The Limits of Pragmatism
Reading Primordiality in Heidegger’s Being and Time

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Joseph K. Seyedan

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Certification of Approval

I certify that I have read The Limits of Pragmatism: Reading Primordiality in Heidegger’s *Being and Time* by Joseph K. Seyedan, and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree Master of Arts in Philosophy at San Francisco State University.

________________________________________
Mohammad Azadpur, Ph.D.
Professor
Thesis Committee Chair

________________________________________
David Landy, Ph.D.
Professor, Chair

________________________________________
Macy Salzberger, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Abstract

In this paper, I engage with the pragmatist reading of primordiality in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. I aim to demonstrate that a fuller reading of Heidegger’s magnum opus reveals the pragmatist reading to lack primordiality [ursprünglich], or ontological priority, largely due to a tenet central to the pragmatist tradition: that human being and understanding is most primordially constituted by *social use*. In the first section, I provide some background to the issue of primordiality, or *origin*, in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. In the next section, I reconstruct the pragmatist reading of *Being and Time* primarily using the work of Hubert Dreyfus and Robert Brandom, both of whom grant ultimate primordiality to the concernful equipment-use of dasein’s being-in-the-world-with-others. In the third section, I emphasize that despite the significance of dasein’s being-in-the-world-with-others (social practices) and its use of equipment therein, Heidegger holds dasein’s *existence* to be more primordial. By taking existence as our clue, I show human’s most primordial mode of being is authenticity, or ownedness, and its most primordial understanding is tarrying-amidst the present-at-hand within-the-world, thereby demonstrating a more primordial basis of dasein than the pragmatists suppose.
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“...we can grow thought-poor or even thought-less only because man at the core of his being has the capacity to think; has “spirit and reason” and is destined to think. We can only lose or, as the phrase goes, get loose from that which we knowingly or unknowingly possess.”

From Heidegger’s Memorial Address for Conradin Kreutzer, Messkirch 1955
Introduction

There are several reasons for the success analytic pragmatism has enjoyed. For one, analytic pragmatism offers an alternative to the more reductive philosophical traditions which have dominated the history of mainstream analytic philosophy. Another desirable aspect of pragmatism has been the tradition’s ability to demonstrate that some of philosophy’s most difficult problems were only pseudo-problems after all. Most appealing, perhaps, has been the effort of the analytic pragmatists to engage with other figures within the history of philosophy—some of whom have received less attention by adherents to those more reductive tendencies. One such historical figure is Martin Heidegger. While Heidegger is afforded more regard in the philosophical Anglo-sphere than other philosophers of the so-called “continental” tradition, few have engaged with his work as extensively as the analytic pragmatists. Despite these noble efforts however, this paper, through a reconstruction of the pragmatist account of primordiality [ursprünglich], or ontological priority, will aim to demonstrate that the pragmatist engagement with Heidegger’s *Being and Time* lacks primordiality, largely due to a tenet central to the pragmatist tradition: that human being and understanding is most primordially constituted by social use. Through our reworking of Heidegger’s text, our aim will be to show that human being possesses a more primordial basis than the pragmatist tradition supposes.

I begin the first section of this paper by providing some background to primordiality as it is introduced by Heidegger at the outset of *Being and Time*. In the next section, I present the pragmatist position that *Being and Time* demonstrates that the primordial basis, or origin, of dasein’s being, Heidegger’s term for the human kind of being, is its being-in-the-world-with-
Using the work of Hubert Dreyfus and Robert Brandom as representatives of this view, it will be shown that in giving ultimate primordiality to being-in-the-world-with-others, human being and its understanding is conceived to be, through and through, a reflection of social practices (i.e. the “involved” use of tools).

In the third section, I begin by reminding readers that for Heidegger, dasein’s being as existence [Existenz]—that is having it’s being to be [Zu sein] and having it as its own (“mineness”) [Jemeinigkeit] is the basis for dasein’s being-in-the-world-with-others, and thus possesses the most primordiality (ontological priority) in Being and Time. Building on this insight (which the pragmatists do not fully account for), I show that the primordiality of existence illustrates that human’s authentic, or owned, kind of being is the most originary kind of being that dasein could possess and serves as the ontological basis for that sort of being and understanding which the pragmatists attribute proper ontological priority: dasein’s undifferentiated kind of being. This rereading of Heidegger on existence and its possible modes will be our foremost clue for showing that human being possesses a more primordial basis.

Finally, I will argue that while human being never fully extricates itself from social use and practices, the primordiality of existence and dasein’s ownedness reveals a mode of being-in-the-world in which human achieves its most originary kind of understanding through a

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1. While many interpreters agree that “dasein” is Heidegger’s term for the human kind of being, John Haugeland notoriously argues differently in his 1982 paper “Heidegger on Being a Person” writing that, “chemistry is dasein—and so are philately, Christmas, and Cincinnati” (19). In my view, this position is untenable given Heidegger’s explicit statement that a “personal pronoun” must always be used to address dasein—indicating that Heidegger understands dasein as the kind of being which belongs to us humans (68) [42]. In another paper of Haugeland’s from 2005, “Reading Brandom reading Heidegger”, he also argues that dasein cannot denote an individual human being because dasein is never found in Being and Time alongside an indefinite article or used in its plural form (422). This is false, however, as Heidegger on more than one occasion speaks of “a dasein” and uses the plural “daseins” [daseienden] at least once (93, 156) [65, 120].

2. While Dreyfus does not explicitly identify himself as a pragmatist, he sympathizes with the tradition and aligns with it in all the ways which are relevant to this paper.
modification of the socially constituted “first access” to the world which we all possess. In this understanding, referred to by Heidegger as tarrying-amidst, entities present-at-hand are revealed to have proper ontological priority in our owned/authentic disclosure of them. I conclude by arguing that the pragmatist characterization of human as most primordially being grounded in social use and practice, is possible only on the basis of this more primordial tarrying-amidst the present-at-hand, thereby putting human on a more primordial basis.

I. Introducing primordiality in Heidegger’s Being and Time

Heidegger’s Being and Time aims “to work out the question of the meaning of being and to do so concretely” (19) [1].3 The question of being, as with any question, is as an inquiry, a seeking [suchen]. Every seeking is necessarily guided beforehand by some understanding of what is sought, thereby enabling us to take up such an inquiry in the first place. Our inquiry then—a seeking into the nature of being—must be guided beforehand by some understanding of the nature of being that we already possess. The fact that we “already live in an understanding of being” and that being is not “unfamiliar even if at first [zunächst, lit. “nearest to”] we cannot grasp it at all” is crucial to Heidegger’s project in Being and Time (23, 25) [4, 6].

The “vague average understanding” of being in which we as human beings, or dasein, always already live and conduct our activities reveals being as “that which determines entities as entities, that on the basis of which [woraufhin] entities are already understood, however we may discuss them in detail” (25-26, emphasis added) [6].4 Being itself, however, is not an entity

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4 I have chosen to lower case the word “dasein”, as well as many of the other terms which are capitalized in the German edition of Being and Time (such as Sein and Seiendes), as these are capitalized only in virtue of the practice
Being is not ‘a thing’. It is, however, always found in ‘things’, or entities (ibid). Thus, entities will have to be our focus and that which is “questioned as regards their being” (ibid). But this raises a significant question. Which entity do we begin with? Heidegger writes:

Looking at something, understanding and conceiving it, choosing, access to it—all these ways of behaving are constitutive for our inquiry, and therefore are modes of being for those particular entities which we, the inquirers, are ourselves. Thus to work out the question of being adequately, we must make an entity—the inquirer—transparent in his own being. The very asking of this question is an entity's mode of being; and as such it gets its essential character from what is inquired about—namely, being. (26-27) [7]

Heidegger’s answer is us, ourselves—that entity which Heidegger states each of us are and calls “dasein”. It is the human being which has inquiry, among other things, as a character of its own being and thus necessarily already possesses some understanding of its being (i.e. it already has some access to what is sought in our seeking). Human then must serve as the departure for our project (i.e. it is to be questioned in regards to its being) as it has priority [Vorrang, lit. “higher in rank”] over what Heidegger calls “present-at-hand” entities. Present-at-hand entities are entities with a kind of being other than that of dasein, or simply, non-human entities.

of capitalizing all nouns in German, and not for a philosophical reason. Since we do not capitalize all nouns in English, I find that retaining the convention introduces unnecessary obscurity.  

5 While ‘thing’ is, of course, not the most suitable term to capture what Heidegger means by ‘entity’, I have used the term in order to help illuminate an initially elusive distinction between ‘entity’ and ‘being’.

6 “Higher in rank” is not to be taken in any sense other than with respect to the inquiry into the meaning of being.  

7 In an effort not to create more confusion surrounding the translation of Heidegger’s terms into English, I will stick to translating the German word Vorhanden as “present-at-hand” and Zuhanden as “ready-to-hand”. The prominent mode of being which belongs to entities present-at-hand, Vorhandenheit, will be translated as “presence-at-hand”. We should note, however, that present-at-hand and presence-at-hand are not synonymous as the former refers broadly to entities other than dasein, while the latter refers to a specific mode of being which can belong to non-dasein entities (and which generally excludes another mode of being which can also belong to non-dasein entities, readiness-to-hand). However, there are some cases in which presence-at-hand refers to all those kinds of being which are non-dasein kinds of being, including readiness-to-hand (71) [45]. For most of Being and Time, however, one can think of presence-at-hand as a kind of “being right in front of you”, and readiness-to-hand as a kind of “being appropriable towards an aim”.

8 See Robert Bernasconi’s 1986 piece “The Fate of the Distinction Between Praxis and Poiesis” pages 112-114 for more on the present-at-hand in Heidegger’s Being and Time. Also Aaron Shoichet’s “The Pragmatist Reading of Being and Time” (2022), pages 175-177. While properly ontologically speaking, present-at-hand entities are non-
Human being is distinguished from present-at-hand entities because human has “the determinate character of existence” (34, emphasis added) [13]. Existence is the “kind of being towards which dasein can comport [verhalten] itself in one way or another, and always does comport itself somehow” (32) [12]. To exist means to have being as an issue and as an issue of one’s own. Humans do not have a fixed essence or nature in the way that a table or chair does. Rather, human being only has “possible ways for it to be” from which it chooses who to be and chooses for themselves (67) [42]. Because of this, dasein has a relationship towards being. It is on the basis of this “having of a relationship towards being” that we have at least some understanding of being. This “definite characteristic of understanding” constitutes not only its ontical state (i.e. the fact that human exists) but amounts to a sense in which dasein is ontological (i.e. dasein has an understanding of its very own being to be). This understanding which we possess, however, is generally a vague, average understanding of being, and dasein’s “being-ontological” does not suggest that we understand explicitly or theoretically. Rather, dasein is what Heidegger calls “pre-ontological”; prior to doing philosophy, that is fundamental ontology, human being generally possesses a non-theoretical understanding of being (32) [12].

In addition to dasein’s understanding of its own being, human possesses as “constitutive for its understanding of existence—an understanding of the being of all entities of a character other than its own” (34, emphasis added) [13]. In other words, because dasein has an understanding of its own being (its being-ontological), it also has an understanding of the being...
of all entities which it is not. Dasein is thus the “ontico-ontological condition for the possibility of any ontologies,” according to Heidegger (ibid). Inquiry into the meaning of being of any entity will involve a previous interrogating—or pre-disposed understanding—of the being of dasein. Therefore, in some sense, the origin of the being of entities other than that of dasein, can be traced back to dasein itself.

With dasein established as that entity which is to be questioned as regards their being, we find ourselves facing another question. What is the right way of access to dasein? Heidegger insists that human being—as existence—always possesses, or is in, a mode of its existence. Additionally, a mode of existence always corresponds to a kind of understanding. Thus, we must identify that mode and understanding of dasein which will allow dasein to “show itself in itself and from itself” (ibid). Heidegger holds that dasein should not be uncovered in what he calls a differentiated character which it can possess such as authenticity [eigentlichkeit, lit. “ownedness”] or inauthenticity [uneigentlichkeit, lit. “unownedness”]. In both of these cases, dasein has taken on a “definite way of existing” (69) [43]. Heidegger’s solution then is that human being must be shown as it is “proximally and for the most part—in its average everydayness”—the third, and only other mode, which dasein can possess (37-38) [16]. Average everydayness [durchschnittlichen Alltäglichkeit] is the kind of being and understanding dasein generally possesses [zumeist] and how it shows itself in our usual, public [zunächst] way of being. Rather than being owned or unowned, average everyday dasein is “undifferentiated” (69) [43]. Heidegger insists that this “undifferentiatedness” is a positive phenomenon which will allow us to make explicit certain essential structures—what he calls existentialia—of dasein’s being without getting off to a bad start with hardened, “dogmatic constructions”, accidental
features of particular dasein, or definite possibilities of dasein’s existence.11 In illuminating these existentialia of dasein, Heidegger writes that his analytic “has the character of an understanding which is…existential” (33) [12]. An existential understanding is a properly ontological, theoretical understanding, achieved through doing philosophy (fundamental ontology).

Heidegger is careful to state that in spite of the essential structures that will be made explicit in the interpretation of dasein in its average everydayness, the analytic is only a provisional, that is preliminary, one which must be “repeated on a higher and authentically ontological basis” (38) [17].12 He states that without this “higher” and more “authentically ontological basis” (i.e. properly ontological basis), our characterization of the being of dasein would lack primordiality [ursprünglich], or ontological priority. It should be clear then that from the outset of Being and Time, despite the proper ontological priority which we will see the pragmatists grant this kind of being, undifferentiated everydayness and our corresponding average understanding, are not given ultimate ontological priority by Heidegger. When Heidegger states that his analysis of dasein is preliminary, it is precisely because the ontological basis on which dasein is first laid bare is the preliminary ontological basis of averageness (that

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11 Heidegger, however, never speaks in this section, or any other section, of undifferentiatedness as possessing any sort of “priority”. He only states that we are going to begin our analytic by first considering dasein in its undifferentiatedness—the way dasein generally is—so that we avoid the pitfalls of other approaches.

12 The “higher” and “authentically ontological” interpretation of dasein comprises most of Division II of Being and Time. Because the goal of this paper is to address the limits of pragmatism by assessing the pragmatist reading of Heidegger, I will largely focus on Division I as this is where the pragmatists give most of their attention. However, I believe a deeper dive into Division II would offer more evidence to suggest that human has a more primordial basis than social use and practice and that the pragmatist reading is quite far from the text. For this reason, the greater neglect of Division II by these philosophers is, to some degree, not coincidental.
kind of being which dasein possesses proximally and for the most part). He writes, “out of this kind of being—and back into it again—is all existing, such as it is” 69 [43]. However, despite their provisional ontological priority, neither “proximally” nor “for the most part” are properly ontological terms, and thus cannot provide an ontological ground for any of dasein’s kinds of being/understandings, including everydayness. In other words, the fact that dasein outwardly manifests itself in the world of the “they” in such and such a way, and does so “for the most part” or “generally”, does not tell us what kind of being we have or what grounds our being (422) [370-371]. It only tells us how we usually are in the obvious, public world around us. In the end, the justification for the provisional ontological priority which Heidegger attributes to everydayness is methodological. However, the question of methodology for Heidegger is not one of a stylistic “choice” exclusive to Being and Time. It is rather an approach structurally related to dasein’s existence and the way one must do philosophy (fundamental ontology). The aim of Being and Time—and really the entirety of Heidegger’s corpus—is to “work out the question of the meaning of being” concretely. The only way we can do this is by phenomenology which, by bringing us into the hermeneutic circle, begins with that kind of being/understanding which is familiar and obvious to us and proceeds to make dasein “accessible

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13 In his 1990 paper “The Familiar and the Strange: On the Limits of Praxis in the Early Heidegger”, Joseph P. Fell recognizes that there is more than one sense of priority at play in Being and Time. Fell argues that what has priority in our “everyday practice” does not have priority in our “authentic recognition or retrieval” (72). He also reminds readers of the distinction between ordo cognoscendi and ordo essendi.

14 The “they” is Heidegger’s term for the who of dasein in its everydayness. It is the public “self” or “they-self”.

15 If one insisted to make more out of this than I believe Heidegger intends to, perhaps we could say that the fact that dasein is proximally and for the most part the way that it is reveals something like, but no more than, a rough ontic “nature” which dasein generally possesses.
by a positive characterization”. When philosophy becomes about reifying “hardened constructions” and jumping to the “origin” as if to establish “first principles”, not only are mischaracterizations rife, but dasein’s kind of being gets obfuscated (69) [44]. Readers of Being and Time then must always keep in mind, that establishing the truly primordial ontological basis for dasein and any of the kinds of being or understandings which it can possess—including everydayness—requires us to tend to the phenomena on an ever-winding path towards the origin.

II. The pragmatists’ Being and Time: being-in-the-world-with-others as primordial

Being-in-the-world

The pragmatists characterize Heidegger’s Being and Time as an “anti-traditional” work. “The tradition”—to the pragmatists—erroneously has given ontological priority to “detached, disinterested inquiry”, supposing that the findings of these inquiries are able to explain “the whole range of human activities” (45). The resulting philosophical approach is one which treats “the factual as the basic form of the real and seeks to explain the normative by adding something, which might generically be called values” (481). But, as the pragmatists point out, when Heidegger embarks on his analysis of dasein’s everydayness, it becomes clear that this is untenable. Hubert Dreyfus puts it well when he writes that, “rather than first perceiving perspectives, then synthesizing the perspectives into objects, and finally assigning these objects a function on the basis of their physical properties, we ordinarily manipulate tools that already

16 Because Heidegger’s methodology—hermeneutic phenomenology—is structurally connected to dasein’s very kind of being, provisional priority, though not properly ontological, is properly provisional. It is indeed true of dasein’s being that, proximally and for the most part, it is in average everydayness.
have a meaning in a world that is organized in terms of purposes” (BITW, 46-47 emphasis added). Exemplifying this in detail is one of Heidegger’s goals early in Being and Time.

Dreyfus clarifies, however, that if we think Heidegger’s focus on tools, or equipment, and our use of them towards certain aims, is merely intended to shift priority from a “theoretical” or “detached” “relation” to the world to a “practical” or “engaged” “relation” (and their respective objects), we would be “underestimating” his contribution. Of course, the “involved stance”—our being-amidst in concern [Besorgen]—and the ready-to-hand—the kind of being which non-dasein, present-at-hand entities possess proximally and for the most part when we encounter them in our everyday concern—is certainly understood by Dreyfus to be “in some sense prior” in Being and Time, though he says little about what kind of “priority” they possess (BITW, 49, 61). Instead, he focuses on what he understands to be Heidegger’s main aim: bringing to light the more originary basis of both our scientific inquiry and everyday activities, thereby allowing us to grasp “the limits of subjective consciousness and the object it knows” (BITW, 45).

Thus, what’s at stake is more radical than the flipping of ontological priority of non-dasein entities within-the-world or a reconceiving of how dasein “first” or “primarily” “relates” to the world. To get to the heart of the matter Heidegger has in mind, the pragmatists push us to

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19 Some interpreters of Being and Time have argued that Heidegger’s intention is to show that dasein is primarily a “practical” kind of an entity as opposed to a “theoretical” one. Aside from sufficient textual evidence which suggests that Heidegger is not interested in this distinction, it should be noted that this is ultimately an ontic question and thus largely unrelated to fundamental ontology.

20 See footnote 7.

21 As we will see shortly, the “priority” of concern, and hence the ready-to-hand mode of non-dasein entities, is a function of the provisional ontological priority that Heidegger grants to dasein’s average everyday kind of being. Again, this ontological priority is provisional and not one which is properly, or authentically, ontological. Heidegger grants it provisional ontological priority because the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology requires it. Many pragmatists, including Brandom, largely fail to appreciate the ontological provisionality of dasein’s everydayness and thus never uncover everydayness’s properly ontological basis. Dreyfus, for his part, accounts for the primordiality of originary transcendence with respect to dasein’s everydayness but, as we will see, in failing to fully elaborate on the significance of originary transcendence’s (being-in-the-world’s) primordial basis, condemns himself, as it were, to the provisionality of dasein’s everydayness.
appreciate that traditional accounts of “ways of relating to the world” have left the precise nature of this “relating”, or understanding, insufficiently addressed. This “relating” has often been accounted for by the concept of intentionality—the fact that we can be “directed at” something. And yet, how is it that we come to be “directed at” something to begin with? Surely, establishing how we are “mostly” “directed at” does not address what lies “beneath” our being “directed at” such that being “directed at” is a possibility for human being in the first place. Thus, it is not intentionality, per se, that will have to be interrogated, but rather the origin of intentionality.

It is within this context that Heidegger introduces the problem of transcendence which, as a problem, is found throughout Being and Time. From the First Introduction, Heidegger writes, “in any way of comporting oneself towards entities as entities—even in any being towards entities as entities—there lies a priori an enigma” (23) [4]. The enigma here is the problem of transcendence. Heidegger draws out what is enigmatic when he discusses what has often been taken as the “single exemplar” for being “directed at” the world: knowing the world (86) [59]. He writes, “if one does no more than ask how knowing makes its way ‘out of’ it [the inner sphere] and achieves 'transcendence', it becomes evident that the knowing which presents such enigmas will remain problematical unless one has previously clarified how it is and what it is” (87) [60-61]. The distinction between intentionality and transcendence is thus crucial to Heidegger’s project. Until the problem of transcendence is clarified, no account of intentionality will be able to penetrate the more fundamental enigma which lies “beneath” it.

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22 On this point, Heidegger writes in Being and Time, “being-in is something quite different from a mere confrontation, whether by way of observation or by way of action; that is, it is not the being-present-at-hand-together of a subject and an object” 221 [176].
Dreyfus, adopting terminology from Heidegger’s *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, states that the problem of intentionality is one of “ontic transcendence” (i.e. concern). Ontic transcendence—which as it turns out includes both our practical and theoretical activities/understandings/ways of being “directed at”—is only possible on the basis of a more primordial *originary transcendence*. Originary transcendence is largely synonymous to the structure [*existentiale*] of “being-in-the-world” (a term Heidegger uses more frequently in *Being and Time*). The phenomenon of originary transcendence—unlike ontic transcendence which concerns itself with intentionality—corresponds to what Heidegger calls *comportment*. Comportments [*Verhalten*] are ways of holding ourselves in kinds of being and understandings of the world and of the entities within it.23 Through comporting, originary transcendence, or our being-in-the-world, consists in “a preliminary understanding of the being of entities,” which thereby “secures the possibility of entities manifesting themselves as entities” (135).24 Heidegger goes so far as to say that originary transcendence and our understanding of being are “one and the same”. His discussion of the “in” of our being-in-the-world supports this. “In”, he insists, is never to be understood as “the being-present-at-hand of some corporeal thing (such as a human body) ‘in’ an entity which is present-at-hand” (like a classroom or jail cell) (79) [54]. Rather, Heidegger asserts that “in” is to be taken in its *primordial* meaning: to be “familiar with” or to be “accustomed to”—in other words, *to already possess some basic understanding of* (80) [54].

Asserting the priority of originary transcendence as opposed to ontic transcendence is another way of stating that, in truth, both practical and theoretical understandings of being have

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23 Simply put, comportment is distinguished from intentionality as the former has to do with kinds of being/understandings which we hold ourselves in, while the latter has to do with ways we are “directed at”.

their basis in and presuppose being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world, as an existentiale, is more primordial than these other two ways of “understanding”/“relating”. Even more importantly, originary transcendence dispels approaching either the issue of practical or “contemplative” affairs (i.e. ontic transcendence, broadly speaking) in terms of a “self-sufficient mind and an independent world” (BITW, 49). Dasein’s being-in-the-world disproves such a hard distinction. As we have shown, if we conceive of “the self” and “the world” in such a way and proceed to explain the “connection” between these “two” by the concept of intentionality, we would never be able to get at the problem of transcendence—that is, exactly how we are always already in and understanding the world in the first place.

With-others

In order to fully grasp how it is that we are always already “in the world”, more must be said about precisely what constitutes this “in-ness”, or understanding, that we are said to already possess. In addressing this issue, the pragmatists bring to light two existentialia of dasein which Heidegger declares are equiprimordial with being-in-the-world. These are being-with [Mitsein] and dasein-with [Mitdasein]. Considered all together, being-in-the-world is revealed to always be being-in-the-world-with-others. The basis for that understanding which our originary transcendence consists in is social practices. It is through social practices that entities within-the-world, the world itself, and our understanding of it become constituted. This social constitution is not limited to allowing the “work-world”, the world in which we mostly dwell, and the ready-to-hand equipment within it to show up and become available, or appropriable, to us for use. More primordially, social practices and their constituting are taken by the pragmatists to serve as the originary ground for our being-in-the-world itself. These constituting practices, as an expression
of essential *existentialia* of dasein’s being, necessarily precede any specific form of involvement which we may have with the world. They are the basis for the possibility that anything can show up for us *as* anything at all (i.e. that we are even “in” the world to begin with).

Robert Brandom offers a rich account of the pragmatist view that social practices ground our being-in-the-world. Though Brandom never uses Dreyfus's term “originary transcendence”, and specifically focuses on establishing what he believes to be the ontological priority of readiness-to-hand as opposed to presence-at-hand, he nevertheless presupposes dasein’s originary transcendence and develops an account of the primordial social constitution which serves as its basis.\(^{25}\) Echoing Heidegger, Brandom states that each thing in our world is taken “*as* something” (“*as*” here indicating interpretation) and that this recognition and discrimination which pervades our being-in-the-world can, according to him, only be conceived of as a sociopractical phenomenon (HC, 48).\(^{26}\) The way we do things, the understanding which institutes those things, and the relations between them, is not the work of a single person or even a whole community of persons. It is rather the result of a community’s *practices* (i.e. an expression of being-with and dasein-with). This “*as*-structure” is thus a “public behavioral matter” (ibid). Entities within-the-world are responded to “*as*” and taken how “*some community*...

\(^{25}\) Brandom, Robert (1983). Heidegger’s Categories in *Being and Time*. The Monist 66 (3):387-409. Henceforth cited as HC. Brandom’s main aim in his influential 1983 paper is to provide an account of the ontological dependency he believes that Heidegger holds things with the kind of being of presence-at-hand, defined by Brandom as “roughly the objective, person-independent, causally interacting subjects of natural scientific inquiry”, have upon “the normative realm”, i.e. things ready-to-hand and the more basic world of equipment (45). However, his argument for the priority of the ready-to-hand—and the whole work-world of equipment to which it belongs—rests on his account of the primordiality of social practices with respect to dasein’s being-in-the-world.

\(^{26}\) It should be mentioned that, as Brandom acknowledges, the “*as*-structure” is not always (and in fact *generally* isn’t) explicit. Something is noticed *as* a hammer not when it is hammered with but when it is inappropriate or searched for in some project, for example. An understanding of the hammer, and the totality of the world and one’s projects to which it belongs, was implicit all along, however.
does or would respond to [them]” (HC, 49 emphasis added). These takings are thus not expressions of “objective matters of fact”, but rather a part of the “normative realm” of “value”.

Furthermore, in our very own practicing of our collective practices, *equipment is appropriated* in accordance with its social significance, and thus “can be used *correctly or incorrectly*, according to proprieties implicit in practices *instituted and pursued* by dasein” (DBT, 482 emphasis added). Thus, an ontological priority of “practice”—or concern—turns out to be, in some sense, inevitable for the pragmatists, despite Dreyfus’s efforts to articulate a more “originary” transcendence.27 As a result, the ready-to-hand comes to possess priority relative to presence-at-hand. It is in our very concernful practice of *using* a hammer and nail *as* ready-to-hand equipment towards socially constituted pursuits, that we manifest our *ability-to-know-how-to-be* [*Seinkönnen*], which itself in turn is grounded in the social constitution of the hammer and nail, each with their socially constituted functions, within an entire socially constituted world to which they all belong. Together, this context of social constraints is governed by what Brandom calls our “responsive dispositions”. These responsive dispositions, molded through and through by being-with and dasein-with, only come to be *reinforced* by us as particular practicers and users in our very own practicing and using. Ultimately, it is precisely these responsive dispositions which constitute our being-in-the-world and provide us with our first “access” to things. As the pragmatists like to say: human is an entity which most primordially possesses

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27 The priority given to “practice”, and as we will see the undifferentiated kind of being, is an indication that the pragmatists only provide an account of ontic transcendence (concern) after all.
“know-how” and the ability to skillfully maneuver around the familiar world which it is concerned with and which has been socially constituted for it.28

Finally, Brandom holds that the “existential basis” of the social constitution of entities within-the-world is ultimately rooted in my recognizing of others as “co-community members”. A community of recognizers—in their recognizing—provide “the existential basis of the consilience of practice which constitutes the category of the ready-to-hand,” and, as Brandom argues later in the paper, presence-at-hand as well (HC, 54). In other words, those community practices which institute the relations amongst entities within-the-world that allow us to understand and discriminate between them, are themselves “existentially based” on our recognizings of ourselves as recognizers. This “practical agreement” of recognizing other recognizers and being recognized ourselves is Brandom’s interpretation of Heidegger’s originary account of communication (ibid). As Brandom understands it, Heidegger conceives of the most basic form of communication as providing dasein access to more specific cases of communication by first constituting its being-in-the-world as being-with and dasein-with.

III. Against the pragmatists’ Being and Time: realizing the primordiality of existence

The primordiality of existence

The pragmatist reading of primordiality in Heidegger’s Being and Time has largely been brought to light. The basis for human’s being is its being-in-the-world-with-others. Through this being-in-the-world-with-others meaning emerges from our concernful social use of entities

28 Brandom, Dreyfus, and most of the pragmatists conceive of this know-how as a non-subjective, non-minded epistemic notion where our awareness of the ready-to-hand and the work-world to which it belongs is “behavioral” (i.e. one’s mental faculties are not engaged). While a full treatment of this question is impossible in this paper, our discussion should hopefully show that this is not Heidegger’s position, nor one which we must adopt once we have shown that human being possesses a more primordial basis than pragmatism’s social use.
ready-to-hand, thereby constituting dasein’s understanding. We would do well to recognize that in some sense the pragmatists are correct. It is true that human being is always being-in-the-world-with-others as we are always already familiar with the world and have an understanding of that world and ourselves in virtue of being initiated into the social practices of a community.

However, if what we aim to do is get at originary transcendence and establish its origin, we should recall that Heidegger states that we not only already always have an understanding of the world and ourselves, but that dasein exists. Dasein is a who, he writes, not a what (71) [45]. He writes, “in each case dasein is mine to be [Zu-sein] in one way or another. Dasein has always made some sort of decision as to the way in which it is in each case mine [je meines]. That entity which in its being has this very being as an issue [dasein], comports itself towards its being as its ownmost possibility” (68, emphasis added ) [42]. Furthermore, it is precisely dasein’s essence as existence which is the origin of our existentiality (and all of the existentialia which constitute it). In other words, existence—the origin of our originary transcendence—is the basis by which human being, as human being, could possibly have any existentialia (including being-in-the-world-with-others and the understanding therein) in the first place. If dasein did not exist, it would no sooner not be being “in” and not be being “with”, than it would not be dasein.29

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29 Existence is what is always most primordial for Heidegger in Being and Time. Asserting the primordiality of existence in Being and Time, in no way suggests what Brandom calls the “layer cake” model of primordiality in “Dasein, the Being that Thematizes”. According to the “layer cake” model, the idea of something being the ontological basis of something else “invokes derivation in a sense implying the autonomy of the underlying layer” (487). In other words, on the “layer cake” model dasein could somehow exist but not, for example, be being-with. This is not what is meant when we say that dasein most primordially exists. Existence does not have an autonomous “status” from existentialia such as being-with, being-in-the-world, etc. The primordiality of existence only means that because we have our being to be and have it as our own, we are being-in-the-world-with-others. Existentialia, including being-in-the-world-with-others, nevertheless are precisely what constitute our existence. It is not the case that we could have our being to be and have it as our own and not be being-in-the-world-with-others.
The pragmatists note the primordiality of existence. They recognize that being-in-the-world-with-others—the most fundamental of all of dasein’s existentialia—finds its ground on the fact that dasein exists. In spite of this, however, they still present dasein’s being-in-the-world-with-others as the primordial basis of dasein’s being. The failure on the part of the pragmatists to fully develop what it means for existence to be the ontological basis by which we are being-in-the-world-with-others is a result of limits within the pragmatist tradition. More specifically, the pragmatist subscription to the view that humans are most primordially social users and that social practices are the basis of our being results in their interpreting of that being and understanding which we possess proximally and for the most part, to be that sort of being and understanding which is a properly ontological ground of dasein. This will be shown to not be true for Heidegger, and instead an outcome of pragmatism’s own subscription to one of its central tenets.

At the same time, we will note that the pragmatists grant the primordiality of existence to the extent that they emphasize Heidegger’s account of human being is “distinguished” from others which reduce the individual to a “passive social object[s]” (BITW, 352). The pragmatists account for this difference by conceiving the “to-be-ness” of human existence as “groundlessness”, and “mineness”, a “possibility” to “own up”, or “modify”, that groundlessness. Unfortunately, this still gives priority to dasein’s being-in-the-world-with-others and its concernful use of the ready-to-hand. However, by putting human being on its properly

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30 The question of “on what ontological basis do we possess a sociopractical kind of being and understanding?” is therefore unaddressed.
31 Brandom’s Hegelian argument that “recognizing ourselves as recognizers” is the existential basis for the “with” existentialia (i.e. being-with and dasein-with) will not be addressed in this paper. That being said, I do not believe such a thesis seems appropriate for an entity with the character of dasein, nor do I think it would be a view one would arrive at by doing hermeneutic phenomenology. Also, while it might provide some insight into the constitution of the they-self, it would not help us much with the question of the authentic self.
ontological basis (existence), the next sections will reveal the uprootedness of that mode of being and understanding which the pragmatists grant primordiality in their reading of *Being and Time*.

**The primordiality of authenticity**

In taking human’s being as existence as our clue for the origin of dasein’s existentiality, we will need to establish what kind, or mode, of existence will, as a result, possess the most primordiality. Every instance of human can only possess one of three modes of existence: authenticity, inauthenticity, or undifferentiated averageness. Heidegger begins by granting provisional ontological priority to dasein in its undifferentiatedness, as per the methodological requirements of hermeneutic phenomenology (see above). However, Heidegger makes clear—on more than one occasion in *Being and Time*—that “we have defined the idea of existence as ability-to-know-how-to-be—an ability which understands, and for which its own being is an issue. But this ability-to-know-how-to-be, as one which is in each case mine, is free either for authenticity or for inauthenticity or for a mode in which neither of these has been differentiated,”… “as long as the existential structure of an authentic ability-to-know-how-to-be has not been brought into the idea of existence, the fore-sight by which an existential interpretation is guided will lack primordiality” (275-276) [232-233]. Not only does this exemplify that existence is the basis for any mode of existence, including authenticity, but that authenticity is distinctive because of its relation to primordiality (i.e. existence).

When dasein’s ability-to-know-how-to-be is revealed to be a function of having our being as an issue early in *Being and Time*, it is also revealed to be not just “anyone’s” issue but one which is in each case mine and thus possibly authentically mine. This is the case, even if one, proximally and for the most part, does not fully realize or even evades this possibility. Therefore,
any hope of laying bare dasein’s being on its properly ontological basis must take the possibility of owning itself for its clue. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger states that to be authentic is to “choose your possibilities” and to “win yourself” while to be inauthentic is to “get yourself into [possibilities]” and “‘seeming’ to win yourself” yet still having “lost yourself” (33, 68) [12, 42].

Both of these modes are “definite characters”, or *existentiell modifications of everydayness*, which dasein can possess and that are ultimately rooted in having our being to be and having it as our own. Heidegger writes, “as modes of being, authenticity and inauthenticity (these expressions have been chosen terminologically in a strict sense) are both grounded in the fact that any dasein whatsoever is characterized by mineness” (68) [42-43].

Authenticity and inauthenticity are thus possible only because dasein is an issue of one’s own. One only has *possibilities to win or not win oneself* because they have the kind of being of *existence*. However, it is because of the very fact that dasein already always has its being to be as its own (i.e. human being *exists*), that authenticity possesses *more* primordiality than any other kind of being which dasein can possess. It is only authenticity which, as a mode of existence, *truthfully accords* with dasein’s being as existence. It is the possibility to be authentic—that is the primordiality of mineness, and thus ownedness itself—which is the *grounding basis* for

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32 Dasein only takes on a “definite character” when it is *individuated*. Only “particular”, that is “existent” dasein can have a definite character (78) [52]. Heidegger speaks of definite characters which dasein can possess as being “existentiell modified” forms of everydayness (our undifferentiated mode of being which we will consider in more detail shortly). The term “existentiell modified” has the specific sense of *everydayness taking on a certain “definite character”*—i.e. it has been *individuated* by the particular dasein, either authentically or inauthentically.

33 Notice the inherent connection between the term “mineness” (i.e. dasein’s existence) and “ownedness” (i.e. authenticity). It is important to note that some have argued that because Heidegger states that authenticity and inauthenticity are to be used in a “strict sense” (i.e. literally ownedness and unownedness, respectively), he disavows connotations of the words which suggest “truth” and “untruth”. What is more to the point is that Heidegger is attempting to show that ownedness and unownedness are precisely the primordial notions of truth and untruth. Explicit evidence to support this view can be found when Heidegger uses “being-in-the-truth” as a *synonym* for authenticity (415) [363].
dasein’s possibility to be inauthentic. One could only seem to win themselves but not really win themselves because winning themselves was a possibility for them in the first place (ibid).³⁴

But where does this leave that everyday kind of being which is given provisional ontological priority by Heidegger and proper ontological priority by the pragmatists?³⁵ Everyday human is described as being lost in the possibilities it has already “grown up in” and thereby yet to win, or even seem to win, itself at all (33, 68) [12, 42]. Because of its lostness, undifferentiatedness is not a manifestation of one of the definite, particular ways of existing for dasein—but is rather how dasein exists proximally and for the most part. Because it is not a particular way of existing, there is a sense in which averageness is not—strictly speaking—a kind of being which particular human possess. In other words, when one loses oneself in the possibilities one has grown up in, there is sense in which having our being as an issue “really” does disappear.³⁶ The pragmatists take this as confirmation that humans are most primordially social users and that social practices are the originary basis for our being, despite the fact that only provisional ontological priority is given to everydayness. This is why our concernful being-in-the-world-with-others takes on the most primordiality in the pragmatist account. Human being and understanding become synonymous with the possibilities it has grown up in. Put a bit more

³⁴ Inauthenticity involves “seeming” to win oneself because inauthenticity always has a “sham of authenticity” with it (223) [178].
³⁵ Again, Dreyfus does emphasize that his concept of originary transcendence is not the same as dasein’s averageness, and that it is rather presupposed in any kind of being that dasein can possess (see footnote 21). This is why I have presented the concept as largely synonymous with a more familiar term for readers of Being and Time: being-in-the-world-with-others. However, being-in-the-world-with-others only denotes essential structures (existentialia) of dasein’s being which, as previously stated, never have their primordial basis fully worked out. At any rate, in having its being as its own and as an issue, human always possesses a particular mode of its existence. Of the three modes of being which dasein can possess, undifferentiatedness is granted primordiality by Dreyfus.
³⁶ See footnote 28.
provocatively, though not far from what Heidegger’s own response to the view might be: the pragmatist account of dasein could just as well be an account of Das Man, or the “anyone”.37

As for those cases where average everyday dasein takes on a definite character by achieving a modified form of everydayness (inauthenticity or authenticity), everyday originary transcendence/dasein’s being-in-the-world-with-others in its concern for the ready-to-hand equipment still possesses the most primordiality. This is because the pragmatists hold that it is average everyday originary transcendence which provides the basis for the existentiell modification38 of those essential structures which make up dasein’s existentiality.39 The result is that dasein’s existentialia take on more primordiality than existence (having our being to be and having it as our own)—the very basis of existentialia. So while the pragmatists grant existence’s primordiality to a certain extent, their account contradicts it, resulting in the de facto position that ontological priority rests on being-in-the-world-with-others. Dreyfus, for instance, describes authenticity as “taking-over the one (while still owning-up-to itself)” (BITW, 242). He states that one can achieve “individuality by realizing it can never find meaning by identifying with a role,” instead “choosing” from “the social possibilities available to it in such a way as to manifest in the style of its activity its understanding of the groundlessness of its own existence” (BITW, 27 emphasis added). Authenticity and inauthenticity alike are thus only “self-constituting” to the

37 Heidegger in fact directly states, “the self of everyday dasein is the they-self”. He continues by saying we distinguish this they-self, “from the authentic self—that is, from the self which has been taken hold of in its own way [eigens ergriffenen]” (167) [129].
38 The notion of a “modification” raises the question of whether what is modified is more primordial or if the modification is more primordial. The pragmatists hold the former. We will return to this question at the end of this section.
39 Dreyfus recognizes what he understands as a “tension” in Heidegger as to whether dasein’s averageness possesses priority or dasein’s authentic mode of being (what he conceives of as our “stand” on our primordial “groundless” way of being—albeit a “groundless” stand). He admits that in Being and Time Heidegger suggests the latter, but attributes this to the influence of Kierkegaard and states that such a position is “abandoned” by Heidegger himself in later works.
extent that they take up a relation with what Dreyfus calls the “groundlessness of existence”. The authentic dasein is said to hold itself—through “constant effort”—in an understanding of its originary “groundlessness”, thereby allowing for it to take a stand on its “groundlessness” which it is to manifest publicly (BITW, 236). On the other hand, inauthentic or undifferentiated dasein identifies and/or is lost in the uprootedness, such that they don’t/cannot take a stand on it and therefore “cover it up”. This voluntaristic account of authenticity, where one may achieve this less originary modification of social practices, or “taking of a stand” on one’s uprootedness, largely constitutes the extent of the pragmatist appreciation of the primordiality of existence.

The truth remains, however, that for Heidegger, the undifferentiated mode of dasein does not possess authentic primordiality. To begin with, every particular, or instance, of dasein is characterized by existence and mineness (68) [42-43]. Furthermore, if undifferentiatedness consists in losing oneself, this is only possible because dasein is one’s own (i.e. mine) to lose in the first place—in other words, dasein must already have the possibility to be authentic. He writes, “but only in so far as it [dasein] is essentially something which can be authentic—that is, something of its own—can it have lost itself and not yet won itself” (ibid). Losing presupposes owning as something to lose—one must first both have something and have it as something to lose to be able to lose it. That being said, “in the first place” here does not necessarily mean that one realizes the possibility that they have their being to be as their own prior to losing

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40 Dreyfus states that authentic human being “must continue doing what one does and being absorbed, even to the extent of being lost in its everyday work while resisting becoming so fascinated by or taken over by the everyday activities that it loses itself and its primordial relation to its situation” (BITW, 228). Authenticity thus consists in maintaining “ourselves” and our being’s “primordial relation to its situation” in our everydayness. We will shortly see that Dreyfus conflates the “nothingness” of existence with the “groundlessness” of average everydayness and thus cannot articulate by what mechanism we are to maintain, or even attain, this “relation”. It is also unclear what this “relation” itself could consist in if both what we take a stand on and that which allows us to take a stand are both conceived of as “groundlessness”.

themselves in social practices. One does not possess some sort of “primitive” authenticity before they get lost in the “they”. The point is rather that one’s very ability to lose themselves or, to use less charged language, be initiated into social practices at all, is ontologically dependent upon the more primordial fact that one has their being to be lost, or initiated, for no other reason than the very fact that they have their being to be and have it as their own, in the first place.

The pragmatist position that particular dasein cease to exist in everydayness is thus the result of not heeding the provisionality of this sort of being and understanding. In recognizing the primordiality of having as our own to lose, it must be the case that existence only seems to disappear without really disappearing. Indeed, this is what Heidegger aims to show with the concept of falling. Heidegger writes that when dasein is in its averageness, its particularness has fallen to the extent that it has largely abandoned its possibility for individuation and choice to the world and others. “Falling” [Verfallen], which is a “basic kind of being which belongs to everydayness”, consists in dasein “falling away from itself as an authentic ability-to-know-how-to-be its self,” and thereby falling “into the ‘world’” (219-220) [175-176]. It comprises idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity which, all together, allow us to “arrive at an existentially adequate determination of dasein’s basic state” (221) [177]. This basic state—undifferentiatedness—has “mostly the character of being-lost in the publicness of the “they” (220) [175].

But, “because dasein is essentially falling”, Heidegger adds, “its state of being is such that it is in ‘untruth’” (264) [222]. The falling of dasein, as an existentiale of dasein’s being, and the seeming absence of existence which characterizes it, constitutes the untruth of human’s average everydayness. Absorbed into the ways of interpreting of the “they”, “that which has been

41 The “priority” of the “losing ourselves in social practices” is the provisional priority of human’s average everydayness as that sort of being and understanding which we possess proximally and for the most part.
[previously] uncovered and disclosed [i.e. having our being to be and the possibility to be authentic] stands in a mode in which it has been disguised and closed off by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity” (ibid). In such a state, dasein’s “being towards entities has not been extinguished, but it has been uprooted (ibid, emphasis added)”. Uprooted being towards entities and the socially constituted concernful use of the ready-to-hand therein is wanting of its primordial basis, or origin. Without it, the uprooted, everyday kind of being which entities such as ourselves possess proximally and for the most part, is condemned to untruth.

Heidegger quickly adds, however, that even when dasein is in a fallen state, dasein is not entirely in untruth. While falling might seem to dispel human’s being as existence—after all, it seems to deteriorate to the point of being almost entirely missing—falling actually “affords us the most elemental evidence for dasein’s existentiality” (224) [179]. He exclaims that “in falling, nothing other than our ability-for-being-in-the-world is the issue, even if in the mode of inauthenticity. Dasein can fall only because being-in-the-world understandingly with a state-of-mind is an issue for it” (ibid). Falling is possible only because we have something to fall away from: our ownmost possibility to be authentic. It is in our having of the kind of being of existence and the possibility to be authentic, that we can fall into the world and abandon ourselves to the “they” and its regime of social use. The fact that falling is always falling-away-from is another manifestation of the fact that lostness presupposes having as my own to lose.

In showing that existence and the possibility to be owned have not only not “disappeared” in everydayness, but that fallen everydayness is itself only possible because of

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42 “Previously” need not always entail a properly provisional “previously”, but always entails a properly ontological “previously”.

43 Despite the sound of it, falling is certainly not always a “negative” phenomenon. It is an existentiale of dasein and as such, an essential structure of dasein’s being. We will briefly touch on one of its “positive” characteristics shortly.
their ontological priority, the position that dasein is not *particular* in undifferentiatedness has been revealed to be false. Dasein, factically speaking, and in truth, is always particular; it always has its being to be as its own and thus has the possibility to be authentic. The possibility of ownedness is definitive for dasein’s being even when it doesn’t “seize” on this possibility.

Pragmatism inverts the foremost point Heidegger is attempting to make. It is not that because of undifferentiatedness dasein is not primordially individualized, it is rather that because dasein is primordially individualized, undifferentiatedness never fully characterizes dasein’s being. In fact, because everydayness always belongs to particular dasein, it is never without its *existentiell modification*—however fallen or oblivious dasein may be. In other words, undifferentiatedness is, in truth, or rather on a properly ontological basis, nothing other than inauthenticity.

The pragmatist tenet that human is most primordially a social user and that social practices are the originary basis for our being limits the tradition’s ability to account for the consequences of what it means for human to exist. “Proximally” and “for the most part” are treated as properly ontological terms which ground our undifferentiatedness, while definite modes of human being (i.e. authentic and inauthentic *modifications* of everydayness) are conceived of as less primordial than the everydayness which is modified. The primordiality of the authentic mode of existence—as that mode which *accords* with existence—is thus neglected. However, once being-in-the-world-with-others is put on its proper ontological basis—*existence*—and authenticity is brought to light as everydayness’s ontological basis, the

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44 This is in part what Heidegger wants to draw to our attention when he distinguishes dasein and present-at-hand entities early in *Being and Time*, writing that to present-at-hand entities “their being is ‘a matter of indifference [gleichgültig]’; or more precisely, they ² are’ such that their being can neither be a matter of indifference to them, nor the opposite” (68) [42]. For dasein, however, being is never a matter of indifference, being is rather always an *issue*.

45 One might think of undifferentiatedness as the “untruth” of inauthenticity, and inauthenticity as the “truth” of undifferentiatedness.
modification of everydayness shows itself as more originary than everydayness. In other words, it is because of the possibility for human to be modified, or individuated—due to the primordiality of existence—that dasein can fall into unmodified everydayness. While we are not in the position to fully grasp the meaning of the primordiality of dasein’s authentic modification of social practices, a clue to a more primordial basis of human being has shown itself.

Before we proceed, we should note the difficulty this raises for the pragmatist view that our average everyday activities are merely behavioral and non-minded (i.e. not mine) (HC, 48). Our findings suggest that, at least for Heidegger, it isn’t possible that human could ever be without its own being as an issue since any dasein whatsoever is characterized by existence. This of course does not mean that in our fallen everydayness we experience ourselves, others, or the world, explicitly. As has been shown, in falling we are still “lost in the possibilities we have grown up in” and have abandoned ourselves to this world. However, we are never entirely lost; whenever mineness seems to “disappear”, in truth, it has only become disguised, or closed off, because of our falling.46 Thus our “skillfully maneuvering” around the world is still always my skillful maneuvering.47 At the same time, when we suggest that dasein is always mine, this by no means indicates that the “mine” here is some isolated, detached “subject”. As we expressed earlier, being-in-the-world-with-others is a characteristic of any kind of being which dasein can

46 There is, I believe, something to gain here by referring to Aristotle’s discussion of whether the “akratic” person possesses knowledge. After all, inauthenticity—that is unownedness—is, in a certain sense, akrasia. See Nicomachean Ethics Book VII, 1147a10-23.
47 John McDowell offers a compelling alternative to this “not mine” account of skillful maneuvering while still being within/sympathetic to the pragmatist tradition. In “The Myth of the Mind as Detached”, one of his many papers which make up his debate with Dreyfus himself, McDowell writes, “experience discloses the way things are, whether or not its subject has the means to make those aspects of its content explicit in judgments or assertions. And in either case, having it disclosed to one in experience that things are a certain way is already an actualization of capacities that are conceptual in the relevant sense. That things are a certain way can be there for a subject to know, in her experience, whether or not she has resources for explicitly judging (or saying) that they are that way” (43).
possess. There will be no case of factual dasein in which each of these essential structures of dasein’s being, and their ontological basis, will not concretely be part of dasein’s being as a whole.48 “Even” authentic dasein is still being-in-the-world-with-others and “only” achieves a modified, or individuated, form of everydayness and the constituting social practices therein.49

As for the pragmatist account of authenticity, it does not do enough to rescue pragmatism from its presupposition that human is most primordially a social user whose most primordial understanding is governed by social practices. Dreyfus’s authenticity equivocates—not always, but sometimes—existential nullity [Nichtigkeit lit. nothingness] and groundlessness [Bodenlosigkeit lit. bottomlessness]. The difference between the two, however, is crucial to Heidegger’s fundamental ontology. Existential nullity is Heidegger’s term of an essential structure (existentialia) of dasein. Because dasein has its being to be, it is “permeated with nullity through and through” (331) [285]. As we have noted, dasein does not have the kind of being of a table or chair. Human rather only has “possible ways for it to be” from which it chooses who to be. This ability we have to choose is precisely a function of having a kind of being which is an issue; we are not yet “complete”, but rather always becoming (and thus permeated by “nothing”). Nullity is therefore not to be taken in any sort of obscurantist manner. It is simply Heidegger’s term for that structure of our being which allows dasein to have possibilities at all.

On the other hand, groundlessness is a quality of dasein’s everyday mode of existence. The “downward plunge into and within the groundlessness of the inauthentic being of the “they”’

48 See footnote 29.
49 Factically speaking, a hard distinction between what is modified and the modification itself is impossible. In truth, average undifferentiatedness is never without its modification (due to existence)—and every modification is never without its everydayness (due to the existentialia falling). The modification however, precisely due to existence, is always more primordial than the modified existentialia.
consists in a being uprooted from one’s own essence as existence (223) [178]. In groundlessness, we find ourselves in a work-world manipulating the socially constituted ready-to-hand largely “unaware” of the primordial basis for such a possibility. One can thus see how conflating existential nullity—a structure of dasein’s existence—and groundlessness—a quality of everydayness—distorts Heidegger’s picture. Not only do the pragmatists hold there to be no “ground” on which dasein can stand aside from social practices (because of their pragmatism), they are also forced to hold that those social practices are *themselves groundless* (because of their granting a certain primordiality to existence). This is why authenticity is *reduced* to a mere volitional phenomenon in which human has “no possibilities of its own”, and is unable to ever acquire any (BITW, 305). All individual dasein can do is be *its* “own” “ground” by “taking a stand” on its they-self, failing to take a stand, or taking no stand at all (supposing they are without need of a stand, as they are lost in the “ground” of groundlessness).50

To be sure, groundlessness is a *possibility* of our having a being which is permeated by nothingness (331) [285]. As we have seen, because dasein has the kind of being in which it chooses who to be, it can choose to disown itself, and fall into its inauthentic being-in-the-world-with-others in which it concernfully uses ready-to-hand equipment in its work-world. In fact, as that everyday kind of being which human possesses proximally and for the most part, this is the possibility which is often closest to us. Nevertheless, groundlessness is but one possibility of existential nullity—and an *inauthentic* one, at that. In the next section, we will bring to light another possibility of this existential nullity: the ability for one to take up a *free, distanced*...

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50 Because the pragmatists understand inauthenticity as ontologically distinct from undifferentiatedness, only authentic and inauthentic dasein take a stand, average everyday human does not. On our view, however, where undifferentiatedness has been shown to be a merely *provisional inauthenticity*, all dasein are either authentic or inauthentic. Thus, all dasein “take a stand” on their existence, even if the everyday dasein supposes they do not.
orientation to the world. This will reveal authenticity to not only be volitional in nature, but also intellectual. By bringing into view human’s authentic understanding and the primordial knowing which belongs to it, we will be able to put human on a more primordial basis than social use.

**The primordiality of tarrying-amidst**

In taking existence as our clue, authenticity has shown itself to be that most primordial mode of existence due to its truthful accordance with our essential ontological structure. What does this mean for the pragmatist view that social use/practice most primordially ground dasein’s being and understanding? It is important to recall that for Heidegger, kinds of understandings always correspond with kinds of being. In granting proper ontological priority to dasein’s everyday kind of being, the pragmatists give priority to its everyday understanding in which we concernfully manipulate equipment. However, in demonstrating the primordiality of authenticity, it will be dasein’s authentic understanding which will need to be brought to light.

Heidegger writes that, “as something that understands, dasein can understand itself in terms of the ‘world’ and others or in terms of its ownmost ability-to-know-how-to-be” (264) [221]. Understanding itself “in terms of the ‘world’ and others” is that kind of understanding, or mode of being-in-the-world, which Heidegger calls being-amidst in concern. As we have shown, concern is the mode in which human is, proximally and for the most part, and it is thus constitutive of our everydayness. Describing this understanding, which is given provisional priority in the analytic of human being, Heidegger writes that one is “absorbed” in the world and “has always dispersed [zerstreut] itself or even split itself up into definite ways of being-in” [83] (56). Indeed, in this mode non-dasein entities within-the-world largely show up as equipment ready-to-hand and—along with the work-world to which they belong, and the projects which we
take up when using them—are a function of the constituting practices of a community—just as (or at least largely as) the pragmatists describe.\textsuperscript{51} Through our being absorbed and dispersed in the socially constituted work-world closest to us, we use and manipulate tools that are appropriable for certain ends that we are aiming towards. In those cases where we do encounter presence-at-hand, we do so only as a sort of deficiency of the ready-to-hand kind of being.

Heidegger contrasts the understanding of concern with an understanding based on dasein’s “ownmost ability-to-know-how-to-be”, indicating that our being-amidst in concern is largely inauthentic. Inauthenticity certainly shares a resemblance with concern. He states that inauthenticity is “a quite distinctive kind of being-in-the-world—the kind which is completely fascinated by the ‘world’ and by the dasein-with of others in the ‘they’” \textsuperscript{176}(220, emphasis added). Thus while social practices undeniably provide our “first access” to entities within-the-world, they at the same time serve to “disguise and close off” what is most originary about dasein’s being—namely, the origin of its being. In other words, in our inauthentic being-in-the-world and its socially constituted concernful understanding, we have fallen into an everydayness which, as we already know, is characterized by untruth, and which, among other things, obfuscates existence as the primordial basis for our being (and thereby the possibility we have to be authentic). We may manipulate equipment and engage in various activities, and yet we have deteriorated into “the groundlessness and nullity” of unowned, averageness (223) \textsuperscript{178}.

In order to articulate the properly primordial understanding of human, it is its authentic understanding which must be laid bare. When dasein understands authentically, it “thrusts aside”\textsuperscript{51} I say “largely as” mostly due to the pragmatist position that undifferentiatedness is a kind of being particular dasein could actually possess rather than only seemingly possess. Otherwise, the pragmatist account of our sociopractical engagements of our being-in-the-world-with-others, in and of itself, may be fine.
the “they”, thereby allowing it to understand itself in terms of its ownmost ability-to-know-how-to-be (96) [67]. This mode of understanding corresponds to what Heidegger refers to as the mode of tarrying-amidst—the only other mode of being-in-the-world. Tarrying-amidst is Heidegger’s term for knowing. Heidegger’s description of this mode of being-in-the-world best exemplifies how tarrying-amidst, or knowing the world, is the authentic understanding which corresponds to the authentic kind of being. He states that in order to tarry-amidst one has to have a “deficiency” in their having to do with the world concernfully. He writes that tarrying is a “mode of dwelling autonomously [eigenständigen Sichaufhaltens] amidst entities within-the-world” (89) [61]. Dwelling autonomously is precisely Heidegger’s term for an owned [eigentlich] comporting—a holding ourselves [verhalten] in a kind of being and a kind of understanding which is authentic, thereby allowing us to have knowledge of the world which is not merely “anyone’s”—but is ours.52 One who tarrys owns themselves, and the primordiality of this understanding is due precisely to its truthful accordance to the kind of being dasein is—a being which exists.

Consistent with the rest of their interpretation, the pragmatists understand the “deficiency” in our concern which must occur in order to tarry-amidst, as properly ontological (i.e. that tarrying-amidst is actually grounded in the more originary concernful equipment-use of being-in-the-world-with-others).53 Heidegger does, in some sense, suggest this when tarrying-amidst is first introduced in the second chapter of Being and Time as a founded mode of being-amidst in concern. Once again, however, this is when Heidegger’s analytic of human is in its

52 The etymological connection between comportment [Verhalten] and dwelling [Aufenthalt] is not to be overlooked.
53 One should note that the pragmatists glaringly misinterpret what is meant by “tarrying-amidst”. Tarrying is conceived of as the failure to recontextualize the world, when our concernful absorption in the world has otherwise receded (HC, 59-62), (BITW, 79-83). As a “deficient” mode of concern, tarrying-amidst consists in “just staring” at “deficient” ready-to-hand entities.
provisional stages. The significance of dasein having its being to be and having it as its own is yet to be fully worked out, and the origin for all of dasein’s kinds of being (i.e. authenticity) has not yet been shown. After such an analytic has been carried out, however, it becomes clear that, in truth, that is on an authentically ontological basis, tarrying-amidst is not a deficient mode of being-amidst in concern, as the pragmatists argue. Concern is rather a fallen mode of tarrying-amidst—one which makes our essence opaque and in which we generally and mostly reside. But the possibility to tarry-amidst, or to know, as that understanding which belongs to the kind of being which most truthfully accords with our essential ontological structure, must nevertheless be presupposed in order for us to be able to be amidst the world concernfully.54

Additionally, in tarrying-amidst, Heidegger writes that “concern holds back from [Sichenthalten] any kind of producing, manipulating, and the like,” thereby allowing us to “encounter entities within-the-world purely in the way they look (εἶδος)” (88) [61]. Entities which we encounter present-at-hand within-the-world are thus not responded to merely as some community would respond to them. Rather, for one who holds themselves (the they-self) back, these entities are able to show themselves to us as they really are—in their presence-at-hand. They are no longer entities trapped within a work-world and merely taken for equipment ready-to-hand; rather they are entities which show themselves to us, in themselves, and from themselves: they are, as it were, the “things themselves”. This calls for another reversal of priorities. While equipment ready-to-hand is granted provisional ontological priority by Heidegger (given that it is the kind of being of non-dasein entities which we mostly encounter in

54 On this point, one might notice subtle similarities between my conclusion and the conclusion which Brandom draws in “Dasein, the Being that Thematizes”. Though Brandom arrives at his conclusion in an entirely different way, I suspect that a thorough and charitable comparison (on a properly ontological basis) would reveal the same ontological structures to be at play.
concern), the priority which they possess in the provisional analytic of human does not, as the pragmatists suppose it does, find its basis on properly ontological grounds. The fact that in tarrying-amidst—dasein’s authentic understanding—entities are discovered in their presence-at-hand, indicates that presence-at-hand is in fact the most primordial mode of being which non-dasein entities can possess. Properly ontologically speaking then, the present-at-hand is not a deficient kind of being possessed by a non-dasein entity, rather it is equipment ready-to-hand which is a fallen form of the present-at-hand of tarrying-amidst—one which covers up the things themselves. Indeed, something can show itself to us as appropriable towards an aim (ready-to-hand), because something can show itself to us at all (present-at-hand).

We should be clear, however, that in no way does the primordiality of dasein’s tarrying-amidst or the entities which show themselves as present-at-hand therein, suggest that either this mode of being-in-the-world, or the mode of non-dasein entities discovered in this understanding, ever become entirely separate or exclusive of social practices. Though the possibility to tarry-amidst the present-at-hand is presupposed in my concern with equipment, the social practices which generally govern our concern with equipment are neither deficient nor illustrate “any ‘less’ being or any ‘lower’ degree of being” (68) [43]. They are rather reflective of falling—that essential existentiale of dasein which we previously noted was not always a “negative”

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55 Fell also holds that presence-at-hand has ontological priority with respect to the ready-to-hand in authenticity—albeit not the present-at-hand of tarrying-amidst, but the present-at-hand of anxiety. Fell’s account for the primordiality of the present-at-hand of anxiety rests on an account of anxiety which misconstrues its defining feature (dasein’s being-in-the-world). With some adjustments, however, I believe his account can help make the connection between anxiety and tarrying-amidst which, despite its importance, is beyond the scope of this paper.


57 Once again, see footnote 29 if necessary.
phenomenon. Dasein is fallen proximally and for the most part, and though this means that
dasein has “gotten away” from its primordial essence (existence)—that is, its origin—the social
practices which govern fallenness are precisely what grant dasein its “first access” to the world
and the entities within it, including other dasein and even itself. Here “first”, however, does not
refer to a properly ontological first as it does for the pragmatists, but rather a provisional, “how
dasein generally is” first, reflective of Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology. It is in virtue of
this “first”, as an essential structure of our being (falling), that there always is an undertone of
“priority” which belongs to social practices. As such, the pragmatist position regarding the
“priority” of social practices is certainly not misguided. Nevertheless, however indispensable this
“first access” is, it is surely not “first” in an authentically ontological order.

Now the pragmatists, recognize that Heidegger “still” puts importance on presence-at-
hand, even if it is merely a “deficiency” of readiness-to-hand. Both Dreyfus and Brandom quote
Heidegger as stating that “science has its source in authentic existence” (415) [363]. However,
not only are the pragmatists conceiving of the concernful, everyday being-in-the-world-with-
others and the entities ready-to-hand discovered therein as ontologically prior to authentically
tarrying-amidst the present-at-hand—but the presence-at-hand of that science of which they
speak, is conceived of as “isolated properties” that “can be quantified and related by scientific
covering laws and thus taken as evidence for theoretical entities” (BITW, 81). This science, or

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58 See footnote 16.
59 It is important to keep in mind, however, as was the case for what is modified and the modification, factically
speaking, tarrying-amidst is not without its concern (due to the existentialia falling), and concern is not without its
tarrying-amidst (due to existence). This is why concern is characterized as having its own kind of sight, and tarrying
its own kind of “practice” (98, 409) [69, 358]. Tarrying-amidst however, precisely due to existence, is always more
primordial than the fallen concern. This, of course, also indicates the impossibility of “not mine” skillful
maneuvering.
60 In the pragmatist account of tarrying-amidst, it is not related to authenticity. See footnote 53.
abstract “theoretical activity”, is another form of ontic transcendence. Characterized by a “more precise” form of concern, it is related to certain types of objective inquiries in which one treats all, or some, entities as “causally interacting”, person-independent objects (HC, 59). In such cases, a scientist decontextualizes an object within the everyday world and recontextualizes it within a world of “average” scientific comportment (ibid). Heidegger, however, criticizes the presence-at-hand of this kind of “average” science for its general failure to take into account dasein’s being as being-in-the-world. This is while he doesn’t see this kind of presence-at-hand as problematic in its own right—as long as we conceive of the scientific, theoretical activity which discloses such a being as only accomplishing “roughly and naïvely, the demarcation and initial fixing of the areas of subject-matter” (29) [9].

While such a science is also addressed in Being and Time, this is not the primordial sense of science Heidegger has in mind when he states that “science has its source in authentic existence”. This is rather the science of authentically tarrying-amidst which is science, or knowledge, in its most primordial sense. The present-at-hand of this originary knowing is not to be confused with the presence-at-hand of an “average” scientific comportment. In illustrating

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61 See footnote 25.  
62 See Being and Time (93) [64-65] on the various senses of “world”.  
63 Fell points out that Heidegger does not ask us to “choose between the validity of science and the validity of ordinary experience”. Heidegger is rather “broadening and deepening the phenomenon of truth, not transferring it from one set of disciplines to another. The point is that true disclosure cannot be equated with total disclosure” (73). That being said, Fell also notes that this doesn’t deny “certain relative priorities, derivations, or dependencies in the ways different senses of being are related to each other” (72).  
64 The primordial sense of science, or knowledge, is something more like theoría [θεωρία]. Theoria, etymologically, is a seeing. See Being and Time (177) [137-138]. Theoria is not the same as theoretical. “Theoretical”, as a form of ontic transcendence, is akin to an “average” science which consists in a decontextualization and recontextualization. Theoria, or originary science, takes the form not of a decontextualization and recontextualization, but a modified contextualization. For more on theoría and how it is distinct—and presupposed—by “average” science, see Hans-Georg Gadamer’s Truth and Method. Trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall. New York: Crossroads, 1992. Pages 450-451.
how the present-at-hand of tarrying-amidst differs from both the ready-to-hand of everydayness and the presence-at-hand of “average” science, Heidegger writes the following of nature:

The wood is a forest of timber, the mountain a quarry of rock; the river is water-power, the wind is wind ‘in the sails’. As the ‘environment’ [Umwelt] is discovered, the ‘nature’ thus discovered is encountered too. If its kind of being as ready-to-hand is disregarded, this ‘nature’ itself can be discovered and defined simply in its pure presence-at-hand. But when this happens, the nature which 'stirs and strives', which assails us and enraths us as landscape, remains hidden. The botanist's plants are not the flowers of the hedgerow; the 'source' which the geographer establishes for a river is not the 'springhead in the dale' (100) [71].

The wood as timber and the river as water-power are nature understood as ready-to-hand, uncovered in our being-amidst in concern, and the result of our falling into uprooted inauthenticity. On the other hand, the nature “discovered and defined simply in its pure presence-at-hand” is the “average” scientific comportment which the pragmatists deem to be Heidegger’s science. It is indeed a more precise form of concern; but precisely in virtue of it still being a concern which uses and manipulates, such a science is still “grounded” in fallen inauthenticity.65

The nature which “stirs and strives” and “assails us and enraths us as landscape”, however, is neither the result of “average” science or everyday activities.66 It is the result of our tarrying-amidst—our “dwelling autonomously amidst entities within-the-world”. Through such a dwelling, we are allowed the pleasure of seeing things, and knowing things, simply as they look

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65 Because “average” science is still a mode of concern that consists in a decontextualization and recontextualization, the pragmatist suggestion that the transition from everydayness to science involves the present-at-hand (of “average” science) coming to be accessible by a kind of equipment ready-to-hand (assertions), may not be incorrect. Remember, Heidegger’s view is that the kind of “average” science which the pragmatists illuminate is by no means problematic in its own right, and thus it may be the case that the pragmatist account of this science is unproblematic as well. Heidegger’s worry, however, is that we lose sight of originary science (authentically tarrying-amidst), or worst, mistake it for “average” science.

66 Interestingly, Dreyfus recognizes an “unusual” sense of nature which has been “neglected by our tradition” referenced in the above passage from Being and Time. He calls it the nature of “primitive peoples” and “romantic poets” and identifies it as a “noncontemplative” experience of nature (BITW, 112). For Heidegger, however, it is precisely this sense of nature which is identified as contemplation in its most originary form.
in their presence-at-hand (that kind of being of non-dasein entities which belongs to the kind of being—authenticity—which most truthfully accords with our essential ontological structure). We do this by holding our concern for the world back and thereby realizing our authentic-ability-to-know-how-to-be which brings us into truthful accordance with our essence as existence. In doing so, we access an openness to the world which, though first given to us by social practices, becomes modified to attain its primordial basis in authenticity, thereby bringing us before the things themselves, and allowing entities to appear to us, without disguise, and as they truly are.

With the identification of this authentic tarrying-amidst, we have put ourselves in the position to bring to light a more primordial basis for human’s being/understanding than that illuminated by pragmatism. Human’s everyday being and understanding undoubtedly finds its basis in the social practices and “responsive dispositions” which govern our concernful use of equipment ready-to-hand. “Average” science also may find its primordial basis in meaning which emerges from our social use and practices which—in its case—are specifically aimed at discerning the causal relationships of the “world” around us. As a form of *ontic transcendence*, such a science and the present-at-hand which it discloses *can*, in many ways, be characterized as a less primordial “modification” of those social practices into which we are “first” initiated. In other words, the “more precise” form of concern and the pure present-at-hand which it discloses *are* indeed, in some sense, a *properly ontological* “deficiency” (decontextualization) which consists in a less primordial absorption in another kind of ready-to-hand (recontextualization).

Yet, the primordiality of authentically tarrying-amidst, or knowing, reveals that most primordially meaning emerges from an autonomous openness to present-at-hand entities within-the-world which we possess in virtue existing, and which we can *latently* gain access to through
a modification of our being-in-the-world-with-others and the concernful use of equipment therein.\(^6^7\) It is precisely in virtue of tarrying’s “failure” to recontextualize, but rather modify that it possesses the primordiality that it does. By bringing us into truthful accordance with our being as existence, we are revealed as entities which let entities within-the-world and “worlds” show themselves—whether inauthentically in a concernful use of equipment ready-to-hand in a work-world or in “average” science—or authentically, and primordially, in tarrying-amidst entities present-at-hand. This autonomous openness to the world—a function of precisely having the kind of being which is “permeated with nullity through and through”—is the basis for the possibility that anything can show up, or be disclosed to us, as anything at all.\(^6^8\)

However, this originary science is not just a possibility among possibilities, it is our most authentic possibility—our ownmost possibility. It is tarrying-amidst which allows for “interpretation in the broadest sense” (89) [62]. Only because we always already possess a free, authentic possibility—our ownmost possibility. It is tarrying-amidst which allows for “interpretation in the broadest sense” (89) [62]. Only because we always already possess a free,

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\(^{6^7}\) Dreyfus in fact writes that “it is dasein's openness onto the world that makes possible the derivative experience of looking or trying to see, as for example in the extreme case of an eye examination, which could, perhaps, be described as involving a private visual experience caused by an object” (BITW, 58 emphasis addd). As stated earlier, Dreyfus accounts for a certain primordiality which originary transcendence possesses, but due to his failure to articulate it on a properly ontological basis, dasein’s “openness onto the world” is left unclear (see footnotes 21, 35).

\(^{6^8}\) Heidegger is interested in identifying the ontological basis for any interpretation whatsoever. Pragmatism’s account of humans as most primordially social users is unable to illuminate that ontological basis. Take for example Heidegger’s discussion of nature. Most pragmatists are committed to a reason-nature dualism. Heidegger, however, recognizes this dualism as simply the result of one interpretation of nature (i.e. a nature governed by causal forces). Nature governed by causal forces, however, is not, strictly speaking, the nature of our being-in-the-world. Rather, it is the disenchanted (i.e. “decontextualized”) nature of “average” science. Heidegger, to be sure, proposes nothing like a “reenchantment” (i.e. recontextualization) of nature as this would be entirely unnecessary. What he wants us to notice is that, primordially speaking, nature is always already enchanted (i.e. contextualized). The disenchantment of nature is nothing more than the disenchanting of the already enchanted nature which we always understand, find ourselves in, and return to (in virtue of being being-in-the-world), in favor of an alternatively enchanted nature suited to a particular kind of concern. Additionally, one need not “choose” between ready-to-hand nature, the nature of “average” science, and the nature of tarrying-amidst as these are all interpretations which find their meaning within a certain context. Nevertheless, Heidegger’s point is that the nature of authentic tarrying-amidst, or primordial knowing, is more primordial as it is the nature disclosed in that context which is most originary, by that sort of understanding which corresponds with that sort of being which is in accordance with our essence as existence. It is the only “context” which is presupposed in any and all “enchantings” and for all the kinds of being/understandings dasein can possess.
distanced orientation to the world, do we have the possibility to be being-in-the-world-with-others and know the world through more specific “relations” in concern (ontic transcendence). In fact, the possibility to tarry-amidst is the very basis by which possibilities are intelligible to us in the first place. Tarrying-amidst is the possibility of having a ground at all—of which the groundlessness of inauthenticity is but one possible “ground” (194) [152]. Authenticity is thus not merely a volitional phenomenon. It is also intellectual, and more primordially so, in virtue of being that mode of being/understanding which, because of its accordance with our essence as existence, is the basis for any kind of being/understanding which dasein can possess.

This, of course, is not at all to deny the volitional aspect of authenticity for factical dasein. Rather, we now have a “ground” on which one can actually be their own ground through an autonomous dwelling in the world which allows entities to show themselves to us in their presence-at-hand (as opposed to merely “taking a stand” on the groundlessness of inauthenticity). But perhaps what would be most important to Heidegger, is that now we have a clue as to how one should go about being their own ground. By holding ourselves back from any kind of manipulating, using, producing, and the like—those kinds of concern which constitute that kind of being and understanding which we possess proximally and for the most part—one may (latently) come to own themselves and, through a tarrying-amidst entities within-the-world, attain a truthful accordance with their primordial essence as existence

Conclusion

Fully realizing what it means for human to possess a more primordial basis of authentically tarrying-amidst entities present-at-hand, is well beyond the scope of this paper. For

69 Because we are permeated by nullity, some sense of this relation remains even in fallen concern. See footnote 59.
such a project, the inclusion of Division II would be required. There Heidegger offers more
details on how one ought to go about achieving the more originary, modified form of
everydayness which, in many ways, is the most fascinating part of his treatise. Nevertheless, the
aim of this paper has been to bring to light Heidegger’s pursuit of a more primordial basis for
human being and its understanding than that illuminated by the pragmatist tradition.
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