

Finding a Theory of Emotion in Heidegger's Notion of *Befindlichkeit*

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Abstract

Heidegger characterizes disposedness (*Befindlichkeit*) as a phenomenon because of which we become interested in the world, because of which the world can entice us, and it can matter to us. For him, our fear of something in the world is essentially disclosive of the fact that we are always disposed to the world such that it can affect us one way or the other. That is, our Being is essentially an affective Being. In his theory of Being, Heidegger considers emotions only as a manifestation of our disposedness towards the world. He doesn't find it necessary to consider that, in emotions, we are not only affected by the world, or become aware that the world can affect us; in emotions, we also act on the world. However, this paper claims that, by considering emotions as a manifestation of not only the disposedness but of understanding and Discourse—the other two equiprimordial phenomena that constitute our Being—we can find a better theory of emotion within the Heideggerian structure of Being.

1. Introduction

In *Being and Time* Heidegger gives us a theory of emotion accidentally. Though he gives a description of an emotion, Heidegger maintains that fear is a mood and accordingly, gives an account of fear as a mode of disclosure of our Being-in-the-world. The way we experience the world, we realize that we are always interested in the world in a manner of being a part of it and not witnessing it from a distance. Heidegger calls it *Befindlichkeit*, (it literally means the way one finds oneself in a situation or a context). i.e., a phenomenon that discloses the concern we have for the world and for our own Being, which we experience as moods. It is due to *Befindlichkeit* that moods make the world matter to us. Heidegger,

while considering fear as mood, explains how moods reveal that the concern for our own Being makes the concern for the world possible. And this is how we end up with a theory of emotion which claims that emotions are ontologically disclosive of our Being-in-the-world, though Heidegger's focus is on explaining the affectivity that constitutes our Being.

Along with *Befindlichkeit*, Heidegger finds the phenomenon of Understanding and Discourse, all three being equiprimordial. That is, the claim is that *Befindlichkeit* and Understanding disclose our Being and is expressed by Discourse. In understanding the world, we assign a meaning to it but any signification the world achieves is governed by how we find ourselves being attuned to the world. Heidegger finds that in *Befindlichkeit* and in Understanding our Being is posed as a meaningful Being, the articulation of which he calls Discourse. As an ontological project, Heidegger inquires into what constitutes our Being, and the equiprimordiality of the said three phenomena forms the constitutive structure. Therefore, being co-extensive with Understanding and Discourse, *Befindlichkeit* is an all-pervasive phenomenon that constitutes our Being. That is, Heidegger finds that no aspect of our Being is non-affective in nature. It can, thus, be argued that, for Heidegger, emotions signify the all-encompassing affectivity of our Being. In the next section, we will first see what Heidegger means by the term Being-in-the-world. We will then go through the three phenomena of *Befindlichkeit*¹, understanding, and Discourse, to come to know that Being-in-the-world is the central thesis of *Befindlichkeit* his theory of Being. But our aim will remain limited to examine the phenomenon of with respect to Being-in-the-world, the affectivity therein and the extent to which it is constitutive of our Being.

¹ There is a lack of consensus between the translators of Heidegger's work when it comes to translating the German word '*Befindlichkeit*.' I will settle with one of the translations in the next section but until then let's stick with the original word as it is.

2. Being-in-the-world

In theorizing Being, Heidegger starts with the question of how we come to know of Being. We know Being through knowing beings, i.e., entities that have Being as a constituting property (*Being and Time*, section 5). He categorizes things around us as entities that are either present-at-hand or ready-to-hand of concern. The ready-to-hand entities are the things that are of immediate use to do some work; we perceive them as objects of in-order-to nature. For example, all the stone pebbles around the usual walkway were always there, but we notice them differently when we find a need for one, for instance, to take down a fruit on the tree. Readiness-to-hand of the pebble is decided by our concerned gaze.

We do not decide beforehand that we can get the fruit down by hitting it with a pebble. Rather, for Heidegger, our concerned gaze that the fruit needs to be brought down renders the pebble ready-to-hand. We not only understand the readiness-to-hand of the pebble's Being, but we also realize our potential of taking the fruit down off the tree using it. This is how our own Being is revealed to us through interaction with the world. Heidegger agrees with the Husserlian concept of the intentionality of consciousness to the extent that all our activities are object-oriented. When we think, we think about something, when we act, we act on something. And, in all these activities, what we do with the object of concern is experienced as Being 'there'—with the object—as opposed to the I-here experience of the self. In our engagement with the object, there is no I experienced separate from the object, we experience ourselves in our interaction with it. When I want to take that fruit off the tree, the pebble presents itself to me as a tool to do it. The disclosure of the pebble as a tool is not experienced as I will throw that stone to get the fruit, but as the fruit can be brought down by an impact of a hard object that will sever it from the tree and I find myself throwing the pebble at the fruit. My Being-potential-to-bring-the-fruit-down is disclosed to me by the action involving the pebble. I exist in that action, not separate from it and hence my existence is disclosed to me in the world and not in myself.

That is why, Heidegger designates a term descriptive of our Being, Dasein, which can be translated as Being-there.

Dasein itself—and this means also its Being-in-the-world—gets its ontological understanding of itself in the first instance from those entities which itself is not but which it encounters ‘within’ its world, and from the Being which they possess. (*Being and Time*, p. 85)

Heidegger calls this phenomenon of finding oneself there, as de-severance. De-severance is a phenomenon of closing off of distance, it signifies distance being met, it means the distance is covered to experience what one is concerned with. For example, though the clothes we wear are the nearest to us, when our attention is with the beloved, we miss our attention on clothes. At that moment, the beloved is what (rather, who) we are concerned with. De-severance is how Being-there is experienced, it is how we are delivered over to the object of our attention.

Circumspective concern decides as to the closeness or farness of what is proximally ready-to-hand-environmentally. Whatever this concern dwells alongside beforehand is what is closest, and this is what regulates our de-severances. (*Being and Time*, p. 142)

It is Dasein’s concernful attention to the world that makes things ready-to-hand, that de-severs the distance between the Dasein and the world and discloses its own Being. Dasein’s Being is disclosed to itself in its relationship with the object and not separately. If Dasein experiences its Being in its active, on-going engagement with the object, there is no subject really who is acting on an object. For Heidegger, Dasein’s Being-in-the-world thus denies subject-object distinction. Dasein’s Being is essentially constituted by the concern for its surrounding, its world.

3.1 Thrownness

Heidegger considers *Befindlichkeit* as a phenomenon that is fundamental to our Being which we experience as mood. The translators of *Being and Time* (in short, *BT* from now on), translate *Befindlichkeit* as “state-of-mind” considering that the phenomenon stands for the German expression that could be translated in English as “‘how are you?’ or ‘how are you feeling?’” (*BT*, p.172). But as we will see, Heidegger contends that our Being-in-the-world is characterized by *Befindlichkeit* and ‘of-mind’ suggests something that is not in the world. Some commentators of Heidegger, hence, give different translations that would justify Heidegger’s explanation of the phenomenon. Lauren Freeman (2016) uses ‘Attunement,’ Katherine Withy (2019) uses ‘finding,’ Daniel Dahlstrom (2019) uses ‘Disposedness,’ and so on. I will use Dahlstrom’s term as a translation of *Befindlichkeit* because I agree with his reasoning that the term ‘Disposedness’ justifies the phenomenon in two of its characteristics: thrownness and Being-in (of the Being-in-the-world). For, in the exposition of *Befindlichkeit*, Heidegger says that it discloses our thrownness, Being-in-the-world, and our openness to the world (*BT*, p. 175-176).

‘Disposedness,’ as a translation of *Befindlichkeit*, is not ideal, but there are several reasons to prefer it over the alternatives. ‘State-of-mind’ can suggest a contrast with the state of the body and, in particular, its orientation to the surrounding world, that being-in-the-world does not. As Eugene Gendlin would put it, *Befindlichkeit* is both inward and outward but prior to their differentiation (Gendlin 1978/1979). Unlike ‘disposition,’ ‘Disposedness’ often clearly captures an affective component, without necessarily being a mood (*Stimmung*) or emotion. Formed from the passive of a verb of placement, ‘Disposedness’ also has the advantage of signalling something akin to the thrownness, the experience of a state-of-mind always finding ourselves (*sich Befinden*) already in a situation. Like the French *se trouver*, some

uses of *sich Befinden* merely indicate where someone happens to reside or that something happens to be. But it also frequently signals a state or condition one happens to be in or to find oneself in. (Dahlstrom 120)

Heidegger identifies thrownness as the first characteristic of disposedness. In an anxious mood, for instance, everything we come across makes us panic. A single insect in the house can make us think of the infestation in the entire house. And when several similar things happen and when a friend or a family member makes us reflect, we realize that we were in an anxious mood. And when we are cheered up by something or someone, we find ourselves thrown in a cheerful mood. That is why, Heidegger contends, we always find ourselves in some sort of mood.

The fact that moods can deteriorate [*verdorben werden*] and change over means simply that in every case Dasein always has some mood [*gestimmt*]. The pallid, lack of mood [*Ungestimmtheit*], which is often persistent, and which is not to be mistaken for a bad mood, is far from nothing at all. Rather, it is in this that Dasein becomes satiated with itself. Being manifests itself as a burden. Why that should be, one does not know. And Dasein cannot know anything of the sort because the possibilities of disclosure which belong to cognition reach far too short a way compared with the primordial disclosure belonging to moods, in which Dasein is brought before its Being as "there". Furthermore, a mood of elation can alleviate the manifest burden of Being; that such a mood is possible also discloses the burdensome character of Dasein, even while it alleviates the burden. A mood makes manifest 'how one is, and how one is faring' ["wie einem ist und wird"]. In this 'how one is', having a mood brings Being to its "there" (*BT*, p. 173).

Dasein is always in a mood. Dasein finding its Being burdensome or finding life wonderful or finding something irritating is Dasein finding itself 'there' in the world. When I find an insect in my house and I panic because I am in an anxious mood already, I am thinking only that it shouldn't be in my house. But why should I panic about it, that I don't know beforehand. I don't even have to know that 'I am in an anxious mood today.' Only reflectively we come to know that we were in a certain mood but being in the mood is finding yourself in a certain way, finding yourself 'there,' having narrow possibilities of being with the surrounding world. disposedness of our Being, Heidegger contends, "disclose[s] Dasein in its thrownness" (*BT*, p. 175).

3.2 Being-in-the-world as a characteristic of Disposedness

Along with thrownness, disposedness discloses Dasein existing 'there.' In that, Dasein's existence of itself, that of the others and the world, is disclosed such that mood "comes neither from 'outside' nor from 'inside,' but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being" (*BT*, section, 176). Whatever mood we are in, it discloses our concern about the world. Upon finding an insect, my anxiety about the possible infestation in the house discloses my concern about the clean house and how it mattered to me. So, in anxiety, my existence along with the house and the insect and the relationship within is disclosed to which Heidegger calls Being-in-the-world. Our disposedness, thus, characterizes our Being-in-the-world. We are not bystanders witnessing as the world goes by. We are not closed off from the world as if what happens inside our minds is independent of what goes on in the world. Our Being is Being-in-the-world because, in Being, we are concerned about our world.

3.3 Openness

We are open to the world and the world is open to us. My disposedness makes me open to the possibility that an insect can make me panic. And here we arrive at the third characteristic of disposedness, after thrownness and Being-in-the-world, "which contributes above all

towards a more penetrating understanding of the worldhood of the world,” that it makes us open to the world (*BT*, p. 176).

[T]he world which has already been disclosed beforehand permits what is within-the-world to be encountered. This prior disclosedness of the world belongs to Being-in and is partly constituted by one’s state-of-mind. Letting something be encountered is primarily circumspective; it is just not sensing something or staring at it. It implies circumspective concern and has the character of becoming affected in some way (*Betroffenwerdens*); we can see this more precisely from the standpoint of state-of-mind. But to be affected by the unserviceable, resistant, or threatening character (*Bedrohlichkeit*) of that which is ready-to-hand, becomes ontologically possible only in so far as Being-in as such has been determined existentially beforehand in such a manner that what it encounters within-the-world can “matter” to it in this way. The fact that this sort of thing can “matter” to it is grounded in one’s state-of-mind; and as a state-of-mind it has already disclosed the world—as something by which it can be threatened, for instance. Only something which is in the state-of-mind of fearing (or fearlessness) can discover that what is environmentally ready-to-hand is threatening. Dasein’s openness to the world is constituted existentially by the attunement of a state-of-mind. (*BT*, p. 176)

Heidegger says that Dasein can discover ready-to-hand entities that are threatening or appealing or disgusting but not the entities that are present-at-hand (*BT*, p.176-177). He implies that what is ready-to-hand, and its readiness-to-hand is characterized by our disposedness. Perceiving an insect as disgusting or the horns of a bull as threatening requires being disgusted or threatened as a possibility of our Being which Heidegger considers as Being-there’s openness to the world. If the Dasein was closed off from the world, it wouldn’t feel bored or disgusted or angry or excited about the world. In the above quotation, Heidegger distinguishes

our encounter with the world from mere sensations. When he says that our encounter with the world is always in some disposedness, he means, it is of the character of circumspective concern. Circumspective concern is different from the totality of sensations of things because it lets things affect us. And it is possible because existentially, we are equipped to be open to the world. In saying, “Dasein’s openness to the world is constituted existentially by the attunement of a state-of-mind”, he is talking about our openness to the world such that something can be fearsome for us. And such openness to the fearsome is characterized by the mood we are in, the way we find ourselves attuned to the world. The kind of mood we are in is the way we are attuned to the world, and it is a particular instance of disposedness of our Being (*BT*. p. 172). In our boredom, the world appears non-excitabile to us, that is because we are attuned to the world in a non-excitabile way. Being excitabile is the possibility that is denied to the world as an outcome of the way we are attuned to the world. Our attunement, thus, decides the possibilities of our Being-in-the-world that are open or closed.

3.4 Attunement, concern, and affectivity

To sum up, Heidegger describes disposedness as a primordial existential such that it constitutes every experience of our Being. He says we experience disposedness as mood in our daily life in which we are attuned to the world in a particular way (*BT*. p. 172-73). Attuned in the sense that we tune in to match a particular frequency of the radio signal, for Heidegger we are always attuned so that the objects in our surrounding are perceived according to that mood. In an elated mood, we would clean up an untidy worktable so swiftly that it makes us feel all the more productive. But if we are in a defeated mood, already feeling helpless, the same untidy table will make us feel burdened as if it is another huge task that has befallen upon us. Heidegger thus claims that as moods precede and constitute our engagement with the world, they disclose that the world affects us. What moods represent—disposedness of our Being—characterizes our Being. It is our “circumspective

concern” for the world, that we find ourselves elated, disgusted, depressed, etc., about the world (*B.* p.176-77). We experience moods because it is possible for us in our Being that we can be disposed towards the world in different ways and that is why, for Heidegger, disposedness discloses our Being-in-the-world. It is an existential claim. That is, for him. Disposedness constitutes our existence such that, to be is to be disposed. And this means we are always in some mood, always attuned one way or the other. Heidegger goes on to say that even when we are attending to something in a theoretical way, we are attuned to it in “a tranquil tarrying alongside..., in comfort and recreation” and that is why we can attend to what is present-at-hand (*B.T.* p.177). That is, the thing that we are theorizing presents itself to us as something that exists ‘alongside,’ for it is not of our immediate concern, lets us attend to it in a seemingly non-concernful way. But if theoretical engagement is also an attunement with the world, then are we sure that attunement is an affective phenomenon? Anthony Hatzimoyosis (2010) asks if Heidegger characterizes mood as “*Stimmung*”, that is, attunement and even the theoretical gaze towards the world is in some kind of attunement, can we really say that attunement is an affective phenomenon?

What Heidegger seems to be saying is that someone cannot see something as it is, and for what it is [...], unless someone is somehow attuned to that thing. That claim sounds correct (at least to my philosophical ear), but the worry is that part of its appeal is that it is a claim so vague that one might appear foolish to deny it [...], it is not explicated how or why the so-called ‘attunement’ relates to the topic of our discussion: the nature of emotional phenomena. The expression ‘being attuned to’ (the world etc.) does not on its own indicate how it bears upon anything that might fall under the heading of affect. (Hatzimoyosis 219)

It is true that Heidegger doesn’t really explain what he means when he is talking about mood. He doesn’t explain what mood is (with exception of the account of ‘fear’ which will be addressed shortly), rather he assumes

we know what is meant by mood and uses the term to explain disposedness. Not making explicit what is attunement or mood, makes it difficult to understand that a theoretical exercise can be an affective one too. What Heidegger states about disposedness is, it discloses our Being and that of the world at the same time, making it possible for us to interact with it. He bases this claim on our everyday experience of the world that we don't experience it only sensually, it is our 'circumspective concern' that lets us think about the object that we are attending. If it wasn't the case, all the objects in our environment would get the exact same amount of attention, making it impossible to decide which one to attend first. As we saw earlier, the pebble we knew exists but didn't actually notice, suddenly becomes the center of attention when we need something to throw. Earlier, it was just the walkway on which we were focusing. For Heidegger, things leave the category of 'present-at-hand' and enter that of 'ready-to-hand' because of our circumspective concern. When Heidegger states that it is our disposedness that makes it possible to attend to the present-at-hand, he is saying that being disposed towards the world 'in comfort and recreation' enables us to be concerned about the world in a theoretical manner. A theoretical gaze is a concerned gaze, being attuned in comfort and recreation. When he claims, "Dasein's openness to the world is constituted existentially by the attunement of disposedness," it follows that because we are concerned about the world, we are open to it, that we can attend to it, that it can matter to us (*BT*, p. 176). As our circumspective concern attunes us with the ready-to-hand, for Heidegger, our concerned Being characterizes disposedness. Therefore, when we are not sure that all attunement is affective in nature, we can rephrase the problem stated by Hatzimoysis as, if all attunement is being concerned, it is not clear that being concerned is an affective Being.

3.5 Disclosure of Being-in-the-world in fear

Heidegger's notion of concern with respect to disposedness becomes clearer in his explanation of fear as a mode of disposedness. Fear as a

phenomenon, he considers from three viewpoints: that which we fear, fearing, and that for which we fear (*BT*, p. 179). That which we fear is the fearsome entity. What constitutes the entity that we fear, Heidegger finds that the fearsome seems threatening because of its “detrimentality” and its immediacy. Then Heidegger argues that fearing as not a process that follows, we ascertain the detrimental characteristics of the fearsome. Rather, the Being that is already disposed to fear, allows the fearsome to matter to itself in a threatening way. Our Being-in-the-world recognizes the fearsome in our environment, frees it, and allows it to matter to us. Heidegger explains how fear discloses our Being-in-the-world in the following way:

Fearing, as a slumbering possibility of Being-in-the-world in a state-of-mind [...], has already disclosed the world, in that out of it something like the fearsome may come close. The potentiality for coming close is itself freed by the essential existential spatiality of Being-in-the-world. (*BT*, p. 180)

Notice that Heidegger says our Being-in-the-world frees the potential of the world and allows it to be fearsome, detrimental. But does it mean that we can deny the world the possibility of being detrimental, or harmful? No. Being-in-the-world is disclosed to us, we find ourselves thrown in the world. Disposedness discloses Dasein’s thrownness in the world, Dasein doesn’t have a choice but to be there. In Being there, in existing, the threatening character of the world is disclosed to us, and we experience it as fear. And thus, Heidegger acknowledges the third aspect of fear, that for which we fear, and it is Dasein itself.

In fear, it is disclosed that the world can harm us. When we feel threatened, it is our Being that is threatened. That is why Heidegger considers that in being disposed, we are open to the world, we let it matter to us. Disposedness in fear discloses that we are in an environment where harm can reach us and with it, the concern for our own Being is realized. And thus, Heidegger states that only a Being that is concerned about its

own Being can feel threatened (*BT*, p. 180). And as we experience fear in varying degrees depending upon what is being feared and its immediacy, the different ways of being concerned about one's Being is disclosed. Like in the example we saw of infestation in the house, Heidegger considers that we fear for the house because our Being-alongside is threatened. "Proximally and for the most part, Dasein is in terms of what it is concerned with. When this is endangered, Being-alongside is threatened" (*BT*, p. 180-81). In considering fear as a mode of disposedness, Heidegger's claim is that it discloses not only our Being-there, but it also discloses that we are concerned about our own Being. In saying Dasein is what it is concerned with, Heidegger underlines Dasein's Being there and claims that disposedness discloses Dasein to itself in what it is concerned with. Concern for the entities that make up our world, thus, is not something isolated from the concern for one's own Being. In being open to the world, Dasein lets the world affect it. That is, as our disposedness is characterized by the concern we have for the world, we let the world affect us by being disposed towards it in one way or the other. Therefore, for Heidegger, our Being-in-the-world is ontologically affective in nature, making it clear that being concerned is an affective Being.

3.6 Affectivity of disclosure

We have, now, an answer to the question posed by Hatzimoysis, whether it is necessary that attunement is affective. Heidegger doesn't state it explicitly, but he makes it clear that circumspective concern makes attunement possible and Dasein's openness to the world makes being concerned possible. And being open to the world is to let the world affect Dasein. Ontologically, thus, all attunement is possible because Dasein is affective in its Being. And the implication is that Dasein's affectivity makes Being-in-the-world possible. However, this thesis is based on the premise that disposedness discloses our Being in disclosing our Being-in-the-world, and therefore Hatzimoysis raises another issue regarding disclosure in disposedness. He notes in Heidegger's elucidation of the

fear phenomenon that we don't first assess that something fearsome is approaching and then fear it. Rather, "it [fear] discovers it [the fearsome] beforehand in its fearsomeness" (*BT*, p. 180). That is, disclosure of Being-in-the-world in fear is non-cognitive. Hatzimoysis asks that if emotions disclose ourselves in a non-cognitive way, then whether the disclosure of ourselves to us must be emotional.

For Heidegger's argument to work, his claim should be not only that the emotional awareness of ourselves is non-cognitive, pre-reflective, or non-observational but also that the non-cognitive, pre-reflective, non-observational awareness of ourselves is emotional. Heidegger makes a case [...] for the claim that emotions disclose Dasein to itself as being-in-the-world, in a pre-reflective etc. manner. To identify, though, Dasein's pre-reflective etc. disclosure with emotional experience, we need a case to be made for the claim that Dasein cannot pre-reflectively etc. be disclosed to itself, unless it is in some emotional mode. And that is something for which Heidegger's text does not seem to provide adequately. (Hatzimoysis 223)

Here, Hatzimoysis is treating Heidegger's account of fear as an emotion though Heidegger considers it as *Stimmung*—mood. Heidegger's reference to an object that is fearful, his explanation that in fearing "we lose our heads," and then we come back around when fear has subsided, are descriptions of fear as an emotion (181). Nonetheless, for Heidegger, fear is essentially a mode of disposedness in which we get attuned to the world such that we feel threatened by it. That is why, even if it is an emotion Heidegger is describing, he is making an ontological claim regarding disposedness. Therefore, when Hatzimoysis asks Heidegger whether Dasein's disclosure to itself has to be emotional, we should translate it as to whether Dasein's disclosure to itself has to be an affective experience. That is, Hatzimoysis is asking Heidegger to make a stronger case for the claim that Dasein's disclosure to itself has to be affective, that non-affective experience of once Being is not possible.

Hatzimoysis considers that pre-reflective, non-cognitive, non-observational experience of oneself is possible and is not against the phenomenological theory of Being. He is referring to Husserlian theory of mineness of all experience, the immediate first-person, positional awareness of the world (Hatzimoysis 224). Hatzimoysis is making a point that, though Heidegger presents a strong case that attunement in mood or in emotion discloses Dasein to itself and its Being-in-the-world but not so irrefutable case for the claim that such disclosure is always affective in nature. But is positional awareness of the world the same as Dasein's awareness of itself Being-in-the-world?

The positional awareness of the world is a first-personal experience of the world which is contrasted with the consciousness of oneself. Mineness of any experience, sensory awareness of the world is an indirect awareness of one's own existence experiencing the world. Hatzimoysis is posing such an awareness of one's own existence that doesn't need to be attuned to oneself, against Heidegger's theory that Dasein is revealed to itself in its disposedness. But Heidegger doesn't ignore the non-positional awareness of oneself; for he talks about Being yonder, Being-there as opposed to the I-here experience of oneself. We should remind ourselves that Heidegger's project is to find what constitutes our Being. For him, our Being is Being-there and hence he gives a theory of the *existentials* that constitute such Being. The mineness of the experience that reveals our existence to us is not enough to comprehend Dasein's Being in its full sense. What constitutes the thereof Dasein's Being is its openness to the world. And hence Heidegger claims that disposedness discloses Dasein in its Being-in-the-world. That is to say, though the mineness of the experience is enough to make us aware of our existence, it is not a revelation of what constitutes our Being. Whereas the phenomenon of disposedness reveals to us that our Being is essentially a concerned Being, that we are ontologically affective beings, and it makes Being-in-the-world possible.

3.7 Disclosure of Being-in-the-world in anxiety

After a close reading of Heidegger's exposition of disposedness, mood, attunement, and concern, we can now say that being attuned to something is being open to get affected by it and as Dasein is always attuned to the world in some way, our Being is essentially affective. But we have not yet considered a specific kind of attunement which Heidegger states as fundamental attunement—Angst, that accordingly might explain affectivity in a more fundamental way. For Heidegger, anxiety is a ground-mood, which enables any other mood or attunement. He finds the basis for anxiety as the ground-mood in Dasein's thrownness in the world and realizing that "Dasein exists factually" (*B.T.* p.225).

That in the face of which one is anxious is completely indefinite. Not only does this indefiniteness leave factually undecided which entity within-the-world is threatening us, but it also tells us that entities within-the-world are not 'relevant' at all. Nothing which is ready-to-hand or present-at-hand within the world functions as that in the face of which anxiety is anxious. Here the totality of involvements of the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand discovered within-the-world, is, as such, of no consequence; it collapses into itself; the world has the character of completely lacking significance. In anxiety one does not encounter this thing or that thing which, as something threatening, must have an involvement. (*B.T.* p. 231)

When the present-at-hand and the ready-to-hand don't appeal to Dasein, when Dasein doesn't feel any involvement, the world appears irrelevant. And yet, in being anxious, its Being-in-the-world is disclosed to Dasein. That is, though the world has lost its significance, anxiety discloses to Dasein that the world affects it. The factual Being, thrownness of it, makes Dasein feel burdened by its own existence. Relatedly, we saw earlier that Heidegger considers the seemingly mood less experience of the world makes Dasein feel the burdensome character of its Being (*B.T.*

p 173). For Heidegger, the revelation of the burdensome character of its own Being to Dasein is the fundamental attunement of anxiety. When the Being is revealed in its most naked form to Dasein, that it exists and the world exists and it has to be concerned of its Being-in-the-world, it is an authentic Being for Dasein as it discloses Being in its facticity. It makes Dasein anxious and then fall into the ontic plane of Being where it experiences inauthentic disposedness towards the world as various moods.

And only because anxiety is always latent in Being-in-the-world, can such Being-in-the-world, as Being which alongside the ‘world’ and which is concerned in its state-of-mind, ever be afraid. Fear is anxiety, fallen into the ‘world’, inauthentic, and, as such, hidden from itself. (*B.T. p. 234*)

Though all moods disclose Dasein’s Being-in-the-world, Heidegger privileges anxiety as ground-mood because, in the disposedness of anxiety, Dasein is not attuned to the world nor to any entity within. Therefore, Heidegger says that anxiety is a mood in which our Being is disclosed alongside the world whereas other moods immerse us in the world.

3.8 Confusion about different affective modes

Anxiety or the ground-mood is different from other moods; in being attuned to one’s own Being and not the world, it is ontologically prior to the other moods. But there lies a confusion in Heidegger’s schematic of the affectivity of Dasein. Lauren Freeman (2016) terms this confusion as the “problem of sloppiness” in Heidegger’s theory of affectivity. Her main contention is that Heidegger doesn’t sufficiently explain what he means by mood, nor does he clearly distinguish between fundamental disposedness, Disposedness, mood and emotion.

He [Heidegger] is inconsistent with regard to his treatment of the ontic and the ontological dimensions of mood. That is, at first

mood is considered to be both an ontic state and an ontological condition for the possibility of ontic states, but then he privileges the ontological dimension of mood and dismisses its ontic dimension. [...] even in explicitly privileging the ontological dimension of mood, he still uses an ontic description of what sounds like an emotion (viz., fear) in his account of what a mood is (where moods are modes of attunement). (Freeman 250)

Freeman is objecting to Heidegger's dismissal of emotions as ontic states, that he considers emotions are only about specific behavior towards specific objects and are more factual about our Being than moods that are of the disclosive nature of our Being-in-the-world. For Heidegger, moods are all pervasive and primordial to any cognition. But when he gives the example of fear as a mode of disposedness, as an ontologically primordial phenomenon, the given description is of fear-emotion. In his description of fear, Heidegger talks about an intentional object ('that in the face of which we fear'), 'fearing' that is feeling threatened which subsides in some time and a subject—Dasein ('that for which we fear'). They all render, though Heidegger doesn't acknowledge, the traditional description of an emotion, while mood is a feeling that doesn't have an intentional object and lasts for a longer duration. Freeman also points that Heidegger's account of anxiety is a better and clear description of disclosure in mood than his account of fear (Freeman 252). Anxiety is not directed at an object, and as Heidegger puts it, that in the face of which we are anxious is indefinite. Thus, we can say that, though Heidegger is clear in his account of anxiety as fundamental disposedness, his account of disposedness in mood is, as Freeman puts it, sloppy. That is, Heidegger's account of mood lacks clarity on whether moods are ontic states or are ontologically primordial to ontic states. His treatment of fear as a mode of disposedness and not an ontic state makes the description of affectivity in disposedness of our Being confusing. But is mistaking an emotion for a mood detrimental to Heidegger's ontological project?

The significance Heidegger ascribes to emotion, here to the mood of fear as a phenomenon of fear phenomenon is noteworthy. That it discloses our Being-in-the-world and that we are essentially concerned about ourselves and hence concerned about the world by extension. Though Heidegger confuses between an emotion and a mood, his account of fear as a mode of disposedness characterizes the affectivity of our attunement with the world in a fearful way. Heidegger's project is not a theory of affectivity where he needs to carefully distinguish between different affective phenomena. His project is a theory of Being, wherein the structures that make our Being possible are examined. And in Heidegger's account of fear, there is sufficient clarity on how disposedness enables the world and makes it fearsome to us. It would have been a better theory of affectivity if Heidegger had handled the topic of disposedness in mood and emotion in detail, specifically if he had considered how moods and emotions are felt. But it doesn't weaken his exposition of disposedness as a primordial structure of our Being, that it empowers the world to affect us. And yet, in mistaking fear-emotion for a mood, Heidegger gives us an account of emotion in which emotions are ontologically disclosive of Dasein's concern for its Being. Therefore, if we go past Heidegger's mistake of treating fear as mood, we have a theory of emotion, where disposedness is a primordial *existential* that pervades our Being, characterizing it essentially as 'Care.'

Disposedness is one of the three constituents that make up Dasein's Care structure which we have been discussing as Dasein's concern for the world or for itself. The other two *existential* are Understanding and discourse. And as Heidegger terms them equiprimordial with disposedness, let's go through the other constituents that make up our concern for our own Being.

4. Equiprimordiality of Disposedness with Understanding and Discourse

4.1 Understanding

Disposedness immerses us in the world, it makes the world matter to us. We saw that, for Heidegger, our Being is delivered over to us by our being ‘there’ in the world. Our Being-there is characterized by Being-in the attunement with the world such that equiprimordial to disposedness is Understanding of the ‘there.’

To say that in existing, Dasein is its “there”, is equivalent to saying that the world is ‘there’; its Being-there is Being-in. And the latter is likewise ‘there’, as that for the sake of which Dasein is. In the “for-the-sake-of-which”, existing Being-in-the-world is disclosed as such, and this disclosedness we have called “Understanding”. In the understanding of the “for-the-sake-of-which”, the significance, which is grounded therein, is disclosed along with it. (*B.T.* 182).

Our mood i.e., our Being-in discloses that the world matters to us, which actually means, our relationship with the world is disclosed to us as if we exist for the sake of the objects in the world that matter to us. Heidegger says, this is how we understand things around us. So, Understanding is not only a primordial characteristic that we possess in order to engage with the world, i.e., equiprimordial to disposedness because, in order to let the world matter to us, we need to understand its significance. In Understanding something, we realize its significance to do something or to achieve something. That is, actually, understanding something as being “competent to do something,” is having our own Being disclosed to us as being competent to do that thing. In realizing the usefulness of the things in the world, we realize our potential to achieve our goals with those things. For Heidegger, this is how, understanding discloses our “potentiality-for-Being”.

The kind of Being which Dasein has, as potentiality-for-Being, lies existentially in Understanding. Dasein is not something present-at-hand which possesses its competence for something by way of an extra; it is primarily Being-possible. Dasein is in every case what it can be, and in the way in which it is its possibility. The Being-possible which is essential for Dasein, pertains to the ways of its solicitude for Others and of its concern with the 'world', as we have characterized them; and in all these, and always, it pertains to Dasein's potentiality-for-Being towards itself, for the sake of itself. The Being-possible which Dasein is existentially in every case, is to be sharply distinguished both from empty logical possibility and from the contingency of something present-at-hand, so far as with the present-at-hand this or that can 'come to pass'. As a modal category of presence-at-hand, possibility signifies what is not yet actual and what is not at any time necessary. It characterizes what is merely possible. Ontologically it is on a lower level than actuality and necessity. On the other hand, possibility as an *existentiale* is the most primordial and ultimate positive way in which Dasein is characterized ontologically. As with existentiality in general, we can, in the first instance, only prepare for the problem of possibility. The phenomenal basis for seeing it at all is provided by the Understanding as a disclosive potentiality-for-Being (*B.T. p. 183*).

We understand something so 'as' to do something. That is, the ability of something like a hammer to stroke the nails is realized by us as ourselves Being able to stroke the nails. There are several things Heidegger discusses in the above quotation. First, a thing present-at-hand receives its competence by way of an extra, that is a hammer is competent to stroke the nails if there exists an entity which needs the nails stroked. Whereas Dasein is in itself Being-possible. Second, our Being-with-Others and the concern for the world, is basically a disclosure of our very own potentiality-for-Being. And third, possibility signifies different meanings for a present-at-hand thing and for Dasein. For a hammer, it is possible to be used as a hammer or as a paper weight. It remains for an

entity looking for a use for it to turn what is present-at-hand into something ready-to-hand, ready for hammering or as a paper weight. That is, as Heidegger puts it, when being used as a paper weight, a hammer is not actually a hammer, nor it is necessary for it to be a hammer. It doesn't realize its possibility. On the contrary, Dasein understands the hammer as a hammer because of its own potentiality-for-Being.

If disposedness discloses to Dasein its Being-in-the-world, understanding discloses its Being-possible, its potential to do something with the world it finds itself in. If disposedness discloses how we are faring at present, then understanding the world discloses our potential future. Therefore, for Heidegger, Understanding and *Befindlichkeit* disclose equiprimordially what matters to us, what they make us feel, and what significance we attach to them. That is to say, understanding and *Befindlichkeit* constitute the ways of Being the 'there' (*B.T. p. 171*). That is, disposedness and understanding equiprimordially enable the world to matter to us such that the world becomes for-the-sake-of-which we exist. And yet, in the above quote, Heidegger states that "possibility as an *existentiale* is the most primordial and ultimate positive way in which Dasein is characterized ontologically," privileging Understanding over disposedness. Though Heidegger keeps mentioning equiprimordially of disposedness and Understanding, his discussion of Dasein's Being is dominated by the elucidation of Understanding of the world. Dahlstrom (2019) raises this issue too, that, though equiprimordial, disposedness remains an accompanying phenomenon of Understanding.

[H]is analyses of several existential phenomena contain in fact no mention of the sort of affectivity involved at all or, if there is mention of it, it is presented precisely as an accompaniment to Understanding. It is perhaps unfair to point to the sections in BT before he explicitly treats disposedness (*B.T. section 29*). Still, it is noteworthy that the analyses of concern (*Besorgen*), the use of tools, the particular kind of seeing involved therein (*Umsicht*),

sign, relevance, and significance include little if any allusion to the sorts of affectivity involved in these ways of Being-in. (Dahlstrom 113)

In section 29 of *Being and Time* Heidegger explains disposedness as a fundamental existential, but prior to this 29th section, his discussion on how the world is disclosed, what makes the worldhood of the world, how Dasein comes to realize its Being-with the others is dominated by Dasein's Understanding of its environment. Heidegger explains that the world is made up of entities present-at-hand and ready-to-hand, and that their presence-at-hand or readiness-to-hand is rendered to them by the concern Dasein has for the world. And yet, we need to wait till section 29 and section 30 to extract the implied argument that all concern is ontologically affective. And that is why Dahlstrom says that for Heidegger, affectivity of our Being is an afterthought of the first existential, that is, Understanding. Nonetheless, Heidegger maintains that "[a] state-of-mind always has its Understanding, even if it merely keeps it suppressed. Understanding always has its mood" (*B.T.* 182). Understanding is, thus, an existential that marks the intelligibility of our Being-concernful as well as the potentiality-for-Being.

In Understanding the world, we also assign significance to the entities within, making them ready-to-hand, ready for-the-sake-of doing something. That is, when we pick up the hammer for stroking the nails, we notice the hammer as an entity. It is a kind of signification we assign to it. But when I use the same hammer as a paper weight, it is my interpretation of it that has changed, that it can be used to weigh down the papers on my table. The signification is my interpretation of the hammer and how it matters to me. We can then say that our interpretation is a structural constituent of the Understanding we have of the world.

In the mere encountering of something, it is understood in terms of a totality of involvements; and such seeing hides in itself the explicitness of the assignment-relations (of the "in-order-to") which belongs to that

totality. That which is understood gets Articulated when the entity to be understood is brought close interpretatively by taking as our clue the ‘something as something’; and this articulation lies before our making any thematic assertions about it (*B.T.* 189,190).

In using the hammer as a paper weight, I have interpreted it as a heavy object and not as an equipment to hammer. That is, I have articulated it as a weight before using it for that purpose. My Understanding of the hammer as a paper weight is, thus, preceded by an interpretation of it as a heavy object. And that’s why Heidegger makes us understand that we are always projecting our interpretation on the entities in the world. Without the ability to interpret, there is no project for us, and hence, no need to do anything. In Understanding and interpreting, we are always projecting ourselves in the future.

4.2 Discourse

Discourse is an articulation of signification that is brought about by Interpretation. The signification we attach to things we understand ‘as’ something, is formed as an assertion, ‘something as something.’ And hence, it is important to note that our Understanding or interpreting anything presupposes our ability to articulate, that is, our ability for Discourse. And as there is no Understanding without disposedness and vice-versa, Heidegger states that, “state of mind and Understanding are characterized equiprimordially by Discourse” (*B.T.* 172). That is, Discourse is the articulation of our ‘mooded’ Understanding. But it doesn’t mean that Discourse is the language we use to get by in society. It is, rather, an ability to construct a language, attained by the implicit interpretation in the Understanding of the world. “Discourse is the articulation of intelligibility” (203-4). And as our Understanding and disposedness towards the world are interdependent, Discourse and disposedness become interdependent too. “The intelligibility of Being-in-the-world—an intelligibility that goes with a state-of-mind—expresses itself as Discourse” (*B.T.* 204).

Our disposedness, hence, governs the Discourse. But Heidegger also considers that Discourse governs our disposedness. When he explains the nature of our Being-with-others, Heidegger states that an ‘idle talk’ is a possibility of how the world is disclosed to Dasein (section 35). In idle talk, Dasein is not disclosed to the world through attunement, rather through mindlessly listening to what is being said about something. Which means that, instead of being open to the world, in accepting something as something, without looking for the grounds for it, Dasein is closed off from the world. When we find ourselves part of a public Discourse, interpreting things in the manner of the public Discourse, it closes the world off for us, “since to go back to the ground of what is talked about is something which it leaves undone” (*B.T.* 213). Under the dominance of public Discourse, even the ways in which we are attuned to the world is decided. We can, therefore, say that Discourse decides how things affect us just as how things matter to us decides the Discourse.

5. Disposedness and Understanding as Being towards Meaning

With the equiprimordiality of disposedness, Understanding, and Discourse, Dasein’s Being-in-the-world is disclosed to it. Disposedness of Being-in enables the world which is understood as that for-the-sake-of-which Dasein exists. Discourse makes apparent how we interpret the world, it is an expression of the intelligibility of the world. And in language, we articulate the signification the world has already achieved in our interpretation. That is why Heidegger claims that through the same structures of Understanding and Discourse, the world gets its meaning. The world does not have any meaning in itself. In projecting its interpretation on the world, Dasein assigns meaning to it.

When entities within-the-world are discovered along with the Being of Dasein—that is, when they have come to be understood—we say that they have meaning. But that which is understood, taken strictly, is not the meaning but the entity, or alternatively, Being. Meaning is that

wherein the intelligibility of something maintains itself. That which can be Articulated in a disclosure by which we understand, we call “meaning”. The concept of meaning embraces the formal existential framework of what necessarily belongs to that which an Understanding-interpretation articulates. [...] In so far as Understanding and interpretation make up the existential state of Being of the “there”, “meaning” must be conceived as the formal-existential framework of the disclosedness which belongs to Understanding. Meaning is an *existentiale* of Dasein, not a property attaching to entities, lying ‘behind’ them. [...] Dasein only ‘has’ meaning, so far as the disclosedness of Being-in-the-world can be filled in by entities discoverable in that disclosedness (*B.T.* p.192-3).

Only Dasein has meaning or the lack of it. Dasein assigns significance to the world, thereby making the world meaningful. In Understanding something as something, the entity gets its meaning. In being Dasein-with, the world is meaningful, and in Being-in-the-world, Dasein finds its meaning. Thus, it can be said that, for there is no Understanding without the attunement with the world in disposedness, the disclosed meaning is governed by Dasein’s disposedness. Dasein gets its meaning because of the concern it has for its own Being. Dasein’s concern for its own Being is constituted by disposedness and Understanding and is articulated by discourse. Disposedness, Understanding, and Discourse form the Care structure of our Being that brings about our Being as meaningful. The equiprimordiality of the three *existentials* of the care structure entails that what is disclosed in Understanding and in Discourse is not without the affectivity of disposedness. Whether it is interpreting the significance of the entities, or whether it is the articulation of the meaning formed in language, affectivity of the concern for one’s own Being is ontologically coextensive to every aspect of our life.

6. Conclusion

Our Being-in-the-world constituted by the Understanding of the world is realized as our potentiality-for-Being. In interpreting the usefulness of the things around us, we make them meaningful for us, thereby finding the meaning for our own Being. But any such Understanding of the world presupposes a kind of Being for which being interested in the usefulness of the world is possible. Noting that in moods we experience the disposedness towards the world, and in moods we experience that the world matters to us, Heidegger thus considers disposedness equiprimordial with the Understanding of the world. Heidegger is right in saying that in moods we find that we are already 'there,' interested in the world. He is also right in recognizing that moods attune us to the world, which means, the entities in the world seem appealing according to our circumspective concern. When we engage with the entities in the world and with the others, there is always an in-order-to aspect to it which looks ahead toward what has not yet come to pass. So, when our Understanding of the world is future oriented, our disposedness brings and immerses us in the world in the present. But Heidegger claims wrongly that only moods disclose the immersive nature of our Being-in-the-world. His own example of fear as a mode of disposedness attests to the ontologically disclosive nature of emotions and yet his analysis of ontological disclosure of our Being-in-the-world privileges only moods. Further, he creates a confusion about the disclosure in moods by terming all moods as ontic except for anxiety, creating a separate category of ground-mood. All moods except anxiety, Heidegger considers them to be ontic expressions of an ontological phenomenon of disposedness. This implies that we are essentially disposed to be interested in the world and we experience the disposedness through moods which are merely particular instances of an engagement with the world. Anxiety, on the other hand, is not an attunement with the world and resultantly, it discloses the 'world as world' without immersing us into it. In anxiety, we experience our Being mattering to us without letting the world affect

us and that is why Heidegger calls being in anxiety as authentic while being in mood as inauthentic Being. Heidegger maintains that when Dasein falls from anxiety into moods, it falls from authentic to inauthentic Being. And yet, moods are supposed to be ontologically disclosive of Dasein's Being-in-the-world. In calling all the other moods as inauthentic, Heidegger wants to stress the fact that we are immersed in the world to the extent that we forget that it is our Being that empowers the world to affect us. But if moods are ontologically disclosive, then certain reflective moods, not anxiety, can certainly disclose that it is our Being that lets the world affect us. In a curious and inquisitive mood, for instance, we may feel dazzled by the fact that our Being makes it possible to experience the world the way we experience it. Heidegger doesn't leave any room for the possibility that not all moods are inauthentic.

Confusion in the ontic and ontological moods, in their authenticity and inauthenticity, mistaking fear-emotion for a mood, all point to Heidegger's disregard for an elaborate account of the affective phenomenon. He knows that "the roots of the existential analytic, on its part, are ultimately *existentiell*, that is, ontical" (*B.T.* 34). If we are to get a full sense of the ontological, we have to start with understanding the ontical, for it is the basis on which he gives us an account of disposedness by making us understand moods. And yet, he doesn't engage with different kinds of affective phenomenon while analyzing the disposedness. Seeing his neglect of a deeper understanding of the affectivity of our Being, we must conclude that, as does Dahlstrom, for Heidegger, affectivity is an accompanying phenomenon to the Understanding. In Heidegger's account of fear, we get a theory of emotion that treats it as an affective phenomenon which is ontologically disclosive of our Being-in-the-world. But emotion remains an ontic phenomenon that represents inauthenticity of our Being; we don't get a theory of emotion that recognizes that not all emotions are inauthentic.

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