

Befindlichkeit: [1]

Heidegger and the Philosophy of Psychology

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In this paper I will outline Heidegger's basic conception of the human feeling capacity and try to show the important implications of his conception. A new word is also needed because the usual way people think about "feeling" is greatly changed in Heidegger's way of thinking.

I will first offer a round delineation of Heidegger's concept in my own words, along with some discussion of the relation between philosophy and psychology. This will enable the reader to understand the relevance of what I will next present: an excerpt and some observations from psychotherapy, and why a new concept is needed in psychological theory. A few remarks that are again on the philosophical level will conclude my preliminaries.

I will then present Heidegger in his own words ([Section II](#)).

In this way I will give its application to psychology before I present

Heidegger's conception itself in detail. I would like the reader to see the lack of the needed concept, indeed, to become hungry for it, to see where it is needed and what its outlines have to be. Then, after I present Heidegger, I will go on to further application in the more usual order.

I. INTRODUCTION TO BEFINDLICHKEIT

Befindlichkeit is among the most frequently misunderstood concepts in Heidegger's work. Certainly it is the most important among those that are frequently misunderstood. *Befindlichkeit* is one of Heidegger's three basic parameters of human existence (*Existenziale*) which are involved in most of his other conceptions. The other two basic parameters are understanding and speech. The three are inherently interrelated so that one can only understand them together. In outlining them we will therefore go to the core of Heidegger's philosophy.

Heidegger says that *Befindlichkeit* refers to what is ordinarily called "being in a mood," and also what is called "feeling" and "affect." But Heidegger offers a radically different way of thinking about this ordinary experience. *Befindlichkeit* refers to the kind of beings that humans are, that aspect of these beings which makes for them having moods, feelings, or affects.

But Heidegger thinks about this human being in a very different way than most people do, and so he also thinks about mood and feeling very differently.

Let me give a rough initial impression of Heidegger's very different basic conception, *Befindlichkeit*.

In German a common way of asking "How are you?" is "Wie befinden Sie sich?" This literally says "How do you find yourself?" One can also say to a sick person "Wie ist Ihr Befinden?" ("How do you feel?") The same form can also be used to say that something or someone is situated somewhere, or in some way. For example, one can say, "The White House *finds itself* in Washington, D.C.," or "I find myself in Chicago," or "I find myself in happy circumstances."^[2]

"Sich befinden" (finding oneself) thus has three allusions: The reflexivity of finding oneself; feeling; and being situated. All three are caught in the ordinary phrase, "How are you?" That refers to how you feel but also to how things are going for you and what sort of situation you find yourself in. To answer the question you must find yourself, find how you already are. And when you do, you find yourself amidst the circumstances of your living.

Heidegger coined a clumsy noun from the German colloquial forms. To translate it, let us not look for an existing noun in English, since he found none in German. His noun is like "how-are-you-ness" or perhaps "self-finding."

The reason for being careful about these allusions, and for keeping his sense of the word, is because *Befindlichkeit* is a new conception and cannot be rendered in old ones.

To view feelings, affects, and moods as *Befindlichkeit* differs from the usual view in the following ways:

1. Heidegger's concept denotes how *we sense ourselves in situations*. Whereas feeling is usually thought of as something inward, Heidegger's concept refers to something both inward and outward, but before a split between inside and outside has been made.

We are always situated, in situations, in the world, in a context, living in a certain way *with others*, trying to achieve this and avoid that.

A mood is not just internal, it is this living in the world. We sense how we find ourselves, and we find ourselves in situations.

Americans might say that "Befindlichkeit" is an "interactional" concept, rather than an "intrapsychic" one. But it is both and exists before the distinction is made. "Interaction" is also inaccurate for another reason. It assumes that first there are two, and only then is there a relation between them.

For Heidegger, humans *are* their living in the world with others. Humans are livings-in, and livings-with.

2. A second difference from the usual conception of "feeling" lies in this: *Befindlichkeit* always already has *its own understanding*. (Here is Heidegger's second basic parameter of human existence: "understanding.") We may not know what the mood is about, we may not even be specifically aware of our mood, nevertheless there is an understanding of our living in that mood. It is no merely internal state or reaction, no mere coloring or accompaniment to what is happening. We have lived and acted in certain ways for certain purposes and strivings and all this is going well or badly, but certainly it is going in some intricate way. How we are faring in these intricacies is in our mood. We may not know that in a cognitive way at all; it is in the mood nevertheless, implicitly.

This understanding is active; it is not merely a perception or reception of what is

happening to us. We don't come into situations as if they were mere facts, independent of us. We have had some part in getting ourselves into these situations, in making the efforts in response to which these are now the facts, the difficulties, the possibilities, and the mood has the implicit "understanding" of all that, because this understanding was inherent already in how we lived all that, in an active way.

3. This understanding is *implicit*, not cognitive in the usual sense. It differs from cognition in several ways: It is sensed or felt, rather than thought--and it may not even be sensed or felt directly with attention. It is not made of separable cognitive units or any definable units. When you are asked, "How are you?" you don't find only recognizables, but always also an implicit complexity. Certainly one can reflect and interpret, but that will be another, further step.

4. Heidegger says that speech is always already involved in any feeling or mood, indeed in any human experience. Speech is the articulation of understanding, but this articulation doesn't first happen when we try to say what we feel. Just as *Befindlichkeit* always already has its understanding, so also does it always already have its spoken articulation. This doesn't at all mean that there is always a way to say what one lives in words. But there are always speakings, with each other, and listening to each other, involved in any situation, and implicit in any living. Hearing each other, being open to each other's speech, is part of what we *are*, the living we *are*. And so it is always already involved in our living, whatever we may then actually say or not say.

So we see that, although Heidegger is talking about the ordinary experience of feelings, affects, or moods, he has given that experience a very different structure. We sense ourselves living in situations with others, with an implicit understanding of what we are doing and with communication between us always already involved. A feeling is all that. Our new conception of feeling has the structure I just outlined.

A Note on the Relation of Philosophy and Psychology

Certainly there is a difference between the theoretical structure of the concept of feeling, and a mere pointing to a feeling. *Befindlichkeit* names the structure, "feeling," "affect," or "mood," and these words can continue to name the ordinary event they always have. But the difference between philosophy and psychology is something else, not the difference between something and theory about it. After all, there is theory in psychology, too.

Philosophical discussion moves on a level from which all or many of the sciences are affected simultaneously. Philosophical discussion may, at some point, seem to be about people and sound like psychology, or about society and sound like sociology, or about matter and energy and sound like physics. But not only the science which seems to be the topic, rather also many others, will be altered by a philosophical discussion. I will illustrate this shortly, in order to be clear.

Philosophy moves on a different level than science. One can say that it is one level more abstract than science. I will say this first in terms of kinds of concepts, and then in terms of kinds of beings, as Heidegger does.

A philosophy examines and sometimes alters *basic* conceptions. That is why there is no way to explain a basic conception in terms of other, more familiar ones. One can grasp a basic conception only by grasping it. It is a new conceptual structure, a new pattern.

What I mean here by "basic" gets at the difference between philosophy and any science, and also the usefulness of philosophy for science. Let me be more specific.

Most people, scientists and others, do not usually think about what *kind* of concept they are using. The most current *kind* is modeled on ordinary things like stones. A stone can be moved from one place to another without changing. It is still the same stone, now in a different spot. A thing like a stone may relate to other things, of course; for example, it may hit and break a porcelain pitcher. But these relations are external and additional to what the stone is. Whether it breaks a pitcher or not, even if it just sits in one spot, it is a stone. It would not be usual to say that a stone is pitcher-breaking, or window-smashing, or any such interaction.

Without being aware of it or capable of examining it (for then they would be engaged in philosophy), scientists currently tend to use this *kind* of concept.

An "electron," for example, is a thing-like concept of this kind. In one puzzling experiment, one electron seems to go through two different slits in two different locations. While an electron differs from a stone in many ways, of course, the same kind of concept is involved in how both are thought of. An electron must be in one place or another, not both. Similarly, there is a puzzle in biology why given well-defined molecules suddenly assume highly important additional powers when in the company of certain other molecules in a certain tissue. As a thing with its own traits, regardless of anything else (as this kind of concept renders everything), this is not understandable. The molecule cannot *be* its different interactions, it has to *be* with certain traits all its own, and only with these is it thought to interact.

Psychologists, for example, use concepts like "self," "ego," "perception," "personal interaction," "feeling" or "affect," usually formulated in thing-like kinds of concepts. A self or an ego is like a thing in the person. A person is a larger thing in which the ego or self, as a smaller thing, resides like a stone in a box. Perception is a stimulus-thing making a representation-thing inside the box: Personal interaction is a relation between two such boxes, each separate before they interact, like a stone and a pitcher. Feelings or affects are little things inside the box, sometimes within the self and sometimes in the rest of the box. People supposedly feel these inside feeling things directly, but can feel other people only by imagining an analogy with their own feelings.

Heidegger brings us an entirely different *kind* of concept. Too roughly, I could say it is of a being that is its relating. But I say this roughly, and it is only for a simple contrast with the above caricature of the current kind. What I wish to convey is the level of discussion, not a discussion of this topic or that, but of *kinds* of concepts. I would like to bring home the importance of differences in kinds of concepts for all sciences.

Note that it must have implications for any science to develop a different kind of concept, for example, some of Heidegger's concepts such as *Befindlichkeit*. It eliminates certain ways of making distinctions, and replaces them with others. In my simple four point rendition of *Befindlichkeit*, we saw how the concept precedes and eliminates the distinction between *inside and outside*, as well as between *self and others*. Similarly, it alters *affective) cognitive*. Later I will show how it also alters the distinctions we are used to in space and time: here/there, and past/present/future. We will want to see exactly how Heidegger refashions all this, we will want to see a sharp and clear alternative structure to the one being eliminated, but it is certainly clear already that such basic changes in kind of concept must affect any science, not just

psychology.

Let me now make the same point in a more Heideggerian way. (Of course, it is then not literally exactly the same point.)

Heidegger's philosophy is ontology. He is not directly concerned with kinds of concepts, but with kinds of being. (Of course, that leads to kinds of concepts, too.)

A tool, for example, *is* in a different way than a stone *is*; they are different kinds of being. Even if I use a stone as a tool; already it, has a being like that of a tool; it *is* in a different way: Now it lies ready-to-hand in my tool chest, and it *is-for*. It is for the use, to which its shape and weight fit it, for me. Now it is in a way that involves me and my activity. It is no longer in that way in which all of its being was just there, by itself. A tool *is* contextually; that is a different way to be.

People *are* different than either stones or tools. They live-in and live-with. They live-in a world they themselves define with their living-in.

People, too, *are* not inside their skins, but *are* their living-in the world and their living-with others.

(In my terms, what kind of a concept is "living-in" and "living-with"? We will want to see that as a clear and sharp conceptual structure.)

Heidegger calls the human being "Dasein" (being-here.) This is again an ordinary colloquial German word. "Das menschliche Dasein" means something like "the human condition" or "being human." As with *Befindlichkeit*, Heidegger uses all the allusions of the colloquial form, both of "being" and of "here."

Humans are not at all some things among others, as dead bodies might be. Humans are being-here, they *are* in a self-locating sense. A stone can be here for me, but not for itself. This "here" is in the world, in situations, and situations are always with-others.

When Heidegger discusses *Dasein*, he is not discussing only humans, but also everything else that is-for humans, or is accessible to humans. It lies in the nature of the human way of being that other beings *are* in relation to it. The stone may lie on the table, but the stone's kind of being is not an openness to something it lies on. A human observer positions stone and table in relation to each other in space and dynamics, but their being doesn't do that.

Therefore, how anything is studied in any science depends first upon the nature of humans as open to access to . . . whatever is studied. Mathematics is not just there, its units and series have to be constituted by Dasein. Physics isn't just there, human observation and measurement are certain specific modes of how humans *areas* generating time and space and things. The basic ontological structure of Dasein therefore alters how we basically conceive of anything else, if we first consider that structure of Dasein.

If we speak of *Befindlichkeit* not merely as something about humans, but as basic to the way humans are open to anything, much more than psychology is affected. A basic method results, in which inquiry articulates what is at first only sensed, found implicitly. One must not forget that, as if to begin with sharp conceptions. The beginning is always how we sense ourselves, find ourselves already with . . . whatever we study, in an implicitly "understood" way, in our living.

Whatever conceptions are developed, in any science, they need to be related back to the implicit lived understanding we already have of the topic, and need to be viewed as articulations of that. Much changes if one employs such a method.

The structural parameters of this kind of concept ("Dasein," "Befindlichkeit"), too, as I have already said, will importantly alter any science.

Both method and structural parameters will of course have important implications for psychology, among other sciences. Let me at last go into that now. Even so, I must ask my reader to follow me on both levels, philosophically as well as in psychology. For philosophy my discussion will be an example, an instance. For psychology it will be directly pertinent. Philosophically, notice the kind of concept, and kind of being. For psychology notice our need for this specific concept (not only the kind). Of course we are talking about the same human being, and the same aspect of that human being, the structure of its "finding itself" in a mood, affect or feeling. Philosophically, that is basic to how we *are* and anything else is. Only one of the implications of that is the kind of concepts we use, and one instance of this being, and this kind of concept, is in psychology.

Some Observations of Psychotherapy

During a psychotherapy interview, the patient quite often says something, then stops, senses inwardly for half a minute or a minute, then says: "No, what I said isn't quite right. I can't say how it feels, yet, but it's different than I said."

At such times it is quite clear that more than just thoughts and words are being worked with. If the patient had only thoughts and words, there would be nothing to check against, nothing to indicate that a statement that seemed right and true is, after all, not right. The statement may still be true, may still describe events, behavior, but the patient has something else there which is felt directly, and that cannot yet be said. Although the patient does not know what that is, it is definite enough to indicate with certainty that it is not ... what the patient had just said it was.

The experience is somewhat analogous to forgetting someone's name. -We then still have "a feel for" that name, which is quite sufficient to enable us to reject any number of other names. We know it isn't Smith or Jamison or Rostenkowsy, and we can also sense the specificity of exactly the name we seek. This specificity is in some sense "in" the "feel" of the name, which we have.

If we, as it were, touch that "feel" of the name over and over, "touch" it with our attention, it may suddenly "open," so that the name appears. Then there is an unmistakable tension-release, a relief in the body, one exhales a long breath, whew.... There is no doubt, then, that this was indeed the name one had forgotten. There is an unmistakable continuity between the erstwhile "feel" and this name.

The metaphoric language I am using is troublesome: the name is "in" the "feel," there is "continuity" between them, the "feel" "opens"; none of this is theoretically satisfying.

With Heidegger we could say that the name is part of the "understanding" that the *Befindlichkeit* has, our feeling not just of the name, but of all our living with that person.

Let me continue the example. We could have saved ourselves the trouble of remembering, and have picked any name, or perhaps the best sounding name we can

find. We could have insisted that that's the name, all right. After all, it is the best-sounding and most desirable name. Or, perhaps we might have found the name by matching a name to the person's presumed ancestry, cultural group, or for some other intellectual reason. We don't do that, because we know that that is not authentic remembering.

Everyone also knows the case when we are close, but not quite right. "It must be _____," we say, expressing our dissatisfaction and unease in that very phrase: "It must be." Although it sounds like necessary concluding, we have not really remembered.

In the following excerpt from a psychotherapy interview, the patient at each step senses that what she just said isn't right, although she cannot yet say what would be right.

It must also be noticed how different this process is from reasoning ("It must be ..."). Once she is able to articulate what she senses, at each step, it makes perfect sense and we can think about it logically in a rational way. But the steps she actually takes differ from rational ones, though they are certainly not irrational.

What does seem irrational is the way in which each new step begins by contradicting the previous one. Each step says, "It's not what I just said, but rather. . . ." Once we hear what it is, then that too makes sense. But the steps are not the reasonable chain that can be constructed in retrospect, after we have heard her. If we examine what we have at one step, we cannot, from that, get by reasoning or inference to the next step.

The sensing between each step and the next corrects her and changes the direction in a way that could not have been known in advance.

She says:

"I'm late. I knew I would be. I have this magic way of saying 'It will be all right,' when I don't have any idea how. When I make a schedule or a plan I put more things in it than I could possibly get done. But I can't choose among them. I'm afraid of making the wrong choice, I guess."

There is some silence. Then she says:

"It's not about making a wrong choice. I don't know what that is."

More silence. Then:

"There's something there, like 'I want it all!' That's really childish, like kids wanting everything they see."

More silence.

"It's not wanting it all. It's not wanting what I'm supposed to want. My sister was the one that did all the right things. I couldn't do what she did, always fit in. I became the one that had secrets, and did the things that were dangerous and not supposed to be done. I still like to endanger myself, go out with men where I can tell it won't be nice. It's an excitement, like violence, it takes over your whole mind. Living dangerously. That's what that wanting is."

More silence.

"Well, I don't really want that. When I think of them telling us how we're supposed to be, then I get this feeling of wanting that violence and excitement. But, if I just think, well, what would I like, then I don't want that stuff."

In this example one can see what I call "content mutation."^[3] First, the content is why she is late and how unrealistic her scheduling is. It seems to be about a fear of making wrong choices. Then it isn't that at all, but a childish wanting everything. Then it isn't a childish wish for everything, but a wish for excitement and danger, violence. Finally, it is a reaction to authority beyond which a different wanting emerges.

In retrospect the steps can make a chain of thought, but moving forward each step comes by contradicting the previous one. What does this contradicting? It is the "sensing" that happens during the silences between. She has the "feel" of it, and this feel is each time different than what she has said.

This patient took only a few minutes for this process. The same kind of process, often more slowly, is found in any psychotherapy when it is effective at all. (I say this on the basis of research findings I shall cite shortly.)

Psychological Theory -- Why a New Concept is Needed

Actually, the new kind of concept Heidegger makes possible is needed in many instances in psychology. I will pursue only the concept of "feeling" or "affect" and show how it needs to be restructured.

I will follow the same four points I presented before, now in relation to our psychotherapy excerpt.

1. She consults a feeling between her statements, yet this-feeling is of how she has been planning, living, choosing men and getting into situations. Although the feeling seems "internal" as she sits there, silently, it is of her living in the situations in which she finds herself, and of course with other people. A feeling must be thought of both as sensed and as in the world.

2. She begins with a cognition ("I must be afraid of making wrong choices."), but the feeling. has its own understanding. From the feeling emerges something ("I want it all") which seems childish to her. The feeling again has its own understanding (desire to "live dangerously"). She now has the cognition that she wants danger. Again, the feeling has its own understanding (It's in relation to "them telling us how we're supposed to be."). A feeling must be thought of as containing its own understanding of how one is living.

3. A feeling's understanding or meaning is implicit, first in the sense that it may not yet be known at all. Secondly, the meaning is implicit in a more inherent respect; implicit in that it is never quite equal to any cognitive units. There is always more to go. Thirdly, it is a wholistic complexity. the feeling isn't just about being late, not just about scheduling, not just about choices, not just about men, nor these as separated things that happen to be together. Rather, there is a complex texture. Even in our short excerpt one can see how much was implicit in the feeling of--what seemed to be only--her chagrin at being late.

We also see (to be discussed later) the "lifting out" character of how cognitions are related to the feeling: at each step something is lifted out that is then both felt and cognized.

Furthermore, in the movement from implicit to being lifted out, the feeling itself changes. If it were not for this change, psychotherapy would not be effective. People would come to know much about themselves, but would not change. When psychotherapy is done

by mere inferences, people indeed don't change. The felt understanding by which they live remains the same, and inarticulate. They seem to know why they act as they do, but not how to be different. In contrast, when feeling[4] (as complex texture) leads to this "lifting out," there is a directly felt changing of the feeling at each step. In our excerpt this is most visible at the last step, but that would not have been reached had the previous steps not each made its change in the feeling.

Thus feeling must be understood as *implicitly* meaningful, and as changing when there are steps of "lifting out," steps of explication or articulation. *To articulate is to live further. To go back* into how one *has been* living is a *forward-moving* step.

4. The feeling knows how to speak and demands just the right words. The feeling, more exactly, is sufficient to bring the words to the person's speech. We can see that, if we compare what her next steps are, with what they would have been, had she pursued the implications of what she first said. No logic could have led her as she did in fact proceed.

We don't want to think that the words were *in* the feeling in the sense that pebbles are *in* a box. How language relates to feeling and living needs re-thinking. But it is clear that just as in living she uses words as an inherent part of living, so also does the feeling-understanding already have the power to guide *speech*, even though, at first it is only felt.

A series of research studies[5] has shown that patients who engage in the kind of steps I described are successful in psychotherapy, while those who usually do not work in this way fail. Success is sometimes measured by patient and therapist judgment after the therapy is over, sometimes by psychometric tests given before and after therapy.

How was it possible to *measure* the degree to which patients engage in this process? It turns out to be quite measurable. Patients are highly consistent in how they approach psychotherapy. Two four minute segments from a tape-recorded interview are sufficient to give the same result as an analysis of whole hours. It is possible to pick out phrasings such as "I don't know what *that* is," as in our excerpt, statements that refer to something directly sensed but not known in a sharp cognitive way. It is noticeable that this kind of phrasing occurs between two quite different versions of content. There are also other signs, such as metaphoric language, often very original, that would have no meaning at all if it did not refer to what is sensed but not yet capable of being thought in usual terms. Raters of such tape-recorded segments arrive at reliable agreements. These scores correlate with the patient's, the therapist's, and the test's evaluation of outcome.

The older theories are remarkably poor for thinking about this observed behavior in psychotherapy. They are theories of what, rather than how--theories of what is supposedly *in* people, not theories about how the process I have described leads to change.

It is known that there is more *knowledge* in the person, somehow, than the person consciously possesses, but this is viewed as the "unconscious," a puzzling realm of internal entities. We have seen, however, that it is quite conscious and awarely felt or sensed, both while living and when attending to feeling.

It is known that complex implications and connections exist "beneath" any simple human event, but these are viewed as sharp and defined entities that are just like

cognitions, only outside awareness. We have seen, however, that there is an implicit texture, a wholistic living.

It is thought that "feelings" are important for psychotherapy, but the word is taken to mean emotions. We need a new word that will distinguish emotions from what I call "felt sense," feelings as sensed complexity. Above all, we need a new concept! Really, such a new concept for feeling would also require changing most of the related concepts in our theories.

What matters most-in psychotherapy is "feeling" in the sense of being unclear and sensing an implicit complexity, a wholistic sense of what one is working on. This can be very quietly sensed, or it may be very emotional, but that is not the crucial question at all.

Emotions--recognizable joy, sadness, or anger--any of these may be part of such sensing, or it may not. Even when it is, the felt sense is more complex and less well known than such a familiar emotion.

Explicit cognitions emerge from a felt sense, but this is not to say that *they* were "in there," in explicit form, in a layer beneath. An implicit understanding sensed in living, and its implicit capacity for speech, must be understood as living-in-context.

We need a new conceptual pattern for our concept of "felt sense," one which has the more basic unity preceding the inner/outer split, the self/other split, the affect/cognition split, and the acting/speaking split.

Philosophical Note

Human beings *are* with an implicit felt understanding, that is to say, they *are* "ontologically" because this is an understanding of being-of their own being and the being of others, things, and tools involved in their own being-with and being-in.

Heidegger uses the word "ontic" for ordinary assertions of anything, and the word "ontological" for the understanding of the kind of being of anything. Thus, to say that I have a felt sense, now, of what I want to say, is an ontic statement. In contrast, to explicate the structure of how there is such an implicit sense of what I may later say at length, that would be ontology.

It needs to be clear that, although we distinguished the philosophical and ontological level from the ontic (for example, psychology), the two are about the same world, the same things, the same beings. One is an account of the basic structure of the other. If they were not about the same beings, there would have to be a separate realm of beings, just for philosophy to be about!

While Heidegger, when delineating *Befindlichkeit*, speaks of the basic structure of the human being-in-the-world, and thus of the world, and of any subject-matter of any science insofar as humans have access to it, this *Befindlichkeit* is nevertheless the same feeling or sensing studied in psychology.

This is so doubly. First, it is so because the "ontic" and the "ontological" are two ways of considering the same being. Secondly, it is so especially because humans *are* inherently ontological. While one seems only to understand some particular living one is doing, one is always implicitly understanding one's own manner of being-as being human, that is to say, as being-in-the-world, always already in the midst of situations,

with *how one is* quite open to events and in play, in the living itself as ongoing.

Heidegger says humans are "pre-ontological" (B&T 12), insofar as this understanding of one's way of being is implicit, rather than articulated.

Later I will give many implications that follow if we restructure the psychological concepts.

To be sure, Heidegger, whom we will now let speak in his own words, speaks on the philosophical level. As I said earlier, implications follow not just for psychology, but for any science, and for life. But it will also be immediately clear from what Heidegger says, how--and exactly how--we might restructure theoretical concepts in psychology, especially the concept of feeling or affect.

It is an error to make of *Befindlichkeit* something different than the way humans are feelingly, as if in addition to that there were some other, mysterious, purely philosophical something. *Befindlichkeit* has been little understood just because as a merely abstract principle it makes no sense. Heidegger is somehow not believed, when he flatly insists that he is talking about how we live, and calling our attention to what we can directly sense. Then he is made to sound abstract and ununderstandable.

Not only does psychology and any science study the same being that ontology clarifies, also for ontology itself it is vital to begin with "Befindliches," with what is livingly sensed directly--and every statement of ontology lifts out something we can then directly sense, something which we already understood before in a pre-ontological way.

To understand Heidegger experientially (if I may call it that) is not at all to reduce ontology to psychology, it is the only way to do ontology, as he insists. The implications of so understanding him are of course much wider than just for psychology. To understand him experientially is to understand the inherent relation between living, feeling, understanding, and cognitions of any kind.

II. HEIDEGGER ON *BEFINDLICHKEIT*, UNDERSTANDING AND SPEECH

What we indicate *ontologically* by the term "Befindlichkeit" is *ontically* most familiar: the mood, or being moody. (134)[\[6\]](#)

The different modes of *Befindlichkeit* ... have long been well-known ontically under the terms 'affects' and 'feelings'.... (138)

Dasein is always in some mood. A pallid, flat being out of sorts ... is far from being nothing at all... to be has become a manifest burden. One does not *know why*. (134)

Befindlichkeit has always already disclosed one's being-in-the-world as a whole.... (137)

The possibilities of disclosure which belong to cognition reach far too short a way compared with the original and basic disclosure of moods. (134)

Even if Dasein is 'assured' in its belief ... if in rational enlightenment it supposes itself to know ... all this counts for nothing as against the phenomenal facts of the case.... (136)

So we see the difference between how mood discloses the whole of one's being in the world, and how the mood stays "phenomenally," regardless of what one might say to the contrary. What one believes "counts for nothing" as the mood goes right on being what it is. The mood discloses much more fully than one knows. Let us now see how this disclosing and, its understanding differs from ordinary cognition.

Disclosed does not mean known as such and such. (134)

Befindlichkeit always has its understanding, even if only in holding it down. Understanding is always moody. (142)

In *Befindlichkeit* Dasein ... has always already found itself, not in the sense of . . . perceiving itself, rather as finding itself moody. (135)

Understanding is never free-floating, rather always *befindliches*. (339)

(There is) . . . an existential fundamental connection between *Befindlichkeit* and understanding. (340)

We must now see how Heidegger delineates this "being-in-the-world" which is disclosed in a mood, feeling, or affect. How is it that people *are* the being-in-the-world?

In clarifying being-in-the-world we have shown that a bare subject without a world ... never is, and is never given. And so, in the end, an isolated 'I' without others is just as far from being... ever given. The others are always already here with us in our being-in-the-world. (116)

The human being's 'substance' is not spirit as a synthesis of soul and body; it is rather existence. (117)

The work] of Dasein is a with-world (*Mitwelt*). Being-in is being-with . others. (118)

And even when Dasein explicitly addresses itself as 'I, here',... this 'I, here' does not mean a certain special point of an I-thing: rather, it understands itself as a being-in, in terms of the overthere of the world. (119)

Humans are called "*Dasein*," which means being-*here*. This *here* understands itself as a being-*in* the world in relation to the *overthere* of the world. Humans aren't just in space, as if space were just given. The being-*here* in relation to the overthere generates being-*in*-the-world. It is one structure, one pattern. And this is also the structure of feeling:

In being in a mood. .. the pure 'that it is' shows itself, the where-from and where-to remain in the dark ... in everyday life the human does not 'give in' ... to moods, that is to say, does not go after their disclosing. (134-135)

Mood discloses in the manner of turning toward, or turning away from one's own Dasein. The bringing before the 'that it is' . . . may be authentically revealing or inauthentically covering up.... (340)

Dasein, as essentially *befindliches*, has always already got itself into possibilities.... But this means Dasein is ... through and through ... possibility. (144)

Authenticity requires this bringing oneself before how one already is, how one is being-here as disclosed in a mood. Without going after what the mood discloses one cannot be authentic. Authenticity is fundamentally grounded in *Befindlichkeit* and its understanding, and requires bringing oneself before how one is disclosed in the mood.

Being-here (that is to say, the human being) is the possibilities insofar as it is *befindliches*. As we will see now, one's authentic possibilities are only those disclosed in *Befindlichkeit*, for only *Befindlichkeit* and its implicit understanding (which it always already has) discloses how we are thrown into the situations in which we find ourselves (into which we have lived ourselves).

Befindlichkeit always discloses being-in-the-world "as a whole," and the familiar emotions are, for Heidegger, "determined modes" of *Befindlichkeit*. He discusses fear and anxiety. Fear is inauthentic because we attribute the cause to the external world. Anxiety is authentic because it brings us before our own being, and before the essential nature of our own being, its unsubstantial character.

... the phenomenon of the *Befindlichkeit* of Dasein shall be more concretely demonstrated in the determined mode of fear. (140)

In what way is anxiety a distinctive *Befindlichkeit*? *How*, in it, is Dasein brought before itself through its own being (184)

Anxiety arises out of the being-in-the-world as thrown being toward death. (344)

The insignificance of the world, disclosed in anxiety, reveals the nullity of the things of our concerns, or in other words the impossibility of projecting oneself (*sichentwerfen*) on a can-be that is primarily founded in the things of our concerns. (343)

Fear has its occasion in being concerned with the world. Anxiety, in contrast, arises out of Dasein itself.... Anxiety frees *from* possibilities that are nullified, and enables becoming free *for* authentic ones. (344)

Anxiety will thus be part (but only part)^[7] of authentic action, since the authentic possibilities will still be in the world. If anxiety were all there is to authentic *Befindlichkeit*, death would be the only authentic action. But one "lives toward death" in a way that frees for authentic action *in the world*. *Anxiety is only one essential part of authentic action*, because it is always only one specific aspect of the wholistic *Befindlichkeit*:

... fear and anxiety never 'occur' isolatedly in the 'stream of experiencing';

rather, *they* always determine an understanding, or, determine themselves from such an understanding. (344)

Understanding and *Befindlichkeit* are "equally original" and interlocked together.

Understanding is never free-floating. rather always *befindliches*. The here is always disclosed equally originally through mood.... (339)

Understanding sketches out possibilities, or one can say (even in English) it "throws out" possibilities, as one throws out suggestions. The German word "entwerfen" means to sketch, to outline. Part of that word is "werfen" which means throwing. As we saw before:

Dasein, as essentially *befindliches* has always already got itself into possibilities.... But this means Dasein is ... through and through thrown possibility. (144)

Let us now look more exactly at this "throwing"^[8] of possibilities, and the "thrown" nature of humans. It is "moody understanding," or "*befindliches* understanding," which "throws" the possibilities, and as *Befindlichkeit*, we are always already "thrown."

As thrown, Dasein *is* thrown into the kind of being which we call 'throwing out' (*Entwerfen*). (145)

Dasein *is* not something ... which as an addition also possesses that it can be something; rather, it *is* primarily being-possible. (143)

Understanding inherently has the existential structure we call *throwing our* (*Entwurf*). (145)

The character of understanding as throwing constitutes the being-in-the-world ... as the here of a can-be (*Seinkönnen*). (145)

Dasein *is* always more than it factually *is* ... on the ground of ... being constituted through throwing. (145)

One is always already engaged, in the midst of trying something, striving for this or avoiding that, going about something. If we ask, "What are you doing?" it is never just the actual. We are trying to bring about this, or going to that, or making this point or trying to achieve something that is not yet. But this being possible, this way we are the possibilities, is not conscious planning, neither is it unconscious. It is implicit.

Throwing (throwing out possibilities. *Entwerfen*) has nothing to do with relating oneself to a thought-through plan.... The sketch character of understanding does not grasp the possibility thematically, . . . such (thematic) grasping would deprive the sketching precisely of its character as possible, and would reduce it to a given intended content.... (145)

Heidegger doesn't mean by possibility and sketching-throwing a mere not-yet, that is otherwise fully and actually known. Rather, it is the understanding which mood always has, the implicitly lived understanding which is this possibility-sketching. We "know"

what we are about, how we came into the situation, but we don't "know" it in a sharp way, in the kind of "cognition" that is cut off from "affect." We know it, rather, in that way in which a mood always already has its understanding, and in which understanding (as Heidegger defines it) is always moody.

We have seen that in Heidegger's conception the person is not an "I-thing," but a being-in-the-world. But have we lost the person thereby? Is this being-in-the-world not just an extraverted, internally empty way of being only in relation? Heidegger says that this losing oneself in the world is indeed a constant pitfall. To be authentically, we must continually bring ourselves back from being dispersed.

It is in how we bring ourselves back that the authentic essential nature of the self becomes clear.

Authenticity has been largely misunderstood, in Heidegger's philosophy, just because *Befindlichkeit* has not been understood. Authenticity is frequently taken to mean nothing more than living by one's own originaive possibility-sketching, rather than living by what the world says and the possibilities it defines. While this is true of authenticity, it lacks the essence. One could be merely capricious and still fit such a definition. Also, one could live oblivious to much of one's relations to others, and still fit the definition of authenticity. But Heidegger defines authenticity much more exactly, and his definition depends upon *Befindlichkeit*.

As we grasp his definition of authenticity, we will also understand feeling or *Befindlichkeit* much better. His conception of the person will emerge much more basically.

A human being is not a what:

In understanding ... the can-be is no what; rather, it is the being as existing. (143)

We designate 'knowlege of the sell' ... not as a perceptual ... viewing of a self-point, rather an understandingly grasping of the full disclosedness of being-in-the-world *through* its essential parameters, *on through* them. (146)

A human self is not a thing but a process, and a "self" is not a what, but a reflexive structure, the phrasing of which always requires that the word "self" be used twice. In bringing oneself before oneself (or in covering up), the human self is. The self is not, like a point is.

Existing being sights "itself" only so far as it becomes transparent to itself a[8] the constituting aspects of its existence, equally in its being-alongside the world and its being-with others. (146)

But how does this being, which is being-in-the-world, which is the sketching of possibilities that are in the world ... how does it bring itself back from the world, how does it bring itself to itself?

Human beings cannot help being-in-the-world, for that is what they are. But we can continuously bring ourselves back from being lost in the possibilities themselves. But to do this is much different than just sketching out more possibilities. Then we would only be lost in those instead of these.

We are not the possibilities themselves, we are the sketching, the throwing, and also the being-thrown. Since we are the throwing and the being thrown, we are lost as soon as we identify with the possibilities themselves.

And only *because* Dasein (being-here) is its here understandingly, can it disperse and mistake itself. (144)

Since "understanding" means throwing out possibilities, and being this throwing, therefore it is possible to be lost in the possibilities.

And insofar as understanding is *befindliches*... Dasein has always already dispersed and mistaken itself. (144)

The mood is the possibilities we already are, as being thrown into them.

. . . *Befindlichkeit* and understanding . . . characterize the original disclosedness of being-in-the-world. In the way of having a mood Dasein 'sees' possibilities from out of which it is. In the sketching disclosing of such possibilities it is always already in a mood. (148)

"Always already." The possibilities we are, are always already in the mood, and only in the mood are they seen, or known. But the mood, *Befindlichkeit*, *has a special power. It brings the being-here before itself, it finds itself.*

Being in a mood brings Dasein *before* its thrownness, in such a way, however, that the thrownness is not recognized as such, but rather is much more originally disclosed in the 'how one is.' (340)

A special time relation is generated here. By going back to retrieve oneself one goes forward authentically.

We saw earlier how Heidegger views space not as a geometric container in which we happen to be, but as generated by the human being here in relation to a there. Now we also see a new time-relation emerging, not the linear one thing after another, but a going back that is also a going forward, and the only authentic way of going forward.

All three times, past, present, and future are together, but not just merged. We must see the exact, sharp structure of their relations. Although the three are together, "understanding" grounds primarily in the future, as possibility.

Befindlichkeit ... temporalizes itself *primarily* in the having-been. (340)

Being moody, we saw, *brings Dasein before* its thrownness.

The bringing before ... becomes possible only if Dasein's being constantly is as having-been. (340)

That humans exist as having-been is just as true, whether we bring *ourselves before it or not, since we are moody, we already are the havingbeen*, we are it in the "how we are," as we just saw above. Heidegger says that this human way of existing as having-been

... enables the self-finding (*Sich-finden*) in the manner of being *befindlich*. (340)

The basic existential character of mood is *a bringing back to...* (340)

The authentic coming-toward-itself ... is a coming back to the ownmost thrown self ... (this) enables Dasein resolutely to take over that being which it already is. (339)

How is this "coming back" or "bringing back" of *Befindlichkeit* related to the sketching-forward of "understanding"? The exact relation of this "past" of the moody having-been, and the "future" of understanding, makes the authentic present. Let us see exactly how this is structured:

The understanding is . . . primarily future . . . but equally originally determined through having-been and presentness. (337) In running ahead, Dasein brings (*holt*) itself again (*wieder*) forward into its own can-be. The authentic *being* the having-been we call retrieval.

(*Wiederholung*) (339)[\[9\]](#)

In resoluteness the present is ... brought back from distraction with the objects, . . . (and) held in the future and in having-been. (This is) the authentic present. (338)

Past, present, and future are thus not merely serial, as usually viewed, as if they were positions in a line. Instead, each involves the others, and they make one structure together.

Going back is also bringing before oneself. One goes back to "how one is," how one is already existing. One goes back to it, it is always already. It is a having-been. Only in so doing does one retrieve one's authentic possibility-sketching, so that a present is made in which one is ready to act authentically.

Mere caprices, however they may originate from me alone, are not authentic because they don't arise from the being I already am. I must take this being over. If I leave it covered, nevertheless, I am that existing, but inauthentically.

I can only take over the being I already am, by finding myself in my *Befindlichkeit*, and moving forward from this going back and self-finding.

We have now found the person, not at all as some notion of oneself, not at all as some "thing" or spot, or steady entity, but as this finding oneself (in the inauthentic mode of not pursuing one's "how one is," or in the authentic mode of retrieving, going back to bring oneself before oneself).

It is the essential nature of Dasein, not to be a substantial "thing," but rather a being-in and being-with, that is therefore fundamentally open to events. What we are is our living, the existing, and that is how we *are affected* differently than a stone is affected. A stone isn't affected essentially. It is a stone, and then it may be changed in this way or that, while its stoneness continues. Humans *are* being affected. Our being, in Heidegger's view, is always being affected and that is how we find ourselves. We *are* the living-in events with-others, our being rides on the events, is dispersed in what happens, is the being-in what happens. Only in so finding ourselves, can we constantly retrieve ourselves, so that there is a present in which our capacity to be is again and

again our own. That is authenticity.

Being-with is a fundamental aspect of being-in the world. Our situations are always with others. That we can hear each other is inherent in this being-with.

Hearing is constitutive for speech ... listening to ... is the existential being open of Dasein as being-with.... Indeed, listening constitutes the primary authentic being-open of Dasein.... (163)

Dasein hears because it understands.(162) Speech is constitutive for the being of the here, that is to say, for *Befindlichkeit* and understanding. (163)

Speech is existentially equally original with Befindlichkeit and understanding (Heidegger's italics). Understandability is always already articulated even before it is appropriately interpreted. Speech is the articulation of understandability. (161)

Just as Heidegger uses the term "understanding" for the implicit sense of our mood, that is to say, for something much earlier that pre-figures what we usually call by that name, so also he uses "articulation" (*gegliedert*) for the inherent speakability of mood and understanding, before we put it into actual words.

However, "articulation" is not a good translation. "Gegliedert" means having interconnected links and parts, being structured, having interlinked links, not like a snail or applesauce but like a skeleton or an animal with articulated limbs.

It is clear that Heidegger means that, in how we are as *Befindlichkeit* and understanding-sketching, which is not just applesauce-like but has structure. That is the inherent pre-condition of actual speech, and is equally original, equally basic, inherent in *Befindlichkeit* and understanding. This characteristic of people is inherent in what humans are as being-with. Understandability means not only that I understand implicitly what I am doing, but that others do, and that I am understandable to them and they to me. Thus the basis of communication lies in the nature of our being as being-with, and without it there would be no world, no situations for us to be-in.

This concludes my quotations of Heidegger on *Befindlichkeit* and its implicit understanding and communicability.

Earlier I said that in addition to the conceptual structure with which we must think about feeling, in psychology, *Befindlichkeit* also has important implications for method generally. Again, what he says is philosophical and examines how we can know anything. Specific sciences are specific ways of knowing some specific topic. What he says also applies to the sciences, of course.

Heidegger on *Befindlichkeit* and Method

Befindlichkeit is a basic existential way in which Dasein (being-here) is its here. It not only characterizes Dasein ontologically, but because of its disclosing, it is at the same time of basic methodological significance for the existential analytic. Like any ontological interpretation whatsoever, this analytic can only, so to speak, 'listen in' to the previously disclosed being of something that is.... Phenomenological interpretation must give Dasein the

possibility of original disclosing, to raise the phenomenal content of this disclosing into concepts. . . . (139-140)

Here Heidegger says explicitly that *Befindlichkeit* is the disclosing on which phenomenological method depends. Without the "possibility of original disclosing" there is no phenomenological method, for that is what this method raises into concepts. If the disclosing of *Befindlichkeit* isn't there as part of the method, it will be free-floating, and not phenomenological.

Every statement or interpretation, every "logos," must be in a direct relationship to this original disclosing of *Befindlichkeit* and its understanding. What we already sensed and understood, perhaps in the mode of covering it up, must be brought to concepts.

In explaining what phenomenology is, Heidegger discusses phenomena and then logos:

The *logos* lets something be seen. . . and it does so either *for* the one who is doing the talking (the *medium*) or for the persons who are talking with one another, as the case may be. Speech 'lets something be seen' . . . that is, it lets us see something from the very thing which the speech is about . . . making manifest in the sense of letting something be seen by pointing it out. (32)

What phenomenological statements let us see is usually covered up, and emerges and shows itself only in response to such statement.

And just because the phenomena are mostly not immediately given, phenomenology is needed. (36)

As meaning of the expression '*phenomenon*,' the following is to be firmly *held on to* (ist daher *festzuhalten*): that which shows itself on itself. (28)
(Heidegger's italics)

Thus phenomena in the primary sense of phenomenological method are not those which are immediately obvious anyway without method, but those which show themselves in response to the logos, the statement or formulation.

Heidegger, instancing what he is telling us, here gives a phenomenological interpretation of phenomenological interpretation. He has asked us to "*hold fast to*" the meaning of "phenomenon" as what shows itself on itself. Now he says:

With a concrete having before oneself of that which was set out in the interpretation of 'phenomenon' and 'logos; the inner connection between the two terms leaps into view.... Phenomenology means... letting be seen

... that which shows itself, just as it shows itself from itself. (34)

Thus phenomenological method involves something quite different from statements only, something that, once the logos lets it show itself, shows itself independently. It is possible to have only "free-floating" statements without such an independent phenomenal aspect showing itself, leaping before us, in response to statement. Also, even if there once was such a concretely present self-showing aspect, it can be lost as mere statements are passed on without insuring that the self-showing aspect too is each time found by each person.

Every concept and sentence drawn originally in a phenomenological way as a communicated assertion has the possibility *of* degenerating. It *is* passed on in an empty understanding, loses its grounding and becomes free-floating thesis. (36)

Thus Heidegger insists that he is to be understood experientially with something concretely showing itself from itself, for every concept and sentence of his. The ontological structure of the human being, and all other subject-matter that can be studied only in relation to it, can be grasped only phenomenologically, and never as "free-floating thesis."

Only 'as phenomenology is ontology' possible. (35) (Heidegger's italics)

It is often thought, wrongly I believe, that Heidegger's concepts and those of others, if repeated, are phenomenological or are phenomenology. Heidegger has himself said that this isn't so, they might be repeated as freefloating theses. Phenomenology is nothing, if it is not method, the method of grounding each assertion in something that then stands out.

'Phenomenology' names neither the object of its inquiries, nor does this title characterize the subject-matter of its inquiries. The word informs us only about the how of the presentation and mode of treatment. (34)

III. FURTHER APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Psychological

The essence of psychotherapy--when it is effective--is phenomenological, not perhaps in the conception of the therapist or the theory, but in the process of the patient.

As in the cited excerpt, any statements and interpretations are effective only when they lift out something from the directly sensed and pre-verbally "understood" felt complexity.

Even very sophisticated statements by patients and therapists alter nothing in the patient's living, unless there is the distinct effect of lifting something out. Many patients have gone to psychotherapy, so-called, for many years several times each week without much effect.

Such failure cases are found in all methods of therapy, and success cases are also found in all methods. The difference is not the ostensive method of psychotherapy, but whether the concrete experiential process described earlier occurs or not. Thus we can neither accept nor condemn one or another type of therapy.

Note that in our excerpt, at each step, one could apply Freudian theory (or Jungian theory) and explain the patient in terms of the theory. However, no theory could have predicted the next steps to which she was led by directly bringing herself before her felt sense. Similarly, if we wish, we can render the whole chain, now that it is explicit, in any of the theories.

In retrospect, it is always possible to construct a logical account for such steps of therapeutic process. In the actual process the steps come first. The statements are a kind of "listening in," as Heidegger puts it, to what is already disclosed pre-verbally in the feeling.

There is a back and forth movement between statement and feeling. Having verbalized something, what then leaps up is not the same as before, and enables a new listening in, which leads to a new statement.

In this role, the theories can be highly useful. Of course any inference is only a guess, a try, an attempt. The anticipated aspect (*or some other aspect*) leaps up in response; if not, then even the best theoretical inference happens just then to be useless. Even when it is corroborated, the inference is not the therapeutic process. The inference has helped, but only insofar as a directly sensed phenomenal aspect arises. It then guides the next step, not what one would have expected to follow theoretically. Notice: Even when the inferred statement is corroborated, the aspect lifted out as a result of it soon leads to something further and different than could be inferred from the very statement that led to it.

This being so, we see that the actual texture of living cannot be equated to any theory. All theory and language *can relate* to living (and to the feel of living), but cannot be equated to it.

Freud and Jung discovered depth psychology. They correctly saw that there is always a vastly complex texture involved in any human event, however simple and routine it might seem. In this they were right.

Freud and Jung erred in taking the symbolizations from a number of people (very much like the patient's symbolizations in my excerpt) and constructing from this a system of contents in terms of which we are all supposedly explainable.

The fact that there is more than one such theory should give one pause. All of them are effective to some extent, which contradicts the exclusiveness with which each is put forward. We cannot really accept any *one* of these theories as rendering us. If we change the way they were intended to function, we can use them all, Jung's, Freud's, and additional theories. The more ways of articulating human experience one knows the better. At a given juncture one or another of these vocabularies may enable us to make a statement that leads to a lifting out. This way of using theories changes the very essence of what theory is:

Theory, taken phenomenologically, relates to what it is about not as an equation or a rendering, but as a logos which lets something be seen *which is then seen on its own*.

The nature of human nature, of living and feeling, is therefore of a much finer texture than any theory or system of sharp cognitions. This is the opposite of saying that experience is indeterminate or vague; it is always very demandingly just exactly how it is, how we find ourselves, but *more organized*, structured, "gegliedert," than any system can equal. Also, it is not given in little pieces, but as a wholistic texture of sensing and living.

In recognizing this, we do not give up on theory; rather, we restore theory to its proper relationship to actuality. This proper relationship lets theory have its own great power. For as we lift out, more and more becomes possible. Theory further builds the world, develops life and gives further structure to anything to which it is applied, but of course it does not do this by itself. Only if theory is put in direct relation with what it is about, does it show its power there.

Words can help the patient lift out something only if the words each have *their own* sharp meanings (even though what is lifted out then has *its own* character). Theoretical words too can lift out, and again only if they have their own sharp meanings. In no way, therefore, does what I say lead to a loss of theory or theoretical sharpness.

If one says that an ax shows its power only on the wood, or whatever is cut with it, this wouldn't imply that one doesn't need to keep one's ax sharp. How much more is this so for the subtle further living and building when theory lifts out something.

Phenomenologists have not well understood all this. There has been a tendency for phenomenology to fall back into descriptions of what is obvious on the face of itself and needs no lifting out, needs no phenomenology. It has become popular to deny not just the concept of the "unconscious" (which, as a conception, deserved to be denied), but also what this concept (clumsily) points to. The implicit complexity, at first only sensed or felt, emerges in the kind of process I am describing. Then something further is felt. There are steps of an explication process. Phenomenologists have felt compelled either to insist on only the face value of human experiences, a hopelessly inadequate view, or—when put to it—they fall into the other extreme and cannot find their way out of accepting one or another psychological theory. This happens frequently, when the phenomenological philosopher as a person enters psychotherapy (for then the power of these theories is experienced directly); and also when the philosopher at last decides to think about psychotherapy. Avoiding the topic, not especially of psychotherapy, but more importantly the topic of feeling, has not well served philosophy.

Feelings were relegated to "tertiary" status in the eighteenth century. They appeared in the rear of philosophy books as "the passions," and had little or no role to play in the constitution of objects and objective reality. Humans were thought to be in touch with reality only in two ways: through perception and through reason. Reason was thought to give order to incoming bits of perception. (Of course this was not ever the only viewpoint during any period.) This view still structures most of our concepts, so that even if we wish to say something else, we cannot do it clearly. Our concepts themselves are still part of that outlook. "Feelings" are held to be internal, rather than a sensing ourselves living. It is then puzzling why there is so much implicit wisdom in feelings. They are also confused with sheer emotions, as I explained earlier. Most philosophers have stayed away from them, instead of clarifying our thinking regarding them.

There has also been another reason for this avoidance. We want to avoid the erroneous

view that philosophical questions can be resolved by arguing from psychological factors, wrongly placed underneath as if they could determine philosophy. Freud, for example, thought he could give psychological reasons why philosophers say what they say. But when philosophy assumes Freudian underpinnings, it is no longer philosophy, for it omits at least the examination of Freud's kind of concepts and conceptual patterns.

Psychotherapy is essentially phenomenological-that does not mean phenomenology is psychotherapy. Phenomenology is a far wider category, and its most important meaning is philosophical. Precisely, therefore, it can provide a critique and re-structuring of the way we have been thinking about feeling in psychology and in everyday life.

Elsewhere I have presented a "Theory of Personality Change"[\[10\]](#) in which I formulate psychological concepts along the lines I presented in discussing Heidegger. I cannot go into them here. One concept only will be mentioned. A "direct referent" (I also call it "felt sense" or "felt meaning") is both felt and interactional, the feel *of* one's living in one's situations. It has the organization of this living before and without reflection. Facets can be lifted out and symbolized, which "were" how one was already living. This "were" is in quotation marks, because one changes in authentic explicating. The very act of symbolizing is itself a further living and a further structuring. But only rare statements (and other kinds of symbolizing) have this lifting out character. As I said earlier, research can measure the extent to which this is part of someone's manner of approach.

Let us change our fundamental way of considering psychological theory. If we see clearly in philosophy that the human way of being cannot be reduced to, or undercut by, any system of concepts--why leave psychology to that false assumption? A quite different kind of psychology is possible, one that studies the process, rather than imputing a content-system.

Even to study process, certain concepts must be formed and used. Philosophy will always be on another level, and will always examine how concepts are made, and what different kinds of being are. But from philosophy implications follow for what kinds of concepts are needed in psychology. We need and have recently formulated concepts to study steps of process and even to measure them. With such concepts we can make clear how there is "content mutation"[\[11\]](#) through process-steps.

Theory must be considered in a new way. What I have said so far can be misinterpreted as if to imply that the differences between Freud, Jung, and others don't matter. Nothing of the sort follows! Words and-theoretical concepts, too, have power only insofar as they are sharp and have their own clear structure and implications. Feelings without further symbolization are blind (and symbols alone are empty). The new view implies no denigration of theory and clear concepts--but a fundamentally new way of understanding what concepts and theory are, and how they may best be used in their proper relation and most powerfully. And that is in a process of steps of lifting-out.

Philosophical

Let me now turn to more philosophical implications, still bearing on this question. What is this "lifting out" relation between theory (and language) on the one hand, and living and feeling on the other? I ask this now not in the practical sense already described, but as the philosophical question how this relation is possible.

In Heidegger's sense, living is always already linguistically patterned ('gegliedert'). Speaking is an equally original emergence along with *Befindlichkeit* and understanding.

In my way of saying it, we live in linguistically structured situations. Even though what we will further say is new, that emerges from living-in our contexts. These contexts are differentiated by speakings (although, not only in this way). If we imagine speech gone, then a whole host of differentiations and intricacies of our situations is also gone. New further living restructures this implicit structure further.

We must therefore grant feeling *more* organization than that of our poor theoretical systems, vastly more. Given that we do, we can then also understand the power of theory to structure further. This is no small power! Poetry in a very different, and more obvious way, has a power of that kind. One would not need to think that humans are *made of* the kind of entities of which poems are constructed, in order to sense why poetry is powerful. Such a view would trivialize the obviously creative power of poetry. Neither are humans made of the cut entities the theoretical systems contain, and yet theories are immensely powerful new languages for living further what we already are.

But this line of thought leads to the question: How shall we think of this much more organized implicit patterning--if the theories are not to be taken literally? So far I have spoken of it as a persian rug, a fine texture, a capillary system (metaphors of intricacy, complexity, and fine patterning).

Homage to a great philosopher is best done by really seeing what the philosophy points to, and by going on further. The later Heidegger himself goes much further in this direction than he does in *Being and Time*, from which my quotations are taken. And his pointing becomes more powerful. For example, in *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* he says that any true statement also hides truth, and formulation is thus also false.

Ultimately, that cannot be denied. It will apply to Heidegger's own work and to anything I said, or will say.

Heidegger brought forward a line of development from Schleiermacher and Nietzsche through Dilthey and Husserl, the founding of our assertions directly on our living, as we experience. Having seen how Heidegger does that, let us notice: Heidegger always goes only one step, from the living experiencing to his formulation of the structure implicit in it. The reader thereby has lifted out some aspect that "was" already being lived, but was not seen as such. But other authors lift out other aspects, or one could say, they formulate "the same" aspects differently. Different aspects of these "same" aspects are lifted out. My interest here is not in reconciling different philosophies, rather in the question I have been posing: How might we think about that much finer and different organization of living, such that "lifting out" is possible?

What is (or are) the relationship(s) between living and formulations, such that different formulations are possible? (And, such that each hides, as well as lifts out?)

As capable of giving explicit birth to nil these liftings out, the character of the organization of living is much more fundamental than even the structure in *Being and Time*. And it can be studied!

This organization can be studied because we have transitions from one formulation to another, one mode of symbolizing to another, one step of this process of further symbolizing to another step.

Thus I said above that one could say either, that others lift out other aspects different than Heidegger's, or one could say they lift out "the same" aspects but somewhat differently and thus with different sub-aspects. One can see that our ordinary logical notions of "same" and "different" are offended by this situation. Put differently, what is lifted out by two systems is not the same, neither is it just plain different. "Same" and "different" have to give way to a kind of order that doesn't consist of sharp units, the kind of units that are only the same or different.

My own work for many years preceded my reading Heidegger. I came to him quite late. Both the Personality Change theory mentioned above, and the philosophical work I will now mention, were written before I read Heidegger. But I had read those philosophers that most influenced Heidegger, and so I emerged from the same sources, at least to some extent. I had also read Sartre, Buber and Merleau-Ponty, who were greatly and crucially following Heidegger. Hence my own work continues from Heidegger, and stands under his influence, although I did not recognize that until later. I have differences with him, too, but this is not the place to discuss them.

In *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*^[12] I develop a way of studying, not unformulated being or experience, nor formulations, but rather the transitions from one formulation (of something lifted out) to another formulation (of "the same" aspect lifted out). It is easy to show negatively that in such a transition lived experience has no one scheme, and no one set of fixed units. Much more follows. Experience *in relation to further symbolizations* can be said to have quite an odd "structure." I call it the "metastructure." A different kind of "logic" arises to specify these transitions. There are a number of different kinds, each with specific dimensions. The resulting "characteristics" of experiencing in relation to further symbolizing are startling, and lead to a new way of thinking that can be sharp and clear, but with a very different logic.

NOTES

1. In Macquarrie and Robinson's English translation of *Being and Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), "*Befindlichkeit*" is translated as "state of mind." However, it is neither state, nor mind. I mention this here only because the reader may be using the English translation.
In addition, *Befindlichkeit* cannot be translated either as "mood" or "attunement," since Heidegger uses "Stimmung," an old word, and nevertheless finds it necessary to make a new word, "*Befindlichkeit*" as well. [[back to text](#)]
2. Heidegger told Joan Stambaugh, an editor and translator of his works in English, that in his later work *Befindlichkeit* becomes *wohnen* (dwelling). Personal communication from Joan Stambaugh. [[back to text](#)]
3. E. T. Gendlin, "A Theory of Personality Change," in *Personality Change*, ed. Worchell and Byrne (New York: Wiley, 1964). Reprinted in: *Creative Developments in Psychotherapy*, ed. A. Mahrer (Cleveland: Case-Western Reserve, 1971). [[back to text](#)]
4. I use the term "felt sense" for one's feel of a wholistic texture. That is to be distinguished from an emotion like joy or anger. Such emotions are embedded in a "felt sense"-the sense of all of one's living involved in being joyful now, or

angry. [[back to text](#)]

5. Gendlin, Beebe, Cassens, Klein, and Oberlander, "Focusing Ability in Psychotherapy, Personality and Creativity," in *Research in Psychotherapy*, ed. J. Schlien, Vol. III (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1967). [[back to text](#)]
6. Unless otherwise indicated, all Heidegger quotations are from *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1927). Throughout the quotations all italics are Heidegger's own. [[back to text](#)]
7. "Equanimity (*Gleichmut*) ... is also characteristic of authentic action." (345) [[back to text](#)]
8. This "throwing out" is translated "projection" by Macquarrie and Robinson. That loses the inherent relation between the throwing out of possibilities and being thrown. [[back to text](#)]
9. Although "Wiederholung" can mean "repetition" in German, it is an unfortunate translation. Heidegger carefully constructs the term in the above sentence from "holen" (bringing) and "wieder" (again). I translate it "retrieval." [[back to text](#)]
10. E.T. Gendlin, "A Theory of Personality Change," in *Personality Change*, ed. Worchell and Byrne (New York: Wiley, 1964). Reprinted in: *Creative Developments in Psychotherapy*, ed. A. Mahrer (Cleveland: Case-Western Reserve, 1971). See also E. T. Gendlin, "Experiential Psychotherapy," in *Current Psychotherapies*, ed. R. Corsini (Itasca, Ill.: Peacock, 1973); E.T. Gendlin, "The Newer Therapies," in *American Handbook of Psychiatry V*, Chapter 14, ed. S. Arieti (New York: Basic Books, 1975): and *Focusing* (New York: Everest House, 1978). [[back to text](#)]
11. *Ibid.* [[back to text](#)]
12. E.T. Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning* (New York: Free Press, Macmillan, 1962, reprinted, 1970). See also E.T. Gendlin, "Experiential Phenomenology," in *Phenomenology and the Social Sciences*, ed. M. Natanson (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973). [[back to text](#)]