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## Feasibility, Necessity, and Rebellion of Collective Authenticity as Understood Through Heidegger and Fanon

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## Feasibility, Necessity, and Rebellion of Collective Authenticity as Understood Through Heidegger and Fanon

In section 74 of his work *Being and Time*, Martin Heidegger expands on the theme of authenticity in a notable and perhaps unusual way. He suggests that in order to fully come back to an unrepressed ownership of its authenticity, Dasein must achieve authenticity in, with, and for its co-historical community, the achievement of which is coined as a ‘destiny.’<sup>1</sup> This section is notable as *Being and Time*’s prior discussions regarding authenticity allude to the authenticity of Dasein in a singular sense, not of multiple Dasein joined together in community. Furthermore, considering that inauthenticity—the state from which Dasein’s authenticity must arise out of—is rooted in Dasein’s fallenness to the they-ness of the others, one may question whether section 74’s concept of destiny and collective authenticity is a contradiction. Can Dasein escape inauthentic fallenness to the ‘they’ and truly come to its authentic self if it must bring others along on its escape attempt? Would maintaining such community be an instance of chaining oneself to the ‘they’, i.e., another recurring instance of fallenness into inauthenticity? Are liberal interpreters such as Salem-Wiseman correct in asserting that any external, non-individual elements of a Dasein’s pursuit of authenticity always “entrench the dominion of *das Man*”?<sup>2</sup>

This paper aims to show that Dasein’s historical thrownness, rather than the individual Dasein in itself, is what should be the main focus in regards to authenticity, and that once this distinction is drawn, the achievement of a collective authenticity is both feasible and indeed what follows *Being and Time*’s main line of argument on authenticity.<sup>3</sup> These considerations will

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John MacQuarrie and Edward S. Robinson (Victoria: Must Have Books, 2021), 434-439.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Salem-Wiseman, “Heidegger’s Dasein and the Liberal Conception of the Self” *Political Theory* 31, no. 4. (2003), 540, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591703251146>.

<sup>3</sup> This is an important disclaimer that I encourage be read in its entirety. To responsibly write about Heidegger’s philosophy, especially in relation to the topics that this paper takes on, I must note that in 1933, seven years after writing *Being and Time*, Heidegger notoriously and heinously joined the Nazi party of the then German Reich. There are a variety of contrasting accounts, interpretations, and affirmations amongst scholars on how this is to affect contemporary studies, discussions, and considerations of Heideggerian philosophical texts such as *Being and Time*

provide a rich support to the late W. S. K. Cameron's belief in a compelling political relevance of the early Heidegger, who noted, "He dismissed ethical and political questions as comparatively trivial. Yet his ontology implies instructive insights for ethics and politics—not least, by undermining the individualistic and voluntaristic assumptions of Western philosophy in general and liberal political theory in particular"<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, this paper will also discuss how Frantz Fanon's philosophy on race and decolonization,<sup>5</sup> particularly in his essay *Racism and Culture* and book *The Wretched of the Earth*, resonates with the ideas of collective authenticity found in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Considerations from Fanon will be used to both demonstrate how they-ness, inauthentic fallenness, and collective authenticity are experienced in the historical context of colonialism, as well as to clarify and develop the feasibility and necessity of collective authenticity itself. Fanon

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that preceded this deplorable period of Heidegger's life. Such discussion is considered in depth in Julian Young's book *Heidegger, philosophy, Nazism*, which this paper references. Nevertheless, the philosophy of *Being and Time* is widely recognized as being immensely influential and fundamental to the development of further thought in the contemporary tradition of continental philosophy, phenomenology, hermeneutics, existentialism, Latin American philosophy, psychology, critical theories on race and gender, literature, and even architecture, that have had deep impacts on shaping the 20th and 21st centuries as we know them. Because of this, the Heidegger and the philosophy of *Being and Time* are still widely studied and considered in 21st century academic philosophy, including in the philosophy department of Loyola Marymount University, which offered a course on Heidegger in the Fall semester of 2021. With all things considered, I am ultimately in agreement with W. S. K. Cameron's assessment in "Martin Heidegger: Individual and Collective Responsibility" that, "Heidegger provides invaluable insights into the possibilities and limits of insight and action— which together form the ground of the political [...] We simply cannot afford to overlook this major, if sometimes misguided, thinker." (239) and believe a careful analysis of such insights in *Being and Time* can be both fruitful and responsible. Rather than deal directly with discussions that focus purely on Heidegger and his Nazism, this paper is aimed at giving focus on how Frantz Fanon, a marginalized philosopher of color, gives important philosophical additions to the philosophy of *Being and Time* that provide us a more refined, full, and correct philosophy of authenticity that connects to concrete racial, cultural, and political realities. I believe that these Fanonian supplements, especially in an extended version of this paper, contribute to a philosophy of collective authenticity that is anti-Nazi.

<sup>4</sup>W. S. K. Cameron, "Martin Heidegger: Individual and Collective Responsibility" *Engaging Nature: Environmentalism and the Political Theory Canon* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014.), 240.

<sup>5</sup> Fanon is more commonly discussed in relation to the French figures of 20th-century continental philosophy that he was most directly influenced by and often in direct conversation with such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Sartre, the latter of which wrote the preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. The philosophy of such French figures, however, is deeply influenced and indebted to Heidegger's *Being and Time*, and as such, it should come as no surprise for traces of *Being and Time*'s influence to be found in Fanon's thought, even if they were not passed on as directly.

will also be particularly useful for discussing how certain groups become more marginalized than others and why collective authenticity will necessarily elicit a provocation.

### **The Historical Thrownness of Dasein**

To understand how collective authenticity is possible and non-contradictory, we first need to specify what is being ‘authenticized’ when Dasein becomes authentic. To do this, we need to understand the historicity and thrownness of Dasein. Heidegger emphasizes historicity, or the possession of an active history, as a fundamental component of Dasein.<sup>6</sup> Our history is something that we are rooted in, something that our present selves come from. We all, for instance, have a culture from which we come, a childhood and family structure (or lack thereof) from which we evolved, the privileges or struggles of a socio-economic background that we have either benefited from or cut our teeth upon, etc.

All these components of one’s history are things into which we are *thrown*. They are not things which were chosen by Dasein. One never chooses or asks for their culture, their body, their country of origin, or their race. As Young describes it, “Dasein never chooses, but finds itself ‘already in a world.’”<sup>7</sup> Such things, however, are inherited by us nonetheless and manifested into one’s history. Thus, one’s history is always one that is constituted by *thrownness*.

This history that Dasein possesses, however, is never merely something that once was, that is now over, and that we merely look back upon from time to time. Rather, it is something *historical*, something that is still very much here with us today in our present lives.<sup>8</sup> One’s historical thrownness is not like an old sterile history book one can simply shelve away, detach themselves from, and forget about. One cannot simply ditch their thrown history of racial,

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<sup>6</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 41.

<sup>7</sup> Julian Young, “Being and Time: positive implication critiques,” *Heidegger, philosophy, Nazism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 61.

<sup>8</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 430.

cultural, and social experiences that brought them to their present moment and act as though they never happened. This is because that historical thrownness determines where we find ourselves in that present moment and thus makes us who we are in that present moment. Our present moments are always contextualized by some history of experience that brought us to that moment. One is never void of such history.

Those historical experiences always shine a light on the world, deciding how it is revealed in one's present experience. For example, for one who has been historically thrown into a racially colored experience in 21st century United States—a historicity in which people of their racial group have been repeatedly exploited, harassed, and murdered by mobs and authorities without justice or repercussions—the present world likely discloses itself as a place viewed with a sense of deep caution, mistrust, fear, anger, and demands for actual justice. In an experience of the present, the history into which we are thrown is always very much right there alongside us.

In bringing us to the present, however, our historical thrownness also projects itself into our future. As Young highlights, one's historical thrownness discloses what is valuable to Dasein, particularly when it comes to what kinds of activities and projects Dasein is intrinsically and genuinely compelled to engage with in its life.<sup>9</sup> The kind of lives that we want to live and the things that we aim for in our futures, be it a job or profession that fascinates us, the continuation of a family culture, a social issue that we want to commit ourselves to, or a kind of romantic relationship that we crave, all stem from our past historical experiences that have led us to develop values. Through this, our history is what opens up the visibility of a future to us. As Heidegger affirms, it is something which *discloses* and regulates our possibilities for life and in

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<sup>9</sup> Young, "Being and Time: positive implication critiques," 61-62.

this sense “is not something which *follows along after* Dasein, but something which already goes ahead of it.”<sup>10</sup>

The fact that our history projects itself into our future does not mean, however, that our futures are simply repeats of our past experiences. There can, of course, be historical experiences that lead us to cherish and become intrinsically attached to a style of life, activity, culture, and/or identity, and which subsequently lead us to value the continuation and growth of such ways of life into the future. But there can also be others that lead us to feel a sense of emptiness, pain, or injustice, in which case we desire to enact change to progress from and overcome such thrown experience.

The overcoming of such voids and pains, however, occurs because one experiences, holds, and recognizes them as their own histories for overcoming. If one fails or refuses to recognize such history, and instead tries simply to ignore and pay no attention to what has brought them to their present, overcoming such a void will be impossible. A triumph over tragedy requires that the desire and will for triumph is projected out of that historical experience of pain and emptiness itself. In being a triumph that is always related to the initial historical experience, the triumph is ultimately united with the tragedy as a single united history of the person that is further developed rather than abandoned.

Fanon demonstrates the importance of Dasein’s historicity in *The Wretched of the Earth* when he discusses the importance of colonized poets and intellectuals whose work focuses on the historicity of the pain, struggle, and injustice of their own marginalized experiences.<sup>11</sup> The emphasis of such work is not aimed at supporting mere intellectual acts. Nor does Fanon present Guinean poetry with the aim of merely evoking deep sadness in a colonized person and making

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<sup>10</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 41.

<sup>11</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 162-167.

one feel as though they will never escape repeats of such pain, injustice, and tragedy. Rather, he recognizes that the historical thrownness of the past manifested in these works allows a colonized person to recognize their own experiences of alienation and marginalization in the present moment, and that from that recognition, an orientation towards future political action that overcomes such present subjugation is opened up to a colonized person for them pursue and with which to liberate themselves.

This intrinsic value and will for one's life pursuits always stems from similar projections of our thrown experience. Dasein, our past, present, and future are all united by the historicity that constitutes us as beings-in-time.

### **Authentication of Historical Thrownness**

Heidegger maintains that Dasein ends up in a state of inauthenticity when, instead of fully recognizing and owning its own history and the life that it is compelled to pursue as a result, Dasein conforms to and falls for the affirmations, rules and expectations of averageness and genericness asserted by the "tradition" of the "they," which dismisses and covers up the particular and unique historical thrownness that is Dasein's legitimate source and origin.<sup>12</sup> Fanon demonstrates that such fallenness into inauthenticity is prominent amongst colonized people who, in attempting to rescue themselves from further subjugation by conforming to the white standards of they-ness under colonialism, attempt to deracialize themselves by walking away from their own culture and customs which colonial they-ness condemns as primitive. Rather than owning and pursuing their authentic selves and ways of life, such colonized people 'fling' themselves into adoptions of the cultural models that this they-ness affirms as acceptable averageness.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 43.

<sup>13</sup> Frantz Fanon, "Racism and Culture," trans. Haakon Chevalier, in *I Am Because We Are: Readings In African Philosophy*, ed. Fred L. Hord and Jonathan S. Lee (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 211-212.

The averageness that they-ness asserts always neglects and rolls over Dasein's historical thrownness because averageness and genericness never encompass the aspects of uniqueness and particularity that make and distinguish Dasein as individuated by its distinct historicity. There is always some experience of one's historicity that is not a generic universal. In as much as one always has such an aspect of uniqueness in what they are, the averageness of they-ness, in failing to encompass that uniqueness that makes one who they truly are, will deny recognizing and pursuing this part of ourselves.

However, fallenness to they-ness does not outright destroy one's historicity. One's fallenness, in inauthentically rejecting their queerness in a homophobic society where heterosexual and cis-gender standards are affirmed by they-ness as the appropriate tradition of averageness, for example, does not outright destroy the identity, past experience, and attachment with the experiences of gender and/or sexuality that they have been historically thrown into. A history of something remains whether it is recognized or not, and as such, continues making the person of the present that very thing. History cannot be erased, only covered up. As Young articulates, "inauthentic Dasein actively *represses* its value-tradition and therefore remains in possession of that tradition in the way in which, for Freudians, one remains in possession of repressed, but not extinguished memories."<sup>14</sup> Because Dasein's history perseveres, albeit a repressed perseverance, there is inevitably a dissonance between it and the averageness of they-ness, a dissonance that Dasein necessarily experiences as a sense of uncanniness and "not-at-homeness" when it is inauthentic. *Being and Time* affirms that this sensation is the call of a Dasein's conscience to come back to its authentic historical thrownness, and thus, to come back to who it really is.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Young, "Being and Time: positive implication critiques," 65-66.

<sup>15</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 317-322.

Fanon recognizes such conscience in the experience of the colonized, noting that regardless of how much a colonized person attempts to deculturalize and deracialize itself so as to conform to inauthenticity, they continue to experience racism and feelings of alienation.<sup>16</sup> This is in part because systematic exploitation against them continues regardless of how assimilated they attempt to make themselves, but also because the culture they attempt to conform to is not one derived from their own historical experiences. In such a position, they always retain an alien outsider relationship to such culture. In the inevitable confrontation of such dissonance, from their own people, communities, and childhood memories, there always remains a covered-up authentic culture that derives from what the colonized has experienced in their historicity, one that they can rediscover, revalorize, and recultivate.<sup>17</sup>

To become authentic is for inauthentic Dasein to hear this uncanny call of its conscience, reestablish ownership of its own historical thrownness, and choose to pursue the future bound values and possibilities that it has received from this historically thrown past. Thus, Dasein's historical thrownness, and its opening of authentic possibilities, is what is specifically being revived and authenticized in an achievement of authenticity.

### **Historical Thrownness as Experienced by Multiple Subjects**

While every Dasein has a history into which it is thrown, it would be wrong to take the historicity of a Dasein as something that is rooted intrinsically and uniquely in the individual Dasein. While a Nietzschean view might suggest that the individual can uniquely decide and create the value that guides them independently within themselves, Heidegger's conception of historicity, as Young notes, views history not as something crafted by Dasein itself, but *received*

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<sup>16</sup> Fanon, *Racism and Culture*, 212-214.

<sup>17</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 158-159.

When discussing colonized intellectuals in *The Wretched of the Earth*, this conscience of abandoned authentic culture and nation is identified by Fanon as the second stage of a colonized intellectual's return. The re-adoption of such culture and nation and decision to become authentic is identified by him as the third 'combat' stage.

and *inherited* externally.<sup>18</sup> The historicity of Dasein would not be one of thrownness if it were something it itself created and decided on. The aspects that constitute such a history are external to and beyond Dasein, and because of this, have the capacity to be received and inherited by others as well. Thus, what we are made of in terms of our history is never anything that is fundamentally exclusive to us as individuals. The rest of the ‘herd’ may also have been thrown into such historicity. Dasein can indeed find others who share that experience and historicity and thus have their world disclosed in that same way.

McMullin gives further support for the potential of one’s historicity to be experienced by others, noting Heidegger’s claim that for all things and experiences that are at hand for Dasein, there is embedded a fundamental reference to “other wearers,” of others that could have gone through the same experience.<sup>19</sup> That is, whenever one is thrown into an experience, be it of suffering as a terminal cancer patient, enjoying the extravagance of being an outdated British royal, or being a member of Tibetan culture, they intuitively recognize the experience as something that another could have been thrown into and experienced. Dasein understands in all these experiences that someone else could have been standing in their shoes and experienced such a thrown pain, splendor, or Tibeteness. Such an understanding is embedded within the experience of these things themselves. It is the very reason why Dasein are compelled to express and describe such experiences to others who did not directly experience such things, be it through literature, art, or verbal conversation. It is also the reason why Dasein are able to recognize and experience a sense of resonance with others that were also in the shoes of such an experience. Thus, this intuitive awareness of other wearers further demonstrates historical

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<sup>18</sup> Young, “Being and Time: positive implication critiques,” 62.

<sup>19</sup> Irene McMullin, *Time and The Shared World: Heidegger on Social Relations* (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 137-138.

thrownness as an ultimately independent and externally derived experience that can be shared with others.<sup>20</sup>

### **What Constitutes a ‘People’ in Heidegger and Fanon**

This important point about Dasein’s historicity is likely why Heidegger begins coining it as a *heritage* of Dasein in section 74, as heritage more directly implies the existence of a community of multiple Dasein that are partaking in and thus sharing the heritage experience.<sup>21</sup> The use of heritage seems to emphasize that what is found within the individual in terms of its historicity is also present in a community that was thrown in the same way. Thus, as Aboutorabi notes, the Heideggerian concept of a people or culture is not based on unity through biology or genetics.<sup>22</sup> Rather, *Being and Time* affirms that a people as a unified group is formed through a shared experience of historicity which unites all participants in a shared experience of the present.<sup>23</sup> This is why it is a tragedy when parents and children are separated from each other for prolonged periods, as without the ability to develop shared experiences together, their ability to be a heritage community together in the form of a genuine family, and share a form of historically thrown being, is hindered.

This conception of historicity as what truly constitutes a people is one that Fanon is in agreement with in *Racism and Culture*, specifically in regards to what constitutes a racial group of people. Fanon affirms that biological and psychological studies to understand race and racism are primitive and oversimplified endeavors that fail to recognize that the history of colonial

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<sup>20</sup> McMullin notes that this is very reminiscent of Husserl’s analysis on the intersubjective nature of the objectivity of objects.

<sup>21</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 435.

<sup>22</sup> The irrelevance of biology and genetics when it comes to *Being and Time*’s conception of people can also be derived from section 10 of *Being and Time*, which affirms that what truly constitutes Dasein (implied in the individual sense) will never be found in any scientific study of anthropology, psychology, or biology.

<sup>23</sup> Rozita Aboutorabi, “Heidegger, Education, Nation and Race.” *Policy Futures in Education* 13, no. 4 (2015), 416-419, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210315571219>.

enslavement, exploitation, and domination is the underlying foundation of what constitutes being a native and inferiorized race.<sup>24</sup> Fanon's criticism here should not be taken as merely an attack against biologists, psychologists, and evolutionists of the 20th and 19th centuries that sought to explain race and justify the enslavement of inferior races through empirical science. This criticism is also aimed at scientists who may attempt to 'nobly' explain race out of existence through biological or psychological reductionist lenses, affirming its nonexistence based on lack of biological differences between people of different 'races,' or of affirming that societal race and racism are merely derived 'mental quirks' and 'psychological flaws' amongst people.<sup>25</sup>

What is wrong about such arguments is that they completely ignore the historical experience of subjugation that native people face under colonialism, which gives rise to their collectively felt and experienced historicity of race. Such a subjugation is one that is rooted not in crude, vulgar racism rooted in biology, but in the intents of the colonizer to continue exploiting, dehumanizing, and subjugating colonized people for enrichment and affirmation of cultural superiority. As Fanon notes, under the more modern practices of colonialism, such colonial intentions continue manifesting through less crude and increasingly 'camouflaged' techniques that are nonetheless fundamentally the same, and thus maintain the inferioritization of colonized people in modernity.<sup>26</sup>

A scientific study that shows that Indigenous people are genetically indistinguishable from Whites would not end the experience of being Indigenous. Such an identity is rooted not in a sense of being biologically Indigenous, but of having been historically thrown into the marginalization, disadvantage, and exploitation that all the genetically and culturally distinct ethnicities of the Indigenous diaspora face under colonialism.

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<sup>24</sup> Fanon, *Racism and Culture*, 206-208.

<sup>25</sup> Fanon, *Racism and Culture*, 211.

<sup>26</sup> Fanon, *Racism and Culture*, 209-212.

Some might affirm that we cannot totally dismiss biology or genetics as components that can unite people. Aren't people who are all collectively thrown into having a biological or genetic disability for example, unified as a collective and distinct people by this 'biological experience'? This question essentially answers itself, as in such a case, it is not the mere biology or genetics themselves that are constituting the sharedness in question. Rather, the sharedness in question is in the felt *experience* itself of being thrown into the context and circumstance that biology is forcing upon these heritage members. For example, is it in merely talking about biological and genetic science that such people achieve a sense of collective unity? Or is it in discussing and sharing the concrete lived experiences of marginalization and disadvantage under such conditions and the wills to overcome such conditions that drive such individuals together as a united people? As I acknowledge later in this paper, only those who directly experience this thrownness have the right to answer this question with certainty, but as an outsider to this particular historical thrownness, I am inclined to infer that it is the experience itself, and not the biology itself, that unifies such a heritage group.

### **Why An Authentic Collective Group is Not The 'They'**

Such heritage communities are distinct from the 'They' in the sense that they still hold distinction and uniqueness in the world. This is because, as for any heritage or historical thrownness, be it of a gender, culture, or race, not all Dasein have been thrown into it, and as such, it is not a mark of mere unremarkable averageness or genericness. When a group collectively affirms such a heritage as their authentic identity, they affirm that they as a collective group are *different* than the generic average of a mainstream societal they-ness, that they have a distinct experience of the world, have distinct values in life, that their collective heritage group is something that defies averageness, and most importantly, that this collective non-averageness

should be empowered to speak and live for itself independently of the norms and opinions of they-ness.

In his liberal interpretation of authenticity in *Being and Time*, Salem-Wiseman misses this point in thinking that external and collective calls for how Dasein is to pursue itself necessarily imply themselves as universal ones of a Kantian-like world conscience, one that leads to a fallenness to they-ness.<sup>27</sup> This is not the case at all. When one authentically supports and pursues a collective heritage that they take as external and shared between many Dasein, they are not affirming that to all Dasein in existence. A LGBTQ pride march, for instance, is not one that is affirming that everyone in society should take up queerness or homosexuality. Rather, this external call is one that is calling specifically to everyone with that distinct historical thrownness to authentically take up this way of being, which is not a proclamation to all people on a universal level.

The fact that such a heritage has a community of Dasein participants does not make the heritage immune from fallen subordination into inauthenticity by the societal ‘They.’ The conveniences and compulsions to conform to averageness that stem from the ‘They’ will still attempt to suppress the distinct heritage and historical thrownness manifested in this community and reduce it to a conforming unauthentic averageness. The fact that the many immigrant heritages that entered Ellis Island were carried by masses of Dasein did not stop the anglo-phizing of surnames, and the washing away, rather than the preserving, of the immigrant heritages, languages, and identities that such Dasein were. The ‘They’ still attacks you even if you are in a group. Since vulnerability to they-ness still exists, a collective heritage community must still seek authenticity through resistance to fallenness.

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<sup>27</sup> Salem-Wiseman, “Heidegger’s Dasein and the Liberal Conception of the Self,” 540.

### **Necessity of Collective Authenticity**

One may, of course, agree that pursuing collective authenticity is possible, but point out that a mere possibility of doing something does not entail an obligation to do so. For what reason should Dasein be compelled towards pursuing authenticity with others rather than simply achieving authenticity on its own and for itself? After all, don't we all hate group projects?

However, for a Dasein to fully revive its historical disclosure into authenticity, it must necessarily work towards reviving the dormant historical thrownness of its fellow heritage group members as well. Mansbach, who also interprets *Being and Time* as being communitarian, affirms that "Dasein is wholly itself when the possibilities of Others become its own possibilities, with the same end in view."<sup>28</sup> We must remember that it is not the individual Dasein itself which is the true target of liberation in pursuits of authenticity. Rather, the target of liberation is Dasein's externally derived historical thrownness itself which is manifested amongst many people in its heritage group. For this historical thrownness itself to be fully liberated, its revival in the entirety of that heritage group must occur. Thus, Dasein becomes capable of authenticity at the highest level when it realizes that the true liberation of its authentic way of being (its own possibilities) means the transformation of the world into one where all people who are like themselves (with the same end in view) are also allowed to freely manifest their shared historical thrownness (the possibilities that are recognized as the same as Dasein's own and thus become its own) in an authentic life.

Furthermore, in his discussion of the 1954 Vietnamese victory at Dien Bien Phu against French colonialism, Fanon demonstrates how single acts and pursuits of authenticity are never fundamentally isolated and contained ones. He acknowledges that such a victory, where the

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<sup>28</sup> Abraham Mansbach, "Heidegger on the Self, Authenticity and Inauthenticity." *Iyyun: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly* 40 (1991): 85, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23350704>.

Vietnamese successfully rejected and cast off the political standards of averageness and acceptability in colonial Vietnam, and were able to authentically affirm and pursue the values and political callings of their historically thrown experience, was one that ignited callings of inspirational conscience and yearnings of authenticity in all other colonial subjects who also shared that historical thrownness.<sup>29</sup>

Fanon's note on Vietnam highlights how in pursuing authenticity, one necessarily becomes an example of that authentic historical thrownness that inspires and lifts up the rest of its heritage community. As Alessandrini assesses, such examples and demonstrations of authenticity alleviate a kind of "fear barrier" which would otherwise continue sedating the rest of one's heritage community into inauthentic subordination to them.<sup>30</sup> It is why one experiences a rejuvenation and feeling of being opened up when an authentic community member is encountered, as the activity of their authenticized historically-thrown way of being kindles and awakens the same kind of historical thrownness within ourselves. As Alessandrini notes, authoritative regimes are aware of the risk that such collective chains of combustion pose to the powder kegs of suppressed authenticity that they sit upon which is why such regimes try to hide, isolate, and stomp out any initial sparks of authenticity that appear, no matter how small or distant they may be.<sup>31</sup>

Additionally, achieving authenticity requires carving out space and allowance in the world for one to pursue and express the uniqueness of their historical thrownness, whether that be a part of the world that is no longer under colonial domination, a space where a religious community can be and feel safe with their authentic selves, or a community where one can

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<sup>29</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 30-31.

<sup>30</sup> Anthony C. Alessandrini, "'Any Decolonization Is a Success': Fanon and the 'African Spring,'" in *Frantz Fanon and the Future of Cultural Politics* (London: Lexington Books, 2014), 166-167.

<sup>31</sup> Alessandrini, "'Any Decolonization Is a Success': Fanon and the 'African Spring,'" 169-170.

pursue their authentic cultural customs without being obstructed; all such openings of space are also necessarily an opening of space to the rest of one's heritage community. The authentication of such heritage community members would open up even more space, and, as Fanon affirms with respect to the authentication of colonized peoples, community members are compelled to care about such further opening: space that is not open is space that is closed off to them— be it a place where colonial and racial domination still lingers, a hellscape of persecution, or a workplace of vicious male domination and privilege, this is a restriction and threat to their own authenticity.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, all promotions and achievements of authenticity are always promotions of the authenticized historical thrownness itself in its full and collective manifestation. Admirations towards specific instances of authenticity are never simply towards the individual Dasein of that instance. Rather, a considerable part of such admiration is how that instance contributes towards an empowerment of a collectively-held historical thrownness in its totality.<sup>33</sup>

Since the apparent pursuit of one single Dasein's authenticity is always a promotion of a historical thrownness itself, an authentic Dasein would always be helping members of its heritage community to develop authenticity. A Dasein cherishes moments of authenticity in all its historical comrades when it recognizes that it can see itself and the historical thrownness that it itself hails from in their eyes. Such a disposition towards its heritage community could explain why an authentic Dasein would be willing to die for them. Such a martyr rests assured in the fact that their historical thrownness, which ultimately encompasses themselves and their world as they experience and know them, will persevere beyond them in the members of their heritage

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<sup>32</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 179-180.

<sup>33</sup> One could perhaps even argue that such admiration is *completely* directed at the collective historical thrownness in its entirety.

community who are instilled with that same experience of historical thrownness. Thus, a pursuit of a collective authenticity is not only very much possible and non-contradictory, but it is also an inevitable and necessary occurrence in full authentic becoming.

### **Possibility of Unity and Solidarity**

It is only with such historical comrades, however, that collective authenticity can be pursued, because if Dasein share no historical thrownness, then there is no common experience of the world or way of life to unite their pursuits of authenticity. This is not to say that one is necessarily opposed to or completely indifferent to the authenticity of a historic stranger. One could indeed support the historic stranger's achievement of authenticity through altruistic solidarity, but such help would not be a pursuit of collective authenticity.

A cis-male, for example, could stand in solidarity with a pursuit of authenticity for women, but this specific pursuit in itself does not open up ways of being and life that match onto his historical thrownness. Something else in his historical thrownness that could indeed be potentially pursued in collective authenticity, such as thrownness into a racial group, would not be the target of the liberation at hand (assuming that this march strictly focuses on women's issues). He cannot stand in direct unity for them, both because it is not pursuing a liberation and authentication of his historical thrownness, and because since it does not involve his historical thrownness, the experience and goals that are being pursued are ones on which he cannot rightfully claim to have insight or expertise. Only one who is part of the historical disclosure that a collective pursuit of authenticity is focused on, whether that be of femininity, Indigenouness, Judaism, or the working class, can claim to truly understand the experience and pursuits of authenticity that the collective group is aimed at. Thus, such people are the only ones who can truly conduct and lead the pursuit and achievement of their collective authenticity. A

non-member could provide support, but only as one in an external solidarity that lets those who are in unity with that historical thrownness lead the way to that liberation of authenticity.

Because of this, collective authenticity is not something that every single person could unite together in pursuit of. It can only be pursued by historical comrades who share a historical thrownness distinct from the generic averageness of they-ness. This would explain why section 74 of *Being and Time* affirms such destiny as “Being-with-one-another in the *same* world,” rather than *the* world in a universal sense.<sup>34</sup>

### **Fanon on Intersectionality**

However, Daseins are, of course, never defined by simply one definite and clear-cut heritage of historical thrownness. Fanon recognizes this as something that some 20th century African intellectuals, in trying to establish the existence of a unified African culture, failed to realize in their pursuit of collective authenticity for the Black diaspora. He notes that when the members of Black historical thrownness came together at the First Congress of the African Society for culture in 1956, They realized that their finer and more particular experiences of historical thrownness ultimately made them different from one another. The Blacks of Chicago, Latin America, Nigeria, and Tanzania all realized that even though they were all Black, they were distinct people through their distinct historically thrown cultures, which were ultimately different collections of values, pursuits, concerns, and goals.<sup>35</sup>

Fanon agrees that the constituents of such a heritage group of a historical thrownness, such as Blackness, are indeed always distinct from each other in other factors of historical thrownness such as culture, sex, age/generation, etc. To suggest that this wouldn't be the case with the Black diaspora, and to affirm that Blacks are nothing but their race, would be just as

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<sup>34</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 436.

<sup>35</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 152-154.

absurd as the racism of white colonizers that proclaims Blacks and other colonial subjects to have no culture and that all Blacks, Arabs, etc. are all ultimately the same.<sup>36</sup>

But even with such discrepancies in a group, Fanon shows that this simply demonstrates a presence of intersectionality with respect to historical thrownness, one that affirms that more particular groups of Dasein, as well as individual Dasein, can and must be comrades in many different communities and pursuits of collective authenticity in order to fully authenticize their multilayered sets of historical thrownness. Fanon notes that while colonized nations such as Guinea and Senegal have distinct cultural pursuits of authenticity that they must undertake on their own in distinct groups, they nonetheless still hold a historically thrown unity and comradeship through the same subjugation of white colonialism and exploitation in Africa that they have experienced and must fight together against.<sup>37</sup> Fanon simultaneously acknowledges the presence of intersectional distinction while also affirming that it should not be used as a grounds to undermine the dimension(s) in which people are still nonetheless united as a heritage group. As Alessandrini highlights, Fanon realized that misleading thinking on intersectionality is what led to the harmful division of ‘White Africa’ and ‘Black Africa,’ which led to a failure to recognize that all parts of Africa, while certainly not sharing a homogenous Pan-African cultural and racial unity, were nonetheless all colonized Africans that pursued a African political authenticity against European colonialism.<sup>38</sup> Intersectional distinction must and should be acknowledged, but at the same time does not and ought not be taken as an obstruction to pursuits of collective authenticity.

### **‘Lone Wolves’**

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<sup>36</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 152-154.

<sup>37</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 168-169.

<sup>38</sup> Alessandrini, “‘Any Decolonization Is a Success’: Fanon and the African Spring,” 166-169.

One may question if collective authenticity is possible if a particular experience of historical thrownness is one that only one single Dasein has been thrown into. However, it would seem quite rare, and perhaps even fundamentally impossible for such ‘lone wolves’ to truly exist. After all, even if one were thrown into apparent aloneness in a certain historical disclosure, wouldn’t they have a shared historical disclosure with others who are also all alone in their historical disclosure? Furthermore, doesn’t the label we are using right now, ‘lone wolves,’ one that is plural, already immediately imply in itself multiple and other people who are thrown into that situation, and thus, a heritage community?

But even if a true lone wolf did exist, then the entirety of that specific historical thrownness would be embedded in that Dasein, and as such, that Dasein would constitute the entirety of the heritage community itself. Thus, any individual pursuit of this authenticity would also ultimately be a collective one in the sense that the entirety of a heritage community would be achieving authenticity. Furthermore, since a Dasein’s set of historical thrownness is intersectional, it would very likely encompass a different layer of historical thrownness by which other Dasein have been attuned. Thus, genuine lone-wolfness is at best an extreme rarity that fails to disprove the occurrence and feasibility of collective authenticity.

### **Heidegger and Fanon on the Constitution of They-ness, An Incompatibility?:**

I now want to give focus specifically to understanding the constitution of the ‘They.’ This will lead to important clarifying distinctions between its *particular manifestations* and its *fundamental ontology*, ones which might otherwise be overlooked and lead to mistakenly taking valuable Fanonian observations on the ‘They’ as being incompatible with *Being and Time*.<sup>39</sup> This

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<sup>39</sup> Fanon, of course, never actually uses the terms ‘They’, they-ness, or Das Man, all of which are derived from *Being and Time*. As will be made evident in this discussion though, I take Fanon as undoubtedly making valuable observations regarding the idea of they-ness, which are simply more implicit ones that don’t make direct reference to or connection with these terms.

will demonstrate both why in certain societal contexts some heritage communities can end up facing much harder struggles for their collective authenticity through marginalization, and why the ‘They’ itself will never actually be dismantled.

Section 27 of *Being and Time* affirms that if we are to ask who or where the ‘They’ is, we cannot succeed by pointing to any particular Dasein, one’s own Dasein, to a specific group of Dasein, nor to “the sum of them all.” With such a description of they-ness, one may perhaps question whether Dasein have anything to do with the development of experienced they-ness at all. The main distinction that *Being and Time* seems to be implying, however, is that being a constitution of they-ness is not equivalent to you being they-ness nor of they-ness being you. I take this as most clearly implied when he describes they-ness as that “which all are, though not as the sum”.<sup>40</sup> In this, *Being and Time* implies that this averageness is constituted through some contribution from each Dasein (all are), and is thus not the result or reflection of any one person or group completely. The reason why it is not a sum is because one cannot see every single individual Dasein contributor and its participation fully reflected in that they-ness that results, particularly because it is a blurred composite without any intra-distinction in which each participatory contribution is diluted, and simply indistinguishable, from the contributions of others.<sup>41</sup>

Fanon’s descriptions of the colonial system in *Racism and Culture* portray a much more explicit picture of the constitution of they-ness in the context of colonized people. Fanon describes how the authority and averageness in the colonial world were not brought about by any kind of passive or peaceful conglomeration of Dasein that created an equal blend of native and

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<sup>40</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 164-167.

<sup>41</sup> While Heidegger’s articulation of the ‘They’ in *Being and Time* presents a very critical account of publicness, Dostal, in “The Public and the People: Heidegger’s Illiberal Politics”, highlights that pre-Heideggerian philosophers such as Kant held this kind of publicness as playing a beneficial and important role for morality (528-531). Dostal also highlights how the criticisms and themes towards publicness that *Being and Time* undertakes are remarkably reminiscent of Kierkegaard’s treatment of publicness in 1846’s *The Present Age* (531-534).

colonizer in the averageness of colonial they-ness. Rather, the standard of colonial they-ness was established through a bloody and violent “sacking of cultural patterns” where “a new system of values is imposed, not proposed but affirmed, by the heavy weight of cannons and sabers.”<sup>42</sup> Under these conditions, the native is completely subjugated and dehumanized by the domination of the colonizing occupant, becoming “an object at the hand of the occupying nation.”<sup>43</sup> The native’s cultural patterns and ways of life are liquidated, lost, and outcast, not incorporated into the standards of the colonial society. In this, the sole way of life that is seen as a ‘civilized’ and legitimate culture is that of the white occupier’s ‘superior race.’ The colonizer, from its pedestal, affirms that without this ‘motherhood’ of white ‘saviorism,’ colonized people would fall into a darkness of barbarism, devoid of any culture.<sup>44</sup> Through these colonial descriptions, it’s obvious that Fanon is pointing a finger directly and specifically at colonizers with respect to they-ness constitution. Does this put his decolonial thought at odds with *Being and Time*’s establishment of the ‘they’ as being rooted in any specific group of Dasein?<sup>45</sup>

### **‘Weak’ and ‘Strong’ Fanonian Arguments on Heritage Community Marginalization**

One might try to make these seemingly contrasting views compatible by suggesting that a weaker argument is being made in Fanon, one which permits the acknowledgement that all Dasein contribute to the constitution of they-ness (which would make it ultimately wrong to attribute they-ness entirely to a specific group), but which explicitly highlights that this does not fundamentally entail each Dasein having an *equal* level of influence on they-ness.<sup>46</sup> After all, it

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<sup>42</sup> Fanon, *Racism and Culture*, 208.

<sup>43</sup> Fanon, *Racism and Culture*, 208.

<sup>44</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 148-149.

<sup>45</sup> Such questions can, of course, be formulated the other way around, and instead question whether *Being and Time* is compatible with Fanonian decolonial politics. I do not mean to implicitly take up the suggestion or argument that accordance with *Being and Time* is the bar which Fanonian philosophy must meet in order to be of validity and value, or vice versa. I simply frame such questions in this consistent way for the sake of clarity through consistency.

<sup>46</sup> As Dostal notes in “The Public and the People: Heidegger’s Illiberal Politics”, the potential that Fanon identifies for publicness/they-ness to be maliciously dominated by a powerful select few was something that recognized by Hegel and Marx as well (535-536). This is also reminiscent of the concerns of philosophers such as Kant, Voltaire,

would be absurd to suggest that marginalized heritage communities of a societal context contribute to the standards of averageness just as much as dominant heritage communities, such as the capitalists, celebrities, white colonizers, binary people, or cis-males of our own societal context. This would thus open up the possibility of considerably, *but not completely*, lopsided they-nesses, one that would demonstrate why marginalized communities, in having their historical thrownness disproportionately ostracized by they-ness, face much higher challenges in their pursuits of collective authenticity than non-marginalized communities whose historical thrownness, while, of course, not endorsed as the standard of averageness, is still given more basic recognition as being a *legitimate* culture, gender experience, sexuality, faith, etc., by the composite of they-ness that is faced.

The stronger argument, however, which seems to be more in line with the strong language and descriptions Fanon puts forth, would affirm that some Dasein and heritage communities can indeed become *completely* excluded from the constitution of they-ness, that marginalizations of complete lopsidednesses can indeed occur, and that they-ness *can* be attributed in its entirety to a specific group of Dasein.<sup>47</sup> With this in mind, are we forced to retreat to the weaker argument in order to keep Fanonian thought in line with the ontology of *Being and Time*?

### **Particular Manifestations of They-ness as Distinct From Its Fundamental Ontology**

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Diderot, and Paine over the influence of secret societies such as the Freemasons on the politics of the Enlightenment (531).

<sup>47</sup> Of course, the considerations from our discussion on intersectionality will highlight that even if a specific group is dominating they-ness in a lopsided way, this they-ness would nevertheless still not encapture each of the intersectional composites of each individual member, and as such, such group members would still ultimately have to resist fallenness to this ‘They’ in order to be authentic. White people, for instance, in being *the* dominant colonizing group that Fanon is making reference to, each still have a fallenness to resist and authenticity to pursue since none of their historical thrownnesses are ones of pure and generic whiteness. Such lopsided domination and privilege, though, even if it doesn’t completely eliminate the struggle for authenticity, nevertheless seems to quite obviously make it less of an issue in the sense that for a dominating group, at least part of their overall historical -thrownness, is never subverted by the ‘They.’

I would argue, however, that there is not any contradiction between the strong Fanonian argument and the conception of they-ness presented in *Being and Time*. This becomes clear if one recognizes two things. First, that understandings on the constitution of they-ness can be directed to either how they-ness can manifest itself *as a concrete particular* in societal contexts, or on what they-ness is *in an ontologically fundamental and existentielle*<sup>48</sup> *sense*. Second, Fanon's colonial recognitions and articulations of they-ness refer to this *former* type understanding, while *Being and Time* is focused entirely on the *latter*.

The strong Fanonian argument can be completely right in recognizing how *particular societal manifestations of they-ness* can be lopsided to points of complete exclusion by dominating groups such as colonizers, and how the pursuit of collective authenticity becomes a much more harrowing task for communities and people whose historical thrownness has been completely denied of any basic influencing or recognition.<sup>49</sup> But it would be wrong to suggest from this that those dominating groups are themselves responsible for *they-ness itself in a fundamental sense*, and that if a redeeming and equalizing justice is served against such dominators, they-ness itself as an existentielle problem, as well as the recurring threat of falling into inauthenticity, would be dismantled for Dasein. Dominators never created the existentielle of they-ness and fallenness themselves. Rather, they simply carry out their domination through existentielle realities already in place. It is for this reason that even for Dominators who dominate to a brutal completeness, we always fail, as *Being and Time* affirms, to articulate they-ness itself by pointing at them.<sup>50</sup> Dasein's being-with-others in the world, which Dasein will never be able

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<sup>48</sup> Term used in *Being and Time* to signify an essential feature of Dasein. Existentials are simply what it means to be Dasein, and are just constant and unavoidable features in our existence.

<sup>49</sup> Egan, in "Das Man and Distanciality in Being and Time", notes that in a stratified society, Das Man can manifest itself in many different ways within distinct sections and roles of the society (Upper-class vs. working class, attendees at an academic lecture, vs. party attendees at a college party, etc.) (295). One could reasonably argue however, that the magnitude of global reach that colonial domination has established is one which dominates all (or an overwhelming amount of) such sections and roles in global society.

<sup>50</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 164.

to detach from, is what inevitably solidifies they-ness itself as a fundamental existiale, and it is our universal participation in that being-with-others, be it participation as complete dominators, as pure and non-influential victims to they-ness, or as somewhere in between, that makes the overall fundamental structure of the ‘They’ itself something “which all are.”<sup>51</sup>

Revisions to the particular manifestation of they-ness at hand in a societal context may, of course, lead to a less lopsided ‘They’ that ceases to disproportionately oppress the marginalized. But a generic they-ness, be it a more just and ‘diversified’ one, will always still ultimately remain, and as such, ultimately retain the challenge for collective authenticity.<sup>52</sup> Political revolutions, no matter how magnificent they become, *will never become ontological revolutions* that change what Dasein is. With this, one could perhaps view us as modified versions of Sisyphus, ones who can perhaps lessen the load of our boulders, but who will still ultimately face an indefinite struggle of pushing them in order to possess our authenticity.

Through these undertaken distinctions, we can now see why the distinct articulations of they-ness found in Fanon and *Being and Time* are indeed compatible ones that both provide important understandings on different aspects of the constitution of they-ness. Fanon’s insights allow a recognition of an exclusionary lopsidedness in they-nesses manifested in social contexts.

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<sup>51</sup>Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 153-168.

To give some more clarity to this point, the ‘They’ can only be what it is in as much as it has victims which it can sedate into fallenness. To suggest that such victims are not essential in this way would be akin to suggesting that a totalitarian dictatorship would be possible on a deserted island. In as much as victims are essential to they-ness in this way, since everyone is a victim to the ‘They’, then regardless of whether they are excluded from influencing the actual averageness of they-ness, they are still ultimately contributing constituents to the ‘They’ itself in its fundamental sense. In other words, being non-influential to something is not the same as not being associatively attached to it. Additionally, being-with-others as a universal existiale also means that regardless of the particular averageness being manifested by the ‘They’ a present societal context, all Daseins, at an ontological level, have the capacity to implant their historical -thrownness onto they-ness’ standards of averageness in a dominating way. It is in this second sense as well that the ‘They’ itself as a fundamental existiale is present in all of us, and as such, is something that we all are.

<sup>52</sup> With these scare quotes, I don’t mean to suggest an emptiness or triviality to diversity. Rather, this is meant to emphasize that the genericness of a particular manifestation of they-ness, even if influenced by a diverse range of people, will itself never be a diverse one, as by the very nature of a they-ness, it will always fail to encompass the particular and unique historical thrownnesses of Daseins and their heritage communities.

It is one that reveals how marginalized communities, in facing much more opposition and burden in pursuit of their authenticity, should be recognized as being in a considerably different position than non-marginalized ones and their own less strenuous pursuits of authenticity find themselves in. One can stand with Fanon in recognizing and fighting for these important points while also simultaneously recognizing that Dasein will always have to face they-ness itself as a permanent existentials that is rooted not in any lopsided domination, but in our own ontology.

### **Can Dominators be Collectively Authentic?**

With this feasibility of lopsided and dominated particular manifestations of they-ness in mind, however, one may ask whether the very dominating groups, whose elevations to the pedestal of mediocrity leads to the disproportionate oppression of marginalized heritage communities, can be collectively authentic in their activities of domination. One may perhaps have in mind contemporary groups that affirm their right to pursue ‘white pride.’ Similarly, one may consider the monstrous Nazi regime that Heidegger attached himself to, one which exclaimed to be letting ‘the pure Aryan Race’ be what they truly were as a people.<sup>53</sup>

As a first observation, such cases entail the affirmation that the activity itself of dominating the averageness of they-ness is a part of the alleged community’s authentic way of being. In the case of Nazism, this would be the affirmation that the collective authenticity of Aryans entails their establishment of themselves as a superior race that dominates the ‘They’ averageness of society, culture, and politics, and which completely exploits and liquidates all other heritage communities to the point of mass genocide. While proponents of ‘white pride’ may claim to be fundamentally different, as Monahan discusses in his consideration of the revivals of white-nationalism and ‘pride’ in the 2010s and 2020s, the concept of whiteness itself is bound up in supremacy. As he discussed, whiteness was a colonially generated concept that

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<sup>53</sup> Young, *Heidegger, philosophy, Nazism*.

instilled European ethnicity and culture as the generic and vanilla standard of global averageness. It is for this reason why white is not considered a color by our present socio-racial context, and why non-whiteness is always considered an ‘exotic’ and ‘colored’ deviant from averageness. Thus, a ‘prideful’ promotion of such whiteness, because of what whiteness in itself stands for, always has an embedded appeal to maintain the hateful and biased colonial order that it is founded upon.<sup>54</sup> As such, such ‘pride’ is inevitably an activity of further instilling and maintaining a domination of averageness.<sup>55</sup>

Such affirmations of authenticity by dominators demonstrate a deep obsession with either establishing or maintaining such domination of averageness, one that signifies an inability to conceive of or be comfortable with one’s collective authenticity as functioning without such domination. They cannot bear the thought of ethnically/culturally European people living in a world in which not every actor on TV looks like like them, in which the works of Van Gogh and Chopin must stand side-by-side with non-Western works, or where beloved Western ideals of ‘liberty’ and ‘freedom,’ often in capitalistic senses, must become neighbors with the ideals of freedom found in other nations of the world. This ironically signifies an immense *fragility* and *weakness* in such supposedly ‘authentic’ dominators, as the only way they can supposedly be themselves is if lopsided standards of averageness hold up their insecure senses of historical thrownness like a crutch. It is through such obsessions and addictions with the pampering of averageness that ‘authentic’ dominators turn out to arguably be *the least authentic of them all*, in the sense that they exhibit an unwillingness to actively and independently hold up their historical thrownness in an active and authentic way against a ‘They.’

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<sup>54</sup> Michael J. Monahan, “Racism and “Self-Love”: The Case of White Nationalism.” In *Critical Philosophy of Race*, 9, no.1 (2021): 9-11, [muse.jhu.edu/article/777467](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/777467).

<sup>55</sup> As Monahan discusses, this toxic element of white ‘pride’ is reminiscent of Rousseau’s conception of a problematic *amour propre*, in which one’s esteem and love for oneself is bound up in a drive to be better than, and thus, superior to, others around them in a kind of “one-upmanship” (4).

Strong, healthy, and genuine senses of collective authenticity would entail no such obsessions or addictions. As such, collective authenticities such as those of Irish pride, Italian Heritage, Southern hospitality, or Germanness, which simply aim to authenticize their heritage communities, and hold no obsessions with dogmatically enforcing their historical thrownness as the generic standards that all must follow, can be beautiful and unproblematic authenticities.

### **Fanonian Violence as Successful Deviation from ‘Idle-Talk’**

As a final note on the accomplishment of collective authenticity, I will discuss how Fanonian violence relates to *Being and Time*'s conception of the *idle talk* that chains a Dasein to they-ness. Idle talk is one in which no actual discourse occurs, as such talk is that which has already been ‘deposited’ and established in the common and average intelligibility of the ‘they’-ness. The notion of idle talk, however, should be understood as applying not merely to language but to human interaction and expression overall. As Hirsch notes, it avoids ever offending by dictating a code of conduct that appeals strictly to universal values of averageness that have already been established.<sup>56</sup> Such talk closes off any change or development. It closes off the possibility of novelty, as novelty would provoke and go against the pre-established rules that guide such conversation.<sup>57</sup> A Dasein that idly talks participates in mere averageness, and consequently, idle talk is a state of inauthenticity.

Fanon recognizes the concept of idle talk in affirming that the liberation of colonized people from colonial they-ness necessarily requires them to defy and break the standards of acceptable interactions and politics that were established by their white colonizers. He recognizes that the evils of racism can never be overcome by appealing to and depending on the political and cultural logic of white colonial overlords. He observes that there are many claims in

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<sup>56</sup> Elisabeth F. Hirsch, “The Problem of Speech in *Being and Time*,” In *Heidegger’s Existential Analytic*, (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978) 356.

<sup>57</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 211-214.

modernity that colonizers are interested in addressing racism and granting their colonial subjects liberty, but that such claims are fundamentally empty and deceptive.

Fanon highlights that in cases where colonial overlords ‘emancipate’ a colonial nation, there is seldom any actual change to the economic and political systems that colonized people live under. This is because such claims and interests are coming from a cultural and political logic that ultimately gave rise to, and which is committed to maintaining the capitalistic structures that maintain colonialism, exploitation, and racism. Colonial overlords are happy to grant a colonized people ‘emancipation,’ but always on the condition that the colonized elite that will take over abide by the implanted rules and systems of the colonizer and stay under the thumb of its political, economic, and cultural approval.<sup>58</sup> Such conditions continue benefiting the colonizer’s traditions by continuing the subjugation of the ‘emancipated’ people. Haddour highlights that such elites of the colonized are deplorably inauthentic members of the colonized community who, rather than developing their own authentic economies and politics, embark to get rich quick by inauthentically conforming to and adopting the politics, capitalism, and cultural standards of their ‘previous’ colonial overlords.<sup>59</sup>

Fanon affirms that actually liberating oneself from the domination of the colonial world is never an agreeable and rational confrontation of viewpoints. In breaking away from the domination of the colonizer, colonized people cannot justify themselves through the logic and standards of the colonizer, as working through such logic and values would constrain one within the pre-set standards of politics and capitalism that the colonized world has set as the rules for global idle talk, within which nothing authentically distinct is genuinely expressed or brought

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<sup>58</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 21-25.

<sup>59</sup> Azzedine Haddour, “The Wretched of the Earth: the anthem of decolonization?”, in *Frantz Fanon, Postcolonialism and the Ethics of Difference*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 161-165.

about that could liberate the colonized.<sup>60</sup> Any genuine and authentic breaking away is a *provocation* that *rejects* the idle talk.<sup>61</sup> Because of this, authentic acts of liberation by colonized people will always be seen as a “enemy of values” through the politics and culture of their colonial overlords which will ascribe evil and ‘violence’ to such genuinely decolonial politics.<sup>62</sup>

Fanon’s observations supplement consideration of ‘idle-talk’ by showing why forms of rebellious provocation are an inevitability for achieving the actual change necessary for collective authenticity. Be it of a minority culture, a queer pride, or a religious faith, a collective historical thrownness will always be limited if it restricts itself to defining and justifying itself through the ‘proper’ logic of the acceptable averageness from which it aims to authentically pivot. It must instead *define itself independently of such restraining rules*. In doing so, as Fanon quotes, it will always come off as foreign, strange, provocative, strange, and/or unacceptable through the lenses of idle talk.<sup>63</sup>

As Ciccariello-Maher discusses, this act of a heritage group defining itself independently was held by Fanon as a creation of a new human being. Fanon believed that such creation, in its uprooting of a societal-order that once denied an oppressed people, and its provocation of the embedded resistance from those who seek to maintain their privilege under the status quo, would

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<sup>60</sup> As Gordon affirmed in “Frantz Fanon, Fifty Years On: A Memorial Roundtable,” when one attempts to respond to and refute a challenge to their humanness, a common mistake is to assume and take up the standards of humanness that the challenger has established, and to prove that one is able to meet them. Examples of this could include colonized people attempting to prove to their colonizers that they too are able of developing and running capitalism, colonized people proving that they can excel in the same kinds of sports, arts, and activities of the colonizer’s culture, or women proving to men that they can take up the kinds of roles and positions that men grant esteem, worth, and power to. Gordon highlights that a key element of Fanon’s philosophy and political thought is to avoid this kind of, as Gordon coins it, “epistemic colonization” (308-309).

<sup>61</sup> As de Warren discusses in “The Apocalypse of Hope: Political Violence in the Writings of Sartre and Fanon”, Sartre viewed such authentic liberation as one which recognizes the status-quo conditions as the “impossibility of change”, one which is “the very object which has to be transcended if life is to continue”(49). He notes that in *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Sartre exemplifies this idea in the 1789 revolutionary storming of the Bastille (48-50).

<sup>62</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 5-6.

<sup>63</sup> Fanon, *Racism and Culture*, 214.

inevitably be a violent one.<sup>64</sup> This ‘violence’ that is spoken of, however, is widely encompassing, and often encompasses acts of resistance that, while often countered by authorities in the same brutal way that violence is responded to, might not be considered violence at all by those who are in unity or solidarity with the heritage group. Ciccariello-Maher notes that even acts of simply appearing in public, such as the black-youth led flash mob phenomena in Philadelphia, which provoked the curfew and public-gathering laws that authorities had set against their commitment to demonstrate against racial injustice, are already held and treated in themselves as violent, anarchic, uncivil, and unacceptable behaviors by authorities, and are brutally responded to as such.<sup>65</sup> With this, one can recognize many other examples, such as the ‘disgusting’ taboo that authentic queer public displays of affection may evoke amongst societies of heterosexual standards, or the unacceptable incivility of those who provokingly defy dress codes or standards, which would also ultimately acts of violently provoking the established idle talk of the ‘They’ status-quo. Heritage groups must have the courage and tenacity to face this state of being a provoker, one which the flourishing of their authenticity necessarily brings about.

## **Conclusion**

Reflecting on Heidegger’s *Being and Time* and the works of Fanon, this paper has demonstrated historical thrownness as the main focus of authenticity, and through this, the feasibility and necessity of pursuing authenticity collectively. In considering the constitution of they-ness, it has also recognized how certain communities can become much more marginalized than others, and due to this, face much more harrowing challenges in their striving for authenticity. Finally, in relating Fanon’s thought to *Being and Time*’s idle talk, provocation was

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<sup>64</sup> Gordon, Lewis R., George Ciccariello-Maher, and Nelson Maldonado-Torres, “Frantz Fanon, Fifty Years On : A Memorial Roundtable,” In *Radical Philosophy Review*, 16, no.1 (2013): 315, <https://doi.org/10.5840/radphilrev201316125>.

<sup>65</sup> Ciccariello-Maher, “Frantz Fanon, Fifty Years On : A Memorial Roundtable,” 316.

recognized as an inevitability of genuine achievements of collective authenticity. With this, one ought to recognize that freeing ourselves to pursue our own authentic callings is an activity that requires us to march hand in hand with our fellow heritage comrades. The full accomplishment of such, be it oftentimes a difficult and provocative one, is what will allow a historical thrownness to shine and project itself to its full authentic magnificence.

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