**Heidegger, hypermedia, and moral identity—**

**A literature review of post-human being in a mediated world**

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Title: HEIDEGGER, HYPERMEDIA, AND MORAL IDENTITY—A LITERATURE REVIEW OF POST-HUMAN BEING IN A MEDIATED WORLD

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Abstract: Being human in a hypermediated world is cause to much confusion and debate, on an ontological as well as on a practical front. This study draws on the works of Martin Heidegger, Charles Taylor, Terry Eagleton, and Michel Foucault to argue about how we orient ourselves in a hypermediated world.

The research question of this thesis is: what opportunities and threats does the use of contemporary information technologies hold for identity and authenticity. The results of a systematic literature review is reflected against the philosophical background of Martin Heidegger, Charles Taylor, Terry Eagleton, and Michel Foucault for comprehensive arguments about contemporary identity-building and the nature of authenticity and contemporary information technologies.

Conceptual papers, qualitative researches, and philosophical papers are searched and systematically narrowed down to form the data for this thesis. A modified form of the Fink model for systematic literature review is used to gather the articles used.

The nature and relations of information technology, technologies of the self, authenticity and identity as tools which disclose our lifeworld and help us orient ourselves morally as post-humans in a hypermediated world is inspected in light of the findings in this thesis.

Keywords: Heidegger, hypermedia, identity, technologies of the self, authenticity, media philosophy
Method: Systematic literature review

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# 1. Introduction—authenticity, humanity and hypermedia

Many, if not most problems of humanity spring from a lack of understanding: understanding of one's own self, understanding where one stands in regard to moral matters, understanding of others and others' stances, understanding the surrounding life-world. Being is necessarily subjective, and to understand any of the others, one ought to understand one's own self, where it springs from and what motivates it: the formation and conception of identity, of the moral self.

The formation of the moral self is a process that is conscious only in part at best. How much of the formation of the moral self is up to the individual, and how great a part the individual's environment plays in it is something that warrants consideration. The assumption is made here that not only does the environment play a critical part in the formation of the moral self, but that media—or, in the case of this thesis, hypermedia—is a critical part of the environment of our contemporary selves.

Hypermedia as a term is not new. It was first used in 1965 by Ted Nelson to describe nonlinear mediums of information. The term is more relevant now than ever, when the structures of information are becoming increasingly non-linear, and the role of users has become truly that of users, not merely consumers. Thus hypermedia is becoming more tangibly part of our environment. Here hypermedia is used as an umbrella term to refer to the medium of information technologies—especially digital technologies and social media—as well as more traditional textual mediums.

The relation of the individual to his or her environment also poses a question of free will: if the self is a product of the individual's will, how much of it is independent of environment? If, on the other hand, the self is a product of the individual's environment, is there any room for the individual will? Even without

such extreme views, one ought to question what the possible roles of the individual and the environment are in the formation of the moral identity.

The use of tools both concrete and abstract is a focal point of consideration in this thesis. It is also something that Martin Heidegger (1962, 1977) comments on extensively. However, tools as means of disclosure and presentation and their use in itself is not essential. What is essential is what ends we strive for with the use of tools (Salonen 2010, 204).

How much self-control and what kinds of tool-use does an individual exhibit in the formation of the moral self? The defining and re-defining of one's self are weighty terms in media education. How does the formation of the self come to be? I posit that it is not only defined, but the individual can exert her will towards re-definition and re-formation. But if so, to what extent? How is the freedom of will experienced and exercised?

One more question I shall endeavour to answer is how conscious an individual is of their own moral existence and the way her identity was formed. This, combined with studies in the use of media and what role contemporary information technologies are perceived to play in today's society grounds this thesis in the tradition of media education.

I would argue that in the post-industrial, mediated world, the concept of environment necessarily includes the media: the others, the news and entertainment media, as well as social media all form that which is understood as the environment in this thesis. I will trace the relation of the individual and the identity (as defined by Charles Taylor, 1989), and the individual's general social surroundings or das Man (as appears in the works of Martin R. Heidegger, 1962, 1977), and tie them together with concepts drawn from the works of Michel Foucault (1997).

The concept of identity is essential to the more theoretical aspects of media education, and the relation of an agent and her surroundings is a first-order

problem of any human science. Therefore a thorough survey into the concept of identity and the relation of an agent to her surroundings and herself is not only justifiable, but a necessary theoretical starting point for studies in media education.

The research question that drives this thesis is: what are the opportunities and threats that the use of contemporary information technology has for identity and authenticity? This research borrows much from philosophy, especially from moral philosophy. Some of the terms brought up in this research are being-in-the-world, the *they*, thrownness and fallenness, which are all terms borrowed from Heidegger (1962), hypermedia, as well as moral technologies. However, the key terms on which the data analysed in this thesis is based are authenticity, identity, and technologies of the self.

This thesis deals with issues related to the more philosophical aspects of media education, as well as philosophy and media philosophy. The findings here can be utilised by scholars of media education, as the contemplations here have much to do with how we should think of media. Additionally, the field of social psychology may benefit from the considerations of identity and the use of media in identity construction. Finally, philosophy scholars may find novel takes on Heidegger's philosophy, as well as considerations on personal identity and authenticity.

## 2. Method

This study takes the form of a systematic, standalone literature review from a thematic perspective on authenticity, identity, and technologies of the self. The reason for choosing this method is partly because of the intellectual challenge, and partly because the subject matter is abstract in such a manner that gathering data is out of the scope of the current research. Another reason for choosing a contemplative approach is that as a human science, media education has much to gain from philosophical contemplations. Media education should include extensive considerations on dimensions of meaning. Thus, without taking away from qualitative or quantitative research, I intend to study these dimensions of meaning from a philosophical perspective on human sciences.

Given the rich body of literature concerning the concepts present in this research, a rigorous examination and synthesising of source materials allows me to put this thesis in its historical context. Additionally, examination and synthesising allow me to put my thesis in the proper context of its scientific field, thus also allowing me to justify the importance of this research (Bearfield & Eller 2008, 61–72).

### 2.1 Systematic literature review

I use the Fink (2005) model for the systematic literature review, which is broken down into seven steps: defining the research question, choosing the literature and databases, defining the search terms (words and/or phrases) in accordance to the research question, defining the criteria for eligible data (years of publication, languages, relevance), methodological evaluation of the quality of articles chosen, a standardised review of chosen materials, and finally a synthesis (Fink 2005, 3– 5). The synthesis in this research is an integrational synthesis that creates dialogue between the chosen works of literature as well as the classical literature used in this thesis, which requires a rigid adherence to the criterion of the literature review, so as to not use source literature that cannot be dialecticised

and therefore ineligible for a proper literature review (Metsämuuronen 2005, 579; Green, Johnson, & Adams 2006, 105).

The seven steps of the Fink (2005) model in the context of this research can be elaborated as follows:

1. **The research question:** What are the opportunities and threats that the use of information technology has for identity and authenticity? From a Heideggerian perspective, the original question might be something along the lines of "what does it mean to be human in a mediated world" or "what is a human being in a mediated world". However, being human is something that hardly changes, so the general interpretation that I could draw from Heidegger (1962) is that being human means being a *thing* or *presence* that is thrown into the world and spending one's time attempting to find authenticity, finding one's self. That which helps the individual to orient in this state of thrownness is identity, as defined by Taylor (1989). And that which allows the individual to reshape his or her identity is care of the self, or technology of the self, as defined by Foucault (1997). Thus I arrived at the question that drives this thesis: the opportunities and threats the use of information technology has for identity and authenticity.

2. **Choosing the literature and databases:** The reason for choosing older literature for outlining the key terms, while they are mainly from the 1980's (with the exception of Heidegger), such concepts do not easily become obsolete, and they give us a solid basis for more recent literature. The databases used for purveying the materials for this thesis are Directory of Open-Access Journals (DOAJ), JSTOR, Academic Search Elite, and SpringerLink. These are all standard databases used in by the university of Lapland, and provide open access to a great deal of usable articles for furthering research. Moreover, using our university's own database search, LUC Finna, to conduct searches for this thesis, most links pointed to one of the aforementioned databases. However, I used the LUC Finna database to conduct the complementary searches.

3. **Defining the search terms:** The search terms used in this thesis were "authenticity", "identity", and "technologies of the self". While I considered using "moral identity" instead of just "identity", in the context of this research using only "identity" is justifiable, because an identity is necessarily a moral identity. Due to the already scarce search results using the more general "identity", I saw no reason to restrict the search results further by using the more specific term "moral identity". The terms "authenticity" and "technologies of the self" are closely related, as will be pointed out in chapter 3.5. While one could argue that including the term "moral technologies" is necessary for this thesis, I posit that moral technologies, while important in the constitution of identities, are a power in play implicitly whenever identities are discussed, and thus the search term need not be included when conducting the searches. For the first complementary searches, I chose the terms "Heidegger", "identity", "information technology" and "media". I used these terms to survey for articles that deal with Heideggerian philosophy related to identity and information technology or media, so that crucial gaps in the results of the initial searches could be filled. I also performed a complementary search with the more overall terms "media", "identity", and "authenticity", to find less specific data, which could however be used in the final discussions of this thesis. The searches with these terms and the results are described below.

4. **Defining the criteria for eligible data:** The data used for this thesis has to be in English, and from a peer-reviewed journal, a thesis, or a dissertation, published in the year 2005 or later. The materials for this research must be found in open-access journals due to a lack of funding for this research, as well as the ease of access for anyone wishing to pursue the themes taken up in this thesis further. The reason for choosing the year 2005 as the starting point for the more recent literature used in this thesis is that it is ten years before the commencing of this writing, and to weed out obsolete research while having a large enough time-window to sufficiently purvey recent research on media philosophy. The reason for seeking journals and materials in English is the desire to make this research

available to an international audience, and due to English being the *de facto* universal language in contemporary research.

5. **Methodological evaluation of the quality of articles chosen:** Because my thesis is chiefly a philosophical one, my data would need to reflect this decision. Thus, the articles I chose as my data should consist of interviews, discourse analyses, and conceptual papers, from which I would make my final synthesis. The difficulty of measuring and quantifying things such as authenticity or morality, as well as the difficulty of extracting information fruitful to philosophical considerations from quantitative data contributed to the criteria of the methodological evaluation.

6. **Standardised review:** The final review of the articles was a content analysis, with the research question in mind. The arguments and conclusions in the articles were analysed so that they could be reflected against one or more of the works chosen as the theoretical background and provide answers to the research question.

7. **Synthesis:** The chosen articles are synthesised among each other as well as the theoretical literature chosen for this work in the above chapters. The synthesis is a descriptive synthesis with a strong emphasis on philosophical contemplation.

## 2.2 Searches and elimination

The first search I conducted was with the search terms and Boolean operators "identity" AND "authenticity" AND "technologies of the self". The results of this search can be seen in table 1. The articles chosen this round were chosen based on the article title. Because the intention here is to map the philosophical and social aspects of media use, articles unrelated to media education, social sciences, or philosophy were eliminated at this point.

Table 1: Found and downloaded articles and the databases used

| Database | Found articles | Downloaded articles |
|---|---|---|
| DOAJ | 0 | 0 |
| Academic Search Elite | 7 | 1 |
| SpringerLink | 12 | 5 |
| JSTOR | 1058 | 30 |
| Total | 1077 | 36 |

Additionally, I conducted complementary searches in the LUC Finna database with the terms and Boolean operators "Heidegger" AND "identity" AND "information technology" OR "mediated". The results of this search can be seen in table 2. The criteria outlined above were applied in the complementary searches as well, eliminating articles unrelated to media education, social sciences, or philosophy.

Table 2: Searches in the LUC Finna database and elimination based on article titles

| Articles found | Articles chosen |
|---|---|
| 185 | 35 |

Finally, I conducted one more complementary search in the LUC-Finna database with the terms and Boolean operators "media" AND "identity" AND "authenticity". The results of this search can be seen in table 3.

Table 3: Searches in LUC Finna and elimination based on article titles

| Articles found | Articles chosen |
|---|---|
| 53 | 13 |

After the initial decisions by article titles, I started reading through abstracts to narrow down the number of articles used as data for my thesis. After going through the abstracts of all 84 articles and eliminating articles which had to do with bioethics, theoretical philosophy, politics, economics, planning, or marketing, I was left with 42 articles.

After this elimination, I performed a light content analysis of the articles, searching for my search terms within the articles. Those articles where the search terms were not present, as well as those in which the terms were present only once or in the article sources, were eliminated. An exception to this criterion was the search term "authenticity" and its derivatives, as the term was scarce in all but a handful of the articles I used. After this content analysis, 26 articles remained for further content analysis. The elimination process outlined here can be seen in figure 1.

Articles chosen based on title: 84

Reading through abstracts

Articles remaining: 42

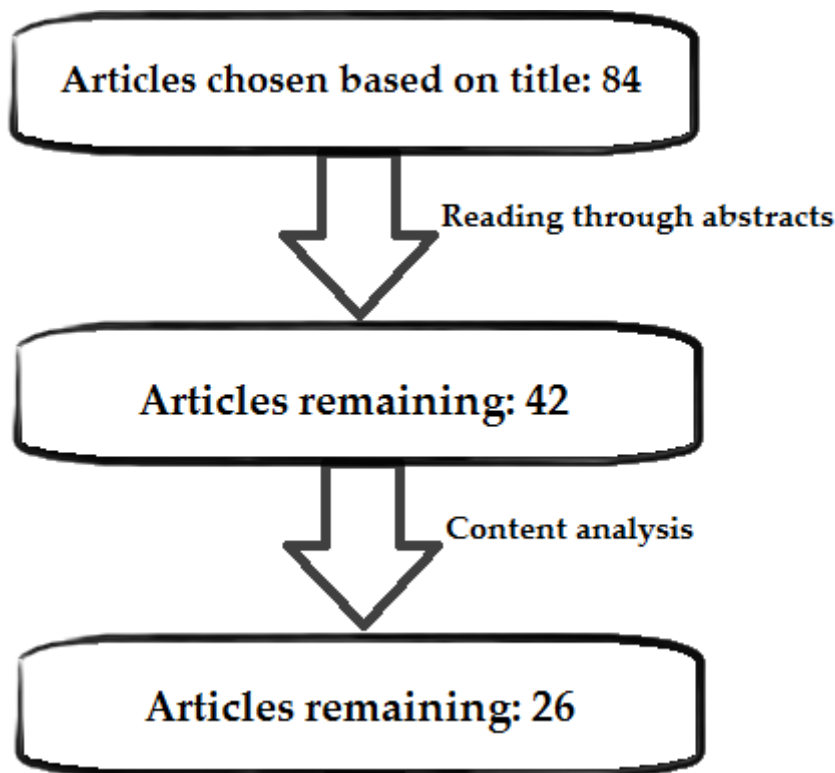Content analysis

Articles remaining: 26

Figure 1: Narrowing down data through abstracts and content analysis

After these rounds of elimination, I started going through the articles with the question of identity formation in mind. If the article could not be connected to identity formation, it would be ruled out. This left me with 20 articles, to which I applied the criterion that they should also be related to hypermedia, an umbrella term lifted from Floridi (2015) in the opening chapter of The Onlife Manifesto. This left me with 15 articles. The narrowing down of the source articles according to the research questions can be seen in figure 2.
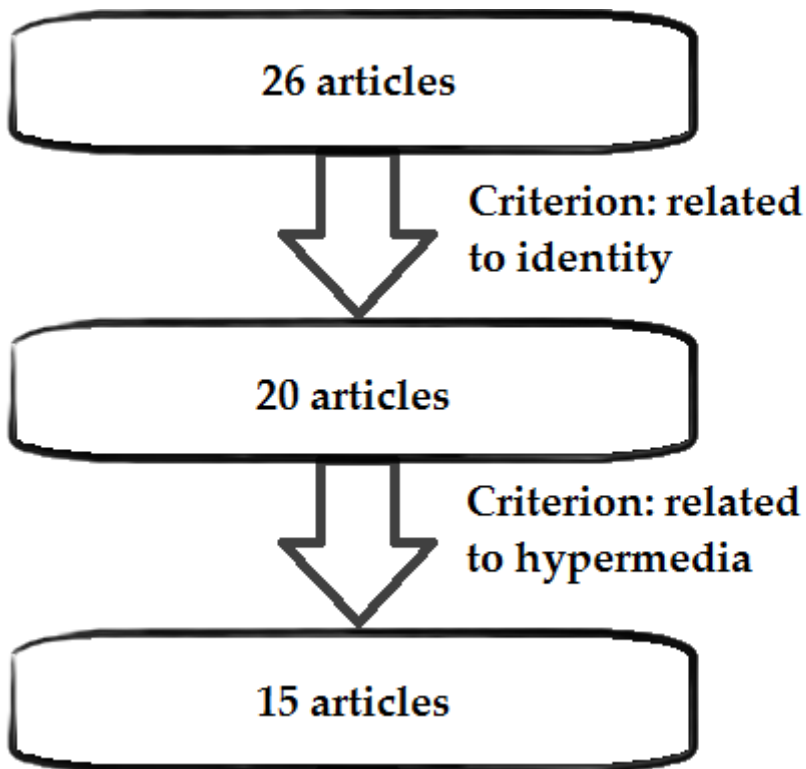
Figure 2: Narrowing down data according to the research questions

Table 4 shows the results of the eliminations. The names of the articles and authors, as well as years of publication, databases used, and the search terms used to find the articles are shown.

Table 4: The final list of articles, used databases, and search terms

| Article title | Author | Year | Source database and search terms |
|---|---|---|---|
| Resilience, Authenticity and Digital Governance | Eric Austin & Jeffrey Callen | 2012 | LUC-Finna<br>Heidegger, identity, information technology, media |
| Interrogating Girl Power | Michelle Bae | 2011 | JSTOR<br>Identity, authenticity, technologies of the self |
| A World I Don't Inhabit | Stuart Boon & Christine Sinclair | 2009 | LUC-Finna<br>Media, identity, authenticity |
| The Political Ontology of Cyborgs | Rachel Buchanan & Amy Chapman | 2014 | LUC-Finna<br>Heidegger, identity, information technology, media |
| "Conversation of Mankind" or "Idle Talk"? | Yoni Van Den Eede | 2010 | LUC-Finna<br>Heidegger, identity, information technology, media |
| Part V: Identity, Selfhood and Attention | Charless Ess | 2015 | SpringerLink<br>Identity, authenticity, technologies of the self |
| Part I: The Onlife Manifesto | Luciano Floridi | 2015 | SpringerLink<br>Identity, authenticity, technologies of the self |
| Part IV: Hyperconnectivity | Luciano Floridi | 2015 | SpringerLink<br>Identity, authenticity, technologies of the self |
| Instant messaging, literacies, and social identities | Cynthia Lewis & Bettina Fabos | 2005 | JSTOR<br>Identity, authenticity, technologies of the self |
| Practical Versus Moral Identities in Identity Management | Noëmi Manders-Huits | 2010 | LUC-Finna<br>Heidegger, identity, information technology, media |
| Youth and Media Cultures | Ridder & Bauvel | 2015 | LUC-Finna<br>Media, identity, authenticity |
| Multiple Identities and Education for Active Citizenship | Alistair Ross | 2007 | JSTOR<br>Identity, authenticity, technologies of the self |
| Transformative Processes of Agency | Ian Tucker, Darren Ellis, & David Harper | 2012 | LUC-Finna<br>Heidegger, identity, information technology, media |
| Social Networking Technology and the Virtues | Shannon Vallor | 2009 | LUC-Finna<br>Heidegger, identity, information technology, media |
| Internet and the Lifeworld | Shanyang Zhao | 2007 | LUC-Finna<br>Heidegger, identity, information technology, media |

# 3. Horizons of being post-human

The aim of this chapter is to outline the concepts of moral identity, moral technologies, technologies of the self, and authenticity, and to analyse how they relate to each other and to being in a hypermediated life-world. I begin this study by looking into Heideggerian (1962, 1977) conceptions of what it means to be in the world, as well as what can be understood from his thoughts on tools and media.

I will then utilise the concept of the modern identity, drawing largely on the works of Charles Taylor (1989). While Taylor also offers some insight into the formation of identities, I will also utilise the concepts of moral technologies, as defined by Terry Eagleton (1985–1986), as well as technologies of the self, coined by Michel Foucault (1997).

Throughout this chapter I reflect the findings of my article searches against the aforementioned theoretical standpoints. At the same time, I shall attempt a synthesis of the classical literature with contemporary research.

## 3.1 Being in the world, involvement; das Man, and hypermedia

The world, according to Martin Heidegger, can be understood in several ways. In the framework of this research, I have chosen the interpretation that the world is that whole in which humans live and encounter themselves as well as other humans, and all the non-human beings to which humans relate and with which humans are involved. This is called our life-world—from German Lebenswelt—within which humans encounter entities and through them gain a self-understanding. (Heidegger 1962; 85, 93.)

The concept and understanding of life-worlds serves as the starting point for my thesis, placing being in a living space. The self-understanding referred to above

comes to us through using our faculties of conversation, and the multitude of tools at our disposal. We will come back to the use of tools later, but at this point it is necessary to keep in mind that with the advent of contemporary information technologies, our being is not only physical-spatial, but also virtual-spatial, with nearly everyone in the developed world possessing some kind of virtual presence.

Being-in-the-world—from German in-der-Welt-sein—is a central concept in Martin Heidegger's Being and Time, in which he describes it as a basic state of being, and in which humans exist in their everydayness. The understanding we have of our own existence is not necessarily very definite, as we are constantly *within it*, and understand it from this standpoint only indefinitely. (Heidegger 1962, 86.) Understanding our own existence is here a focal question, both for Heidegger and by extension for my research. Understanding the world and our existence must be rooted, first and foremost, to knowing oneself. This is essential as a preliminary consideration regarding my research question: what are the ways in which we come to know ourselves?

Knowing oneself is a process which happens according to proximity with others, the environment, and the concern one has with these two (Heidegger 1962, 161). However, a genuine understanding is not certain, and more often than not it is only implicit, a very rough sketch rather than a clear picture of what is going on. This kind of implicit understanding without further analysis is called readiness-to-hand.

Tools such as information technology are a means for humans to make sense of what is happening, a means of relating our own being both with human others as well as non-human others, the objects and things in the world we inhabit. However, the existence and use of information tools is not an unproblematic issue, as numerous arguments and even moral panics about various forms of media attest. We will come back to this later.

In Heidegger's words, the ready-to-hand—from German vorhanden—that is, the abstract of the tool is not grasped theoretically at all, and the way in which we

consider that which is ready-to-hand is necessarily through its towards-which; the usability and end of any given tool. Not only are the usability and end of a tool necessary, but there is also the quality of being assigned to the person who uses the tool, the producer and user of the tool are also present 'in' the tool. (Heidegger 1962, 99–100.)

The presence of the producer and user 'in' the tool is nowhere as apparent as in contemporary information technologies. These technologies are not only a tool but also a space in which we conduct ourselves. Thus, we are—at least virtually— quite immersed and involved in the use of the tools we call information technologies.

Our being in the world is something that is for us completely obvious. The way this happens is perfectly described in Being and Time, by Heidegger's (1962) favourite example of hammering:

> The less we just stare at the hammer-thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is—as equipment. The hammering itself uncovers the specific 'manipulability' of the hammer. The kind of Being which equipment possesses—in which it manifests itself in its own right—we call 'readiness-to-hand'. (Heidegger 1962, 98.)

The relationship we have with our being in the world is to us completely ready-to-hand, phenomenologically transparent, and primordial; it requires no special contemplation, we simply *are*, engage in a *trouble-free existence*. Suppose we take Heidegger's favourite example of the hammer and hammering. When the hammering is trouble-free, no attention is being paid towards the action, or the tool which is ready-to-hand. If one were to replace the hammer with another tool, or subtly redirect the action of the hammering, it is precisely because of the perceived readiness-to-hand and trouble-freeness that the action can be redirected. In the state of trouble-freeness, the original intentionality of the action

is, if not forgotten, at least the sight of is it lost; the woods are concealed by a single tree.

Being-in information technologies is perhaps not quite as self-evident as being-in the physical world. However, with our growing dependency on information technologies, I argue that human existence is close to being as much virtual as it is physical. This is reflected in Floridi (2015, 7) saying that the deployment of information technologies has already radically affected our existence. If information technologies affect our existence, *how* do they affect it?

Our existence, insofar as it involves conversing with others and the *they*—from German das man—lends itself to be exploited. When the dialogue is perceived as trouble-free, it is not paid sufficient attention that volition or intentionality can manifest. The means by which this dialogue takes place today is often mediated by information technologies, and especially the flood of information readily available with the advent of the Internet, the exploitability of human dialogue should be readily apparent.

The exploitability of human dialogue is where the *they* come into play. In a state of mind of trouble-free being-in-the-world, the expectations and the volition of the *they* can infiltrate the individual's existence. It becomes the default, into which the individual is absorbed. But what or who are the *they*?

The ambiguous others through which we often come to interpret ourselves and our surroundings is called by Heidegger the *they*. This *they* is an elusive term in that it is not concrete, and is best described by a direct quote:

> By 'Others' we do not mean everyone else but me—those over against whom the 'I' stands out. They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does not distinguish oneself—those among whom one is too… By reason of this *with-like* Being-in-the-world, the world is always the one that I share with Others. (Heidegger 1962, 154.) One belongs to the Others oneself and enhances

> their power. 'The Others' whom one thus designates in order to cover up the fact of one's belonging to them essentially oneself, are those who proximally and for the most part 'are there' in everyday Being-with-one-another. The "who" is not this one, not that one, not oneself, not some people, and not the sum of them all. The 'who' is the neuter, the "they" [das Man] (ibid. 164.)

Especially in the larger picture, the concrete Other dissolves into this indistinguishable mass of the *they*, and in close proximity to the *they*, the individual also dissolves into the *they*. We match our experiences of what is happening, our way of interpreting our life-world to this ambiguous *they*, without much thought of why we would do so. (Heidegger 1962, 164.) The *they* plays a large part in determining what and how one 'sees' (ibid. 213).

It is in the tendency outlined above, that humans have of matching our experiences and our thinking with the ambiguous *they* that we find some grave problems. The relations the individual has with her surroundings cannot be completely dominated by the *they*, but the individual cannot act as a completely self-standing subject either. Essential for our being and understanding this being is also a potentiality for relations and interrelations, and this context of relations is understood through our involvements with other entities in the world. These involvements may be either authentic or inauthentic. (Heidegger 1962, 119.)

Thus, what is essential to our being is our proximity to other entities. This proximity is rather abstract, and has little to do with concrete spatial proximity, and more with *how close in abstract proximity we take an entity to be* to ourselves. This way we encounter may encounter things we may not see or touch, ideas and concepts, with relatively close proximity to ourselves. The actual spatial distance between us and the entities we take as proximally close can indeed be far removed from each other. (Heidegger 1962, 139–141.) Thus we *find*, or interpret, ourselves in relation to this abstract proximity to other beings and gain an implicit and primordial understanding of ourselves and the surrounding world (ibid. 155.) This abstract proximity is made nearly ubiquitous by contemporary information technologies.

*Finding* and interpreting naturally require a certain being acquainted with oneself, which has been weighty concept in philosophy since ancient times through contemporary thought. It is from the value put on this finding in contemporary thought that begets the conception of authenticity, which will be considered in a later chapter.

A becoming acquainted with oneself is necessary for authentic being, but this becoming acquainted becomes hazy when one constantly has to be in proximity to others. Indeed in many ways we often have no choice but to 'see the world through others'. (Heidegger 1962, 161.)

In everydayness, averageness, publicness, Being-with and Being-among-one-another, neither the self of one's own being nor the self of the other has become constant, has been found and is therefore *inauthentic*, fails to stand by one's self. (Heidegger 1962, 166.) The deployment of information and communication technologies does not make the human condition easier by any means, and it has, in the words of Floridi (2015, 7), radically affected it, modified our relationship to ourselves, to others, and to the world.

How we are in this world and how we experience our life-world is necessarily connected to others, the Other, or the *they*. Connectivity and the dialogue that we have, not only with concrete others, but the all-encompassing *they* that encompasses the concrete others as well as the near-ubiquitous media makes it very easy for the self to dissolve. While the reality that dialogue with the others and the *they* gives us cues as to what is proper and expected cannot be (and should not be) disputed, a surrendering to the *they* puts the (authentic) self in jeopardy.

The molding of the individual according to mores through a general understanding of what is proper and expected could very well be claimed to be *precisely the aim* of certain types of media (advertisements readily spring to mind). Being the *they* on which the individual relies for cues on how to navigate society

is a very powerful position. Heidegger, ever wary of mass culture, would surely reel back in terror at the thought of such media technology as permeates our time.

However, mediated communication cannot be seen only as a threat to individual authenticity, or a power which serves to alienate us from authentic states of being. Fabos and Lewis(2007, 486) propose that online communications can be an integral part of the involvement we have offline, and thus a part of our authentic relationships.

The involvement of the *they* in our being in the world is essential to how we are, and in the end *who* we are. How we relate to ourselves and the *they* form how we develop as individuals and as moral entities. The social significance of the *they*, in the words of Heidegger 'throws important light on the phenomenon of the world, since we can now see that the crucial for-the-sake-of-which structure that stands at the base of each totality of involvements is culturally and historically conditioned'. (Heidegger 1962, 167.)

The passages about the *they* can be seen echoed in the introductory passage of Fabos and Lewis (2005, 470), when they state that once technology becomes normal, it becomes uncomplicated and unnotable to its users, in itself a fact of life and a way of being in the world. This reveals both the way in which we construct ourselves socially in accordance to how "everyone"—or the *they*—acts, and how mediated communication has played a part in shaping the world.

Fabos and Lewis (2005, 473) bring forth concrete examples of this taking for granted that befalls mediated communication to such an extent that its users do not view the technology thus utilised as technological at all. Mediated communication, as we call it, is in this case simply a natural extension of communication, and does not in itself hold any promises or threats that are not inherent in any "traditional" means of communication.

The essence of communication is the back and forth of co-state-of-mind; shared moods, states of mind, attunements to each other and the environment, shared

understanding (Heidegger 1962, 205). Communication, as we will see later, is essential not only to being human, but an integral part of how a particular human being is formed. That is to say, communication shapes identity.

Not only that, but mediated communication has, in the world of today, changed the spatiality of community in that regional borders do not play such an integral part in who, how, and where we are. The region of today's communication is stateless and non-territorial, a space unlike any that humans have inhabited throughout history, and vastly different from Heidegger's time. (Floridi 2015, 56.) It is necessary to understand Heidegger in his historical context, and modify the interpretation of his work accordingly. The work referred to here is the 1962 English translation, but the original German work was published in 1927.

Especially social media has come to the fore as an irremovable aspect of everyday life (Bauvel & Ritter 2015, 2). Social networks and information technology have become central in mediating relationships and making sense of the world around us (ibid. 9, 21).

In another work, Heidegger (1977, 4–5) claims that humans are essentially chained to technology, which is their own creation. The essence of technology is that it is a means to an end and at the same time a human activity. It is an instrument, which humans control and use as a means to their will. This is an aspect of media technology that is easy to overlook: that media technology is still merely an instrument, albeit the furthest-reaching and in its uses the most malleable of human instruments. It is an instrument of informing and communication. Heidegger's (1977, 12) concise description of technology is that at its essence, technology is an instrument of revealing and disclosure.

A clear understanding of the role of technology, and an ontological account of what it means to live with and in social media requires serious consideration (Bauvel & Ritter 2015, 5). Information and media technology disclose and reveal to us much of the world, but what interests us in the scope of this study what it reveals to us of ourselves. As the world and das Man are disclosed to us, we

relate ourselves to them and are able to come upon revelations and realisations of ourselves: how we react to the seeming state of affairs, to our conception of the good, and to ourselves. As our surrounding community as well as the world outside our immediate community is revealed to us through information technology, and as we use this instrument to reveal the world and ourselves to ourselves, it is worth considering how the use of these instruments reveal us.

Technology, in Heidegger's words, gives to us humans the means to reveal and interpret ourselves, to demand of ourselves a different way of thinking, to enframe and challenge ourselves, and to understand how we relate to and encounter each other and to technology. The encountering of ourselves in others and technology, the relations therein let us understand that there "is no such thing as a man who, solely of himself, is only man". (Heidegger, 1977, 27–31.)

In the same vein, Floridi (2015, 94) states that we as humans create our technologies and shape them according to our needs, but in turn the technologies we shaped also reshape us. This is not a wild conclusion, considering how the advent of writing systems affected cultures which adopted it, or how Gutenberg's print shaped the generations to come. Or, drawing on a more recent example, digital and media literacies have become a common requirement, at least in first-world countries.

Drawing from this, we can see that we, as humans, do not exist solely as human entities, but are in constant and irremovable contact and interchange with technology. Technology is not an entity removed and separate from us, but a part of our being. It is essential for humans to create, have, and use technology. The creation and using of technology reveals to us much of our own being, if we only know how to look.

The inseparability of humans and technology is vividly visible today, and as information spreads, the power of information technologies assuming the role of an ambiguous other in respect to human beings, concerns about this development are voiced. Tucker, Ellis, and Harper (2012, 10–11) point this out in

their study on how humans perceive the way software algorithms seem to direct humans towards products and services.

In Tucker, Ellis, and Harper's study (2012, 17–18), the interviewed expressed concerns about the potential for information technologies to act as shaping forces of life, which they have the power to do by virtue of gathering data of the users' Internet surfing habits. The feeling of being surveilled by something, an even more unambiguous *other* than an unknown person is found to be rather unsettling.

More concerns are voiced about "the way the world is going", as the interviewed perceived technology as somehow insidious, becoming in a way the means by which to think, as well as an entity which can direct activity, a considerable force across all areas of life. How the presence of information technologies feeds back into everyday living is a matter that warrants great consideration. (Tucker, Ellis, & Harper 2012, 19–20.)

It can be said that technology affects our world-view, but a more accurate depiction of the relationship of technology and our world-view is that the existence of technology and its necessity are irreplaceable parts of our world-view. Humans are not helplessly delivered over to technology, but utilise technology as they see fit. The connection between sociality, communication, and technology, and the hiddenness of their socially mediated nature is hinted at by Fabos and Lewis (2005, 475) in a passage where they also claim, even at the risk of stating the obvious, that literacy and thus communication skills change with and are shaped by the available technologies.

As human selves become widely digitally mediated, information technology playing a constitutive role over numerous aspects of human life and human being remains undisputed. The widespread embeddedness of information technologies in modern societies sees human beings adapt to this backdrop of technological being. (Tucker, Ellis, & Harper 2012, 21–23.) It is not far-fetched to speak of *digital Dasein*, or even to speak of post-human being. We will come back to this later.

However, this does raise a pressing question, namely that of authenticity. And, with the question of authenticity, there still is a possibility of humans being delivered over to technology, on an individual level at first, and with time, on a larger societal level as well. While a divide between nature and technological artefacts is widely assumed—and also normatively criticised—and seems also to be suggested by Heidegger in his writings, information technologies and their rapid deployment would suggest that the line between the natural and technological is being blurred (Floridi 2015, 8).

The confusion and fright the individual may feel when facing vast virtual spaces is not something to be taken lightly, and the complexity of such existence cannot be overlooked (Buchanan & Chapman 2014, 13). Online communications are called "third spaces" by some, meaning that they thread the line between the public and the individually private (Floridi 2015, 100).

It is the existence in and dependence on these spaces of communication that calls for a shift in understanding the human being, and Buchanan and Chapman (2014, 16–17) invoke the term "cyborg ontology". They elaborate on this term, calling it an "assemblage of context-dependent, individual, social, digital, non-digital, natural, and technologized components", and describing information technologies and their grounding in real-life connections a logical condition of cyborg existence.

Until this point, the picture of human existence drawn from Heidegger (1962) seems rather confusing. It is not made much clearer by what can be drawn from Floridi (2015), and indeed the digital age, while touted as a victorious era for information, seems to foster chaos rather than order. In Floridi's (2015, 93–94) words, the distinctions between reality and virtuality as well as between human, machine, and nature are blurred. While this sort of development is ripe with promises, it does not in itself help at all with making sense of the world into which we are thrown.

The contemporary world order of so-called "hyperreality" is complex, and ripe with possibilities and limitations (Buchanan & Chapman 2014, 15). The line between the private and the public blurs, and confronting as well as utilising this divide and novel way of being is a complex process (Floridi 2015, 102). Navigating between the digital and non-digital aspects of life, as well as dealing with and making sense of the records of our digital existence raises numerous questions (Buchanan & Chapman 2014, 18). Digital spaces cannot yet contain the complexities of the real world, and managing ourselves between real and digital life can create disquiet regarding who or what we in fact want to be (Boon & Sinclair 2009, 106–107). The question asked here returns to the way in which we make sense of ourselves as posthuman, and how we confront and conduct our posthuman identities.

### 3.2 Thrownness, fallenness, and captivation

A confusion regarding finding ourselves is named by Heidegger (1962; 174, 219–220) *thrownness*—from German geworfehnheit—in one instance and *falling* or *fallenness*—from German verfallen—in another. Here, I will look into these concepts and why they are relevant to research on identity in general, and to this research in particular. The concept of the *they* outlined earlier is closely related to thrownness and fallenness, as the individual is 'thrown' amidst the *they*, and falls into being with the *they*.

Human beings are 'thrown' into the world, where they find themselves amidst other beings. This signifies the understanding of never having any will towards being born into the world, and the confusion that one feels towards the fact that one was 'thrown' into the world without any evident reason for it. (Heidegger 1962, 174.)

Thrownness is a constant surrender to the world, a being in which one avoids the very question of being. In other words, we allow ourselves to be captivated by the world around us, and lulled into a state of being where a genuine understanding is thought unnecessary. (Heidegger 1962, 178.)

Fallenness, on the other hand, is related to the phenomenon of being alongside the world, an absorption in being-with-one-another. It is also a much clearer form of avoiding the question of being than thrownness is. However, fallenness does not express any negative evaluation, nor does it mean a 'fall' from any purer or higher status into a lower one. Rather, fallenness is a state of being in which human beings maintain themselves for the most part. (Heidegger 1962, 220.)

Fallenness is a state of being within the *they*, which is an inauthentic mode of being. This inauthenticity is a form of being convinced that one understands oneself without ever definitely knowing what is really to be understood. (Heidegger 1962, 222.)

The thrownness and fallenness we find ourselves in, once these states of being and the need to question them are understood, require us to utilise a tool to guide ourselves in the world. We must form orient ourselves in a world in which we are thrown and into which we fall.

Van Eede's (2010, 203) foray into the works of Heidegger concerning technology concludes that our living with technology is indeed wrought with danger regarding the authentic understanding of humans. However, that technology at the same time has great revelatory potential about the world, as well as the humans who create, use, and are enframed by technology. Here we touch upon the wellspring of my research question: technology as a force in play in our life-world is rife with both promise and danger.

That tool which allows us to orient ourselves in these states of being, that which gives us direction is identity. It is namely identity that can be called a tool which answers the question of being on a highly personal level while being closely tied to the surrounding society.

Identity, as we will see in the next chapter, is largely something that is formed through human interaction. A hypermediated life-world, where human interaction

is electronically mediated drastically alters how we understand human interaction and ourselves. Though such mediation does not and should not necessarily replicate face-to-face interactions, novel possibilities and changes in the dynamics of human interaction introduce contemporary communication technologies as viable forces in the framework of the understanding of human existence. (Zhao 2007, 146–147.)

The questions arising from Heidegger's work pertain to identity, which raises further questions on the formation of identity, and authenticity. After a final paragraph related to Heidegger, I shall look into these questions in the following chapters.

In our being and our experience, we are to assume a phenomenological point of view which allows us to interpret ourselves through our experiences. Only thus can we have a definite grasp of the worldly elements that we may use to construct our identities (Heidegger 1962, 179.). The state of the human being is that of confusion and disorientation. Being thrown into the world and always finding oneself fallen into inauthentic states of being, dictated by others, despite one's constant search for authenticity, while not arousing any normative statements from Heidegger himself, seems an undesirable state of affairs. The adoption of information technologies brings with it a tempest of information, which does not make this orienting any easier. That which certainly can give us orientation in our being, as well as that which reveals to us glimpses of what is, to us, authenticity is, of course, our identity.

### 3.3 Identity and the self

'Who am I' is the question one asks time and time again during one's lifetime. The question is both an important one, but also a relatively recent invention. To paraphrase Giddens (1991, 74–75), the search for the self or identity is a modern problem rooted in Western individualism, and that the notion of each human being as unique in character and potential would be alien to pre-modern culture, and individuality was neither valued nor praised. However, at the present knowing

one's knowing of oneself is a multi-faceted issue, with which I will commence this research.

Regarding the themes I will take on in this research, the one to produce first and foremost is that of identity. How identities were formed in pre-modern times should not, in the scope of this research, interest us. Indeed, the way we understand the concept of identity is largely in individual terms, while identity as understood in pre-modern times was largely dealt with in universal terms, therefore making our discussions unintelligible to our forebearers (Taylor 1989, 28). Therefore, I utilise Sources of the Self by Charles Taylor. In Sources of the Self, Taylor describes identity as that which in itself gives an individual orientation in moral space, and indicates what has meaning or importance, and what is trivial and secondary (Taylor 1989, 28–30). Identity is, then, the framework in which a person understands and defines his or her preferences, wishes, opinions, and goals.

The definition of identity as that which gives the individual orientation in moral space is an observation the gravity of which is not to be undermined. While identity is more than the moral self—the individual has an identity which is simply an identity without any moral flavours—in the scope of this thesis identity is likened to the moral self. The reason for this is that as something that gives orientation in a perpetual state of confusion, one of the most basic elements available that which is or is not good. How one relates oneself to that which is good—whether the knowledge behind this relation is implicit or meditated upon—a primordial "sense of direction".

The framework of identity is, of course, not a given, and certainly not something that is born in a social void. Without existing within relations between oneself and others, there are hardly any tools with which this framework could ever be built; a child raised among animals hardly has the necessary elements to perceive or conceive an identity as we do.

Taylor goes on to claim that dialogue is an integral part of the formation of identity. Taylor writes that a person can only be a person in relation to certain interlocutors. One is who one is through a definition of where one is speaking from and to whom. Identity, Taylor states, thus requires reference to a defining community. (Taylor 1989, 36.)

Today, the debate about what information technologies and living in a hypermediated world does to us is ceaseless. We not only have our physical presences to tend to, but must also look after our digital selves. These, some argue, are lacking somehow because they are not "real" (Boon & Sinclair 2009, 104). This, insofar as the real is taken to mean the tangible and physical, is true. However, the digital self affects the real life self through dialogue with interlocutors. This is expressed by Boon and Sinclair in a worry about how many of us would broadcast something personally meaningful on social media, and what kind of self-presentation do we conduct to an audience that may include our superiors, cohorts, or prospective employers (Boon & Sinclair 2009, 105).

The dialectical nature of the formation of identity is key. Dialectical here means that the relations which contribute to it are not unilateral, nor are they always direct. Dialectical means here something that is built and develops through a dialogue. Identity is definitely not, as drawn from Giddens (1991, 2), a passive entity at the mercy of outside influences, but something to the determination of which the individual contributes.

The dialectical nature of identity is also brought up by Patrick Stokes, saying that one's ethical development and self-understanding are developed in relation to the others (Stokes 2010, 134–135).

Ross also emphasises the dialectical nature of identity, but from such a perspective that one presents one identity as tailored to the social context in which one presents oneself. The relationships one has with others construct for one different contingent identities, all coming together to form a constant self (Ross 2007, 288). The same consideration of the malleability of presented

identities is visible in Fabos and Lewis, in that identities constructed online were constructed upon consideration of to whom those identities are presented (Fabos & Lewis 2005, 483–484).

The formation of identities is inarguably closely related to the relations one has with one's social surroundings. While this begs no valuation in itself, for one who believes in and values free will, this may pose rigid restrictions. When the social surroundings make certain factors such as gender or nationality ultimate, the individual may experience living a female life, or a life of certain nationality as such a compelling factor that freedom of choice and will is dissolved.

The worry that social factors in identity formation are insurmountable, however, slightly abates with Ross' consideration that identity which is based on adherence to a group is not necessarily deep and fundamental. Identities which are based on geographical location—that is, national or regional identities—may in fact be transient, and only a performed identity that is tailored for the audience that holds such a regional identity. Ross goes on to say that supranational identities may take precedence over national identities (Ross 2007, 292).

Insofar as identities are our orientation regarding the good, the concept of national identity ought to be seen as absurd. After all, how could something so defined by chance dictate to us what is good or preferable? This, I posit, is one thing that is possible to debate more than ever in our era of far-reaching digital communications and dissemination of information without gatekeepers. The dialogue we can have to complement the process of constructing our identities can reach further and wider than ever before. However, this is a rather Panglossian and utopian view of the possibilities of information technology, and actual results of such developments remain to be seen.

Ross brings up, again from a different perspective, the dialectical nature of identities when he states that all of our identities are socially determined, and that at the same time that we define our identities, others will also define our identities in their terms, based on their perceptions of who they assume our identity to be

(Ross 2007, 288). This identity, as seen by others, can be in direct opposition to what we wish our identities to be. However, how others conceive our identities can, and in many situations will, also play a part in reshaping our identities.

How we represent our identities in and as cultural texts and practices is changed vastly by the advent of contemporary information technology and social networks, in that we are involved in describing ourselves and our world and in ongoing conversation by non-textual means as well as textual (Eede 2010, 197–198). Taken broadly, the notion of conversation includes practices outside oral and textual conversation, and acts of self-expression regardless of the form they take ought to be understood as conversation (ibid. 204).

For having an identity, it is necessary to adhere to certain goods such as freedom, altruism, authenticity, justice, human dignity, or the like. And while life goods of certain contexts are debatable, some such good is inevitable for us to understand our own position in the world, and therefore our identity (Taylor 1989, 93–94).

The identity we are concerned with here is, more than anything, a moral identity: one perceives one's morality to one's moral environment. Because of this definition of identity, namely as a *moral* identity, it is highly appropriate to discuss the elements of the formation of modern moral identities.

How the lives of individuals are conceptualised in and through media is in constant flux due to the conflict between market powers, cultural powers, and audiences' tactics. How media cultures relate to possibilities of presentation and re-presentation, and how they relate to the social and cultural organisation of identities are important points of consideration. (Bauvel & Ritter 2015, 10.) What brings these points together and is important to acknowledge is that media institutions want people to produce stories (ibid. 17).

The significance of this push towards creating stories and narratives relates to one final, significant feature of identity that Taylor provides us is that it is something that is understood as a narrative, or a lived history. One understands

one's self necessarily by from where and how one got to where one is. This narrative, or lived history, is necessary in the sense that if we do not understand our lives as a continuing narrative, our life will feel structureless, and therefore senseless. Moreover, we are placed, and place ourselves, in relation to the good and the moral in the space of this narrative. Narratives play a crucial role in the formation of identities in that they have a vast capacity to confer meaning and substance on people's lives. This is not, however, without trouble, since narratives can be used to feed self-conceit, to give moral assurance to that which is morally dubious, or to reinforce an undesirable status quo, to name a few examples of how narrative also has the capacity to sinisterly delude us. (Taylor 1989, 47–52, 97.)

A worthwhile consideration of the narrative quality and the contingency of identities is brought forth by Ross, saying that the individual selects an identity for presentation in response to the audience, location, and preceding events of that identity (Ross 2007, 287–288). That is to say, our selves are convergences of a multitude of narratives which result in multiple identities, which make up the self.

Finally, our notions of the good and our understandings of self, as well as the kinds of narrative which make sense of our lives, and conceptions of society are interconnected. Identity is that with which we conceive ourselves as a human agent among human agents. (Taylor 1989, 105.)

The concept of identity borrowed from Taylor (1989) above is mirrored in Fabos and Lewis' study, where the participants were engaged in designing their social worlds, the interconnectivity of their relationships, as well as their communication techniques (Fabos & Lewis 2005, 486). It is worth noting here that the participants also developed their use of language through these mediated interactions. Language is, after all, in its many forms integral to how we perceive, understand, and present our identities. In our hyperconnected and hypermediated world the webs of interlocution that in the end constitute our moral selves have vastly expanded. Floridi emphasises the gravity of how our relationships have multiplied

and the notion of selfhood and identity has, to put it mildly, rather complicated (Floridi 2015, 99).

Identity is, then, that through which one understands where one stands on what is worthwhile, what is good. It is a quality in us that we understand in a narrative sense that helps us make sense of our lives as how they have unfolded until now, and how they will unfold. And it is something that is shaped through the dialogue that the individual has with others and the environment.

According to Manders-Huits, information technology has become an important means for attributed constructions of the self, and therefore for shaping our moral identities. Through societal engagement in online social networks, our moral identities are shaped and reshaped in relation to others. However, in a hypermediated world there exists a discrepancy between the fluid and reflective process of self-identification and attributed identification, which must happen within the framework of technological structures. And we must take part in technological structures if we wish to take part and benefit from social organisations and structures. (Manders-Huits 2010, 47–49.)

The shaping of a moral identity is exemplified by a passage by Vallor, speculating an individual who modifies her online practices towards the virtuous with selfish desires in mind, but with time retaining her behavior while abandoning the selfish desires (Vallor 2009, 162). The habits of the individual, along with the environments, influence the development of her character, for better or for worse. Again, Vallor brings to attention the potential that virtual communities have for the development of the individual's character, her moral identity. He exemplifies this with an individual who reports gains in social capital while developing vices such as emotional narcissism, or an individual who reports short-term losses in social capital due to his or her online presence while having gained in moral qualities, such as open-mindedness. Vallor also emphasises the importance of virtual social spaces in saying that an individual's friends strongly affect the individual's moral identity. He goes on to mention the importance of social media in deepening self-understanding, and unquestionably the use of social media as a

virtual social space plays a part in shaping the individual's moral identity. (Vallor 2009, 163–164.)

Perhaps the first mention of concrete media comes from an observation by Charles Taylor regarding the rise of the modern novel, which in its part reflected and furthered the development of the affirmation of ordinary life, dealt with virtues regarding the entrepreneurial life or love and marriage. The modern novel also brought forth a novel conception of the gap between the particular and universal, and the value of individual, personal qualities. (Taylor 1989, 286–287.)

Tucker, Ellis, and Harris provide arguments to support Taylor's (1989) in a passage stating that the operation and organisation of information technologies becomes a way of being for users, who begin anticipating being watched by the technologies. Awareness of such technologies is an agentic force in the constitution of individuals' lives and thus become forces that shape their identities. (Tucker, Ellis, & Harper 2012, 21–22.)

Vallor elaborates on this, saying that to assess the moral development of individuals we have to know their habitual actions, and by extension the technologies present in their habits. Thus the relationship between moral identities and information technologies warrants much consideration (Vallor 2009, 158–159). A person's habits dictate much of the practical morals he or she holds, and especially social habits, in the form of exchanging thoughts and ideas, play a part in shaping the morality of individuals. Vallor emphasises that which is already widely agreed upon in the sphere of media education, that there is no way to justify the claim that computer-mediated communication is good or bad for human beings in itself, and morally valuating mediated communication versus face-to-face communication is pointless (Vallor 2009, 160).

Floridi speculates about the identities that have started forming after the advent of Web 2.0 technologies that they would emerge as hybrid selves, teetering the line between the relational or sociable selves and the privately public of the online world (Floridi 2015, 103). The entanglement of human beings with the abstract of

cyberspace all but assures the transformation of what it means to be human in the more abstract sense, and the transformation of how human identities come to be, on a smaller and more easily graspable view.

Identities mediated through information technologies are not quite as focused on the moral aspect of identities. Especially technologies of 'identity management' focus on attributed, determinate pieces of nominal identities, which do not allow for the fluidity of the process of identity formation. While the process of identity formation is a continuous and dynamic process, which must however be orchestrated into one comprehensive and coherent account of identity, which is what 'identity management' technologies attempt in our hypermediated world. (Manders-Huits 2010, 48.)

While Taylor goes to great lengths to argue compellingly on the formation of identities, two other useful perspectives on this formation can be found in two focal points of my previous research: the works of Terry Eagleton (1985–1986) and Michel Foucault (1997). Next, I will consider the relation of the society to the individual, somewhat touched upon in the previous paragraph: moral technologies.

### 3.4 Moral technologies and technologies of the self

One of the key concepts of this research is the relationship of the society and individual. This dialectical—keeping in mind the definition of dialectical as a non-unilateral, indirect and unequal dialogue given on page 28 of this thesis—relationship is to be considered from two perspectives, the first of which is the society's (and, to a large extent, media's) impact on the individual. This interaction, especially in the light of media education, is called moral technologies.

Terry Eagleton (1985–1986) writes of moral technologies, describing them as techniques and practices by which values as well behavioural patterns are planted into subjects. He also analyses moral technologies as something that makes it possible for individuals to reflect on their own selves and to invite the

individual to become aware of the codes and rules used in creating cultural texts (Eagleton 1985–1986, 96–97).

While Eagleton (1985–1986) is concerned primarily with cultural texts as explicit textual productions, the same analysis and interpretation can be, without much of a stretch, applied to more implicit matters. An individual's personal history and narrative; larger, overarching cultural histories and narratives; the way people simply *are* in a given society. These all are or contain some forms of moral technologies, and thus also elements for technologies of the self and interpretation of the self that individuals utilise. This can, of course, be a willful utilisation of cultural and moral elements, but a major part of this must happen by induction and therefore be unconscious.

It is also worth noting that moral technologies in education are used so that the individual is molded in accordance to the expectations from media and administration (Salonen 2010, 212). This sort of utilisation of moral technologies is willful on the part of educators, but something the educated often have no means to question. Thus, attitudes present in the media are already present in education, so that they will be perpetrated by the future generations.

Taking heed of Taylor's (1989) description of the formation of identity, moral technologies are those messages which define the attitudes of the community to the individual. More than that, moral techonologies are clearly something that define the conception of the good to the individual. The multitudes of messages present in a community as moral technologies do not necessarily dictate the good to the individual, but they necessarily play a part in the conception of the good in that they paint a general picture of *what is seen as good* in a given community.

While in the next section I will go on to argue that identities are processes to which the individual necessarily contributes, it can be said while thinking of moral technologies that a willingness to submit to a moral code that is given is understandable. Seeking out given moral standards, and therefore moral

identities can, in the face, of certain problems become a veritable temptation (Weeks 2010, 145).

However, succumbing to given moral codes as such is hardly a real option, as many thinkers argue that not making a choice is, in itself, also a choice. We shall now look at the formation of identity from a more proactive perspective. An important thing to keep in mind here is that identity is not something one is born with, and not something that one either has or has not. It is a process of identification, something that one does (Jenkins 2008, 5).

The nature of identity as a process of identifying is mirrored in the study by Fabos and Lewis, where social use of instant messaging is an extension of real-life interactions, where speech is molded by how the user normally speaks, and further refined to sound more sophisticated. The real is thus idealised through textual interactions (Fabos & Lewis 2005, 495). Of course, such an idealised presentation of identity has a chance of bleeding into offline interactions as well, especially if it is favourably received by the intended audience.

The morphing of presented identities is, naturally, tied to the multiplicity of identities. If we present different identities to different interlocutors, a multitude of interlocutors necessarily means a multitude of identities as well. Vallor doubts the existence of an integral online identity, as online interpersonal connections are wrought with calls to convenience, hidden aspects, opacity of the online identity in relation to an integral self (Vallor 2009, 167–168). Each individual has multiple identities which relate to the integral self, and there is a reciprocal shaping and reshaping in constant process between these multiple identities and the integral self.

The notion that the individuals have multiple identities is echoed again by Jeffrey Weeks (2007, 139), when he writes that identities are not pre-given in nature, but are structured through social interactions, encounters with peers, educational processes, and so on. Social interactions unarguably shape how we perceive

ourselves, and further amendments to our ideals of our selves according to the processes of social interactions are not hard to imagine.

A perspective regarding the formation of identities that tackles this matter concisely is to view identity formation as a process, a technique of technology for individuals to perceive and construct themselves as the individuals that they are. People see and define themselves in the context of their societies, which include dialogue. Foucault's definition of technologies of the self describes them as something that "permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality" (Foucault 1997, 225).

To be able to analyse Foucault's (1997) technologies (sometimes 'techniques') of the self, we require first an explanation of how Foucault understood subjectivity. This is provided in a comparatively recent work by Kelly (2013; 513, 518–519): the subject (that is, the individual) constitutes itself in varied forms by the use of practices. The practices mentioned here are the technologies of the self, a mastery of the self in relation to itself.

The ubiquitous connectedness in information technology has opened up a world of possibilities to the construction and enactment of our moral identities (Manders-Huits 2010, 51). What this means is that, in Foucault's (1997) thinking, the subject applies itself, its moral identity in various practices, as a process of constituting itself. How the individual acts within and in relation to her surroundings is a constant process of interpreting, creating, and re-creating identity. The technologies of the self are fundamentally practices that consist of knowledge and care of the self. That is, for an individual there must be some conception of the self, as well as action that "puts it in practice" (Kelly 2013, 519).

Identities and identifications are also necessarily embedded in power relations, the interrelations of agents and their interests. Identity is not that which

determines what humans will do, but a map of from where one is acting and in relation to whom (Jovanovic & Markovic-Krstic 2011, 421). Identities must, insofar as individuals must, exist within a living, breathing world, and must thus be involved in the relations associated with this being in the world.

The same points raised by Jovanovic and Markovic-Krstic (2011) are the basis of much feminist research, and it would not do to disregard these points of view. They concretely bring to light the relation of power relations and the interrelations of agents and their interest.

An interesting issue is raised by Bae, stating that postfeminist discourse, coupled with commodity feminism, gives female individuals autonomous control over the construction of their selves—technologies of the self. However, the ultimate goal of these technologies is that of falling in line with a certain ideologically approved image—a moral technology—that is antithetic to feminist thought. (Bae 2011, 29.)

Much research on identity and its formation has been done by feminist scholars. Naturally, such research is coloured by ideology and certain interests. Ideally such a pushing for stronger female identities should not be needed—all humans should be viewed equally regardless of chance factors such as gender—, but matters being as they are, feminist studies provide us with numerous examples and plentiful points of consideration on identity, moral technologies, as well as technologies of the self.

Namely the points I argued above can be seen again in how female practices of creating an embodied identity—technologies of the self—manifesting in encouraged practices of taking care of the self and self-improvement, are predominantly based on patriarchal standards. These standards—a form of moral technologies—are of a certain type of social distinction, and in many cases attracting male attention. (Bae 2011, 30.) Two points in Bae's text demand attention: one is, obviously, the moral technologies and technologies of the self that pertain to female individuals. The second is how these two concepts are realised in consumer culture: what is worthwhile to purchase and consume is

again given to us in some form, and we make decisions on what we think is worthwhile to consume. Here we see again the dual play of moral technologies and technologies of the self—those of consumer culture.

The technologies of the self with which we are concerned here are, then, strictly related to our own continuing process of understanding and interpreting not only our selves, but the life-worlds, a part of which we necessarily are. We *are* in the world, not as isolated beings, but as beings among others, and necessarily in relation to other beings as well as the world. Here we can find a view of how the relation of an individual and her life-world unfolds.

The technologies of the self which interests us here are those present in information technologies. These technologies as means of communication offer numerous opportunities for identifying, constructing, and presenting oneself (Manders-Huits 2010, 44). It is in these identifications, constructions, and presentations that vast potentialities as technologies of the self lie.

Writing in particular is a technology of the individual-rational self, the autonomous subject, and the agent. For the cultivation of this sort of self, our choices for future media and the skills that go with it are essential. (Ess 2015, 106–107.) Naturally enough, the skills and literacies pertaining to contemporary information technologies are more than simply the skills to read texts, but multiliteracies for reading, interpreting, analysing, creating and editing cultural texts.

The notion of "girl power" often comes up in Bae's text as a technology of the self for Caucasian females, against a Caucasian patriarchal hegemony. While resisting a form of mass culture—a sort of culture which wields moral technologies and attempts to sculpt individuals according to its rules—this form of resistance meant as a technology of the self for certain individuals is, in today's feminist discourse, seen as marginalising certain cultural differences and therefore in a process of becoming another hegemony to replace a pre-existing hegemony. Postfeminist media cultures emphasise consumption and tie it together with a female identity, making identity something that is created through

consumption, and thus making consumption a technology of the self (Bae 2011, 32–33.).

The moral technologies provided by hegemony culture, be they that of a patriarchal culture or consumer culture—or in this case, both—can be subverted into a technology of the self, a tool to reflect about oneself, one's identity and one's decisions against given values (Bae 2011, 36–37; Bauvel & Ritter 2015, 4). This kind of reflection is especially valuable when it concerns normative valuations, the question of what one deems valuable and good. There is, as Bae states, much ambivalence present here regarding feminist values, but ultimately such processes of reflection produce meaningful reflections on moral orientations for feminists (Bae 2011, 38). I would take this further, and claim that similar processes ought to be taken up by any individual, as such endeavours are fruitful in gaining a fuller understanding of one's self and the lifeworld.

Self-presentation through hypermedia, specifically contemporary social media, is attractive precisely because they allow the users to create digital selves, and keep on manipulating those selves to make them more positive, attractive, and idealised by providing carefully picked information and photographs, creating a "face worthy of Facebook". Indeed the temptation to smooth our digital image is not trivial, and namely because the users understand this, finding the "real" person behind a digital self is a matter of disquiet. (Boon & Sinclair 2009, 102–103.) Self-presentations are, as claimed by Bauvel and Ritter, embedded in popular culture, and creating a self that appropriates texts and aesthetics of popular culture to create a narrative is what makes media cultures a significant resource for the formation of the self (Bauvel & Ritter 2015, 19).

However, another aspect of contemporary media culture is that of 'identity management' technologies, a more forensic perspective of identity construction which is present in online media. Users create their identity profiles online, and within the framework provided by a service. These services are, at times, not flexible, and may not include sufficient opportunities for experimenting with, reflecting about, and changing one's identity (Manders-Huits 2010, 54). Sufficient

flexibility in such services should be considered in their design, so as to be more fully inclusive of the narratives that the users tap into when creating their identities online.

Zhao (2007, 147–148) states that the narratives we create and encounter in online worlds, in describing who we are and what we have been through, and as manifestations of sometimes deep self-disclosures, are at times more meaningful as narratives than face-to-face interactions are. This is not only a technology of creating, but also receiving and interpreting narratives, gaining knowledge not only of ourselves but of others as well. Zhao (2007, 156) also states that as much as the narratives themselves, the process of recounting those narratives generate knowledge, again of the other as well as the self.

A concern raised about the construction of these identity-forming narratives raised by Manders-Huits (2010, 53) is that they are constructed within the possibilities and constraints of a given framework. Labels, categories, and attributed identifications, which are often present in contemporary information technologies are not only descriptive, but also become constitutive (ibid.). These labels, categories, and attributed identifications may also shape our actions offline as well as online, such as the case of someone invested in a pro-anorexia website in such a way that his or her willingness to seek treatment is inhibited by this label of "pro-anorexia identity", making him or her *be* pro-anorexic in such a way that the consideration of seeking treatment in completely ruled out, as the person fits himself or herself to this inferred category (ibid.).

The recounting of biographical narratives in digital spaces, which we observe and in which we participate, with the feelings and reflections it arouses can reshape our outlook or alter our way of living. It is also, as stated earlier, an important tool for our understanding of the self, as we need to look at and reflect upon ourselves to tell a story. Our ideal selves may also be present in how these narratives are formed. Moreover, today many of these narratives take place online, making the digital world of hypermedia irremovably a part of our life-world. (Zhao 2007, 151–152.)

The use of information technology is identity-forming, but the issue is not as simple as simply making this conclusion. Identities are formed partly through and in the self-disclosure performed in the use of information technology, but they remain grounded in and also contribute to the non-digital. (Buchanan & Chapman 2014, 10; Zhao 2007, 149.) This conclusion takes us towards the understanding of the non-dualism of the posthuman Dasein, and the understanding of how human beings exist in a hypermediated world without clearly dividing themselves between the digital and non-digital.

## 3.5 Authenticity

Much value is implicitly placed on authenticity in everyday language. Phrases such as "that is not really *me*", or "I'm trying to find what I *really* want to do" reveal that authenticity, what one truly is, holds great value to most individuals. That there exists such a phenomenon as "searching of one's self" already sheds light on what kind of position authenticity has in the modern world. Honneth describes the importance of authenticity in the following way: "To some extent, authenticity and autonomy agree in supposing that one should strive to lead one's life according to one's own reasons and motives, relying on one's capacity to follow *self-imposed* guidelines. In both cases, it is crucial that one has the ability to put one's own behavior under reflexive scrutiny and make it dependent on self-determined goals." (Honneth 1994, 59–60.)

Of course, authenticity and autonomy alone will not do as a value of life, as it is hard to imagine a functioning society where each member's driving force is mainly their own authenticity and autonomy. Supposing that such a society could function assumes that the interests of every one in it coincide, and assuming that basically assigns more weight on luck and fortune than with what one should be comfortable.

In the scope of this research I will bracket and put aside the ultimate question of whether or not there is free will. The reason for this is that even if we accept some

(rather convincing) arguments of scientific determinism and deny free will, we only end up with the following question: so what?

On the question of free will we come again to narratives. Within the narratives we create for ourselves, we necessarily create ourselves with a free will, often unconsciously. The issue here is not "do we have free will?", but instead "do we phenomenologically believe we have free will?". The meaning given to the term "phenomenological" here is that of experiencing and interpreting phenomena. To this, in order to be able to have any basis for ethics and morals, and therefore this research, I must say that phenomenologically we do (believe that we) have free will. For those who wish to delve into the matter of free will, Robert Kane (1996) offers interesting insights.

Closely related to the concept of free will is that of *authenticity*. Authenticity is seen as a realisation of the individual's freedom and potentiality for choice. However, a deeper understanding of the term is necessary, and can be found again in the works of Heidegger (1962) and Taylor (1992).

The view of authenticity that can be drawn from Heidegger (1962) is that authenticity is a state the human being being for itself, and not for the other or for the *they*. However, an inauthentic state of being is not in any case something that is 'really not', and is thus not subject to any moral valuation. Authenticity is a state of being for one's self, and inauthenticity is a state of being fascinated by the world, being completely with and in the *they*. An inauthentic state of being is a *possibility* from which one can spring towards an authentic state of being, and both of these states of being necessarily exist. (Heidegger 1962, 167; 220.)

Authenticity in Heidegger's case is, then, that clear state of being for one's self where one is aware of one's state of thrownness and fallenness. The being lost in the publicness of the *they*, regardless of which and in the context of which one is still willing and able to realise the potentiality for being for one's self. (Heidegger 1962, 220.)

On the other hand, Taylor (1992) also considers authenticity. He calls it "being true to oneself", something that the subject uses to define herself and realising a potentiality that is properly her own (p. 29).

A concern regarding authenticity and information technology raised by Austin and Callen (2012, 417) is that individuals existing in digital spaces through technological systems are treated by the systems as fitting within the transformational processes of the system, rather than unique individuals. The threat that this poses for authenticity is that individuals may come to treat themselves and other individuals through the frameworks provided by these systems, and thus give up certain forms of authenticity.

Authentic knowledge of the self and others, as mediated through information technologies is also threatened, as information accumulates endlessly online, and all knowledge is believed to be but a click away. A critical stance towards technology use is required so that subjects may authentically use it while retaining their ability to confront the world and their place in it, so that technology is used in a way that is disclosing rather than obscuring. (Austin & Callen 2012, 418–419.)

Taylor is heavily critical of a certain romantic ideal of authenticity for its own sake, especially in those specific cases where authenticity is taken to be a value unto itself, and not as a value for a goal, or a value that springs forth from other factors. He goes on to say that authenticity must be based on horizons, cultural and social backgrounds, which are given to the subject, and not created by her. When we define our identities, we must define them against a background of things that matter to us, and the same also holds for authenticity. That which matters to *me* is not defined by only *myself*, but is something that I create from an interpretation of my historical and social contexts. (Taylor 1992, 38–41.)

The ethical implications of authenticity in Taylor's (1992) mind are those of originality and freedom. It is the idea that the individual must stand against some kinds of social conformity and externally imposed rules to be authentic. This

notion of authenticity as something valuable for its own sake is, in Taylor's mind, an important shift away from authenticity as a means to be moral and into an ethic of self-indulgence (pp. 63–68.)

The conclusion we can draw from Taylor (1992) is that authenticity is pregnant with both danger and opportunity: a self-indulgent definition of authenticity is an unrealistic ideal of freedom, of being removed from any responsibility towards society or others. But on the other hand, authenticity is also an opportunity towards a more self-responsible life and even a richer mode of existence (p. 74).

How rich a mode of existence, then, is a digital existence? Boon and Sinclair (2009, 103) would argue that a digitally mediated self is, by design, at least partly artificial. They claim that even real world friendships may be diminished in light of the contradiction between the perceived authenticity of the offline person and the inauthenticity of the constructed online person.

According to Boon and Sinclair (2009, 104) connections created in digital spaces can appear weak or hollow compared to connections maintained in the real world, as mediated interactions and engagements are by nature different from those that are "unbuffered". However, Fabos and Lewis came to different conclusions altogether. They found that online interactions which are intertwined with offline engagements were those which were perceived as the most valuable. When the interactions were perceived as parts of an "ongoing story", and the mediated identities related to those ongoing stories were no more or less real than unmediated identities, an authentic yet mediated state of being was reached. (Fabos & Lewis 2005, 488–489.) Identities which are created in the disembodied world of hypermedia intersect with those that exist in the tangible "real world", which is in keeping with Floridi's (2015, 8) statement that the line between the "real" and digital is increasingly blurring.

Boon and Sinclair (2009, 105) wonder that, with the advent of social media, we have the potential to create several faces and lives for ourselves, do we start to wonder which one is "real". To this, we may answer that the multitudes of

identities we create are constitutive and contribute to our authentic identities. A loss of value, which Boon and Sinclair (2009, 109) raise as a point of concern, is not an intrinsic quality of hypermedia, but much like our unmediated states of being, a critical engagement is required for a meaningful use of hypermedia, lest its trivial forms take precedence over the non-trivial ones.

What authenticity can mean for morality here is that the individual has the potential to be ethical, even if the outside influences she is subject to are not. The individual, in a state of authenticity, can act ethically against the demands of the *they*. Authenticity is, in short, a readiness to grasp possibilities that go against the grain of the whole, the potentiality for taking personal responsibility where none is demanded—and in some cases even discouraged.

According to Austin and Callen (2012, 421), hypermediation does not necessarily mean undermining authentic relationships and discourse, but the ways contemporary information technologies are used often ultimately do undermine authentic commitment and engagement. Because hypermedia technologies seemingly encompass everything, and because all information seems to be but a click away, there is no impetus to plunge into authentic commitments (ibid.). However, taking an alarmist stance is not necessary, as hypermedia environments provide a platform for authentic discourse and possibilities of authentic engagement, when they are used with the proper mindset (Austin & Callen 2012, 422–423).

To paraphrase Vallor (2009, 169), social engagements through information technology has the potential to move human communication forward, to strengthen social ties and make them more rewarding, and to alleviate pressures related to remaining socially pleasing in traditional communicative contexts. Vallor (ibid.) also notes that face-to-face environments for socialising produce strong pressures to cling to a group and remain oriented to its activities— reminiscent of Heidegger's (1962) account of blending into the *they*—and thus sacrificing qualities of engagement that would contribute to authenticity. Vallor (ibid.) concludes by saying that mediated engagements hold important

opportunities for private reflection, which are critical to the development of moral character.

# 4. Issues, strengths, and weaknesses

In this section, I attempt to concisely outline the considerations of the trustworthiness as well as the strengths and weaknesses of my thesis, as well as making clear my own position as a researcher.

## 4.1 Evaluation of trustworthiness

There are at times liberal extrapolations from the data surveyed in this thesis. Specific forms of information technologies such as Facebook or Second Life in Boon and Sinclair (2009), or instant messaging in general in Fabos and Lewis (2005) have been extrapolated to mean engagements mediated by information technologies in general. However, I think the considerations I have made are sound and logical, and done from sufficiently numerous points of view.

While the method of this thesis is the systematic literature review, there are some sources which were found unsystematically by browsing databases using loose search terms long before conducting the systematic searches that became the main data for this thesis. These preliminary searches were included as sources in the section about the technologies of the self (Jenkins 2008; Jovanovic & Markovic-Krstic 2011; Kelly 2013; Weeks 2007, 2010) as well as in the section about authenticity (Honneth 1994; Stokes 2010). However, I found these sources before starting the actual systematic literature review, and see these sources as constitutive to my argument, and saw no reason to exclude them from the final thesis.

## 4.2 Further considerations

While Taylor's (1989) account of identity is extensive, observations of identity in relation to media can only be extrapolated from Taylor's writings. For a more extensive consideration of identity in relation to media, the writings of Theodore

Adorno or Anthony Giddens, as well as a survey of contemporary research in their tradition ought to contribute to further research in my field.

What is missing altogether from this thesis is the consideration of ideology. Moral identities are constructed and retained with the technologies of the self, but this construction must be done within a framework of ideology. Mirroring the contents of the current thesis to ideology, as defined either by Karl Marx or Slavoj Žižek should prove fruitful for further considerations. This would provide a wider view of the points brought forth in the writings of Eagleton (1986–1987). Ideology is also related to Heidegger's (1962) concept of the *they*, and therefore should prove a fruitful complementary theoretical background for Heideggerian media philosophy.

Especially those analyses which deal with identity and gender would benefit from a more in-depth survey of the Foucauldian research tradition. I have done this to some extent with articles from Jenkins (2008), Jovanovic and Markovic-Krstic (2011), Kelly (2013), and Weeks (2007, 2010). However, these are hardly sufficient for an in-depth survey of the theory of the technologies of the self, and the question of gender and identity is all but bypassed in this thesis.

Considering Jürgen Habermas' theory of the public sphere and communication in relation to the themes taken up in this thesis could provide a deeper understanding of the meaning of communication and public engagements in the formation of moral identity. Habermas is a household name in the more theoretical circles of media education, and should therefore not be bypassed by those who wish to write theoretical or conceptual papers in media education. Drawing on Habermas' writings should be among the first steps if I go on to write a doctoral dissertation on a similar theme.

Finally, one is invited to consider authenticity as a state of being for one's own self against the state of inauthenticity. A state of authenticity is not sustainable indefinitely, though it is a state that Heidegger would argue human beings continuously strive for. Being for one's own self as a negation of being for the

other, and being for the other as a negation of being solely for one's own self could find interesting food for thought from the writings of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel or Tetsurō Watsuji, both of whom are concerned with the structure of negation and double negation.

The source articles used for this thesis have little empirical data in them. Perhaps a well-thought interview could shed some empirical light on the concepts with which this thesis is concerned. However, at this point in time such a data sample is out of the scope of my research. Further studies of consumer culture related to identity construction would be interesting to survey and reflect against the theoretical background that I have outlined in this thesis.

## 4.3 Researcher position

My own position as a researcher tends strongly towards the philosophical, which is one of the reasons I chose the literature review as my method. My stance towards technology leans towards the positive, and I think information technologies hold at least as many promises as they do threats. However, technology being a tool in essence, its valuation ought to be done based on how it is used. Moral panics and alarmist views regarding media and information technology are, in my opinion, uncalled for—though these can also be seen as a form of discourse which is constitutive to the identities of those who engage in them—and moving with the times, albeit cautiously, is the prudent choice for one who wishes to participate in society.

Even Heidegger, who is ever cautious of the power given to technology, admits that where there is danger there is also possibility. And along the thoughts of the philosopher Toivo Salonen, what is essential is possibility, and our inability to grasp it (2002, 101, my translation). None of the possibilities we never even attempt to grasp can be grasped. The possibilities for human communication are vastly increased by information technologies, and the speed at which they evolve can seem frightening, provoking the luddite to action. I think the use of information technologies in itself does not threaten authenticity, but surrender to it, like to any

other pressure present in engagements does. The contemporary, post-human *Dasein*'s authenticity is necessarily different from the *Dasein* of Heidegger's time. Thus, worrying about information technologies, instead of the *ways we use them* is futile, and ought to be replaced by critical considerations regarding sufficient education of how the individual should take care of himself or herself in a hypermediated world.

My understanding of identity is that, while the individual's surroundings are an integral part of how the individual's identity is constructed, the individual has the means to accept or reject the elements provided by the surroundings. The surroundings are, then, the palette which the individual uses to paint his or her identity. This puts much emphasis on personal responsibility, while not disregarding the importance of where the individual comes from and where the individual is brought up. To invoke again the image of the painter, painting a blue sky is impossible if one's palette lacks the colour blue.

## 5. Conclusions—post-humanity and contemporary authenticity

There are two types of authenticity and inauthenticity: one is that described by Heidegger, being authentic as a being in itself on the one hand, and being inauthentic as being ready-to-hand as a *property* to some other being or entity. Another is a conception of authenticity and inauthenticity touched upon by Taylor (1992), in which authenticity and inauthenticity have a moral or ethical flavour.

In general, non-academic discussions, the latter form of authenticity and inauthenticity is rather prevalent. Authenticity is often seen as an end unto itself, as something good and worth pursuing. Authenticity and inauthenticity of the latter kind are ethical narrative tools among many, which an individual uses as a *care of the self*, that is, a *technology of the self*. An individual must have tools for interpreting himself or herself as *good*, and authenticity as an ethical ideal is one such tool or technology, and a very powerful one at that.

One criticism of Heidegger's (1962) writings on being is his focus on being and temporality. This is simply described in figure 3. The "I", or identity (henceforth "the 'I'"), that is now is formed in relation to personal history and future prospects, in relation to personal temporality.
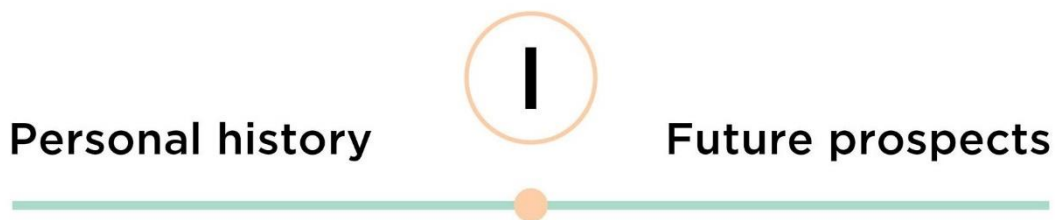


Figure 3: The temporality of identity

However, this model of thinking is overly simplistic, and requires consideration of the aspect of spatiality (figure 4). The "I" is formed in relation to the surrounding community and society, or personal spatiality. This spatial aspect of understanding being is present in Heidegger's (1962) writings, and is also a step towards the way to understanding identity as Taylor (1989) does.



Figure 4: The spatiality of identity

The understanding of where one stands in these respects is formed through relations and engagement with others. These relations and engagements can be direct or mediated, reciprocal or unilateral in nature, but this does not change the fact that they hold potential for furthering one's understanding of where one stands.

However, the formation of the "I" is not an either-or case, and both spatiality and temporality must be considered. Figure 5 shows the intermingling of spatiality and temporality of personal identity and its relation to a greater whole, to society and world history. This is an interpretation much closer to that of Taylor's (1989) understanding of the "making of the modern identity". The understanding we have of ourselves is related to our surrounding society, which is in turn related to understanding of our times, which must be related to the times that came before, and thus to history of our society and therefore world history.
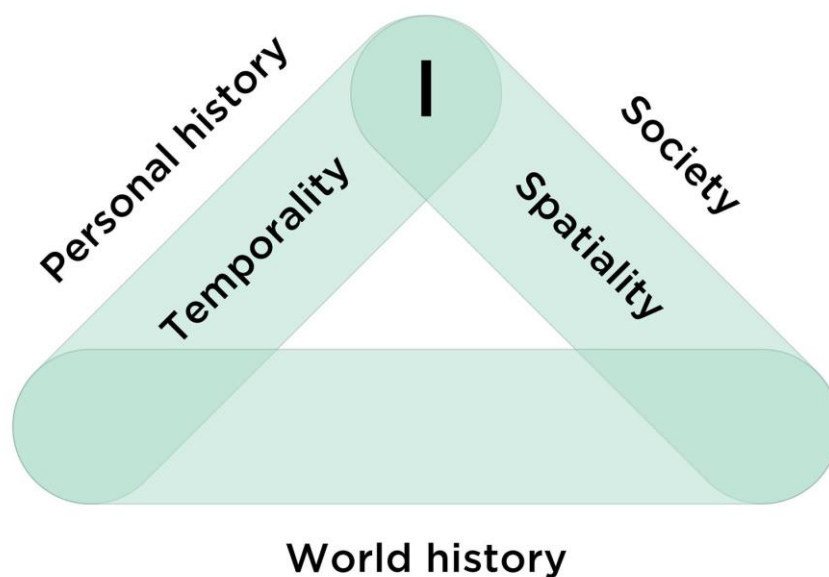


Figure 5: The spatio-temporality of identity

However, a fuller picture of where the individual stands in interpreting the self requires a more complex mapping. Where the individual stands requires a narrative, and therefore a spatio-temporal whole from which these interpretations are made. For this, an interpretation of where the individual stands in relation to the good, which in turn must be reflected against the individual's community, a spatial involvement, as well as the individual's personal history, a temporal involvement. This web of relations is shown in figure 6.
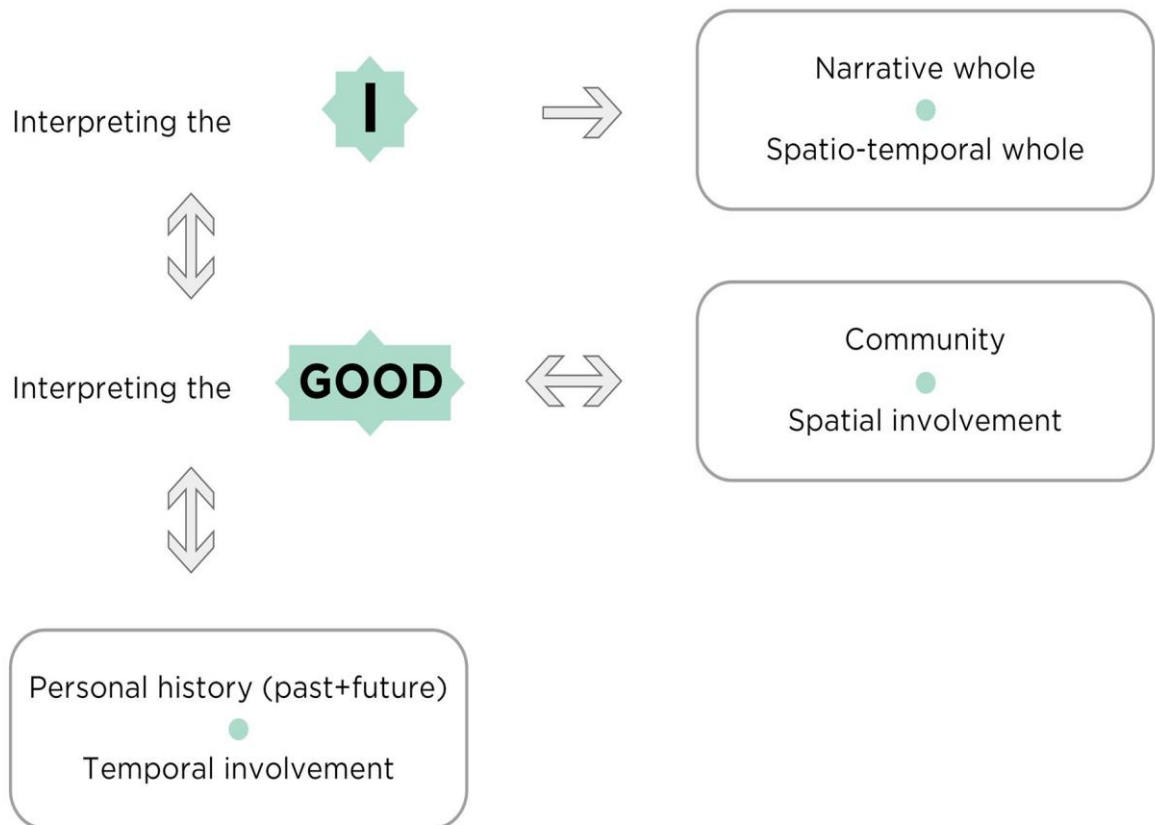
Figure 6: The web of relations in interpreting personal identity

Das Man, or the *they*, which often comes up in this thesis is a rather ambiguous entity, not really being anywhere, yet being everywhere. It is something that enframes individuals, giving us the framework of "how one does"—as in "one enjoys a cold drink after work"—and therefore contributes to the formation of identities as that background against which the individual may reflect his or her decisions and actions. The workings of the *they*, one learns by exposition to how people around one act. This exposition was, in Heidegger's times, largely spatially constricted.

On the other hand, contemporary engagements are intermingled with and presented in countless forms of media. It is for a reason that Floridi (2015) calls ours a hypermediated world. The exposition to "how one does" is mediated nearly

as often as it is not. Thus, I claim that there is a significant overlap of the *they* and media, as shown in figure 7.
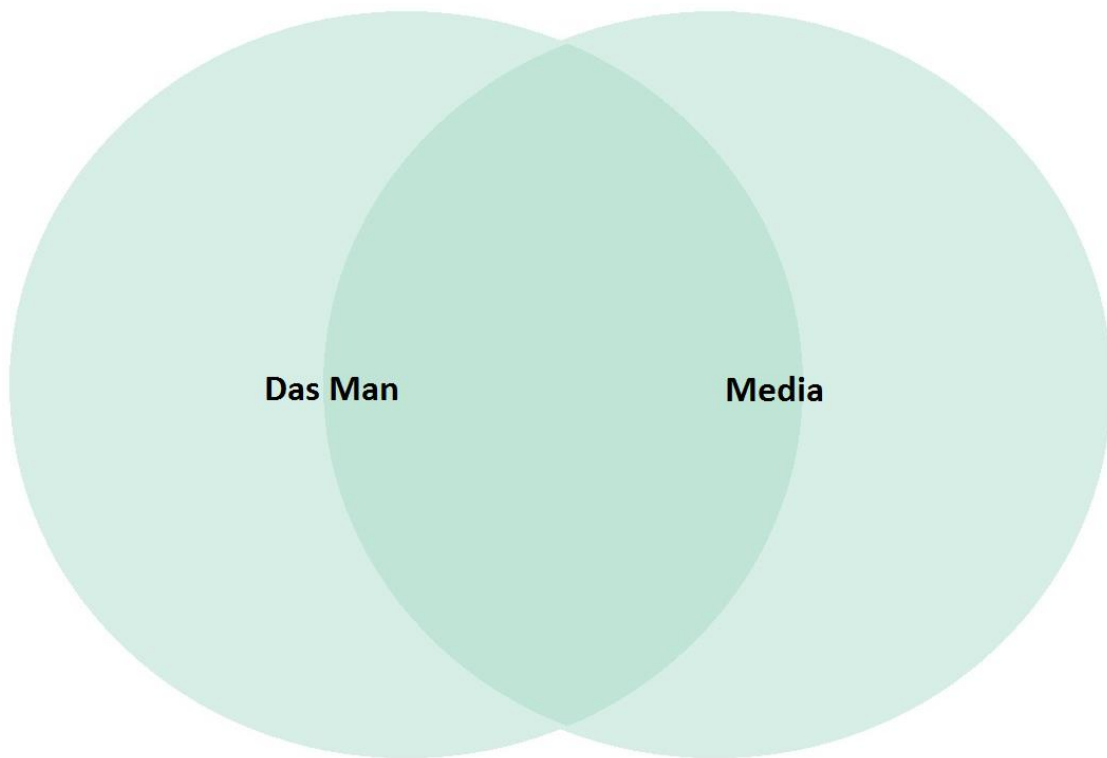


Figure 7: The overlap of the concepts of Das Man and Media

Because the concrete entity of the media—meaning here, of course, all media that is consumed, used, and produced—and the ambiguous entity of the *they* both enframe our interactions, engagements, and relations, they are factors in our self-interpretation as well as our interpretation of the world around us. Thus, the web of relations described earlier should be reflected against this background, as shown in figure 8. This should give us a clearer picture of what kind of moral compass we hold and from where the directions to orient ourselves in relation to the good come.
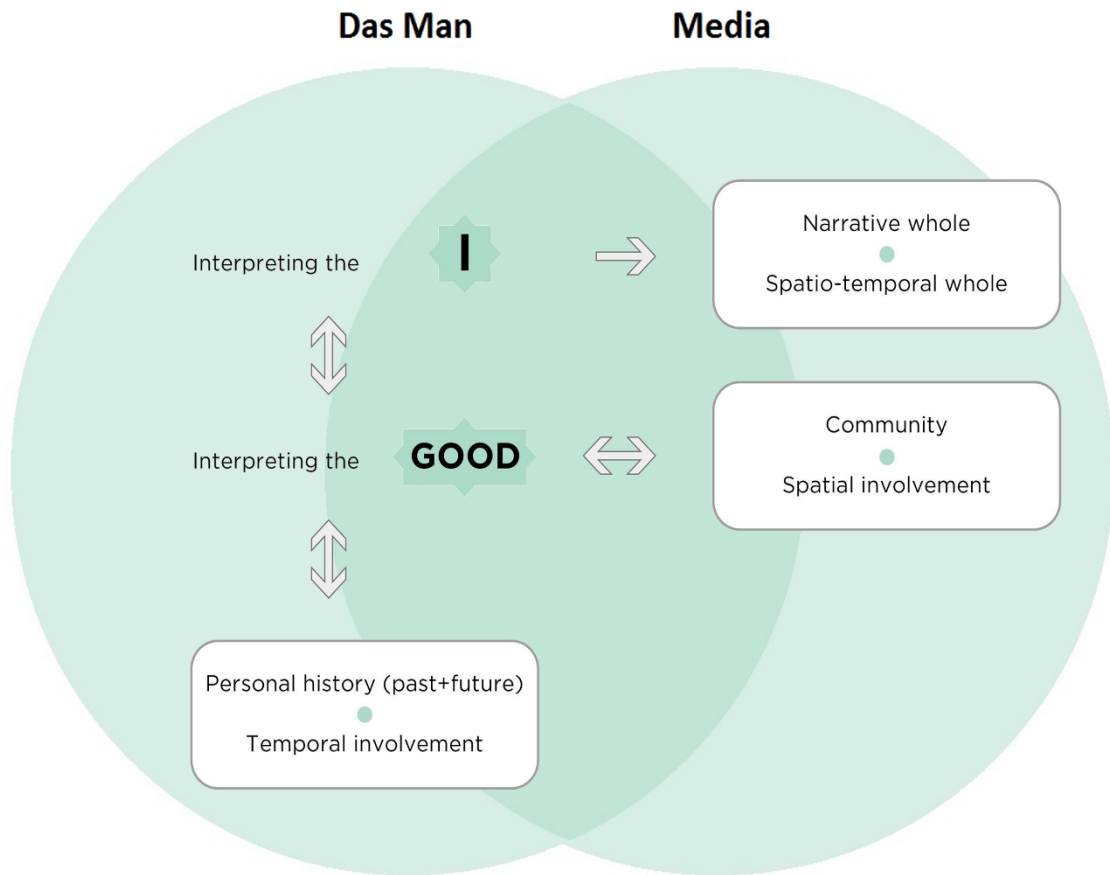
Figure 8: The web of relations reflected against the background of Das Man and Media

The narrative which we create is a highly abstract tool that we utilise in our identity formation. Here, we can point out two ends towards which the narrative works. One is the organisation of our lives into a coherent whole (Taylor, 1989). The other is, extended from Taylor (ibid.) the creation of a moral narrative. This moral narrative exists for ourselves, while also existing as part of and in relation to our life-world. The other is reflecting this narrative whole against the background which is given to us by our many interactions with the outside world.

The significance of the *they* in light of the later parts of this research is that the *they* are, as an ambiguous entity a form of moral technologies, as well as something against which an individual reflects herself as a technology of the self. But because the *they* is a much more subtle entity than any given media, and by

far more far-reaching, as well as difficult to be distanced of, the understanding of the *they* as belonging under either technology warrants consideration.

What of authenticity then? Does the contemporary evolution of information technologies pose a threat to the authenticity, that of individuals or that of human beings as a whole? Loss of authenticity, in a Heideggerian sense, would mean the being-for-the-sake of someone or something else, and dissolving into the *they*. In a Taylorian sense, loss of authenticity would simply mean a dull existence in accordance to rules of society—though presented in a different way, not entirely different from the Heideggerian view.

Manders-Huits (2010, 51–52) raises a concern that a computational reductionist view, if such a view is disseminated into contemporary media practices, would reduce individuals to mere nominal objects, with no contextual and motivational features, background knowledge, or personal explanations regarding actions and decision. This concern of "databasing" humanity and profiling individuals as objects of computation in contemporary information technologies despite the invitation for self-presentation, with implications of enhanced possibilities of constructing and presenting oneself, is valid when it comes to considerations of authenticity (ibid. 52). After all, mere nominal identity without background information about the motivations and wishes of the individual can hardly be information about the authentic individual.

Manders-Huits (2010, 53) says that the use of information technologies pertaining to identity are paradoxical in that they present us with a wide variety of means for constructing moral identities, but because of the forensic logic utilised by information technologies, moral identity construction is constrained by the use of information technology. The concerns here are categorisation, labeling, and attribution that happen within the world of information technologies. While the concern of attributed categorisation of identity is not uncalled for, it is also not novel. Here we come back to something pointed out by Taylor (1989, 27) in that labels such as being of a certain creed or nationality already perform this categorisation. If we look back to history, this was a much stronger tendency, as

labels of social status were also imposed on individuals more or less from birth. Understanding identities by "labels" is nothing new, though when it comes to authentic identity, "the real me", attributed labels—as well as labels which the individual arbitrarily takes up—may not be accurate, or may completely miss the mark.

Wheeler (2011) interprets Heidegger's understanding of involvement with tools so that an involvement is never a stand-alone structure, but a piece of a *totality of involvements*. To apply this to the use of information technology, and to technologies of the self is no small feat, but I shall attempt it here.

The tools with which we are concerned here are, in ascending order of hierarchy: information technologies, technologies of the self, authenticity as a narrative tool, and identity. Information technologies are a complex network that is involved in the dissemination of information and presentation, and thus in enframing human existence, and spreading the mores of society—as well as presenting a society's mores to other societies. But information technologies are also involved in communication, presentation, re-presentation, in the reflection that the individual may do against the framework of the surrounding community, both physical and virtual. Thus integral to information technologies' totality of involvement is their involvement as a technology of the self.

The involvements of the technologies of the self are much more personal, as well as abstract than those of information technologies. This tool is for building the self, taking care of the self, reflection, and for creating meanings, creating a fuller life for the self. Thus, an involvement of the technologies of the self is an involvement in creating authenticity.

Authenticity, then, is another created tool. It is not a quality that one "has" or "has not", but something that one creates for oneself, a narrative tool of identity-creation. Its involvement is that of figuring out what is meaningful, what is worthwhile, and finally who we in fact are. Thus, authenticity is involved in the creation of our identities.

Finally, identity is that tool which we use to navigate through life in a state of thrownness and confusion. Because of the tumults of life and the great variety of situations in which we find ourselves, our identities are not salient, but vary according to the situation. Their creation, a process which modernity has vastly complicated, must be based on the environment in which we exist.

Authenticity is no more threatened by contemporary technology than it is threatened by any other consequence of human existence. It is pieced together from the elements which we have at our disposal, and the definition and possibilities of authenticity vary by the elements available to us. Post-human authenticity is threatened, if at all, only by that which post-humans perceive and create. Moral identities and their authenticity are formed according to where we are talking from, with whom we are conversing, and who is listening.

Salonen (2010, 209) notes that the well-known phrase "know yourself" implies the imperative to know, to experience, and to become aware of oneself. These three imperatives are the ones required for an authentic being regardless of the era in which one lives, and they hold as well for the post-human. Knowing, experiencing, and becoming aware of oneself are processes of which one is aware through the mirror of the world. There is no inherent value in the world being physical or digital, and whatever values can be found come back to the human element.

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