supposed value of Authenticity as a meaningful concept and as useful mode of being. What's so special about Authenticity anyway? In Existentialism as a whole there is, depending on who you read, a faint to strong air of disapproval about following the patterns laid out by your culture and by the `they` or the One ... What is the basis of that disapproval, why is it morally better to strive for authenticity? Is it morally sensible or superior to strive to be authentic at all costs? What if to be authentic is to be an aggressive individualist? Do you really want a Nietzschean as your next door neighbour?

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Is it true as, Camus claimed that the only meaningful authentic alternatives open to us are suicide or rebellion? Is our everyday existence really as pointless and absurd as Camus in `the Myth of Sisyphus` tries to make out? What is absurd about trying to rationally understand the universe anyway? Doesn't the world have too many people relentlessly striving to be authentic, romantic, hedonists? They disrupt the ability of ordinary people to make substantial progress in terms of greater knowledge of the world. Could not hell be other Existentialists? After all what have the existentialist to say about morality, human nature, culture and tradition that isn't destructive and negative? Is that being authentic or just gratuitously nihilistic?

I think I prefer being in the world getting on with it and making the best of it like most people do. So let's hear it for Everydayness.

QUESTIONS:

I have four main issues with Heidegger and existentialism:

1. Is life facing death without God really absurd? What is the problem about the world and our existence in it being ungrounded? Can we not find meaning in the pursuit of happiness, love, social usefulness? Money, beauty, self realization and knowledge or a combination of all these things? Is contemplating the absurd, absurd in itself?
2. Why does Heidegger, in spite of all the sensible things he says about our Being, ie its embodiment in the world, its thrownness, its looking to the future, its existence as a process embedded in time, still feel it necessary to posit two modes of being ie authentic and inauthentic and imply that the former is superior to the latter.? What is so valuable, special, useful about being Authentic anyway?
3. Isn't Sartre's notion of Nothingness and Bad faith a license for an unviable pathological existence?
4. How do you know when you are in an authentic state? Heidegger talks about being resolute, facing up to things. What does this mean in this context and how could you ever verify that you had achieved them?

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DISCUSSION:

Simulat: great intro Oswy :-)

Sojourna: Oswy - I have a question - how is everydayness different to authenticity?

Oswy: Thanks Simulat did you believe it?

Simulat: yes - I agree with your position

Shingles: these things eg, social usefulness, are fine in themselves, they can give one happiness, but it'll be a shallow unprofound contentment

Oswy: Soj that's a good question. I don't think they are but Heidegger and the others seem to think they are and we can sort of feel a difference?

Oswy: Shingles what is shallow about being socially useful?

Renald: I have a similar question, actually: what's the difference between authentic and natural?

Steve: Thanks Second Philosophy Team for this second discussion and the focus on Heidegger, and very good questions Oswy

Oswy: Renald, perhaps the supporters of Heidegger could explain

ZJ: nature is unnatural - nowadays

Oswy: Not sure I follow that ZJ

Shingles: nothing particularly, but what is profound about it, Oswy?

ZJ: u must approach nature from its no longer natural state

Renald: I don't mean nature itself.

ZJ: intellectualized by humans

Oswy: I am not seeking to be profound Shingles I leave that to Heidegger and Sartre. I am in favour of everydayness

Simulat: About absurdity - I have no problem with existence being absurd in the sense of pointless - and I don't understand why the idea of absurdity causes people to have despair

Markos: I don't think everydayness = inauthenticity in Heidegger. Authenticity is not opposed to everydayness, which means being absorbed in everyday activities

Fedor: Oswy, do you think that it is possible to be 'not authentic'?

Oswy: Neither do I Simulat surely we have always felt this at times but it does not get in the way of making a life.

Shingles: Ok, but I think you should acknowledge that that is a conscious effort to resist questioning the nature of things and rather a complacent approach, Oswy

Steve: like Heidegger's notion of truth which involves necessarily revealing and concealing; so existence involves necessarily authentic and inauthentic moments

Sojourna: I think the absurd focuses on some incongruity between how we take our lives to be serious and how ultimately is not. Just to repeat here what I mentioned on the Facebook discussion - Thomas Nagel himself explains that he finds absurdity in "the collision between the seriousness with which we take our lives" and the impossibility, as he sees it, of finding any ultimate foundation for the "whole system of justification and criticism" that supports our activities, projects and beliefs."

Oswy: Fedor, I think that other people may be able to detect it in you ie if you contradict your intentions by your actions say.

Markos: Also, Heidegger doesn't advocate trying to be authentic. That's what he calls "non-genuine" authenticity

Steve: yes, Markos

Renald: That's interesting, Markos, because the whole notion of trying to be authentic struck me as... problematic, at best.

Steve: you find yourself facing your own finitude and own up to it and become aware of the ownness of existence

Markos: right Ren

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Sojourna: Yes, Markos, I get the feeling that with Heidegger authenticity is just about everydayness. We are already that?

Sage: Markos, so it a virtue like of Aristotle, which has value but isn't something we can directly choose among?

Steve: that no one can substitute for you at your moment of death and that you are finite

Simulat: I still don't get it Sojourna - I have no expectation of an ultimate foundation for anything - but I still find it easy to be really interested in what I'm interested in

Fedor: Oswy, in that case would I not be authentic, or would my intentions be, or would my actions be?

ZJ: trying to be authentic --cant be authentic -- trying prevents

Markos: Sojourna, there are different ways to be absorbed in our everyday activities. The inauthentic mode is to believe that there are rules which are somehow absolute and compelling, and that you must follow in your behaviour

Oswy: Markos and others, I don't think H says you should strive for Authenticity either but he does seem to say this is a state of heightened awareness and it has value above everydayness.

Sojourna: Simulat - I just think you've come to terms with what is the absurd condition of human existence. According to Camus, I think.

Markos: Sage, it's something you arrive at by facing up to your own guilt and mortality. But your goal in life can't be to become authentic

Oswy: Good question Fedor. From a second person point of view you might not be authentic.

Shingles: may I ask to what the guilt pertains to Markos?

Sojourna: Markos - doesn't H say that we are always kind of finding things important and compelling in our historical everydayness or whatever and we tend to pursue goals and activities according to this?

Howard: let's see if I understand stuff so far. To be Authentic in H's sense is to be your own person. To decide what is the best for you, and to live your life accordingly. This may mean ignoring or even disobeying some of the 'normal' expectations of life in your society.? Oswy is saying most of us do live a 'normal' life in our own community and this is good -or good enough for a fine life? Is this right?

Nick: guilt, mauvaise foi we're talking about?

Markos: Yes, Oswy, he thinks it does have value. That's because it a) allows you to take responsibility for your own life, and b) opens you to the particular demands of the concrete situation you are in

Markos: Shingles - the guilt of existence. You can't help but affect others, and yet you can't justify the effect you have on them

Fedor: Oswy, do you mean that authenticity only exists in the eye of the beholder?

Nick: isn't Heidegger authenticity similar to Sartre's mauvaise foi?

Renald: Liver?

Oswy: Fedor, in the sense that it has meaning to a second person yes.

Nick: ah Levinas!

Shingles: whilst I understand that I find the possibility of guilt impossible if there is no 'lawgiver' as Sartre would describe God, Markos

Nick: yes, guilt is a Kantian factum for him Markos

Oswy: Fedor remember I am speaking of what I think H means by Authenticity

Simulat: Could it be that the dislike of the absurd has to do with being raised to expect that god loves you and has a plan - and then if you lose your faith in the plan you berate yourself and say "Why did I put up with that crap"?

Nick: or are you talking about 'Sorge' from Heidegger?

Sojourna: Simulat - haha yeah

Oswy: Howard I think that is about right. But in everyday life we have always had anxiety but we get on with our projects just the same. We would do this anyway. I don't see this heightened awareness thing. A special factor as it were

Markos: Nick, why do you think authenticity is like bad faith?

Renald: Nick, that would be good to know. Sorge = guilt, as far as I know.

Nick: yes, both Levinas and Heidegger take it as a Kantian factum

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Steve: don't think Heidegger is talking psychology Oswy

Markos: No. Sorge is care. Guilt is Schuld

Wichard: so dislike of the absurd fits in a teleological paradigm while love of the absurd is anti-teleological?

Nick: but the question is, is it? What is our relationship the the Other

Steve: not about states of awareness

Shingles: what is this anxiety, apart from the rationality of it, why on earth should it produce an emotive response such as anxiety? That's what I don't understand

Nick: something in us always answers before we're put in the situation of guilt for being egocentric, for the 'I' that greets the world in the morning

Fedor: Oswy, would this mean that authenticity is a state one can only reach by caring about what others think about you?

Oswy: Steve, interesting how do you distinguish a state of awareness from a state of being?

Steve: states of being condition awareness

Oswy: Fedor, I don't think authenticity is state you can be aware of. I don't think you could ever know if you were in such a state.

Markos: Why not, Oswy?

Steve: they are how we are attuned

Sojourna: Shingles, it just does for me. Not sure why. But I often feel like pursuing things, building, creating, is rather odd when in the end I'm going to die and none of it will have any further significance to me. So, what's the point? Of course, the point is that this is our condition, so yeah you just get on with it. But still, I have experienced that despair.

Wichard: So authenticity is unconscious?

Renald: Authenticity seems inevitable, to me.

Howard: Shingle - I agree with you and Oswy - we all have problems (anxiety?) in deciding what to do in everyday life-but we seldom agonise or feel guilt or enter any prolonged state of extreme anxiety- why does Heidegger think so?

Steve: out site the consciousness unconsciousness dichotomy Wichard

Fedor: Oswy, isn't this declaring 'authenticity' as irrelevant to ones actions?

Simulat: I learned that I was authentic from Sojourna's test last week (tongue in cheek :-)

Oswy: Markos, from the little I can glean Heidegger never really spells out what the state of authenticity is. He says things like being resolute towards death and being clear sighted. How do I know when I am genuinely in that state of being what is my criteria of knowing it?

Sojourna: That's interesting Wichard, I don't think Heidegger is saying it is unconscious though, but something that we do and are. We respond to the world, have feelings, give importance to some things and not others according to whatever feels right for us.

Oswy: Sorry Fedor, didn't follow that last point?

Steve: we are in the world according to Heidegger

Wichard: But being self-aware might have something to do with authenticity

Oswy: Last should be

Steve: we "world" as a verb; we respond to things in terms of our way of being in the world

Sage: Markos, you said that inauthenticity amounted to rule-following. But aren't all our actions built on generalizations that are usually invisible to us? Does authenticity means we must see our invisible assumptions? Surely we cannot see them all at once, or challenge too much at a time.

Markos: Here's how I understand it. When you are authentic, first of all you take over who you are, not as something you have to be, but as something you just are and want to be. Second, when you are authentic, you don't think that social ideals, habits, tastes, ways of responding to situations, etc., are inherently right. What you win from authenticity is a freedom to live your own life, and an openness to doing what the situation requires, given who you are, rather than doing what one is supposed to do in the situation.

Nick: hmm, ever think you're being word-fetishist communicating like this? Authenticity is a word that can be used to try to describe something, it has no meaning in it self, nor does some like 'Heidegger's authenticity'

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ZJ: is authenticity beyond the world??

Shingles: well, this is a common and usual approach: that one expects the world they are born into to make sense, to be coherent, if one assumes this then naturally once they question the order of the universe they shall feel disappointed. is expecting coherence natural? maybe not

ZJ: they are born into a constructed world; unnatural

Nick: I second that Markos

Steve: ZJ, there is no beyond the world for Heidegger

Shingles: astute, ZJ

ZJ: when are you not authentic?

Oswy: Shingles, why does the contemplation of death or anxiety make the whole world lose sense?

Sojourna: Markos - according to H, authenticity is just being what you are. According to others, say Nietzsche, authenticity is becoming who you are. Is that the narrativist authenticity concept?

ZJ: Steve - that's his problem

Shingles: I wouldn't claim that it does, Oswy

Markos: No, authenticity is not just being who you are. It's taking responsibility for who you are

Marya: Almost seems like common sense

Renald: Soj... can't they work together? Isn't there a self-in-the-moment and a self-over-time?

Fedor: Oswy, I mean that if you can never know if you are authentic, the concept becomes irrelevant for action, and therefore one cannot be responsible for being authentic or not. All discrepancy between intentions and actions would also be unique... therefore I feel that what Renald says (Authenticity seems inevitable, to me.) is a fact...

Shingles: I think that's good reasoning, Markos :)

Steve: I agree if you are referring to Levinas, and his beyoubd, which is the Other

Howard: But Markos, we all take responsibility for our actions (with few exceptions) and our actions in some sense are who we are

Sojourna: Renald - yes, interesting.

ZJ: authenticity is being ego is its blockage

Nick: but Markos, who we are isn't in our control

Simulat: Sojourna - doesn't the idea of becoming who we are presuppose that there is a way we should be? And where would that should come from

Oswy: Markos, I hear this sort of mantra over and over when I read commentators and supporters of Heidegger, but what is this sudden sense of freedom and openness what extra is it beyond the normal condition of life. Do we actually have these self revelatory moments?

Renald: Howard... we all take responsibility for our actions?

Shingles: what about the ones who are 'just following orders' Howard?

Nick: we attach to stuff before we become someone

Renald: Not to mention the times the devil made me do it.

Sojourna: Markos - not sure if you were responding to me - so Nietzsche and Heidegger are saying the same thing?

ZJ: authenticity is nakedness of true being ---and ego is costume it wears

Steve: Have to disagree a bit Markos

Nick: how to take responsibility for that?

Markos: Howard, we often don't take responsibility. Let me give you an example: you stop at a stop sign, and I ask you: why did you stop? You respond: because that's what you're supposed to do. That's pushing off responsibility to somewhere else

Sojourna: Yeah, Simulat, there's a kind of weird problem with the becoming who you are supposed to be.

Sage: Marya, many people believe in some absolute rights for human - it's even written into the American declaration of independence and is widely agreed on - but I believe Heidegger's notion of authenticity requires that no rights are truly 'inalienable' as I understand it

Steve: for Heidegger, find yourself in a more authentic atunement happens

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Oswy: Fedor yes I see well I think I agree Authentic except in the sense of hypocrisy observed by others does not seem to be something we can experience first hand.

Steve: you can't decide to put yourself in it

Markos: (sorry - this is moving too fast for me to possibly respond to all the comments directed at me) :

Oswy: I should say I apologise if I am not answering everyone fully but there are several stream of argument going on inevitable I'm afraid.

Shingles: and I think that this dissolution of responsibility runs deep in our human cultures (to differing degrees of course), Howard & Markos

Nick: np Markos

Sojourna: haha sorry Markos

Howard: Ren - yes, we are responsible (unless we argue about free will); and from Nuremberg trials onward obeying orders is no defence for ones bad actions

Renald: Howard, I wasn't suggesting that we aren't responsible. But not everyone accepts responsibility for all her actions.

Fedor: Oswy, in what sense would hypocrisy be an exception?

Sage: Markos, you said that inauthenticity amounted to rule-following. But aren't all our actions built on generalizations that are usually invisible to us? Does authenticity means we must see our invisible assumptions? Surely we cannot see them all at once, or challenge too much at a time.

Howard: Ren - agree that - 'covering your back' time is well established from bankers down wards. But the buck stops somewhere

Steve: can you call on one person at a time to speak

Oswy: Ok I will try and take the question on. Let's suppose you can achieve Authenticity whatever the means?

Shingles: in answering question 2, I would say in some sense, its a required trial of maturity

Oswy: Let's suppose you authentic self is a violent or otherwise disagreeable person.

Nick: there's a big difference between morality and legality, our inner core responding to something and the law

Markos: Sage, authenticity is a modification of inauthenticity. I think that means that we never escape from all rules or generalizations. But one can be guided by a generalization and also open to not following the rule when it is not appropriate. That's part of authenticity

Shingles: but what if there is a 'law without a law-giver', Nick?

Oswy: How useful would authenticity be do you strive to reach such authenticity in the future?

Nick: laws like I meant it are forged by humans

ZJ: try not confuse authenticity - with the shell of genuine that ego wants u to see as true

Shingles: ok, then, Nick

Nick: it's interesting how pragmatic things are becoming in a fast changing world

Oswy: What's wrong with a life of relative conformity at least as in a previous example we all stop at the stop signs for the good of others which is a purpose in life?

Nick: that law doesn't follow fast enough; so we're thrown back to our responsibility

Steve: nothing Oswy

ZJ: authenticity is timeless and you always have it at centre

Nick: a very interesting situation

Shingles: yes, fluidity of assets is the most valuable quality in our contemporary world (credit crunch, good casing point)

Oswy: Steve, so what is the value of authenticity in this case?

Nick: yes shingles

Steve: trying to say it is not an individual state; we exist

Howard: ZJ - how can authenticity in the sense it seems to be acquiring here (ie developed by a person for his/her life) be timeless?

Nick: Simulat just wrote an essay about it, haven't gotten to reading it, but I bet it's very interesting

ZJ: your authenticity is of both cyber avatar and bio ego

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Sojourna: Stopping at stop signs is part of our cultural and historical reality, so stopping at stop signs is fine in terms of authenticity.

Steve: authenticity/inauthenticity are two sides of existence

Nick: authenticity comes into being when you become a master of your own faith if you ask me

Shingles: I think the flaw is that one is required to trust the consensus values of good/useful, Oswy, bearing in mind that they may be flawed or prejudicial, Oswy

ZJ: isn't 1st yr of life --is outside of life

Nick: hence I think socialism is more authentic than capitalism and blind hand ideology

Shingles: remember, existentialists rose from the 'death of God'

Fedor: Would not stopping at a red sign be seen as authentic, or rather as idiotic?

Renald: oh, dear

Steve: we are always more tuned in to one aspect than another

Oswy: Nick what exactly does that mean in cashed out terms. How could you ever be the master of your own fate?

Steve: both necessarily are happening at once

Sage: Markos, so authenticity always occurs in a background of inauthenticity? We find a rule to challenge while amidst others we do not?

Markos: Of course you can still stop at the stop sign. But you don't do it under the illusion that you have to

Nick: by emancipating as much as you can

Steve: stars are there in day; we just don't see until night

Nick: Frankfurter Schule and stuff

Oswy: Soj, Markos raised the issue of stop signs as genuine authenticity ie to question them

Nick: getting analysed; know yourself

Wichard: Ahhh, so we return to Socrates and Plato.

Nick: :)

Shingles: oh, great

Sojourna: We stop at stop signs because we choose to live in a society in which people do that and not because there is some intrinsic goodness in that or because of some greater good. I think.

Nick: Socrates didn't not write for nothing if you ask me

Shingles: hahah, nick

Nick: communication is way more important than text and laws

Sage: you do, Soj? I stop because I don't want to hit someone or be pulled over by a hidden cop lol

Oswy: Steve, that last remark was too cryptic for me

Howard: Wichard - and both are a long way from H -but in developing Greek virtues you achieve a form a authenticity which allows you to play a proper part in your community

Wichard: Perhaps the authenticity/inauthenticity is one of those ideals of the neoPlatonists that are thrown out to confound us.

Steve: well truth is a-lythia for Heidegger - means un-hiddenness; so truth always is hidden/unhidden

Simulat: I'd say that if you always decide whether to stop at a stopsign you'll make a mistake pretty quickly and crash into somebody

Nick: all just words Wich, meaning is use ;)

Howard: It is confusing me

Renald: alethia

Shingles: yes, in terms of laws, it now works partly on how the communicators (barristers/lawyers and such) Can utilise the law, rather than an absolute writ in stone, Nick, I agree completely

Simulat: it's why the stop signs were invented

ZJ: btw --is any here who have dharma approach to authenticity

Fedor: I think that stopping at stop signs is the consequence of a sensible agreement. If to agree means losing authenticity, the concept again loses all value...

Nick: nice shingles :)

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Oswy: Fedor it would be idiotic not to stop/ Markos why would you have ever thought anything different of course you don't have to but doesn't everyone know that and put it aside. What is that value of knowing you don't have to stop?

Sage: sure sim, but if you consider it, or any rule, to be one you simply cannot break, then you're going to have other problems, sooner or later :)

Steve: when you reveal something you conceal something else; same with authentic/inauthentic

Markos: An expert can get tuned into the situation well enough to tell when the action is called for by the situation without having to think about it

Simulat: Well Fedor - as it is, lots of people decide whether they will stop at a stopsign each time - and lots of them make mistakes and cause a lot of harm and damage

Steve: you are still going to have to die your own death even if you refuse to consider it

Nick: aleitheia indeed Steve :)

ZJ: can u be authentically inauthentic

Sage: Oswy, what question are we on?

Nick: you can't frame anything without a frame

Wichard: Oh, recursive self-referentiality!!

Shingles: yes, but using this example, how many of us have ran a red light just moments after it becomes red? Quite a few, if we're honest, Sim. So we accord with the rules when we see fit

Renald: I must be missing something.

Simulat: yes shingles

Oswy: Sage it's a sort of blanket attack. But basically I hope we are considering how useful authenticity would be if it existed.

Steve: well each person here exists

Shingles: each avatar, lets say instead of person

Oswy: Steve you last set of remarks seem impenetrable to me. When truth is revealed another part is concealed. I just don't know what you mean by that or what Heidegger means.

Fedor: I feel that it is still the possibility of 'non authenticity' that must be proven

Steve: look at a box; can you see the entire box at once?

Wichard: Authenticity still sounds to me like another attempt at a culture-free, decontextualized ideal

Renald: Fedor, I'm with you there.

Fedor: Arigato renald

Wichard: When every individual operated within a culture and context.

Steve: or the back of your head?

Renald: I'm looking at the back of my head right now, Steve

Oswy: Fedor why can't we just accept the fact of being and existence as Heidegger delineated it in part one of Being and Time. Why did he complicate matters with authenticity as superior to non authenticity if he could give a clear definition of one or the other?

Steve: not your avatar or in a mirror; or your face?

Renald: Oswy, I'm curious about that, too. But it seems to have been in the air, then... or the water, something.

Renald: Maybe it still is.

Fedor: Oswy, yes, that seems to be the question. Why aren't we able to?

Oswy: Steve is your point that as humans can only see part of reality at a time?

Steve: we are perspectival; see from a perspective

Wichard: yes, Steve, I agree.

Steve: in the centre of a field of consciousness

Wichard: And that perspective is a consequence of many factors

ZJ: if the behind the keyboard is your avatar's authenticity --what's your humans??

Oswy: Ok I agree Steve

Steve: some things show

Markos: Ren, Fedor, do you know anyone who thinks they're living the way they're *supposed to*

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Steve: and when they do others are obscured

Teleo: I would have thought that, everybody's shared values -which we have silently taken up - can only describe a General reality about some state of affairs. If that's so then authenticity would be the more grounded in the individual maybe. As opposed to the normative shared values ... in the case of a sign, whatever it may mean and what ever the ways it may be adhered to may lose there relevance depending on weather the rule makes any sense, any longer..

Wichard: including immediate context, broad cultural contexts and personal reference frames. Some of the personal reference frames may be part of deep psychological identity and thus unconscious

Renald: Markos, I do know such people.

ZJ: to little assured rather assumed communication

Steve: Heidegger calls the condition of the possibility of this field of consciousness existence

Oswy: Steve only one can be focussed at a time that is not the same as saying one thing conceals another is it?

Markos: Just a few, Ren? Or most?

Shingles: I would tend to treat the normative values as a challenge to be overcome, Teleo, it could be an easy one or a difficult one

Steve: and existence is finite

Sage: Markos, Is authenticity more than an awareness of our options?

Markos: Yes, Sage. Even inauthentic people are aware of options

Renald: Not most, Markos... I'm not sure I could say many, even. But more than a few. But, this points up the problem. Feeling that one isn't living as one is supposed to doesn't seem to me to be a matter of authenticity or not, so much as a conflict between is and not is.

Oswy: Good point sage and when have we never been aware of our options?

Sojourna: Markos, could you say a bit more on that?

Fedor: Markos, personally I am not aware of anybody that fulfils that condition. Which would make all of them authentic. Anyhow, as far as I understand it, isn't the concept of guilt in European philosophy a guaranty that nobody is as 'supposed to be'?

Teleo: you can be authentic sometimes though, I would expect.. though that would likely be a fluke.

Renald: But, spending time dwelling on whether one is authentic seems at great risk of an infinite regress designed to lead to depression, if not worse.

Markos: I guess we run in different circles. Most people I meet believe that there are things that they should and shouldn't do, just because you're supposed to. Most people I know think there are inherently right ways to live a life

Sage: It sounds like it's more about an awareness of our ability to take personal responsibility for our choices

Oswy: Shingles i am all for questioning of normative values but isn't that something we do I almost say naturally, it does not require some authentic state of existence?

Shingles: the question of whether one is authenticity only becomes relevant if one desires a purpose to existence

Renald: What's the difference between authenticity and identity?

Oswy: Shingles in the intro issues I pointed out that people could have many purposes to make life meaningful but they don't talk about that in terms of being authentic.

Oswy: Renald, I don't think there is one

Shingles: and as I pointed out, those examples are limited to themselves and hence, unprofound, Oswy

Howard: I think we are back to the problem of what authentic/inauthentic means - and unless we clear/agree that we probably can't answer Oswy's 2nd question about why H thought it necessary to raise the issue and claim one superior to the other. So far i think the balance of views is that the distinction is either false or unnecessary or both.

Renald: Then, Oswy, I am both clearer and more confused about the issue. :-)

Sage: Markos, is it possible to be aware of being inauthentic? Or is it something that necessarily involve a kind of blindness?

Marya: Let me repost what Markos wrote about what authenticity means via Heidegger: **“Markos: Here's how I understand it. When you are authentic, first of all you take over who you are, not as something you have to be,**

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but as something you just are and want to be. Second, when you are authentic, you don't think that social ideals, habits, tastes, ways of responding to situations, etc., are inherently right. What you win from authenticity is a freedom to live your own life, and an openness to doing what the situation requires, given who you are, rather than doing what one is supposed to do in the situation. Authenticity is not just being who you are. It's taking responsibility for who you are."

Steve: only by "anticipating my own death do I get close to realizing my finitude; this is as close as I think H gets to spelling it out

Oswy: Renald, hang on to the clear its worth its weight in gold.

Oswy: Shingles many people share these pursuits eg of money or of happiness, or beauty. Doesn't that make them profound? What is your definition to make something profound?

Renald: Markos... what if part of who one is emerges from the context in which one has lived... I mean, what if that's inevitable, universal.

Shingles: there is a very human Desire to value clarity, because it makes things easier

Howard: Marya - that's how I see it so far

Steve: this is getting as much of a sense of the whole of your own being as is given to us

Shingles: sorry, that was unrelated, Oswy

Teleo: you know you are being inauthentic when you come across a sign saying *No Entry* and you do exactly what you are told to do, without any question whatsoever. Our assumption that the sign may be even true anymore would signify the danger in unquestionably following rules *Blindly*

Renald: By that definition, Teleo, one could never actually be aware of inauthenticity, either.

Markos: Yes, Ren, that's exactly what Heidegger thinks

Renald: Great Scott, Markos!

Shingles: 'world-altering' is perhaps a useful understanding of 'profound', Oswy

Markos: But you take it over as an historical inheritance, not as inherently right and correct

Teleo: I thought I just described what format it could take, inauthenticity, that is

Simulat: Sure Teleo - whenever I see a sign saying something is dangerous - I test the danger for myself (not) - in fact, I need a good reason to go past signs indicating danger

Sage: Markos, so we can't be aware of being inauthentic right now, but we could deem we were acting inauthentically earlier, and learn from it?

Oswy: Marya, Steve, taking responsibility, contemplating death. Don't all humans at all times do this in the everyday course of life and then they get on with their purposes that makes life meaningful?

Markos: "awareness" is a tricky concept sage. I'm not sure exactly what you mean

Steve: no most of us believe in the myth of the isolated mind; that our mind is internal and eternal - although we confess that we "know" everyone dies

Shingles: settling for a base purpose 'money gives my life meaning', is that a condonable thing to desire, to encourage, Oswy?

Renald: Markos... not as inherently right and correct... beyond one's own authenticity, right? I mean, within that, they are right... just not absolutely.

Howard: Well shingles some people would argue that we are what we possess and money permits that...of course we can have money without taste....

Sage: Markos, what if you replace awareness with 'having knowledge'?

Oswy: Teleo I don't think people ever behave in that unquestioning way. Ask them and they will always give a reason for their actions.

Shingles: or is it simply that if we allow and encourage such sentiments our lives become more comfortable, Oswy?

Teleo: well Sim, that would indicate to me that you see all normative values as having good reason, which I doubt you do. The sign may be a complete lie and place there to stop you on what may actually be, your right of way..

Oswy: Shingles you may think the pursuit of money is not a worthy purpose but many people think it is it gives them a direction and they think it has benefit to others viz capitalism etc.

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Shingles: yes, but why on earth should we encourage such thinking, Oswy?

Renald: Who said anything about encouraging?

Shingles: is it to muzzle the questioning mouths?

Autumn: Surely the whole point is that it is up to you to define what gives your own life meaning, and if that is money, well, that is up to you

Shingles: yes, and each decision has its consequence, autumn

Teleo: Oswy. I have heard thoughts of reasons for thousands of acts, and often, when inspected not a lot made sense to me, even in light of the best course of action to result in their stated end.

Marya: Oswy, you said "*Marya, Steve - Taking responsibility contemplating death. Don't all humans at all times do this in the everyday course of life and then they get on with their purposes that makes life meaningful?*"

-- I think people perhaps think about death yes, but how much responsibility they tend to take for themselves is perhaps a separate issue - in fact I think modern humans probably take less responsibility for themselves than ever before

Howard: no shingle - there are plenty who question it right now with the financial crisis -but it is part of everyday life and I cannot see that for someone focused on such matters it could not be part of an 'authentic' life as defined by some here

Fedor: Teleo, doesn't that just prove that reason is overestimated as to what its importance for action is?

Oswy: It is now 9-15 so I think I am going to draw the formal discussion to a close. We didn't even get to Sartre but never mind. I knew we would not agree on a definition of Authenticity or its usefulness but that was not the purpose of the exercise. At least we have aired this week and last the complexity of the issue and the many sided nature of our response to it.

Sojourna: About the contemplation of death - isn't that just a way of refocusing our attention on the fact that we are only historically situated and have limited possibilities because of that, this means that what we do has no universal or absolute importance but is only ever important within the limitations of our historical existence. ?

Teleo: Fedor, that would suggest though that reason can be faulty... and I suppose that would be an authentic thought to have..

Renald: That sounds about right, Soj :-)

Shingles: no offense, but I do maintain that to encourage humans to take base pursuits and then claim that that gives them purpose in any meaningful sense is self-diminishing, Oswy

Renald: Ah... I suppose I must be marked with the number of the beast then, eh?

Renald: Base on whose scale?

Steve: Soj you ask about "About the contemplation of death"

Sojourna: Yep, Steve?

Steve: it is your own death you need to face

Oswy: Shingles if I believe in Liberal Democracy and Capitalism as believe that the pursuit of these two things brings immeasurable benefits to the world how can that be seen as base.

Sojourna: Yes, my own. And anticipate, in the now, right now, at each and every moment, as if this was your last

Sojourna: Yes.

Steve: well this is being toward death

Marya: Well yes Steve, I guess considering your own death would encourage you to consider your own authenticity and what it means to be who you are and take responsibility for who you are

Oswy: Soj don't die I need you

Sojourna: OK

Sojourna: Haha Oswy, can't avoid it! Have to!

Steve: not up to any of us to decide

Sojourna: *knocking unphilosophically on wood*

Steve: Oswy

Shingles: reasonably, I suppose it couldn't, but your earlier phrasing of it eg 'beauty or money' can credibly be seen as base, Oswy

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Oswy: I refuse to let any of you die and that's that

Sojourna: I can suicide, Steve. But that's another discussion I guess....

Marya: Nice Oswy - much appreciated :)

Renald: Beings are limited... death is just the ultimate limit for us.

Sojourna: I wish Oswy!

Steve: well still would not "Know", that you have stopped your existence in Heidegger's terms

Marya: yes true

Steve: not biological or even psychological

Teleo: Ren just use that bottle of serum I sent you.. you may be pleasantly surprised :P

shingles Fotherington chuckles as he considers something for his profile

Renald: heh

Oswy: Shingles I could be an entrepreneur make lots of money buy beautiful art and put it in a museum where it can be appreciated by many. Nothing mean about that is there?

Renald: I don't know... this all just seems enormously simpler to me than it sounds just from listening to the talk.

Sojourna: Steve you mean in the sense that Epicurus said? If you are here death is not, if death is you are not?

Marya: Steve, we can only know if we are alive - so when we are no longer alive, there is no need to know anything

Steve: yes

Sojourna: OK

Steve: talking about the Da of Da-sein being here

Renald: there

Marya: in the world, yes

Shingles: I didn't claim it to be mean, only that it would be base to assume that you would have purpose therefore, Oswy

Steve: the Da for Heidegger is here

Renald: base

Oswy: Steve Are not all humans aware of death they contemplate it from time to time and then carry on. I think Heidegger might agree on that. What I still don't see is how the awareness of death devalues the purposes of our life. Surely death is just another thing in life ie the end of it.

Steve: on the contrary does not devalue

Renald: It invalues.

Oswy: Shingles would you deny that the life I have just described has a purpose or is it just a lowly purpose?

Renald: base

Shingles: a lowly purpose, as you eloquently put it, Oswy

Renald: And whose scale, Shingles?

Steve: my own death makes me whole

Renald: Aye, Steve

Marya: Wouldn't it give more value? I mean in the sense of what I mentioned above - being aware of your mortality can make you re-evaluate what matters to you

Shingles: the philosopher's perhaps, Ren?

Autumn: A lack of awareness of death is what would devalue the purpose of life. We have a limited amount of time to create value and meaning in our lives; we would be in no rush to do that if we had forever

Sojourna: the da, lol, reminds me of that police tune, do do do do da da da da that's all I want to say to you

Steve: so I am always on the way toward death

Shingles: or maybe from certain philosophers perspective, instead, ren

Steve: this gives life it temporal meaning

Sojourna: but Steve we are always pursuing other goals meanwhile

Oswy: Steve you read again and again in the literature the awareness of death without God shows that life is without foundation and purposeless.

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Sojourna: no?

Renald: THE philosopher, Shingles? Any philosopher? Some Congress of Philosophers?

Steve: don't have all the time in the world to get on with my life

Renald: Shingles, I'm just curious what puts some people in a position to judge that for others/

Renald: .

Steve: well need to spend time somewhere else now so must go

Renald: Oswy... is that Anglo-Euro-Australo-American literature, btw?

Shingles: Anyone's position does. You cannot viably claim that we ever act without judging our peers, Ren

Oswy: Steve, have not all humans always been aware to their temporality

Steve: no

Renald: I make no such claim, Shingles.

Marya: I don't think so Oswy

Oswy: Why is Heidegger raising this issue as if he has made some new discovery?

Marya: People have usually believed in some sort of afterlife?

Steve: some have had faith in an immortal soul

Shingles: it maybe an unjustified position to judge from, but we nevertheless do constantly judge our peers from our own position

Shingles: from my position, I judge it to be base, Ren

Autumn: an awareness of our own mortality is one of the things that distinguishes us from animals

Steve: or have

Renald: As long as that's the extent of your judgement, Shingles, I say huzzah.

Shingles: huzzah!

Oswy: So are you saying as I suspected that this is all a sort of religious question?

Steve: clearly Heidegger's philosophy will not accept this

Autumn: Yes Marya, pretty much every civilisation has believed in an afterlife. We find it difficult to accept our own mortality

Renald: Actually, Marya, the afterlife business is relatively recent -- except for ghosts and demigods.

Marya: lol ... so which one is it?

Renald: heh

Oswy: Marya but they still believed in the temporality of the body. ie that their earthly existence would end.

Shingles: yes, and the gods of the ancient Greeks for instance, were capable of pettiness, pride and treachery, which is interesting

Marya: Aye Oswy, but the belief in a 'spirit' that would continue is relevant I think

Renald: Well... here is my understand of what was once very common attitudes about death and such:

Autumn: What about the Day of Judgement Oswy? When apparently the faithful will be resurrected? That would represent a continuation of earthly life.

Oswy: Marya, you are assuming they had no doubts. I think humans always have doubts even medieval peasants must have questioned the afterlife privately. Its part of the human condition and then you get on with things.

Autumn: The belief in an afterlife is what sustained people who had miserable lives: they expected their reward in heaven

Renald: Spirits of people hang around as ghosts. If you honour them, they're happy and can be a positive influence. If you dishonour them they get pissed off and are a negative influence.

Shingles: 'getting on with things'? How philosophical is that?

Autumn: And being a mediaeval peasant must have been quite miserable

Marya: I'm not really assuming they had no doubts Oswy, I'm just thinking they believed strongly that they would 'continue' and that would influence their thinking greatly

Autumn: You are more prepared to suffer misery or even die if you believe in an afterlife

Marya: very true

Renald: If a ghost gets enough honour over enough time, especially if it was a powerful person originally, it works its way up a more or less complicated hierarchy to godhood.

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Oswy: Autumn, I'm sure that was the dominant view and it gave people comfort but I bet they still had doubts. I have said on Facebook there is something arrogant about the Existential thinkers assumptions that they have discovered the importance of anxiety about death.

Renald: Arrogant and Euro-centric.

Marya: I don't know that I would say they 'discovered' it but I do think it is relevant - as I mentioned before; it would be arrogant for them to say they discovered it :)

Oswy: I agree Renald and cery located in inter war Germany and inter war and post war France.

Renald: And struggling with Christianity's shadow.

Oswy: Of course we have not debated Sartre the Marxist resistance fighter and Heidegger the Nazi

Shingles: maybe the French have it right; they presently and blatantly ignore the smoking ban if they choose to

Renald: So much of that stuff only makes any sense to me at all when I stop and say to myself -- oh, that's right, Christianity.

Oswy: Shingles only because they think it's what an authentic French person would do. Haha

Marya: lol

Renald: hehe

Autumn: lol

Shingles: yes, the 'Nazi' shadow looming over elitist thinking everywhere, they really spoil it

