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Publisher Routledge

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Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title-content=t713634601>

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Louiza Odysseos^a

^a Department of International Relations, University of Sussex, Sussex, United Kingdom

Online Publication Date: 01 March 2009

To cite this Article Odysseos, Louiza(2009)'Constituting community: Heidegger, mimesis and critical belonging',Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy,12:1,37 — 61

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/13698230902738528

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13698230902738528>

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Constituting community: Heidegger, mimesis and critical belonging

Louiza Odysseos

Department of International Relations, University of Sussex, Sussex, United Kingdom

In his commentary on Martin Heidegger's 'politics', Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe noted that there is a continuous but unanswerable question of identification in Heidegger's thought. At the same time, Lacoue-Labarthe asks: why would the problem of *mimesis*, of identification, indeed, of 'community', not be considered the essential question of the political as such? In this article, I propose a consideration of the question of community and mimesis. I suggest that Heidegger's radically hermeneutic and heteronomous analysis of existence (*Daseinanalytik*) enables us to give a critical rereading of his cryptic, contentious and troubling statements on 'community' and 'people' in the infamous paragraph 74 of *Being and time*. My purpose is not solely exegetical with respect to Heidegger's argument, however. This rereading is primarily a retrieval of a productive understanding of how community comes to be constituted through the practice of 'critical mimesis' from Heidegger's thought, as developed by authors such as Peg Birmingham. Critical mimesis or identification, I argue, points to a type of relationship towards the community's past ('the tradition') that renders communal constitution by its members into a type of 'critical belonging'. Critical belonging involves critique, displacement and resistance towards the tradition and, as a questioning mode of identification, help us critically theorise community constitution beyond 'thick' and 'thin' dichotomies. It may also well aid us in examining empirical questions about the expansion of community, multiculturalism and social exclusion which are at the forefront of social and political concerns.

Keywords: Heidegger; community; identification; mimesis; Nazism; belonging; tradition

Introduction

International relations and political theory have long engaged with the question of community, and in particular the question about the *constitution* of political community. Seminal contributions have highlighted that thinking about community is usually pursued within a dichotomy: either there is an essence by which community is constituted (usually referred to as 'thick'

Email: L.Odysseos@sussex.ac.uk

ISSN 1369-8230 print/ISSN 1743-8772 online

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DOI: 10.1080/13698230902738528

<http://www.informaworld.com>

conceptions of community) or community is composed of pre-formed individuals and, thus, amounts to little more than procedural copresence (denoted as ‘thin’ understandings of community) (cf. Walzer 1994). Awareness of this dichotomy has led to a variety of critiques, for example, questioning the conflation of the community to the state; rethinking oppression and social exclusion and their relation to civil conflict; conceptualising the ‘we’ outside of essentialist and, therefore, exclusionary determinations such as those of religion, ethnicity, nation, etc.; investigating the assumptions of liberal democracy about community and diversity, as well as examining the ways in which modern assumptions about the subject of politics and society entail the reduction of coexistence, and community, to the mere co-presence of pre-constituted, ‘pre-social’ selves.¹

This article interprets the desire to think the constitution of community, and especially of *political* community, as a call to move beyond the parameters of this dichotomy – if not to transcend it, then to chart a path through it which attempts to reconcile its extremes. Prominent amongst its chief preoccupations is a concern with otherness, understood both as the particularity/otherness of the self and also the concrete other, threatened by the homologies of essence and copresence (Odysseos 2007). To navigate this dichotomy the article turns to Martin Heidegger, who some scholars might regard an unlikely source, and asks whether his early thought has anything to contribute to such a consideration of the constitution of political community.²

The impetus for turning to Heidegger comes from a set of comments made by the French philosopher Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe who remarked, when discussing Heidegger’s ‘politics’, that there is a continuous but unanswerable question of identification, and its relation to community, in Heidegger’s thought. Indeed, Lacoue-Labarthe asked (1998, p. 286; cf. 1990), why would the problem of mimesis and identification, the problem of ‘community’, not be considered the essential question of the political as such? In this article, I propose a consideration of precisely the question of community and mimesis, both as it operates within Heidegger’s *Being and time* (1962), and also as it continues to affect discussions on the constitution of political community today. I use the context of the debate on Heidegger’s politics in order to return to Heidegger’s assumed determination of community according to a nationalist essence. I suggest (cf. Odysseos 2002, 2007) that Heidegger’s radically hermeneutic and heteronomous³ analysis of existence (*Daseinanalytik*) enables us to revisit Heidegger’s contentious, troubling and cryptic statements on ‘community’ and ‘people’ in the infamous paragraph 74 of *Being and time* and reread these critically and productively. Contra the assumptions of the debate on the ‘Heidegger affair’, I read his discussion of Dasein’s⁴ relation to the historical tradition as enabling the emergence of a political selfhood that has a distinct *questioning* relationship to its historical tradition and which thus avoids positing communal constitution according to an essence (such as religion, nation, ethnos, language, etc.).

Such a rereading is primarily a *retrieval* from Heidegger's thought of a productive understanding of how community comes to be constituted through the practice of an agonistic sort of identification, which Peg Birmingham (1991) calls 'critical mimesis'. Critical mimesis or identification, I argue, points to a type of relationship towards the community's past ('the tradition') that renders the very constitution of community by its members into a type of 'critical belonging'. Critical belonging involves critique, displacement and resistance towards the historical tradition: indeed, it may be this attitude of critique, some might say, *betrayal* (cf. Cavell 1979), towards certain of the tradition's historical *possibilities* that helps constitute the communal, and the political, as such.

My purpose is not solely exegetical with respect to Heidegger's argument, however. This is a perspective of a critical and questioning mode of identification, I propose, which is extremely valuable for theorising community today. Specifically, it facilitates a conception of community constitution which lies between the two extremes of, on the one hand, mechanistic, additive and compositional thinking exemplified by contractarian accounts of how pre-social individuals come to constitute community, and on the other hand, of conventional communitarian understandings of community deriving from, and constituted around, an essence (be this nation, language, religion, etc.). It can, moreover, be essential for thinking beyond the reduction of community to the nation-state and tackling more empirical concerns surrounding the expansion or broadening of community with which we are currently faced (see also Archibugi *et al.* 1998; Campbell 1998; Linklater 1998).

The article proceeds by, first, outlining the main concerns raised about Heidegger's politics, as specifically relating to the issue of community. Out of this discussion it, second, proposes an account of community constitution through a critical process of mimesis and identification. This almost paradoxical kind of identification leads to what the article calls 'critical belonging', delineating a relationship to the community that is marked not by acquiescence but, rather, by resistance. The final part concludes by reflecting further on the implications of this retrieval on the theorisation of community for political thought and on the continuing debate about Heidegger's politics.

Heidegger's politics and the thought of community

The suggestion that one could use Martin Heidegger's thought to think about the constitution of political community might be met with surprise, at best, and recoiling horror, at worst. This is because such a proposal necessarily takes place within a still-raging debate fuelled by increased acknowledgement within the fields of philosophy and politics of his deplorable engagement with National Socialism, which is now familiarly captured by the term 'Heidegger's politics'.⁵ This debate has taken place

both at the level of historiography as well as political philosophy, with the result of calling into question whether it is, in fact, still possible to put Heidegger's thought to political use; and, even if it is possible, whether it is desirable to use his thought politically. In other words, is not any political thought of community derived from, or associated with, the thought of Martin Heidegger immediately tainted by his commitment to National Socialism in the 1930s, when he assumed the rectorship of the University of Freiburg in 1933, and his subsequent failure to apologise for, or even discuss, this involvement in the post-war years (see, most prominently, Heidegger 1985; Farias 1987; Ott 1993)? Heidegger's many critics might accept that his thought assists in the deconstructive enterprise of political and social philosophy, questioning its reliance on modern subjectivity; they might easily acknowledge that it can call liberal-proceduralist accounts of community constitution into question by 'unworking' the sovereign, pre-social and individualist subject on which they rely. But they are likely to also regard that his politics, if not his *thought*, compromises these deconstructive insights by determining community according to a nationalist essence, resulting in the valorisation of the communal historical tradition.

In this section I examine the debate on Heidegger's politics,⁶ which has had a serious impact on our ability to usefully utilise Heidegger's *Daseinanalytik* for a political thought of community. In particular, I examine a prominent objection which (re)reads *Being and time* in light of Heidegger's involvement with the Nazis, deeming it to be at best politically vague, and thus open to conservative revolutionism, and at worst as determining community along 'nationalistic' and 'racist' lines, and thus wholly inappropriate for a progressive and critical thought of community.

A Nazi thought? Mapping the debate on Heidegger's politics

The major objection to using Heidegger's existential analysis⁷ for political thought asks whether the possibility for articulating a *political* account of community is impaired both by the apparent determination of authentic 'Being-with' according to 'a people' within the analysis of *Being and time* and also by the political interpretation of the overall project of fundamental ontology given to it by Heidegger's own subsequent engagement with National Socialism.

Let us briefly consider what Heidegger means by 'Being-with' (*Mitsein*). For Heidegger, human being 'is essentially Being-with' – Being-with is an existential attribute of human existence (*Dasein*, or *There-Being*). By this Heidegger means that the term 'with' cannot be seen

as designating a relationship that can be noted once there are more than two terms. Rather we have to think of *Mit-sein*, of *Being-with*, or more exactly of the very *Being of with*, of *witness*. There can be two terms that can encounter

one another only if first *there is* withness. That is, only if first there is a primordial structure of commonness, of a with relationship, can a specific type of relationship be instituted. (Georgopoulos 1994, p. 91)

To say that Dasein is Being-with has little to do with the actual presence of one or multiple others, because 'with' is not about spatial proximity: it is not merely a description that 'I am not present-at-hand alone, and that Others of my kind occur', nor that 'I am currently with others'. 'Being-with is an existential characteristic of Dasein even when factually no Other is present-at-hand or perceived' (Heidegger 1962, p. 156). Even when no Others are present, Dasein is Being-with. Being-alone is possible only for an entity who has Being-with as its Being (p. 157). 'Withness', Heidegger suggests, is the existential commonness that makes all actual interactions with, and experiences of, others possible. This 'sharing' of the world is a 'prior capacity', which Dasein possesses; it is the capacity to-be-with (*mit-sein*) that makes any consideration of, and relationship with, others possible. Coexistence, as well as community, and their multifaceted dimensions rest on this existential structure of Being-with. As Michael Gelven (1970, pp. 67–68) notes '[t]o say that Being-with (or to-be-with) is an *a priori* existential of Dasein means that one cannot be a self unless it is within one's possibilities to relate in a unique way to other Daseins. Hence, to be Dasein at all means to-be-with'. Human being is 'with' to such an extent, Heidegger's analysis suggests, that the legacy of the philosophy of the subject whereby human being is understood as an individual, as an 'I', can no longer be sustained. Not only is human being *not* an individual, but the appropriate answer to the question 'who is Dasein?' is not the 'I' but the 'they' (*das Man*, see Heidegger 1962, para 27).⁸ The 'they', or the 'one' as it also sometimes referred to, is part of Dasein's constitution. Dasein belongs to others 'who proximally and for the most part "are there" in everyday Being-with-one-another'. 'The "they", ... which we all are, though not as the sum, prescribes the kind of Being of everydayness', notes Heidegger (1962, p. 164).

What does it mean to suggest that the answer to the question of 'who is Dasein?' is the 'they' signify, however? From the perspective of everydayness, human existence is heteronomously constituted and manifested not as the 'I' assumed by accounts of modern subjectivity, but as 'anyone'. The 'they', it can be argued, rescinds any priority of the self and affirms the primacy of sociality and relationality:

[w]e live in the midst of others with their beliefs and values, fears and conflicts already so deeply embedded in us that the initial experience of reflection is the shock of discovering how utterly the voice of the other comes pouring forth whenever I, the sovereign individual, speak, feel, think, or act. (Davis 1989, p. 115)

This brief discussion of Being-with allows us to presently return to the charge that Heidegger determines Being-with, described as an existential

attribute of Dasein in Division I of *Being and time*, according to a ‘people’ in the more contentious Division II (Heidegger 1962, para 74). At the most obvious level, such a nationalist determination can be seen in Heidegger’s comments on history and ‘historising’. For Heidegger, the self is historical in the sense that it exists ‘between’ birth and death. Its existence unfolds between the two, and this unfolding he calls ‘historising’. Historising, moreover, refers to the self’s relationship with its ‘historical background’, what we commonly refer to as the ‘tradition’ or ‘historical heritage’ in which the self is ‘thrown’. Since human being is Being-with, Heidegger claims, its historising is *co-historising* (see Heidegger 1962, pp. 347, 435ff).

Specifically, Heidegger appears to determine Dasein’s co-historising in a nationalist manner when authentic Being-with is attached to the ‘community’ and the ‘people’ in paragraph 74 of *Being and time*. Let us quote extensively from this crucial and contentious paragraph, where Heidegger writes that,

if fateful Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, exists essentially in Being-with Others, its historizing is a co-historizing [*Mitgeschehen*] and is determinative for it as *destiny* [*Geschick*]. This is how we designate the historizing of the community, of a people. Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another can be conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects. Our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities. Only in communicating and in struggling does the power of destiny become free. (Heidegger 1962, p. 436)⁹

Why should Heidegger specifically determine Being-with in terms of a ‘people’, why does he emphasise such terms as ‘community’, ‘fate’, ‘destiny’ and the historical tradition? And, more importantly, should this discussion about ‘a people’ be read, in light of Heidegger’s subsequent involvement with Nazism, as the emergence of nationalism in his thought? These two questions require greater examination and the response to them is decisive for a critical account of *political* coexistence and community.

Let us take the second question first, which must be discussed within the context of the continuing debate about the ‘case of Heidegger’.¹⁰ Although few scholars would presently ignore or excuse Heidegger’s involvement with the Nazis, three distinct positions seem to exist as to how this affects our consideration of *Being and time* and his earlier thought more generally. A first group of scholars has argued that Heidegger’s thought is inseparable from his politics, and even *Being and time*, which chronologically predates his rectorship, should be read as a response to National Socialism, as some kind of proto-fascist text in which the very origins of his politics can be traced (Wolin 1990, 1991). Johannes Fritsche (1999, p. xv), for example, has provided a rich textual discussion of paragraph 74 of *Being and time*, which leads him to argue that ‘the soil of *Being and time* is *völkisch*’. He castigates most (left-leaning)¹¹ Heideggerians for having ‘cultivated this ignorance [of

the völkisch character of *Being and time*] by making procedures of decontextualization their primary tool, and they have been harvesting the sweet grapes of postmetaphysical plurality and recognition of the other as irreducible other from the notion of historicity in *Being and time*' (p. xiii). Fritsche maintains that it is challenging for non-Germans and especially Americans (where the Heidegger controversy is still raging) 'to understand Heidegger's notion of historicity and authentic Dasein. For there could not be a more marked difference than the one between the "German" rightist notions of *Held* and fate on the one hand and the "American" understanding of what it means to be authentic on the other' (p. xiii). Fritsche argues that if *Being and time* is read as Heidegger *intended*, by responding to his own (and Germany's) specific historical situation, it becomes immediately apparent that '*Being and time* was a highly political and ethical work, that it belonged to the revolutionary Right, and that it contained an argument for the most radical group on the revolutionary Right, namely the National Socialists' (p. xv): as such, he regards the usage of Heidegger's thought to be itself reactionary and right-wing. The language of *Being and time* would have been recognisable to all Germans of the Weimar and Nazi eras who would have recognised in it the Nazi agenda, he argues further. Therefore, '[t]he phenomenology in *Being and Time* can scarcely be saved by screening the nuggets of gold and throwing away the dirt' (Neaman 2001, pp. 148–149).

A less extreme position is put forward by a second group of authors who acknowledge that there is an ambiguity and vagueness within Heidegger's discussion of these core concepts, which may leave them open to a political determination. They, nevertheless, argue that it is Heidegger himself who later infuses the analysis of *Being and time* with political motifs. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe (1998, p. 286), for example, calls the communal determination of authentic Being-with 'an ontic preference' of Heidegger's, arising presumably from his own conservative revolutionist political persuasions but not made inevitable by the ontological discussion in *Being and time*. Miguel de Beistegui (1997, p. 19) adds that the concept of historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*, *Geschehen*) is ontologically vague within *Being and time*, which allows it to be 'from the start politically oriented'. Jürgen Habermas, moreover, regards the communal determination of *Mitsein* to be a consequence of the way 'understanding' and 'sense' are connected to disclosure, which is, of course, collective. He considers (1987, p. 132) that 'the historical destiny of a culture or society is determined by a collectively binding preunderstanding of the things and events that can appear in the world at all.' Habermas (1989, pp. 439, 441) dates the turn to Nazism, however, to 1929 arguing that 'from around 1929 on, Heidegger's thought exhibits a *conflation* of philosophical theory and ideological motifs' which amounts, for Habermas, to 'the invasion of the philosophy of *Being and time* by ideology', made possible by Heidegger's own re-reading of his thought. More critically, Simon Critchley calls this communal determination

of Being-with the ‘political fate of fundamental ontology and the *Dasein*-analytic’; for Critchley, thinking about politics and coexistence in the space opened by *Being and time* would have to avoid the ‘autarchic telos and tragic-heroic pathos of the thematics of authenticity, where in Paragraph 74, *Mitsein* is determined in terms of “the people” and its “destiny”’ (1999, p. 240; cf. Adorno 1973). Yet Critchley, unlike Fritsche above, does allow for the possibility that alternative readings of Being-with may be possible.

There is, thirdly, a group of scholars who, while still condemning Heidegger’s politics as one cannot fail to do, seek to situate his discussion of community and historicity within his broader philosophical preoccupations with the predominance of modern subjectivism. R.N. Newell, for example, suggests that the apparent political orientation of Being-with in the language of the ‘people’ comes from Heidegger’s philosophic ‘concern of how to achieve a cohesive community in a world increasingly dominated by the values of liberal individualism’ (1984, p. 783). It is important to highlight that Heidegger avoided any references to ‘society’ (*Gesellschaft*) because he believed that ‘society today is only the absolutization of modern subjectivity’ (cited in Harries 1978, p. 304). Indeed, de Beistegui (1997, p. 22, first emphasis added) also argues that the usage of the term ‘community’ (*Gemeinschaft*) by Heidegger is made ‘as much in favour of a specific understanding of the nature of our being-in-common as it is made *against* the view – associated with liberalism, capitalism and intellectualism – which articulates the meaning of communal life in terms of *Gesellschaft* and *Staat*.’ This is a point developed further by David Wood (1993, p. 151), who argues that ‘[t]he distinctive function played by destiny ... is to provide a way of transcending the mere arithmetic addition of individual fates’.¹² And indeed, as was quoted above, the sentence which follows the reference to ‘community’ and ‘people’ reads: ‘[d]estiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another can be conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects’ (Heidegger 1962, p. 436).

Yet, does linking the discussion of ‘the co-historizing of *Dasein*’ to this philosophic concern with liberal understandings of *Gesellschaft* settle the question of ‘community’, as well as its relation to ‘destiny’? Hardly, for even de Beistegui (1997, p. 20) notes that the identification with community is what ‘gives a political orientation to Heidegger’s discussion’. Lacoue-Labarthe best articulates the centrality of the issue of community and identification when he argues (1998, p. 297) that the concept of ‘mimesis’ is the ‘formidable unanswered, or unformulated, question that continually haunts Heideggerian thought.’ Heidegger refuses, according to Lacoue-Labarthe (1998, p. 299), to examine the problem of identification, which is the ‘German political problem par excellence’.¹³ A return to the first question is called for, therefore, of why Heidegger discusses *Dasein*’s co-historising in terms of *community*, and how to understand this discourse of *Dasein*’s historical happening, its co-historising,

in terms of the historical past of the ‘community’. Is it necessarily the emergence of nationalism in his thought, as Karl Löwith insisted (1994, p. 38), seen in the ‘passage from a particular and individual *Dasein* to one that is general, no less particular by virtue of its generality – namely, one of German *Dasein*’? The crucial question here has to be, therefore: is the communal determination of Being-with inevitably nationalistic (‘*German Dasein*’), embedded as Fritsche suggested above, in a *völkisch* rhetoric and the ‘political and ethical’ programme of National Socialism? An interpretation of this is essential in order to assess whether the thought of Being-with binds the discussion of tradition and community, when seen in light of the horror of the 1930s and 1940s, to a nationalistic determination. But the question of community is not a problem for Heidegger *alone* but, indeed, a central problem of political thought and practice in general. As Lacoue-Labarthe (1998, p. 300) asks emphatically: ‘[w]hy would the problem of identification not be, in general, the essential problem of the political?’

For the present discussion on the constitution of political community – which this article understands to involve divorcing community from exclusionary nationalism and its practices, but at the same time avoid the pitfalls of pure proceduralism and its assumptions about the pre-social nature of selves – this question of identification and its relationship with ‘destiny’ and ‘the historical past’ cannot be ignored. It has to be discussed directly and alongside the related question of whether a non-nationalist, critical reading of authentic Being-with can be given and justified. Therefore, the article examines this fundamental question of identification in *Being and time* below, in an attempt to retrieve out of Heidegger’s discussion an account of how community is constituted without being bound to a homogeneous totality determined ‘biologically’, ‘ethnically’ or according to other modes of (as)sociation tied to an essence, while at the same time, avoiding the determination of community according to an additive impulse, which assumes already constituted selves prior to community, and which I have called elsewhere the logic of composition (cf. Odysseos 2007). The interpretation which appears below would, almost certainly, be castigated by the first group of scholars, who purport that there exists only *one* historically accurate reading of *Being and time*, one tied to a nationalist agenda. Yet what is offered below is not a misreading of *Being and time* but must be understood as a critical appropriation of Heidegger’s thought. Such appropriation is not misplaced, naïve or erroneous; it exists, arguably, within the phenomenology of *Being and time* as a possibility, and can be uncovered and restructured for a political thought of community.

Mimesis, community and critical belonging

This section discusses the emergence of *Dasein*’s historicity within its manifested public group (‘community’). In particular, the notion of identification,

or *mimesis*, is examined, enabling the recasting of Dasein's co-historising away from a nationalist determination. Heidegger's discussion of Dasein's attitude towards its historical tradition contains within it, it is argued, the possibility of a critical and productive relationship with the community. Indeed, Dasein's relationship with its tradition displays an agonistic sensibility toward the historical tradition, a sensibility which maintains a critical, one might say, resisting relationship towards the tradition's past historical possibilities, uncovering those that can be 'repeated' in Dasein's contemporary concrete situation, disavowing and discarding others which are not deemed appropriate or productive. Dasein's agonistic attitude recovers 'repeatable possibilities', possibilities which are worth recasting, in other words, through a mode of deconstruction parallel to that which Heidegger had himself employed towards the ontological tradition in philosophy.

Interpreting Heidegger's discussion of Dasein's 'repetition of past historical possibilities' in a critical and agonistic manner provides a *productive* conception of identification, where the mimetic process contains *also* an element of critique, resistance and displacement towards the community's historical tradition, and particularly, the community's past *possibilities*. Such a displacing and resisting towards the community's past possibilities forms the contours of a practice through which community itself is constituted outside of conventional modes of belonging and association. Such a discussion is useful both for international political theory engaged in serious discussions on the constitution and future of political community but also for illustrating that Heidegger's communal determination of Being-with need not be inevitably nationalistic or *völkisch*, regardless of Heidegger's own political commitments. In other words, Heidegger's text contains within it critical possibilities that belie the historical juncture of its writing, as well as Heidegger's discernible authorial intentions. As such, it can be productive for theorising community in the midst of contemporary political challenges.

'Critical belonging': tradition, repetition, destructive retrieve

Contentiously, in paragraph 74 Heidegger discusses Dasein's relationship to the heritage and tradition of the public group in which it is historically manifested. While this has been cast as part of a conservative agenda, it is also open to alternative readings and crucially, this section proposes, it can be made a central part of the theorisation of the constitution of community. Let us return to Heidegger's text, where he writes that, the

resoluteness in which Dasein comes back to itself discloses current factual possibilities of authentic existing, and discloses them *in terms of the heritage* which that resoluteness, as thrown, *takes over* (1962, p. 435, emphasis in original).

Dasein, in other words, in acknowledging and resolutely grasping that it is a being defined by the finitude of its existence, is able to ‘take over’ particular possibilities that are handed down to it by the historical tradition of the public group in which it finds itself (or, is ‘thrown’). ‘Taking over’ is, moreover, associated with a process Heidegger calls ‘repetition’, further examined later in the section. Let us first discuss the usage of ‘heritage’ and ‘tradition’.

The discussion of ‘tradition’ is part of the overall ‘determination’ of historical being-there, which is embedded in a historically situated public group, or community. Stated otherwise, Dasein is radically embedded (*thrown*) in its world and this world is manifested publicly and historically; when Dasein resolutely projects itself upon possibilities (Heidegger 1962, para 31), it must do so in terms of those possibilities that are publicly and historically available to it as part of the historical tradition of its community. However, the discussion of the historical tradition is also part of Heidegger’s attempts to distinguish between history and his own claim that Dasein is *historical*.

As Heidegger suggests, history is commonly understood as ‘something past’, as ‘that belonging to an earlier time’, as ‘context of events’, and as ‘the transformations and vicissitudes of man, of human groupings and the “cultures” as distinguished from Nature’ (1962, p. 430). He claims, however, that Dasein is *historical* – Heidegger forthrightly asks of his own argument, ‘by what right do we call this entity “historical”, when it is not yet past?’ (p. 431). According to his account, since Dasein is never merely occurrent (present-at-hand), it can never be past in the sense of ‘now *no longer present-at-hand or ready-to-hand*’ (p. 432). Dasein’s capacity to-be-a-whole (to be self-constant) ‘is the movement of Dasein as it stretches itself through time and is called Dasein’s happening or *Geschehen*’ (Hoy 1978, p. 338). David Couzens Hoy (1978, p. 336) argues that ‘Dasein becomes aware of how it *is* its past (the past of its generation, i.e., its tradition) insofar as the past is an essential part of the *constitution* of Dasein’s understanding of its futural possibility.’ As Heidegger argues, Dasein projects itself futurally onto the possibilities available to it as a radically embedded self, a *thrown* being. Its projection must take place within, and is shaped by, this ‘heritage’, understood as ‘that in which *Dasein* is always immersed and implicated: its historical possibilities’ (Birmingham 1991, p. 29).

In light of this, Hoy (1978, p. 340) further suggests that the notion of ‘taking over’ inherited possibilities has to be interpreted as ‘a recognition of the compelling situation of the actual historical world’ but one that can lead Dasein ‘to an urgent commitment to what is most unique and individual about one’s way of being-there’. This urgent commitment is what has been called ‘resoluteness’, understood as Dasein’s readiness for anxiety in light of its finitude; in its resolute response to its finitude and in recognition of its heteronomy, Dasein plunges itself towards the factual world, rather than remain

lost in the comfort of the 'they'. This is paramount for Heidegger, because '[t]hrough anticipatory resoluteness, the "there" or the situation of Dasein is made transparent to Dasein' (de Beistegui 1997, p. 15); the actual choices or options which Dasein can resolutely make about its possibilities, however, are intentionally *not* discussed by Heidegger. Neither is speculation about them entertained, because a consideration of actual factual possibilities is not *possible* in the abstract: they can only be thought through by each particular Dasein finding itself in a uniquely different factual situation and thrown in a distinct public group. Therefore, de Beistegui argues '[i]f an ethics or a politics could indeed unfold from this fundamental existential constitution, Heidegger refuses to consider it. Dasein's resoluteness remains empty' (1997, p. 15).¹⁴

But as was noted above, the emptiness of resoluteness is but a step away from 'the abyss of steely and *völkish* rhetoric' (de Beistegui 1997, p. 16). A step which apparently Heidegger takes when he asserts, as was already quoted in the preceding discussion, that 'our' heritage and tradition guide our projection upon possibilities:

[o]ur fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities. Only in communicating and in struggling does the power of destiny become free. Dasein's fateful destiny in and with its 'generation' goes to make up the full authentic historizing of Dasein. (Heidegger 1962, p. 436)

This can be, and has been, read as the emergence of a conservative nationalism in Heidegger, where the struggle of the community in its self-determination leads to a process of repetition and, hence, identification and mimesis.¹⁵ Such a reading would concur with Lacoue-Labarthe's assessment (1998, p. 300) of the unstated identificatory process at play in *Being and time* and justify his concern that '[a]n unacknowledged mimetology seems to overdetermine the thought of Heidegger politically'.

Can 'repetition', 'fate' and 'destiny' avoid a nationalist communal specification, however? Hoy suggests (1978, pp. 340–341) that in the discussion of historicity, '[d]estiny (*Geschick*) and fate (*Schicksal*) are technical terms for Heidegger' where 'fate represents the way Dasein becomes definite and actual through its relation to events in the world' and destiny 'involves the essential connection of the individual to the *community* or a *people*'.¹⁶ One could suggest, following this, that it is possible to consider the determination of the 'with' in terms of a community's tradition or heritage to be a technical matter, a *repercussion*, so to speak, of the primacy of relationality, which dictates that 'since Dasein is essentially in the world with others ... and since Dasein is essentially fateful or historical it follows that Dasein's fate is a co-fate and its history a co-history' (de Beistegui 1997, p. 17).¹⁷

But it is not until the conception of 'repetition' is examined more closely that the general discussion of the historical tradition can be better located.

Heidegger (1962, p. 437) suggests that the relationship of Dasein towards the tradition can be understood as *repetition* and that '[r]epeating is handing down (*Überlieferung*) explicitly – that is to say, going back to the possibilities of the Dasein that has-been-there'. For Lacoue-Labarthe, as was noted earlier, this discussion of Dasein repeating the tradition's possibilities as part of its 'historising' reveals the troubling presence of a nationalist or 'communitarian' identification process, which nevertheless remains 'unthought' by Heidegger himself. Yet, we must bear in mind that 'repetition' is a particular kind of 'taking over' possibilities which belies its immediate association with nationalist identification. Heidegger is explicit that 'the Dasein that has-been-there is not disclosed in order to be actualized over again ... repetition does not let itself be persuaded of something by what is "past", just in order that this, as something which was formerly actual, may recur' (1962, pp. 437–438).¹⁸ Therefore, it would be wrong to assume that repetition implies the blind reenactment of what has occurred in the past. As Derrida was to later argue (1972, p. 40) with respect to 'iteration', this sort of repeating also 'alters, something new takes place'. Repetition takes place, each time, in a unique historical and socio-political context ('factual situation'): in typical polysemic fashion (Bourdieu 1991, p. 57), the Heideggerian text makes difficult the understanding of repetition as mere replication of what had previously occurred in and to the 'community' in which Dasein is thrown, or a reiteration of the community's values and ideas.

For Heidegger, then, repetition 'is an attempt to retrieve a more original, a more positive and hence *constructive* comportment towards one's history' (de Beistegui 1997, p. 25). Yet, constructive engagement might well take an agonistic and critical form. To explore this element further, Peg Birmingham has developed a notion of 'critical mimesis' by examining specifically the *response* towards the heritage which resolute Dasein takes over (see Heidegger 1962, p. 435). She explores the possibilities contained within Heidegger's discussion of repetition, in order to elucidate Dasein's agonistic relationship toward the tradition. According to her analysis, Dasein's is a *critical* process of identification and this calls into question Lacoue-Labarthe's claim that in Heidegger's discussion of historicity there is a process of nationalist or 'communitarian' mimesis at play. She asserts (1991, p. 25) that 'Lacoue-Labarthe overlooks a crucial aspect of the discussion of destiny and historicity in *Being and time*, namely, Heidegger's discussion of *Erwidert: Dasein's* response to its repeatable possibilities'. Birmingham joins commentators such as Wood and de Beistegui in noting that Heidegger expands the meaning of repetition beyond its casual connotations and in highlighting that, remarkably, 'the repetition of tradition opens up our destiny' (Wood 1993, p. 150) and affords a "go[ing] back" to a given situation, but in such a way that this situation is thus disclosed, illuminated in a new way, revealed as a unique historical possibility' (de Beistegui 1997, p. 25). Once this occurs, Dasein 'takes over' its communal historical heritage, *responds* to it, in a specific way: it

comports itself towards the past historical possibilities of its tradition in the manner of *erwidern*.

What does it mean to respond by way of *Erwiderung*? Macquarrie and Robinson's translation of *Being and time* rendered *Erwiderung* as a 'reciprocal rejoinder' to correspond to the normal usage of *erwidern* in the sense of 'to reply' (Heidegger 1962, p. 438). This, however, fails to clearly indicate its full implications, and those of the root *wider*, which include strife and which in casual discourse mean 'contrary to or against' (Birmingham 1991, p. 31). To emphasise this particular aspect of repetition, Birmingham argues (p. 31) that '[t]he response to repeatable historical possibilities is one which disavows any notion of continuity or identity with the past'. Therefore, when the concrete situation is 'illuminated', there is no guarantee that Dasein will accept the tradition's possibilities uncritically or allow itself to be submerged in what is 'past' so that it can make it occur all over again. On the contrary, the disclosure of the tradition may well lead Dasein to attempt 'to overcome the way the tradition conditions or limits its possibilities' (Hoy 1978, pp. 336–337). It can, in other words, 'take over', or 'repeat', its inherited possibilities by engaging in critical mimesis: a 'repetition' which practices critique and retrieval with respect to the possibilities available to it within its heritage. The notion of 'destructive retrieve', put to use by Heidegger with respect to the ontological tradition of philosophy, here comes to describe Dasein's very response to the heritage and tradition in which it is thrown.

De Beistegui concurs with such an assessment, asking in addition,

Is it not in the context of such a strifely or adverse attitude of Dasein in the face of its own historical situation that we must understand the use that Heidegger makes of the word *Kampf*? Does the 'struggle' not refer to Dasein's ability to engage with its own time in a strifely dialogue ... ? (1997, p. 25)¹⁹

When Heidegger states (1962, p. 436) that '[o]nly in *communicating* and in *struggling* does the power of destiny become free',²⁰ 'communication' (*Mitteilung*) and 'struggle' must be evaluated as part of this agonistic attitude and disposition which Dasein displays towards the tradition. *Mit-teilung* communicates that which is shared, which is itself 'communicated through the sharing (*Teilung*)' (de Beistegui 1997, p. 23; cf. Derrida 1993). The contentious reference to 'struggling' and 'communicating' thus performs two functions: first, to initiate the internal contestation of community by its own members, in order to counteract the account of 'idle talk' (*Gerede*) with which the 'they' drown all communication (Heidegger 1962, para 35 and para 27); and second, to indicate the way in which Dasein's historicity unfolds as a critically disposed repetition of the past repeatable possibilities of the community's tradition (de Beistegui 1997, p. 168, n.32)²¹

This kind of agonistic repetition, in the manner of *erwidern*, 'does not abandon itself to that which is past, nor does it aim at progress' (Heidegger 1962, p. 438). In this way, it neither lends itself to 'reactionism' as a political

modality which ‘is nourished by a thinking of the return (to the origins, God, to values, to meaning, etc.)’ and nor does it support a teleological understanding of politics and history as ‘the arche-teleological unfolding of a meaningful process in a certain appropriation of the philosophy of the Enlightenment’ (de Beistegui 1997, p. 29). Heidegger’s analytic, therefore, is as suspicious of the conservative alternative as of the liberal political understanding. The future does not unfold according to a teleology: it is perhaps best imagined (as an extrapolation from Heidegger’s work) in the sense ‘engender[ing] a collective field of imaginable possibilities ... a restricted array of plausible scenarios of how the future can or cannot be changed’ (Cruz 2000, p. 277). The future is critically projected upon past possibilities, which *become* ‘imaginable’ in a factual situation through the very process of critical mimesis.

Such a response to Dasein’s historical being-there participates in a critical engagement with the customary practices of its historical tradition in order to reveal the positive possibilities it inherits and to recover a constructive way of relating to this heritage without blindly re-enacting it. This movement of a factual ‘destructive retrieve’ enables Birmingham (1991, p. 25) to suggest that the concern regarding the nationalist identification entailed in Dasein’s co-historising must be reinterpreted on the basis of *Erwiderung*, namely, as ‘displacement and disruption’. Employed in this disruptive mode, mimesis encourages a radical rethinking of the determination of Being-with in terms of a ‘people’ and also of the understanding of community as such, because Heidegger’s articulation of mimesis is ‘not based on a classical model of identification’ of part to whole (Birmingham 1991, p. 25).²²

If Dasein’s response is understood as a critical, rather than a ‘reciprocat-ive’, rejoinder with respect to its tradition and more generally to the social context in which it is thrown, there ought to be more than one possibility in which to think its co-historising. The suggestion that Being-with becomes historical by way of a *critical* mimetic response to the historically manifested tradition and ‘people’ – a response whose manifold meanings include *struggle*, strife or agonism, even a certain betrayal towards the tradition (cf. Cavell 1979; Derrida 1993; de Bestegui 1997) – accommodates *both* Dasein’s radical embeddeness within the tradition seen in its indistinguishability from the ‘they’ and *also* Dasein’s struggle against prevalent understandings of the tradition’s possibilities. Moreover, it leaves open the space to think about tradition or heritage not only in terms of a people and a national or local community but as a ‘group-in-becoming’, a group that can be inclusive in its practice of critical belonging (cf. Connolly 1996). As Slavoj Žižek (2001, p. 93) notes in this regard, there is a certain ‘transgression’ constitutive of the community which points to the ‘way we are allowed/expected to violate its explicit rules’, to the extent that ‘a subject which closely follows the explicit rules of a community will never be accepted by its members by “as one of us”’.

In this way,

we are 'in', integrated, perceived by the other members as 'one of us', only when we succeed in practicing this unfathomable DISTANCE from the symbolic rules. It is ultimately only this distance, which exhibits our identity, our belonging to the culture in question. (Žižek 2001, p. 93)

In sum, Dasein's identification might be always already embedded in a historical tradition, and thus part of 'thicker' understanding of community, but if authentic, it ought to be critical, disruptive and, at the same time, productively applied to the specific historical ('factual') situation. It is in this sense that the constitution of community can be seen as an instance of critical mimesis, and coexistence can be understood as constituted through the practice of critique against the background of repeatable historical possibilities. The notion of *critical* mimesis, therefore, provides a response to the question of political identification, an identificatory response already infused with critique, rather than the mere unproblematic replication of the historical heritage.

The discussion of Dasein's historicity and co-historising, then, need not be immediately thrust aside as the premonition of a conservative agenda, tied to a racist or biological understanding of the community and the tradition; rather, it is open to alternative readings, ones that are useful for a theoretical account of a critical practice of identification or mimesis and ultimately for the theorisation of a thick and yet non-essentialising conception of community. The notion of 'critical mimesis', in this sense, can lead not only to the constitution of community through a response that has the disposition of critique towards its past possibilities, but also a community in which the mode of belonging is itself critical. 'Critical belonging' makes concrete Dasein's primacy of relation – evident in its thrownness – but shows this primacy to be manifest in Dasein's critique, displacement and resistance to the tradition. Critical belonging, therefore, is the mode in which the self *makes* the community out of her critical and resisting disposition.

In Birmingham's words (1991, p. 27), '*Dasein* determines itself authentically in a co-determination of being-with wherein the indifferent and efficient mode of solicitude becomes emancipatory'. In this way, the mode of 'critical belonging' also allows solicitude towards others to be 'radically transformed' into a liberating kind of comportment: 'no longer viewed as part of the indifferent emptiness of the crowd, the homogeneous anonymity of the anyone, the other is freed to be who he or she is in his or her potentiality-for-Being' (Birmingham 1991, p. 27; cf. Odysseos 2003, p. 199). Rather than being the sign of an essentialist/nationalist determination, the self's being-with others 'now has a sense of a heterogeneous space, a differentiated temporality in which each is grasped in his or her own specificity' (Birmingham 1991, p. 27). This is a critical activity which rests on the centrality of critique and agonism in social life (cf. Campbell 1998) and one which allows us to recast Dasein's 'agency' as both 'thrown' but also critical, radically embedded but also

critically free (cf. Tully 1995, pp. 202–206). Thinking about agency does not have to accommodate belonging and critique: Dasein actively belongs in the mode of critique and resistance.

To conclude this section, the critical mimetic response of the self, understood as a kind of ‘critical belonging’, refutes the reading of Dasein’s co-historising according to a nationalist essence. This allows a return to the question of Heidegger’s politics and whether scholars ought to refrain from using his thought for a political thought of community and coexistence. The above discussion of critical mimesis and critical belonging is *itself* a practice of disavowal, displacement and resistance. It has disavowed Heidegger’s politics and resisted the determination which he imposed on the analysis of *Being and time* by his political engagement. This is not a case of ‘sorting what in his thought may be preserved free of his own Nazified orientation’ (Rockmore and Margolis 1992, p. 1). Discussing the possibility of a critical mimesis according to Birmingham’s analysis, and delineating an account of communal constitution through the mode of critical belonging towards the community is akin to undertaking the *destruction* (in the sense of ‘destructive retrieve’, cf. Kockelmans 1978) of Heidegger’s legacy: an act of resistance and critique towards the determination of *Being and time* given to it by Heidegger’s political involvement with the Nazis. What is given herein is not, in other words, a blind reading of *Being and time*, but constitutes a constructive retrieval of certain unacknowledged insights within the text. This is tantamount to releasing the past possibilities of that text. The present discussion, thus, disrupts and displaces Heidegger’s ‘ontic’ determination of the thought of Being-with and resists his politics. This, arguably, is the Heideggerian gesture *par excellence*, which he undertook towards the ontological tradition, and which has been employed here in order to retrieve from his thought a critical account of community constitution today.

Conclusion: poiesis, praxis and politics

This article addressed the question of whether, and how, the thought of *Being and time* might aid us in rethinking political community. It examined the concern, articulated within the context of the debate on Heidegger’s politics, that any conception of community derived from Heidegger’s thought inevitably falls into the trap of an essentialist and exclusionary nationalist determination of community. In response, the article engaged in a re-reading of the contentious paragraph 74 of *Being and time* which enabled a critical appropriation of the process of ‘repetition’ described by Heidegger. Rather than necessarily falling prey to an essentialist mimetology, as argued by Lacoue-Labarthe, it was suggested that the very constitution of community can be understood as taking place through a process of ‘critical mimesis’. Peg Birmingham’s analysis in this regard illustrated how Dasein can comport itself towards the ‘past possibilities’ of the historical tradition, in which it is thrown, with an

agonistic and resisting attitude. The radically embedded self *identifies* with the community by critically repeating certain past possibilities of its tradition, in the sense given to repetition by Heidegger, which entails the retrieving of *repeatable* possibilities. Those productive possibilities found within the tradition's past are emphasised and re-articulated within the political space opened up by the very act of critical engagement; others regarded as not wholly expressive of the tradition's historical potential are abandoned. Such a relationship towards the tradition does not refute the radical embeddedness (thrownness) of the self in the community. But it does suggest that this kind of political self *belongs* by exercising critique, resistance and displacement towards the tradition's past possibilities, and that community itself is constituted through such critical belonging.

The self's continuous practice of 'critical mimesis' is useful for international political theory because it incorporates a critical and agonistic attitude which enables a movement towards a subject, and a politics, of non-essentialist and non-exclusionary community. The discussion of how the community is constituted through the self's critical mimetic response to its historical tradition, which might be called in shorthand 'community through critique', not only displaces Heidegger's *own* determination of the phenomenology of *Being and time*, but, moreover, offers an understanding of communal constitution that is inclusive of others and otherness. This is because others, who are not embedded in the specific historical public group in question according to conventional modes of belonging and association, are hereby acknowledged by the self as having a voice;²³ the questioning kind of belonging, which retrieves from those possibilities 'inherited' by the tradition those worth 'repeating', is open to everyone engaging in practices of critique towards the tradition's heritage. Others who wish to critically 'repeat' possibilities in a community where they might not be members under more commonplace criteria, such as the figurations of language, nation, ethnicity, or religion (cf. Nancy 1991b), may too engender critique and thus participate in the 'critical mimesis' of possibilities of the group in which they envision their future projection. Critical belonging notes only the desire to engage in a critique of the possibilities handed down to the group to which one *wishes* to belong (as in the case of migrants, for example) (see Žižek 2001, p. 93).

The 'praxeological' character of this critique entails the endless critical engagement with the repeatable possibilities of the tradition and constitutes 'membership' as such. Although any understanding of a community would be exclusionary in some formal sense, the notion of a 'critical mimesis' as the mode of constitution of the community may be so in ways which are not arbitrary. When *critique* becomes the mode of belonging, the community is not arbitrarily excluding others because of race, religion, colour, birthplace, etc. The critical mimetic process does not limit belonging to territorial or other identity-related criteria (cf. O'Sullivan 1997) and, as such, can reinvigorate existing discussions of 'multiculturalism' and of the extension of

the community (Taylor 1992; Tully 1995; see Cochran 2000 on ‘extending the “we”’).

Moreover, the mode of ‘critical belonging’ discussed above makes two further contributions to international political theory. First, it enables the discussion of community constitution outside of the dichotomy of proceduralist composition and essence. The understanding of community constitution provided above acknowledges ‘thickness’ in the sense that it is based on Dasein’s thrownness in a historical tradition but in no way constrains the ‘opening up’ of the tradition. The tradition is historical, in the sense of the location of the ideas, projects and practices which it comprises in a specific public group; membership to it, however, is not restricted to those who ‘inherit’ it in a conventional sense (as might be the case with other immutable characteristics). This is because membership and belonging are based on a substantially different understanding of ‘tradition’ as such, where community is conceived not only as *open* to critique, but as *constituted* by the self’s very act of critically engaging with the past possibilities of the tradition in which one wishes to locate oneself.

Second, ‘critical belonging’ is essential for international political theory in an era of globalisation, precisely because of its focus on otherness. It invites others outside of the particular historical tradition to enter the critical mimetic process because it acknowledges,

the claim of others who, from beyond ‘our’ horizon, call into question the parochialism of our tradition insofar as it does not speak for them and who demand that we include their perspectives in the effort to understand ourselves. (Vogel 1994, p. 70)

The multiplicity of perspectives that globalisation involves, referred to as the intensification of ‘value pluralism’ in the IR literature (cf. Lensu and Fritz 1999), does not negate this process. On the contrary, plurality *assists* the forcefulness of critique by re-articulating and re-imagining the repeatable possibilities of the tradition by bringing difference to bear on them productively. Therefore, critical belonging, open to all those who wish to critique and retrieve a tradition’s possibilities, constructively theorises the ‘friendly struggle’ (cf. Derrida 1993; Coole 2001) of the negotiations of multiple perspectives in an era of global transformations. Most significantly, it illustrates that plurality is to be found *within* the tradition. This enables a movement away from the community’s conceptualisation as uniform and essentialist, towards its diversification, both from inside and from an outside that is already within.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Peg Birmingham and the CRISPP anonymous reviewers for their critical comments and suggestions, as well as the participants of ‘The

future of political community' workshop (ECPR Joint Sessions, April 2006) and, in particular, Jens Bartelson, Gideon Baker, Stefan Elbe, Kimberly Hutchings, Allan Dreyer Hansen, and Daniela Vicherat for their feedback on an earlier version of this article.

Notes

1. See, for example, Miami Theory Collective (1991), Nancy (1991a), Brown (1992), Walzer (1994), Tully (1995), Archibugi *et al.* (1998), Linklater (1998), and Odysseos (2007).
2. 'Unlikely' for a number of reasons: first, because of Heidegger's involvement with the Nazis, discussed below; second, because the nature of his thought is regarded as essentially a-, non- or pre-political (see Janicaud 1996, p. 39; de Beistegui 1997, p. 11 and 2007, p. 88; cf. also Ward 1995) and; third, because of need to distinguish between ontic and ontological discussions of community, with Heidegger's work falling within the latter (Heidegger 1962, p. 31).
3. I use the term 'heteronomous' in the sense of the primacy of relation and the self's constitution by otherness (see, Odysseos 2007, chapter 1), contrary to the meaning of heteronomy as the 'abandonment' of the self to 'the despotic rule of nameless, higher powers' and a subsequent relinquishment of responsibility (Wolin 1990, p. 150) or the meaning associated with 'paternalism' (Salem-Wiseman 2003, p. 550).
4. 'Being-there' or 'There-being'; for Heidegger's particular use of the German term *Dasein* (conventionally understood as 'existence'), see Richardson (1963, pp. 44–46).
5. And indeed, this is a continuing debate; see for example, the special issue on Heidegger's politics in the *European journal of political theory*, 6 (1), January 2007.
6. See, Derrida (1989), Habermas (1989), Levinas (1990), Wolin (1990, 1991), Bourdieu (1991), Caputo (1991), Ijsseling (1992), Rockmore and Margolis (1992), Sluga (1993), Janicaud (1996), de Beistegui (1997), Fritsche (1999).
7. *Daseinanalytik*, or the analysis of There-being. Also invoked in this term is the distinction between existential and existentielle analysis (see Heidegger 1962, pp. 31–35, as well as paras 9–10).
8. The 'they' is the somewhat unfortunate and misleading translation of Heidegger's term 'das Man' and it should not lead one to one assume that *Dasein* is distinct from the 'they' on the basis of this translation.
9. First brackets added, second brackets in the original Macquarrie and Robinson translation. In German the first sentence reads: 'Wenn aber das schicksalhafte *Dasein* als In-der-Welt-sein wesentlich im Mitsein mit Anderen existiert, ist sein Geschehen ein Mitgeschehen und bestimmt als *Geschick*. Damit bezeichnen wir das Geschehen der Gemeinschaft, des Volkes' (Heidegger 1993, p. 384).
10. '*Der Fall Heidegger*', the German term *Fall* meaning both the 'case' of and the 'fall' of Heidegger (cf. Rockmore and Margolis, 1992).
11. Thomas Sheehan (2001) calls them 'self-hating Heideggerians'.
12. This entails transcending the determination of community (and coexistence) according to a compositional, additive logic, which I have elsewhere analysed as the 'logic of composition' (Odysseos 2007).
13. With regards to the manifestation of this problem in the 1930s in the form of National Socialism, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy argue that there is a complicity or responsibility of 'German thought' in the continued mythic response to this problem of identification: '[t]here incontestably has been and there still is perhaps

a German problem; Nazi ideology was a specifically political response to this problem; and there is no doubt whatsoever that the German tradition, and in particular the tradition of German thought, is not at all foreign to this ideology' (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 1990, p. 295). Also, 'it is because the German problem is fundamentally a problem of *identity* that the German figure of totalitarianism is racism ... It is because myth can be defined as an *identificatory mechanism* that racist ideology became bound up in the construction of a myth' (p. 296). See also, the discussion of Nazism's revival and production of mythic identification (pp. 296–312).

14. Because of the emptiness of anticipatory resoluteness de Beistegui refuses to identify it 'with the heroism and decisionism with which it has been often charged' by authors such as Karl Löwith (1994, 1995) and Richard Wolin (1990, 1991).
15. Moreover, is there not the danger, as has been argued by Karl Löwith, that the reference to the struggle of the collective entity (especially in the context of Being-toward-death) entails the very constitution of the 'we' through the assumed or posited threat to its continued existence by an 'enemy' – much like in Carl Schmitt's *Concept of the political?* Dasein's co-historising might manifest itself as the collective confrontation with an enemy. Indeed, Löwith suggests that there is a correspondence between Heidegger's being-toward-death and '[Carl] Schmitt's "sacrifice of life" in the politically paramount case of war' (Löwith 1994, p. 32; see also Löwith 1995, pp. 160–161 and Schmitt 1996, p. 33).
16. Yet this distinction between 'fate' and 'destiny' is not sustained in the work of the later Heidegger (Inwood 1999, p. 68).
17. The reference to community may not be, in this understanding, a theoretical commitment to a (necessarily right-wing) understanding of community (*Gemeinschaft*) but might be, rather, a reminder of the *historical manifestation* of the worldliness of being-there. As Fritsche rightly reminds us, in Heidegger's case the historical situation would have been the post-WWI Weimar Republic, with its economic uncertainty and the emergent political rise of both communism and fascism.
18. In Joan Stambaugh's translation: 'The handing down of a possibility that has been in retrieving it, however, does not disclose the Da-sein that has been there in order to actualize it again' (Heidegger 1996, p. 352).
19. De Beistegui rightly points out that the best example of this *Erwiderung* is none other than Heidegger's method of *Destruktion* or 'destructive retrieve' through which he engages with traditional ontology in order to be able to restate anew the question of Being. Naturally, this point is rejected by those who suggest that only one reading of paragraph 74 is possible (see, for instance, Fritsche 1999, pp. 1–28, and in particular his refutation of such critical readings of 'repetition' and 'critical rejoinder', pp. 7–28, 251–253).
20. The sentence reads in German: 'In der Mitteilung und im Kampf wird die Macht des Geschickes erst frei' (Heidegger 1993, p. 384).
21. The reference to the 'they' and 'idle talk' could be understood, moreover, as an explicit stance against a subjectivist conception of *Gesellschaft*, where community is invoked to contest and problematise the 'absolutization of subjectivity'.
22. Regarding Heidegger's involvement with the National Socialists Birmingham argues (1991, p. 44) that at the time of the 'turn' Heidegger 'begins to think that the Dasein's destiny can be given a *topos*'. See also the discussion of 'ontology' (Campbell 1998, pp. 33–81).

23. In the sense of the voice that Dasein carries within (cf. *Odysseos* 2003; Derrida 1993).

Note on contributor

Louiza Odysseos is Senior Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Sussex. She is the author of *The subject of coexistence: otherness in international relations* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007), as well as coeditor, with Fabio Petito, of *The international political thought of Carl Schmitt: terror, liberal war and the crisis of global order* (Routledge, 2007) and, with Hakan Seckinelgin, of *Gendering the international* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). She has also guest-edited special issues on the themes of gender and international relations in *Millennium: journal of international studies* (27 (4), 1998) and on the international theory of Carl Schmitt for *Leiden journal of international law* (19 (1), 2006).

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