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Conatus and Dasein: The Problem of an Existential Theory of Motivation

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Abstract

*In the article I articulate an interpretation of the findingness (Befindlichkeit) of Dasein in Heidegger as a specific existential drive, basing it on an interpretation of his concept of existence, drawing from his earlier lectures before *Being and Time*, and relying on the clarification of the existential meaning of relation. Following a related interpretation of understanding and care, I offer some considerations pertaining to the problem of authentic motivation and its possible practical application. Initially, I offer an interpretation of existence as it relates to the meaning of being, understanding the relation in this ultimate sense as two aspects of speech. In this, I understand the meaning of being as a groundless call or address. Building on that, I propose a motivational understanding of findingness as the necessary drive of Dasein toward its self-interpretation as it relates to the enigmatic call of being. I supplement this view with an interpretation of existential understanding as a coequal aspect of the groundless freedom of that relation of Dasein to itself. Finally, I offer an interpretation of authenticity, in line with the aforementioned explicated understanding of existence and the corresponding meaning of the authentic motivational findingness of Dasein. In conclusion, I raise a question of how such authentic motivation could be practically understood in the perspective of life-world interactions.*

Keywords: *Befindlichkeit; Dasein; authenticity; relation; Heidegger*

In contemporary Heidegger scholarship, there is considerable confusion regarding the core concepts of existential analysis, such as Dasein, world, being. In my view, this is mainly conditioned by the fact that the meaning of these terms is not understood in their problematic intention; rather, one tries to interpret them with regard to some unproblematic everyday concepts that are already at hand, completely contrary to their original intention.¹

¹ Existence is mostly understood in the literature by an analogy with living; being a Dasein means roughly the same as living as a human being. I shall hopefully have the opportunity to systematically present my understanding of basic existential concepts in another publication; in this article my focus is to interpret the concept of findingness and its possible practical application.

I. Some key existential concepts

a. Dasein (existence)²

In Heidegger's formulation of Dasein as a being that in its own being its being is an issue, the meaning of "being" is not taken as problematic in the literature, as if its meaning was obvious, as everyone is, "exists," and has one's own "being" as an issue for it.

By Dasein I understand 1. a questioning relationship of interpretative understanding and the meaning of being, and 2. an interpretation of this very relationship. As any interpretation can be construed as a form of relation, Dasein can be thus understood as a relation to the relationship of understanding and being. To this one must add: 1. Dasein is not questioning the meaning of being and its own relationship to it just incidentally, but always and in principle, it is a basic universal structure of existence. 2. This questioning of being happens by way of a distinction, differentiating between beings (*ens*) and being (*esse*), in the form of the interpretative carrying out of the ontological difference. However, this means that Dasein is questionable for itself in its own existence and, as being always announces itself in connection with the meaningful structure of the world, Dasein is questionable in its relationship with the world. The main point here is that Dasein is always determined by its relation to being.

In understanding itself as questioning and questionable, it shows itself as an always already accepted thrown possibility; this is what is, in short, meant by Dasein's facticity.

Now, let me briefly explain why and how we should understand Dasein as a relationship to being.³

² The following proposed interpretation of existence in *Being and Time* is gathered from Heidegger's lectures. Martin Heidegger, *Ontologie. Hermeneutik der Faktizität* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1995), §2, GA 63, and *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie. 1. Die Idee der Philosophie und das Weltanschauungsproblem* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1919) §4; §13–§15, GA 56/57.

³ One could immediately object to interpreting existence as a relation though, as Heidegger warns multiple times against such (see for example *Sein und Zeit* §43a) understanding. Despite this admonition I maintain this conceptuality for the sake of analytical clarity. It has to be admitted that this brings along a certain formalization. However, it has to be kept in mind that in this relation, correlation is not a logical subject-object relationship, but is filled with a phenomenal meaning, exhibited first in the hermeneutics of every day being-in-the-world. The concept of relation should then be understood here just as a methodological, interpretative, and analytical tool. The fear of terminological confusion is unnecessary, if the purpose this concept serves is clearly defined. Without maintaining the concept of relation analytical, we lose the meaningful independence of Dasein and the world as well as everything in *Dasein* as a unitary structure. The correlation of Dasein and being should then be understood in the strict existential, hermeneutical sense of a call-answering factual interpretation. We need to be cautious, however, to not consider the relationship between the meaning of Dasein and

1. Meaning announces itself in speech. In speech, an understanding of the meaning of being, an interpretative relation to the meaning of being is also always articulated or at least implicitly present. The meaning of being articulated in speech calls the understanding into a relation to itself as a relation to that which is called-upon by this meaning, as the addressee. Dasein has an interest in being. This self-relation is not logical, as it is not something that a reflection would decide for or against. However, if we say that speech is just structured in this self-reflective way, we have not really explained this phenomenon.

2. The fundamental reason for this relation-to-relation-to-being structure is “finitude,” understood here broadly as groundless thrownness, which always implies the possibility of being thrown out from that in which the thrown is thrown, the groundless unnecessary of the meaning of being. This in which Dasein is thrown is thus something that remains hidden, foreign, mysterious, yet at once always the nearest and what forms the meaningful context and background of any meaning. Therefore, such is the meaning of being. This relationship is always in action, even though it announces itself only privatively and motivates the very turning away from it and hiding from it in relationship with beings. In this possibility, this relation is a problem for itself.

3. Owing to that, the meaning of being functions as a certain meaningful resistance, so that it always puts understanding in question, in the way that questioning the understanding of the meaning of being is always involved in what it is questioning (the meaning of being). The meaning of being could not announce itself at all, if it would not announce itself as a problem, an enigma, which of course already means as an enigma for some understood interpretation.⁴ Thus, for this mutual relationship of understanding and the

meaning of being as clarified or even obvious based on the aforementioned conception. On the contrary, the exposition of the relation structure of existence should achieve a clear problematization of the possibility, meaning, and mode of this relation. What Heidegger seems to want to emphasize is this: thrownness is the phenomenal meaning and existential foundation of meaning relation and not the other way around. I have to agree with this: the explication of existence as relation is a formalization. The full phenomenal meaning can be discerned only in the coequal structure of being in, of care. Although I think that this interpretative use of the idea of relation is meaningful insofar as it contributes to some much needed systematic clarity, which always has to be accompanied by a note of its full phenomenal meaning. The question of the existential meaning of the relationship between *Dasein* and the world is of course necessary, but that does not mean that it becomes unimportant, that there is some form of relation between the understanding of *Dasein* and the meaning of being. In fact, Heidegger does not deny completely the relation, but only maintains that this structure of being in the world should not be reduced to an empty, formal relation, as its phenomenal content is factual transcendence.

⁴ One could object that this being that is always meant is some other meaning of being

call of being to be able to happen at all, this relation has to be transparent to itself as such. Only because the relationship to being is problematic for itself, can it allow the problematic call of being and interpret it as such.

4. However, this means that the relationship of the meaning of being is in its full structure a primordial unity, structured as a dynamic intertwining or circling of both moments, where the transitioning from one moment to the other has the structure of self-interpretation,⁵ which preserves the meaning unity of both moments and is founded in an incessant interpretative motivation by the meaning of being. This factual involvement in the call of being also demonstrates the primordial unity of the understanding and meaning of being. This is because involvement is possible only on groundlessness, which implies primordial unity, where no moment of the relation founds the other, as it is not a logical, thing-like relation.

5. The meaning of thrownness in the relation with the world is expressed in speech. Who is in relation then? Obviously, this can only be speech itself. What is then the meaning of this relation to relation? Just the relation of speech to itself, in its fundamental structure of being thrown as being called by the meaning of being. Speech makes itself as that which is called by the meaning of being as a factual acceptance of the call into a meaning moment (with the power of concept formation, formal indications, construction, and interpretation), and so it can interpret itself in relation with this moment of the call of meaning. Speech cannot be in relation with the call of the meaning of being, if it was not in relation with itself as being in this relation,⁶ but this it can be only if it “posits” itself as this relation.⁷ Existence is nothing else than speech thus understood.

than the enigmatic being, and one could discuss which one is more original, thus the point of existential hermeneutics would be reduced to some mode of being always being co-expressed. However, this very enigma of being always announces itself in every expression of the meaning of being.

⁵ As soon as we speak of a relationship – toward – we tacitly presuppose some meaning of this “toward,” as subjective intentionality, etc. By reducing meaning to facticity, the only thing left is the relationship of understanding and meaning. Traditional philosophy did just this; it hypostasized relationship, so that the intellect, or the subject, in addition to being in a relationship, has itself a relationship structure, where what remains unclear is of course how such structure is supposed to pertain to it, and so takes refuge in the concept of spontaneity, drive, the movement of negativity, etc.

⁶ If only the relation of two moments internal to speech existed, then one could not talk of a calling of the meaning of being as something in a sense transcending speech, but only as something transcendent to that particular moment of speech, though still completely and in all sense immanent, transparent, and disclosed in speech as a whole.

⁷ This does not mean though that speech objectifies itself in some way or becomes reflectively external to itself. On the contrary, only as involved in the calling of meaning can it “reflect” this relationship. Only because the meaning of being affects the understanding of speech as such, is speech incited to put itself in relation to its own relation with this call, which shows this call as such, that is in relation with speech. However, Heidegger developed the foundations of

b. Being

The meaning of the concept of being is probably the most contested one in the literature and, of course, at once the most fundamental one, upon the understanding of which any interpretation of existence as understanding of being necessarily stands or falls. Thus, I start with a brief explanation of what I understand by being in Heidegger.

The meaning of being with which existence is in a questioning relation, is neither some metaphysical in itself nor some logically independent meaning of being, but just the meaning of being as it announces itself in speech. However, on the other hand, the meaning of being is a limit phenomenon, being is an expression of a limit, a wondering of the groundless existence upon that it meets some meaning at all. The understanding of being, which at once always hides this meaning of being, does not involve some knowledge of being, rather it incites questioning.⁸

c. World

The concept of the world as the structural moment of being in the world can easily be taken too lightly, maybe even the most of all concepts. It is a peculiar nature of existential analysis that it interprets the most fundamental, “everyday” notions such as world, in a way completely removed from the everyday understanding.

The world has a specific existential meaning of the wholeness of the meaning of being, and is primarily a problematic concept. Based on metaphysics, moments of wholeness take on characteristics of unity, uniqueness, and perfection; however, these are just titles for the problem of an existential clarification of the meaning of the world, and at once a problem that addresses itself to concrete and not just theoretical existence.⁹

this understanding only in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. Also, this moment that “represents” speech to which it is in relation, is not something other than itself; there is no relation to a copy so to speak, but of sameness of meaning, so that there can be no question of objectivation or alienation.

⁸ Sheehan in interpreting the *Dasein* as the world, existence as clearing, and *Dasein* as the meaning of being meaning, completely overlooking the phenomenological correlation. See Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (London, and New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014). Also, as a critique to the interpretation of Capobianco, if one does not maintain the distinction among being, revealedness, and disclosedness, the entire phenomenological project collapses, for it presupposes that in *Dasein* some meaning of being is revealed. If we identify revealedness and meaning, we are left with a tautology (what is revealed to *Dasein* is just the revealedness itself). *Dasein* does not primarily consist of relating to disclosedness, but to being itself (of course, in its disclosedness, that is to say, insofar it shows itself), and only on this basis, to the disclosedness itself. See Richard Capobianco, *Heidegger's Way of Being* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 7-20.

⁹ Here, the following problem needs to be addressed: in what sense and why is worldliness supposed to be the structure of *Dasein* and not an independent meaning of being? How does

II. Interpretation of the “Findingness” (Befindlichkeit) of Dasein and Care

a. Findingness¹⁰

In this section I now turn to the motivational, conative aspect of factual existence. The Heidegger literature has mainly been devoted to, along with the basic commentaries, the “hard” problems of the interpretation of *Being and Time*, namely, death, authenticity, time, being, and truth, and has presupposed the concepts pointed at in the paragraph on being-in (the world) as such as largely needing no further explanation or problematization. This is absurd, considering

Heidegger claim that worldliness is somehow Dasein itself, how is this thesis motivated? We have to differentiate among several meanings of worldliness as far as it is said to pertain to the structure of existence. a. In one sense, worldliness is the structure of the entire meaning, structured as the meaning of being at hand. In this sense, worldliness is a meaning related to Dasein. b. In another sense, worldliness is a character of Dasein, insofar as it pertains to Dasein that it is worldly, that it is always in relation with worldliness in the first sense. c. In a third sense, worldliness is a moment of Dasein as an originally unitarily, interpretatively, and relationally structured meaning, it is a moment of Dasein, insofar as Dasein expresses a relation of understanding and being. All three meanings have textual support. If we identify Dasein with the being in the world, then we can claim that the world is a constitutive moment of Dasein. In such a case, however, we have to clarify what is meant by Dasein. The appearance of a logical necessity that the world is a meaning moment of Dasein as it relates to the world and being in the world, arises because it is overlooked that Dasein in this sense, as it relates to the world, (as the understanding that is in relation to the world), is already an analytically isolated moment of the originally unitary meaning of understanding and world. King [see Magda King, *A Guide to Heidegger’s Being and Time* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 52] explicitly interprets the “world” in the structure of being-in-the-world as the way in which Dasein exists, as an existential-ontological concept, that is to say, a concept that expresses Dasein’s relation to being. In my view, Heidegger quite often uses concepts in this relational sense; the foremost example is being itself, which, when referring to the existence of Dasein, I understand means the relation to being. If worldliness is conceptualized as meaningfulness, the conceptual distinction between Dasein and world as an independent meaning is already blurred. Unless this meaningfulness is understood in the sense of the original unity of Dasein and the world. Meaningfulness could also be understood transcendently as meaning-giving, and worldliness as the whole of meaningfulness would be understood primarily relationally, as the whole of meaning-giving. When Heidegger says that *Dasein* is existing in its own world, this should be taken to be expressed emphatically, for rhetoric effect. We can also talk about worldliness as the medium of both, as one could clumsily say, as the original unity of meaning. It seems that Heidegger has this meaning in mind several times. Why has he not himself distinguished these meanings? In this preparatory analytic he was focused on gaining an horizon of the interpretation of Dasein, not on clear analytical distinctions. As this part of the text is a preparatory hermeneutics of everydayness, it is necessary that it remains obscured just as the everydayness itself. The fundamental character of *Dasein* is that it exists for the sake of itself, but also of the world. What is the relation between the two? One should not reduce this character to *Dasein* alone, as then it would follow that the character of existing for the sake of the world one-sidedly originates in *Dasein* as some primary principle. See for such an interpretation King, 65. With world I shall always understand the meaning of the wholeness of meaning being as a structurally independent moment in the original unity of meaning.

¹⁰ This term is used also by John Haugeland, *Dasein Disclosed* (Cambridge, and London: Harvard University Press, 2013).

this paragraph functions as the key paragraph of the entire work and any misinterpretations of its central concepts inevitably lead to misinterpretations of all the other parts of the work.

It appears that findingness has not been approached as problematic in the literature. This could be attributed to several reasons. 1. The concept of existence is already simplified and not viewed as problematic in relation to being. 2. Findingness is approached in a pragmatic manner and based on a definitive understanding of facticity. 3. Findingness is regarded only as a burden, which is its first and most obvious meaning, but not in relation to a motivational problem of existence.¹¹ 4. The reason for the latter is that existence is not understood as a problematic relation to a relation to being.

Against that, I maintain that the findingness of existence is something that still has to be explained adequately and in a properly existential manner and that it even has to remain partially enigmatic, if it should function as a motivational, conative principle.

b. The problem

What in an existential sense is meant as the findingness of Dasein, is ontically experienced as mood. But should the analysis content itself with just observing this fact of everyday existence and in addition observe that existence as such obviously has some universal structure, that enables all the particular moods? If the analysis is to be existential, it has to relate to some hermeneutically, interpretatively conceptualized facticity, and, in relating to being, not just an ontic facticity. The ontic moods can here serve only as an illustration of a problem. Existential findingness is not exhausted by what we can gather phenomenologically from moods. Too often, purely existential problems are confused for still phenomenological, albeit ontic problems.

On the other hand, we also have to always consider the historical context of any conceptuality and not let the traditional concepts and understanding determine a contemporary interpretation.¹² Based on this, Heidegger's

¹¹ See for instance: "As factically thrown into its there, dasein always has some 'sense of' or 'feel for' or 'appreciation of' how it is doing or how life is going for it" (Haugeland, 144). For such an ontical understanding of facticity see also Ernst Tugendhat, *Über den Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger* (Berlin: de Gruyter 1970), 300-306; Michael Gelven, *A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 80-81; 121, and Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990), 168-170.

¹² The "there" of thrown facticity has never been reflected in the philosophical tradition, hence is also absent from modern psychology. From the Christian world viewpoint, this concept is understood as createdness, in ancient philosophy it is known as nature, *physei*, and platonically it is interpreted as emanated hypostasis, that is to say, always on the basis of some reason. In opposition to this view stands the existential meaning of thrownness as the groundless findingness of the self-relation to having to be in relation with the world. In taking over

findingness can be easily understood according to a traditional mode of mood as affect. At the same time, the traditionally understood affectivity and orrectivity pose a problem or a question to the existential analysis. *How* are we namely to conceptualize the fact that for Dasein its existence (as the relation to being, to the phenomenon, that there is a world) is originally imposed on it, that it *has* to exist (as such relation)? What is the ground for that? The tradition of the concept of affectivity offers a basis for a hermeneutical destruction of this concept, which, guided by the reduction to the phenomenon of existence, offers a possibility of an existential construction of Dasein's affectivity and findingness.¹³

The conceptual core on which Heidegger bases his analysis and which we can, in some sense, preserve existentially, is the drive or inclination toward existing, which is always interpreted in some manner, or the privative modification of such a drive, and not the modern conception of affect, ridden of its original connection with the motivational driving principle. The subsuming of *appetitus* under affect or the sharp distinction between the two, is already a symptom of a rationalistic mode of the subject, so that what is left as the only sense of affectivity is negative irrationality.

In traditional terms, my interpretative thesis can be expressed in the way that Heidegger's expressions that Dasein has to exist, that its existence is an issue, is not to be understood only purely affectively as a burden, but orrectically, as *conatus*, drive, a motivational principle, that is to say, dynamically.

c. The proposal

Dasein is always already called into self-interpretation, being a factual relation to the relationship of understanding and meaning. That Dasein has to exist as itself is not imposed on it by some obscure capacity of self-affecting, but to Dasein as self-interpretation there belongs an inclination, drive, toward its relation to the relationship with being. Dasein thus always already interprets itself in the respect that it has to exist as itself as an "existential imperative," it has always already found itself in this inclination; this is the meaning of findingness.

But what is the meaning of this? Why does understanding *require, impose* self-interpretation?

the ancient conception, the *dia* of the original diathesis became confined to the meaning of "apartness," losing the medial meaning of the "through," as in "posited" through the world, where the *dia* names the original unity of *Dasein* and the world.

¹³ The nature of the *pathos* already includes the relation to being. *Hexis* and *pathos* are in a certain way co-equal. This is what Heidegger seems to express with his interpretation of findingness as *hedone*, which connects both these concepts. See Niall Keane, "The Affects of Rhetoric and Reconciling the Nature of Possibility," in *Heidegger on Affect*, ed. Christos Hadjioannou, 47-67 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 57.

Dasein in its existing is never just a foreign phenomenon, held at a theoretical distance, which could be only observed, but its meaning is always its ownmost. Now, the afore-sketched involvement of facticity has to be clarified “concretely,” namely with regard to the meaning of the individual unique existence.

The involvement of facticity has been explained from groundlessness – Dasein is not some self-grounded entity, that could further ground itself in some way, in some dialectical reflexivity. In this groundlessness, because of it, Dasein is necessarily always delivered to itself as a unique problem, a question that implicates itself as questioning the relation to its existence.

What is then *the ground of the drive* of Dasein toward its interpretative existence as a problem? *The relation to the constant already being-called by the being meaning as enigmatic.* For:

1. This call of the meaning of being is groundless. As such, it is enigmatic, problematic, and questionable.
2. Owing to this, the meaning of being is always and already calling Dasein into an interpretative relation with it, addressing it as a problem.
3. As this call is structured, as was explained above, as self-relational, Dasein is constantly impelled to a relation to this relation to the call of being, as itself enigmatic, problematic.
4. Thus, Dasein is impelled to take on itself the relation to the relationship with the meaning of being as problematic, questionable, enigmatic, and its most defining; however, it would try to avoid it and has, in some way, be it however unclear, interpreted itself as such. Dasein is thus constantly self-calling-into-existence (understood as relation-to-the-relation-to-being), constantly having to exist (in the aforementioned sense).

Thrownness, facticity, is thus not to be understood just as some fact about existence, but as a motivational principle, the constant being called in thrown existence. That Dasein has to exist, be in relation to the relation to being and not only be in relation to being; this is the original meaning of facticity, thrownness. The thrownness of the relation to being already co-expresses the relation to thrownness in that relation to being.¹⁴ Thrownness can be properly understood only as a relation to the relation (to being).

¹⁴ With regard to the simplified interpretation of mood and findingness as the ground of that some being can meaningfully affect us in some way and a meaningful affectedness with the world, it has to be said that the real task is to explain the structure of this relation as thrown. The structural and the motivational aspects, as Dreyfus calls them, are though inextricably connected; see Dreyfus, 226.

Findingness is then a dynamic structure, it means holding itself in one's findingness, finding oneself always anew, arising from groundlessness, interpretatively holding oneself in that being and impelled toward a relation to the relation to being.

That Dasein "has to exist" also implies that it cannot choose the meaning of being it is in relation with, nor the way it is related to being (except inauthentically or authentically). However, this is secondary to the primary meaning of being called toward existing from the groundless call of being.

However, there is a certain illusion created by the fallen structure of purposeful meaning that it functions spontaneously. For this purposeful structure of meaning is in fact possible only because of the facticity of findingness of having to exist.

d. Findingness and affectivity of moods

It would be wrong to distinguish an existential structure of findingness and then, in addition, a structure of affectivity of moods, which would enable particular moods, while findingness would then express the original condition of possibility of affectivity. Existence is not built as a logical system, but in a way of coequal dynamical intertwining of meaning, interpretative structures. That is why affectivity, the modifiability of Dasein in particular moods, is just findingness itself, viewed from the perspective of this possibility, and not some special structural possibility of Dasein. This means that findingness is coequal with its affective expression, meaningful only in relation to it and in it, and not just some formal structure.

e. Understanding

For Dasein to interpret its own findingness in speech, it has to always *understand* itself in its existence. *Verstehen*, understanding, or know-how, expresses a certain being-ahead-of-oneself. In understanding there is a foregrasping of the possibility of meaning. To understand something means to have a certain relation to some meaning context, so that one can already in advance, before any particular practical or mental moment, orient oneself, that one can, in short, interpret it.

Initially, we can characterize understanding as a meaningful, interpretative relation to thrownness, as a groundless possibility. On the basis of findingness, I can project myself in certain possibilities, I can affirm or deny my relation to the world. The fact that I can at all be in relation to myself as a relation to the world, and that from myself, for the sake of myself as a free relation, that my relation to the world is not grounded in any being or being-context, in something in myself, or outside myself, is an existential moment. For the sake of itself then means: understandable, interpretable only from itself.

Thus, possibility has to be understood negatively, against any prior actuality, prior form, or any prior given meaning that would ground this possibility that would only on the basis of this grounding be a possibility.

That means that groundless thrownness can be understood only in groundless freedom.¹⁵ This free relation to groundless factual possibility is what is meant by projection. However, the free understanding of being thrown is always lagging behind itself as a projection and has to always project itself anew, interpretatively accepting itself in its own thrownness as such. Moreover, this freedom is coequal with findingness imposed on Dasein and has to exist, though indeed as free.¹⁶ However, we have to preserve the groundlessness, problematic character of the original unity of meaning; the task of existing is not to “come to an end” with it, but to preserve this call of the original enigma of relation, which lays in the final analysis in the groundless enigma of being itself.¹⁷

f. Care

How can we then conceptualize care as the unitary structure of existence as ahead of-itself, with regard to the proposed interpretation of findingness?

1. Being ahead of itself is in essential connection with the thrown projection. This has been explained as Dasein always already accepting itself in its thrown freedom.
2. How is this accepting to be understood though? It means that Dasein always, necessarily, and inexorably holds itself in its thrown possibility as its own. This holding oneself though, is itself to be understood as not allowing oneself to be ever fully absorbed in the world of beings and the possibilities that it offers, in which it can engage.

Dasein can then be its own thrown projection only as far as it holds itself in this possibility, by constantly projecting itself in this thrown projection so to speak. In any case, this being ahead of oneself is in no way to be understood to mean that some concrete particular possibilities of the life-world always remain open for Dasein; this would be an ontic, not an existential level.

¹⁵ As Schürmann observes, both findingness and understanding can be grasped in their specific meaning only in their mutual contrast; see Simon Critchley, Reiner Schürmann, and Steven Levine, *On Heidegger's Being and Time* (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), 85.

¹⁶ The interpretation of understanding as some release from thrownness is fundamentally wrong, as it overlooks the strict and final co-equality of thrownness and possibility. See for such an interpretation *ibid.*, 142.

¹⁷ This is what Critchley calls the enigmatic *apriori*. *Ibid.*, 135.

Therefore, the motivational principle of care consists of two co-equal motivational moments: the findingness of having to exist (as a thrown, groundless relation to the relation to being) and the free possibility of self-interpretation in the form of this findingness. There is no conflict between the freedom and necessity of findingness; these two are aspects of a single motivation.

III. The motivational structure of Dasein and *conatus*

Heidegger seems to gather his existential concept of motivation from the interpretation of Leibniz,¹⁸ or at least uses this discussion to present his own concept, which he interprets as closely related to that of Leibniz. In Leibniz, *appetitus*, drive, seems to be oriented by a primal (perceptual) givenness. Thus, Heidegger interprets that drive is neither a (scholastically understood) disposition or capacity nor a process (a movement, understood by analogy with natural movement as one could understand Aristotle), but a “taking upon itself.”¹⁹ In existential terms, Dasein taking it upon itself means to explicate its own existence in self-interpretation, as it has always already found itself.

In Heidegger’s discussion of Leibniz’s concept of *conatus* we can discern three main moments of his existential interpretation of the concept.²⁰ Together they form the hermeneutical background of the motivational, conative interpretation of Dasein that I present (and as I claim, Heidegger does as well). We can summarize its content as determined by facticity (1), ontological difference (2), and hermeneutics of interpretation (3).²¹ I interpret these moments with the following characterization:

1. Inclination, directiveness, which can be understood in opposition to idealistic spontaneity (for example, as a Hegelian movement of formal negativity), that is, out of thrownness, findingness in relation to the enigmatic meaning of being.
2. Releasement, which can be understood as Dasein freeing itself for its relation to being, by overcoming the obstacles to the drive to its relation to being that are implicit in findingness (facticity), being thrown in the life-world of beings, opposed to the free relation to the enigma of being that is Dasein. Existentially, drive (toward the

¹⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz* GA 26 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), 86-105; 111-123.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 102.

²⁰ In the later part of this interpretation, Heidegger also discusses the conceptual relation of finitude and world, in their inter-connectedness to the concept of drive.

²¹ It could be argued that each of these moments are articulated in an opposition to a traditional metaphysical notion of *conatus*, be it understood teleologically as *orexis* in Aristotle, or deterministically as the self-explication of substance in the chain of *modi* in Spinoza.

relation to the meaning of being) is meaningful only as far as it helps overcome the obstacles to the problematic relationship with being, with Dasein always already interpreting itself as this overcoming.²²

3. Transcendence, which can be understood as the structure of self-surpassing in the sense of self-explication of interpretation, which has to happen always anew, as it is structured as releasement, movement against beings that determine it by closing off the enigmatic transcendence of being, and at the same time, because it is structured as facticity, as findingness, in the sense that it has already found itself. Thus, it has to self-transcend in order to be capable of self-interpretation. In its findingness, Dasein has already found itself amidst beings claiming Dasein's relation in this or another character of their being; as threatening, comforting, at-hand, and found itself thus interpretatively disposed in its relation to being, that is, in its transcendence.²³

What constitutes their interrelatedness and co-equalness is the enigmatic, problematic character of the groundless meaning of being.

IV. Authentic motivation

In this and the following sections I shall discuss the existential concept of an authentic motivation or conatus, as explicated above.

Heidegger distinguishes two basic modes of existence: authentic and inauthentic.²⁴ Findingness and care are always already modified in one of these

²² Ibid., 100.

²³ Ibid., 115.

²⁴ Here I have to briefly argue my position on the problem of the modal indifference of *Dasein*, which mainly rests on the problem of the interpretation of the meaning of *beziehungsweise* (bzw), which Heidegger uses to refer to the modally indifferent mode of *Dasein*. Compare Jo-Jo Koo, "Heidegger's Underdeveloped Conception of the Undistinguishedness (Indifferenz) of Everyday Human Existence," in *From Conventionalism to Social Authenticity: Heidegger's Anyone and Contemporary Social Theory*, eds. Hans Bernhard Schmid, and Gerhard Thonhauser, 53-79 (Cham: Springer, 2017), 56-70. This expression can have two meanings, a disjunctive and an explicative one. In distinguishing authenticity, inauthenticity, and modal indifference one is making an existential-analytical distinction; if the analysis initially considers *Dasein* as existing first and foremost, and if that is taken to mean *Dasein* as indifferent in regard to its modality, then this just means that it does not consider the aspect of authenticity/inauthenticity. This does not mean though that everyday *Dasein* is not inauthentic. Indifference is not a proper existential term, meaning, it does not refer to any original structure of *Dasein*, it is just an analytical, methodological term. Yet, in another sense, *Dasein* truly exists indifferently, in an "indifference of modal sense," as far as it shows itself in the aspect that it exists at all, that it is structured as existence at all. So even as authentic, it still exists "indifferently," in some sense, as far as it exists as thrown, understanding. This bzw is then not to be understood in an exclusive sense of "either." An interpretation of indifference as neither choosing itself nor not

modalities. As there is inauthentic findingness, there is authentic findingness and care.

Authenticity is again not understood adequately in the Heidegger literature, as what is lacking is an interpretation of the authentic meaning of the world, and the meaning of existence is not understood properly from the beginning, as it is understood as unclarified “being” instead of the relation to the relation to being.²⁵ By authenticity one should definitely not understand *exclusively* any specific way of being in the life-world, any specific way of dealing with the pragmatic public world, choosing some life-world possibilities over others, or the possibility thereof.²⁶ The problem of a practical application of the idea of authentic existence, to which I turn later, indeed consists of the question of how to understand authenticity in this practical aspect. However, this should not be understood as its primary meaning.

An authentic relation to the unique being of the world is a relation that is in relation to itself in the way that it is an “active,” dynamic, taken-upon, contributing, co-forming, invested relation to the giving of the unique being of the world, but only as I myself let it happen, only as I “participate” in the happening of this relation in a unique, ownmost manner. Heidegger discovered this motivational principle of authentic existence on the basis of the insights of Dilthey’s hermeneutics (the idea of facticity and the hermeneutic spiral) and phenomenology (the idea of correlation).

choosing itself as authentic, but lost in the they, because it is not yet met with anxiety (see *ibid.*, 61) is a formalistic, unnecessarily schematic and without any phenomenal grounding, as Dasein has always already chosen itself this way or the other, and as it has always already fallen, this is just the meaning of its facticity. In my view, one should always apply Ockham’s razor in interpreting the structure of Dasein; we should not multiply existential structures without necessity. The entire problem can be reduced to the question if in-authentic is fully interchangeable with inauthentic as Jo-Jo Koo observes (*ibid.*, 68) and proposes (*ibid.*, 70) that Dasein is in the mode of indifference not fully but only relatively value-neutral. At this point, this becomes pure speculation and arbitrary ascribing of concepts. With regard to textual support: Heidegger does not claim that the entire analysis of the first division, until the analysis of the they is an analysis of a modally indifferent Dasein, but that this is a goal of this analysis, reached in the analysis of being-in (the world) as such. The real existential question is rather, why does *Dasein* has to be always already modified, always authentic or inauthentic? Heidegger answers: because it is in each case mine, that is to say, because in its facticity it is an issue for itself as its ownmost possibility. See also Magda King’s interpretation of the indifference of everydayness as meaning that the distinction between the authentic and inauthentic self has not yet come to light. King, 42.

²⁵ A widespread understanding of the “existential philosophical” view of motivation seems to be one that sees the freedom of existence as some empty self-relation of “being” without any positive character that could serve as a basis for an ought. The understanding of authenticity that is prevalent in the literature, is centered on pragmatic concerns with the meaning of social norms.

²⁶ Or, on the other hand, as Dreyfus’ interpretation goes, the insight into the fundamental indifference of choice, stemming from anxiety and fallness; see Dreyfus, 337.

Authenticity means taking upon oneself the groundless freedom of one's existence, as nothing intra-worldly is finally the ground of one's relation to the relation to the being of the world. It means the freedom of the interpretation always starting from existence itself, not from the life-world. Being transparent in one's freedom is a condition for being transparent in one's uniqueness, and vice versa. Both moments are connected and founded in their co-equality in the groundlessness of existence.

Authentic Dasein frees itself from falling in the public world and thus transcends it toward the being of the world as such. With the transcendence of the world I thus mean that the world as such, in its being, shows itself only in transcending the everyday world. In releasement from the life-world existence, it enables itself as a released openness for the enigma of the being of the world, covered over in everyday existing by constant appropriation and clinging to the proximate being meaning. However, Dasein can exist authentically only insofar as it stays a problem, an enigma for itself. Nevertheless, this is possible only in attempting the creation of new meaning.

Existential analysis ascertains that man's existence always contains a motivational principle, a *conatus*, a drive toward an authentic meaningful relation to the world of being as such (not some "pure will to live"), even if all the classic, standard psychical motivators, be their emotional, social, or ethical, are taken away from him. This drive is a drive toward a free meaningful relation to that one has to exist at all, to be in relation to the world, to accept oneself as a constant problem, burden, task of this relation.

Authentic findingness and care as motivational principles can be understood only in opposition to the falling of Dasein. In falling, Dasein turns away from findingness of care as such, the free having to exist (as a relation to the relation to being). It transposes it into the ever-new dealings with beings. In falling it seems like the only possibilities of meaningful self-interpretation that are available to existence are those that it has already discovered in the world, even if it has created them itself, this created character gets covered over. However, the structure of the life-world is such that its purposefulness exhausts itself sooner or later and boredom and depression can set in, as also the relation to the relation with the being of the world is understood only from this limited life-world perspective.

Meanwhile, the unique relation to the relation with the enigmatic unique being of the world, as long as it is understood as such, cannot be exhausted, except as it can fall back into falling. In the authentic orientation of existence, the being of the world shows itself as a transcendent, never exhaustible, absolute meaning, which constantly calls existence into relation with it and into the self-relation, as a meaning that has to be created ever anew, against the tendency toward falling.

In authentic existence then, what is always at issue is preserving the motivationally structured problematic openness for this openness of the meaning

of the being of the world as such, preserving the possibility that the world can address one in a unique meaningful way in its transcendence, which can show itself in aesthetical, ethical, sublimely natural, and other ways. What Dasein, as always already fallen, has always already lost in this falling is then the problematic, enigmatic unique drive to the relation to the meaning of the being of the world as an enigma; authentic findingness dictates that it has to always gain it back anew.

Authentic findingness means the awareness of existence that has to tend toward the relation with the unique being of the world for the sake of that relation itself, not for the sake of something intra-worldly. The authentic task of existing is then to exist as a unique ground of the problematic, enigmatic transcendence of the world.²⁷ Dasein has a possibility of creating new meaning as far as it has a possibility of creating a unique relation to the relation with the being of the world, a unique form of original unity with the being of the world, in self-interpretation.

As the being of the world is enigmatic, the very relation to this being is itself eminently enigmatic and problematic and in this way meaningfully motivated. The “feeling” of a duty to oneself as existence that can motivate consistently, can be experienced only in relation to the problematic unique transcendence of the world.

This means that there is an existential self, without regard to the self or personal identity constituted in the life-world. From this freedom, new meaning can be created in the life-world. This freedom can function as a principle of motivation, even when all the motivational factors in the life-world have been exhausted.

What motivates the transition from the inauthentic to the authentic mode of findingness (care) is finitude, in the sense of the possibility of not-being in the relation with the being of the world. Finitude manifests itself in all limit possibilities of existence (boredom, anxiety).

From the groundlessness of existence, namely that meaning is fundamentally not founded in anything intra-worldly, the relation toward that groundlessness can open up, opening up a view that there still remains nevertheless a meaningful relation. As this relation, as groundless, not founded in anything intra-worldly, is unique, I can project meaning from this uniqueness of the relation, as far as I let it enlighten my life-world interactions.

V. Conclusion

The problem of the practical application of these insights to concrete everyday life, the dialogue of life and existence, should be perceived as a persistent problem, task, and challenge, not as something solved in advance. What kind

²⁷ Tugendhat poses the question of authentic motivation and sees the truth, understood as the self-disclosure of *Dasein* as the motivational principle for the transition to authenticity; see Tugendhat, *Wahrheitsbegriff*, 319-320. This seems to me too formalistic, for what has to be explained is exactly why the authentic self-disclosure of *Dasein* motivates it in its authentic existence.

of theoretical, ethical, and aesthetical relation should I adopt toward the world in view of the findingness of my having to exist, to be in relation to my relation with the world?

The deep motivator is the unique relation to one's own relation to the relation to the being of the world as a problem, being for oneself the unique problem of the relation to the world. The practical question is then, through which relations can the individual cultivate their own unique problemat�icity in relation to the enigma of the being of the world? At least in principle, the care for the unique relation to the unique being of the world can motivate the relation to life as a whole, which can then motivate particular actions in the life-world.

Authentic moments of relation to the relation with the being of the world may be rare, but one can cultivate a disposition that induces such moments, and these moments can enlighten all our actions in the life-world. At the same time, this relation to the relation to the being of the world is intuitively, emotionally available.

In philosophical tradition, the "ought," motivation, is always deduced from some prior essence of man and then imposed as a principle of action, as a self-imposed norm.²⁸ Meanwhile, in an existential perspective, the "ought" is already implied in the very structure of existence, thrown in its having to exist, to be in relation to the relation to being, which can only be freely accepted. In a motivational regard, this existential perspective is well-founded in phenomenology and appeals to a phenomenally real content of existence, while the idealistic motivational principle always necessarily remains on a level of a postulate, which can be effective only insofar as it is a specific formulation of the existential drive toward a self-interpretative relation to the world. Contrary to the traditional theory of motivation, where the thought of the final purpose of the highest possible fulfilment or actualization of capacities is central, the existential theory of motivation proposes that what motivates is only the fact that Dasein has to develop and cultivate its unique, ownmost relation to the problem of the relationship with the being of the world, for the sake of this problem itself, as well as the practical forms of this relation in communication with the life-world.

However, this means that any theory that postulates as a motivational principle any form of spontaneity, is fundamentally wrong. Appealing to such a posited capacity can be effective in practice only because it happens to hit on the

²⁸ However, in Fichte there is the factual moment of the *Anstoss*. In Aristotle, this relation of freedom and thought is more complicated, as the ought follows from the free relation to the natural necessity, purpose (telos). See Taylor Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse and Authenticity in Being and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 133. One should distinguish the purpose as only a rational thought and as a motivational principle. Carman discusses this in connection with Heidegger's distinction of for-the-sake-of-itself and purpose. Heidegger's view would probably be that rational purpose alone lacks motivation; this is also in line with Aristotle's metaphysics (see the relation of will and reason in his theory of the soul).

co-equalness of having to exist and freedom, in the way of appealing to freedom. Both philosophical praxis and all forms of therapy, counselling, and psychological therapies in general, presuppose an enlightened, Cartesian rational individual, a subject that is capable of understanding themselves analytically and, on the basis of this understanding, motivate some presupposed principle of will.

Contemporary psychological theories have taken over the Aristotelian model of purposeful drive, will, but at the same time cut it off from transcendence, in relation to which this model can only be meaningful. It is an idealist, cognitivist presupposition that values themselves motivate. In fact, having values presupposes a certain rationalistic relation to one's own existence. Heidegger's existential analytic uncovers the original groundlessness of man. It does not promise nor offer faith, trust in any values, norms, purpose, life form, happiness, good, fulfilment of potential, etc. It offers only insight and acceptance of the original groundlessness of the relation to the being of the world, and its motivational structure.

It is thus a fundamental mistake, if the everyday, normal life is presupposed as a standard, as a normal expression and form of motivation, and if one tries to appeal to non-normalized existence with this same standardized model, out of the life-world instead of from existence in its findingness. Such an approach overlooks a problematic aspect, the only one which can truly, consistently and persistently motivate for meaning, namely, that one has to always exist meaningfully anew and answer for oneself the practical question of how it is uniquely possible for one's existence in connection with the life-world. Psychology cannot reach to the original uniqueness of the individual, to existence as the relation to the relation to being and its motivational structure, it cannot conceptually reach uniqueness of existence, and for that reason cannot adequately grasp the principle of deep, persistent motivation.

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