

Protocol, Graduate Seminar—Heidegger, *Being and Time*
Class Session 10—October 27, 2008
Minute Taker: Matthew Johnson
Topic: *Befindlichkeit* (continued), Fear, Understanding

Lotz began the session with some concluding remarks on ¶29, which I believe can be captured in Heidegger's statement: "Ontologically, we thus obtain as the *first* essential characteristic of states-of-mind [*Befindlichkeit*] that *they disclose Dasein in its thrownness, and—proximally and for the most part—in the manner of an evasive turning away*" (175). The two moments of this characteristic of Dasein were described as [1] Dasein's affectivity (thrownness) and [2] Dasein's dispersion (evasion).

AFFECTIVITY (THROWNESS)

Heidegger says that " 'thrownness' is meant to suggest the *facticity of its being delivered over*" (174). Dasein is disclosed as factual in a mood (the mood is not itself 'factual'), the mood lets one find oneself within a specific range of possibilities. That moods disclose the thrownness of Dasein means that Dasein is given over to a disposition that gives significance to the world that is encountered. Prior to Heidegger, affectivity had been analyzed (especially by Husserl) in terms of the *sensational* content of modes of intentionality. With the analysis of *Befindlichkeit*, Heidegger establishes that significance must be a condition for the possibility of sensation, i.e., before I find myself affected by sensations, the world has already been disclosed as meaningful to me—it *matters* to me.¹ This is a non-psychological description of affectivity. Dasein is distinctive in that it is opened up to encounter the world, to be affected by it, and what Dasein is affected *by* is not in the first instance sensation, but rather significance.² The intelligibility of the world is discussed under the analysis of both *Befindlichkeit* and Understanding.

Since we had discussed affectivity in an extremely passive sense—that one cannot choose one's mood (so it wouldn't make much sense to command someone to be suddenly change their mood) and must instead find themselves within such a mood, we were somewhat puzzled when Chamberlin pointed out a certainly bizarre quotation: "Factically, Dasein can, should, and must, through knowledge and will, become master of its mood" (175).³ Lotz speculated this statement might have been a concession to Heidegger's adversaries, that perhaps there is a meaningful sense in which we might ask someone to get out of their bad mood, but that such a mastery was not the negation of mood, but rather taking on a counter-mood. There seems to be some grounds for thinking of the manipulation of moods, but we must understand Heidegger's over-arching concern, which is to show that Dasein is always in some mood.⁴

¹ See p.176

² Lotz: "Dasein has something to do with being limited in a specific sense, so being limited means it is limited by 'what it is not', but precisely in a way that it is opened up to that 'what it is not'. The question is now how are we opened up to that, or how do we think that?"

³ The quotation in German is: "Daß ein Dasein faktisch mit Wissen und Willen der Stimmung Herr werden kann, soll und muß . . ." (H136), which to my knowledge doesn't cast the passage afresh, since 'master' seems to be an appropriate translation of 'Herr'.

⁴ Vick emphasized the passivity of moods and thought the word 'master' was inappropriate, since Heidegger is claiming that we're always in some mood and cannot, therefore, control whether or not to have a mood. Further, Schoonover pointed out that Heidegger mentions Aristotle's orator, who must understand "the possibilities of moods in order to rouse them and guide them aright" (178).

DISPERSION (EVASION)

Heidegger's analysis of *Befindlichkeit* reveals yet another everyday way in which Dasein is understood from out of world. We must wonder if Dasein is ever disclosed as 'itself' or how might one really *be* a 'self' when what we have primarily seen so far have been the semblances of the self, i.e., its everyday dispersion in the world through concern, being-with, and attunement. Later we will see that these modes do not disappear in Heidegger's discussion of the possibility of the self's authenticity, rather, the issue will be a change in our relation to these everyday modes.

We see this dispersion in *Befindlichkeit* since what a mood reveals is not something about the self, but rather, the 'there' of Dasein. This is not to be understood in a 'spatial' sense, but rather the sense in which we might ask someone on the telephone: "Are you there?" Here we are not concerned with the spatial location of another, but their presence with us in the conversation. In being there with myself (present moment), I find myself as having been within possibilities (attunement) and as projecting possibilities (understanding). Thus, attunement and understanding are constitutive of Dasein's being-in-the-world.

FEAR (§30)

Fear is one example in which we are guided or taken over by our concern. The discussion of Byrd's concept paper made the non-psychological status of moods more concrete. Fear is positive in the sense that through it we discover something about the fearsome entity, significances are given to us in a certain way such that there is something about, e.g., the tiger that has crept into the room that *is fearsome*.⁵ But this is not to say that we apprehend fangs, claws, etc. and then make the judgment that this tiger should be feared. Rather, fear allows us to discover something about the world, and this will mean that we find ourselves within certain possibilities.

Since Heidegger maintains that even in fear for others, it is ultimately one's own Dasein that is feared for, Schoonover wondered why there seems to be a meaningful sense in which he can be afraid for his son after his death. Schoonover will not be around to be affected by whatever may befall his son, and yet there seems to be a meaningful sense in which he may fear for him. Brown emphasized that we must understand the self socially, i.e., since Dasein includes this moment of being-with, we can understand our fear for others after our death in this way.

UNDERSTANDING (§31)

We only had time to briefly discuss Wallace's concept paper on understanding.⁶ Lotz began by bringing in a crucial component of understanding, namely, its connection to the 'for-the-sake-of-which'. Heidegger says, "In the 'for-the-sake-of-which', existing Being-in-the-world is disclosed as such, and this disclosedness we have have called 'understanding' " (182). Lotz explained, "The totality of these references is the condition of the possibility of the references and the references are the condition of the possibility of the accessibility of the entities." Dasein understands the totality of the world, from out of which the entities can be meaningful. The entities are always given

⁵ It should be noted that the distinctive feature of anxiety, the counter-concept to fear, is precisely the opposite. In anxiety, the significance of the world disappears so that Heidegger will say: "That in the face of which one has anxiety is characterized by the fact that what threatens is *nonbeing*" (231).

⁶ Wallace emphasized the difference between 'reaching an understanding' in Habermas' sense and the projecting of possibility in Heidegger's sense. The already brief discussion was perhaps diverted by Johnson, who thought that perhaps what is reached by interlocutors for Habermas are precisely the totality of the reference relations. Lotz was afraid that this would level the difference between the two thinkers, and wanted us to rather to focus on Heidegger so I will not say more here.

in an as-structure. This brief discussion was brought to a close in discussing the priority of potentiality (understanding) over actuality (state-of-mind), which we might like to revisit since the discussion seemed to be brought to a close too soon.