

On the Concept of Anxiety in Heidegger's Thought

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Abstract

The concept of anxiety occupies a crucial position in early Heidegger's writings. Most prominently, it appears in *Being and Time* (1927) and "What is Metaphysics?" (1929) as a structurally central concept. After 1920s, Heidegger began to use the term much less frequently, leading some scholars to suggest a change in Heidegger's view of the role of anxiety. In this essay, I argue that central to an understanding of the role of anxiety in Heidegger's thought is the fundamental difference between Heideggerian and psychological anxiety. This distinction is crucial as it is directly connected to the idea of the ontological difference, i.e. the difference between the ontical and the ontological, between beings and the Being of beings. Psychological descriptions of anxiety remain at the level of the ontical and, therefore, fall short of comprehending the ontological meaning of Heideggerian anxiety, which is one of Dasein's basic possibilities of Being. Equipped with such an ontological understanding, I argue that the concept of anxiety remained central to Heidegger's thought, early and late alike, and suggest that perhaps Heidegger's much less frequent use of the term after "What Is Metaphysics?" was a result of his recognition that its terminological similarity with psychological anxiety could become a source for misunderstandings. Moreover, in the last section of the essay which functions like an addendum, I engage with Freud's analysis of the uncanny and its relation with Heidegger's Being-not-at-home. I argue that although Freud's analysis of the uncanny seems to, in a sense, open up horizons beyond the reach of empirical psychology, his quasi-scientific quest for causal explanation leads his analysis to ultimately remain at the level of the ontical.

Keywords: Heidegger; Anxiety; The Ontological Difference; Ontology; Being; Uncanny; Freud.

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Introduction

Heidegger's Introduction to *Being and Time* ends with a layout of a project that was never completed. He outlines two parts, each consisting of three divisions. The book that is now known as *Being and Time* includes only the first two divisions of the first part. The task of the first division, entitled "The preparatory fundamental analysis of Dasein," is to prepare the grounding required for posing the question of Being¹ correctly. The fact that Heidegger ends this division with an analysis of anxiety² leading to the concept of care as the totality of the Being of Dasein alludes to the central role that anxiety plays in Heidegger's thought, at least in the Heidegger of *Being and Time*.

This essay is concerned with the role of the concept of anxiety in Heidegger's

thought, both in *Being and Time* and afterwards. In particular, I would like to investigate how an analysis of the fundamental differences between Heideggerian anxiety and psychological anxiety can shed light on the distinction between the ontical and the ontological which is basic to Heidegger's thought, early and late.

I will begin with a rather lengthy exposition of Heidegger's analysis of anxiety in *Being and Time*. This discussion and the questions that arise from it will lead me to bring in his rather different analysis of anxiety in the inaugural lecture, "What Is Metaphysics?" (delivered in 1929, two years after the publication of *Being and Time*). A comparison between Heidegger's analysis of anxiety in *Being and Time* and "What Is Metaphysics?" calls for engaging with the idea of 'the turn' in Heidegger's thought and the status of anxiety in later Heidegger. In this part, I will mostly rely on Thomas Sheehan's reading of the turn.

I will end the essay by a rather short section in which I bring in Freud's concept of the uncanny into the picture. This move requires an explanation. Psychological anxiety, in all its variations, is defined as a

1. In Macquarrie and Robinson's translation of *Being and Time*, which is the translation I use in this essay, Heidegger's concept of Being, as opposed to beings, appears with a capital B. In some later translations of Heidegger, such as the translation of "What Is Metaphysics?" it appears with a small letter b, so that its distinction with beings can be recognized from the context. In order to preserve consistency, I follow Macquarrie and Robinson's approach and will always use Being as opposed to beings.

2. Various translations have been suggested for Heidegger's term *Angst*. In this essay, I will mostly use anxiety, except in a few places where, following the context, I directly use the German term *Angst*.

mental state, or an emotion, characterized by its empirical features and symptoms.¹ At this point in the essay, it should have become clear that the Heideggerian concept of anxiety is distinct from psychological anxiety in that the former is ontological, that is, as Hans W. Cohn put it, it “belongs to ‘Being’ as such” and does not refer to any specific sensually perceivable phenomenon, whereas the latter is always characterized as a perceivable phenomenon, belonging to the realm of beings, the ontical (Cohn, 80).² In other

words, the very exposition of Heidegger’s concept of anxiety sufficiently clarifies its distinction from any empirically defined notion of psychological anxiety.

But Freud’s psychoanalytic analysis of anxiety in terms of the concept of the uncanny seems to open up horizons beyond the reach of purely empirical analyses of anxiety. In the essay entitled “*The Uncanny*,” Freud locates the source of uncanniness in the unhomelike, but not consciously graspable, return of the repressed, thus entering a realm that does not satisfy the traditional criterion for experience as the ad equation of thought with its object. The task of the third section which stands separate and functions like an addendum to the rest of the essay, is to show that although Freud’s analysis of the uncanny moves beyond common psychological analyses of anxiety, his methodological attachment to the scientific

1. APA Dictionary of Psychology defines anxiety as “an emotion characterized by apprehension and somatic symptoms of tension in which an individual anticipates impending danger, catastrophe, or misfortune. The body often mobilizes itself to meet the perceived threat: Muscles become tense, breathing is faster, and the heart beats more rapidly.” Similarly, Oxford Dictionary of Psychology offers the following definition for anxiety: “A state of uneasiness, accompanied by dysphoria and somatic signs and symptoms of tension, focused on apprehension of possible failure, misfortune, or danger.”

2. In response to this limitation of empirical psychology, and in the wake of Heidegger and other existential thinkers, there have been various attempts to develop existentially informed psychotherapies. In *Zollikon Seminars*, which is the 1987 publication of the series of seminars Heidegger delivered to a group of psychologists and psychotherapists from 1959 to 1969, Heidegger distances himself from the first formulation of such a psychotherapy by Binswanger and argues that Binswanger’s ‘psychiatric Daseinanalysis’ was still ontical (*Zollikon* 113, 124-25). Following Heidegger’s critique of Binswanger, there have

been other attempts to develop truly Heideggerian psychotherapies by Medard Boss, Rollo May, Irvin D. Yalom, and Hans W. Cohn, among others. Whether or not the various formulations of existential psychology and psychotherapy developed since have been able to satisfactorily respond to Heidegger’s charges against empirical psychology and Binswanger’s ‘Dasein analysis’ is an important matter that requires further analysis but lies beyond the scope of this essay.

demand for causal explanation and prediction prevents him analysis from leaving the realm of the ontical.

The Being of Dasein

The preparatory analysis of Dasein begins with the identification of Being-in-the-world as the basic structure of the Being of Dasein. This structure is analyzed through its manifold phenomenological dimensions in Division One of *Being and Time*,¹ Chapters 2-5. The initial empty sketch of Being-in-the-world in Chapter 2 is gradually transformed into a rich and phenomenally manifold structure by the end of Chapter 5. But the very multidimensionality of this structure gives rise to a problem. what Heidegger calls Being-in-the-world is really a basic structural whole or a mere collection of various aspects of the Being of Dasein? In order for Being-in-the-world to satisfy Heidegger's claim that it is indeed a basic structure of Dasein, Heidegger needs to demonstrate that Being-in-the-world refers to a totality. In other words, the final task of the preparatory analysis of Dasein is to

show, in an existential-ontological manner, that the general and unifying concept Being-in-the-world is not an arbitrary cover concept that merely collects some aspects of the Being of Dasein under itself, but rather amounts to the totality of Dasein's Being.

The totality of the structural whole cannot be built up out of its elements because this would require an architect's plan, that is, an understanding of this whole beforehand. In the absence of such a plan, the Being of Dasein, Heidegger writes, "becomes accessible to us when we look all the way *through* this whole *to a single* primordially unitary phenomenon which is already in this whole in such a way that it provides the ontological foundation for each structural item in its structural possibility" (BT: 226). The question remains as to how we can practically apply this insight which does not require anything less than bringing Dasein face to face with its Being.

Dasein's everyday environmental experiencing cannot provide such a single unitary phenomenon because in its everydayness, Dasein is primarily concerned with the entities present-at-hand or ready-to-hand within-the-world. But

1. In this essay, for intra textual citation, I will use the abbreviation *BT* for *Being and Time* and *WM* for "What Is Metaphysics?"

Dasein is neither something merely present-at-hand nor ready-to-hand. Thus, everyday circumspective concern does not involve a face-to-face confrontation of Dasein with the totality of its Being. Neither can we proceed to construct this unitary phenomenon from an already formed idea of man. This would obviously go against the fundamental insight of Heidegger's existential analysis that "*the 'essence' of Dasein lies in its existence*" (BT: 67).

But insofar as Dasein is an entity for whom its Being is an issue, an understanding of Being belongs to its ontological structure. Therefore, if existential analytic of Dasein is going to retain its function in fundamental ontology, it should be capable of bringing Dasein's Being as a whole into view. In search of a way to bring Dasein face to face with itself, Heidegger reminds us that Dasein, as a being that is disclosed to itself in its Being and as a kind of Being that belongs to this disclosedness, is constituted by understanding and state-of-mind. He thus provides a new formulation of the question of the possibility of access to the totality of the structural whole: Is there a state-of-mind in which Dasein is disclosed to itself

in such a distinctive way that its Being as a whole reveals itself?

Of course Heidegger responds positively, but it is worth paying careful attention to the way he articulates his response. As he puts it, "as a state-of-mind which will satisfy these methodological requirements, the phenomenon of *anxiety* will be made basic for our analysis" (BT :227). Thus, anxiety is not simply the state-of-mind we have been looking for. Nor is it identified, from a variety of states-of-mind as one with the distinct methodological capacity of revealing the structural whole. Rather, Heidegger writes that it *will be made* basic for our analysis. What Heidegger wants to highlight with this choice of words is, it seems to me, the crucial difference between the ontical characterization and the ontological interpretation in the analysis of the phenomenon of anxiety.

Dasein Face to Face with Its Being

The ontological interpretation of anxiety is not accessible to the pre-ontological understanding of Being or to our ontical acquaintance with entities. However, the ontological interpretation cannot be totally isolated from the ontical everyday

experience of Dasein. It requires “pre-ontological confirmation.” As Heidegger puts it, it is important “not to confuse the onto-existential characterization with ontologico-existential Interpretation nor we may overlook the positive phenomenal bases provided for this Interpretation by such a characterization” (*BT*: 229).

Thus, Heidegger begins his analysis by providing an ontical characterization of anxiety. Ontical information about anxiety can be collected through its comparison and contrast with another phenomenon, fear, which is very closely connected to the phenomenon of anxiety. Fear and anxiety, according to Heidegger, are obviously ‘kindred phenomena.’

In fear, Dasein shrinks back, that is, flees away, in the face of that which is threatening. That which is fearsome and threatens Dasein in fear is “a detrimental entity within-the-world which comes from some definite region” (*BT*: 230). Dasein’s average everydayness which is constituted as falling into the they-world, is also characterized by ‘fleeing.’ However, the fleeing of Dasein in falling is not a turn away from an entity within-the-world. Rather, what in the face of which Dasein shrinks back in falling has the same kind of

Being as Dasein. That is to say, “in falling, Dasein turns away from itself” (*BT* 230).

Therefore, the fleeing away of falling cannot be founded upon fear, as one of Dasein’s possibilities of Being, because fear is always fear of some entity within-the-world. In the turning away of falling, the exact opposite occurs: Dasein turns away from itself towards entities within-the-world by absorbing itself in them. Here is where anxiety, as the more primordial phenomenon, enters the analysis: “the turning-away of falling is grounded rather in anxiety which in turn is what first makes fear possible” (*BT*: 230).

Heidegger’s crucial claim here is that “that in the face of which one has anxiety is Being-in-the-world as such.” To elucidate this claim – which plays a fundamental role in *Being and Time* – Heidegger discusses the phenomenal characteristics of that in the face of which anxiety is anxious in contrast to that in the face of which fear is afraid. As mentioned above, unlike fear, that in the face of which anxiety is anxious is not a definite entity within-the-world. Thus, the threatening that causes anxiety is “essentially incapable of having an involvement” (*BT*: 231). That in the face of which anxiety is

anxious is 'there' and oppresses the one who is anxious, but nevertheless, it does not have a definite place; it threatens from nowhere. It is neither something present-at-hand nor ready-to-hand. It is completely indefinite, a nothing, but a nothing that threatens.

Therefore, the totality of involvements of the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand within-the-world is of no significance in the case of anxiety. This does not however mean that the world is absent. It is rather the opposite. What is within-the-world becomes of so little importance in anxiety precisely because what oppresses one is not this or that entity, but rather the very possibility of each and every entity present-at-hand or ready-to-hand: the obstinacy of the 'nothing' that persists and continues to threaten means that "the world as such," as what makes the entities within-the-world possible, "is that in the face of which one has anxiety" (*BT*: 231). In short, that in the face of which one is anxious is 'nothing' when one considers the phenomenon of anxiety only ontically. Ontologically speaking, however, it is the world itself, as the ground of possibility of anything ontical. But, the world belongs essentially to the Being of Dasein as

Being-in-the-world. It is therefore Dasein's Being itself that is disclosed in anxiety: "Being-in-the-world is that in the face of which anxiety is anxious" (*BT*: 232).

The question is now raised as to why in anxiety Dasein becomes anxious in the face of its Being as Being-in-the-world, that is to say, what is it about that Dasein is anxious? In anxiety, Dasein's concern with the entities within the world is totally removed; it is brought face to face with its Being as Dasein. Left naked in front of its existence, Dasein recognizes, directly and first hand, the possibility of its ceasing to exist. In other words, the phenomenon of anxiety consists in a strange and outrageous experience in the face of the possibility of the termination of Dasein. Dasein is revealed to itself as Being-possible. It is not the fear of death, but anxiety in front of being-able-not-to-be. In anxiety, Dasein is anxious about its own Being as Being-in-the-world, because it becomes aware of its being-able-not-to-be.

Removed from all involvements with the entities within the world, in anxiety Dasein is brought face to face with the question of the meaning of its Being, of *how it is* in the world. In the recognition of its Being as Being-in-the-world, Dasein

sees itself as thrown in the world, that is, thrown in the world of the-they. The they-world, in which Dasein feels at home in its average everydayness, suddenly seems alien. Anxiety is uncanny because Dasein realizes that it is not at home in the world of the-they. Moreover, the feeling of being-not-at-home is accompanied by the manifestation of Dasein's "*Being towards* its ownmost potentiality-for-Being – that is, its *Being-free for* the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself" (BT: 232). It is in this way that "anxiety individualizes Dasein for its own most Being-in-the-world which as something that understands, projects itself essentially upon possibilities" (BT: 232). This individuality reveals to Dasein its own possibilities. Dasein becomes aware of itself as the unique individual that it is who has the freedom of choosing itself or letting itself be lost in the comforting world of the-they. That is to say, in anxiety, Dasein dreads its being free to be either authentic or inauthentic.

So far, it has become clear that in anxiety, Dasein is anxious *in the face of* its Being-in-the-world *about* its Being-in-the-world. But, as a state-of-mind, anxiety itself is a basic kind of Being-in-the-world.

Thus, "the selfsameness of that in the face of which and that about which one has anxiety, extends even to anxiousness itself" (BT :233). This means that "the disclosure and the disclosed are existentially selfsame."

Anxiety and the Nothing

With this last step, we are now ready to see how the totality of the structural whole of Dasein's Being is derived from the phenomenon of anxiety. In the selfsameness of that, in the face of which and that about which one has anxiety, together with the consideration of the phenomenon of anxiety itself as a basic structure of Being-in-the-world, three fundamental characteristics of Being-in-the-world are disclosed. Heidegger summarizes this structure as follows:

Anxiousness as a state-of-mind is a way of Being-in-the-world; that in the face of which we have anxiety is thrown Being-in-the-world; that which we have anxiety about is our potentiality-for-Being-in-the-world. Thus, the entire phenomenon of anxiety shows Dasein as factually existing Being-in-the-world (BT: 235).

Heidegger chooses the concept of 'care' to refer to this structural whole: "the Being of

Dasein means ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)” (BT :237).

It may sound a bit strange that Heidegger derives the central concept of care from a single, rarely experienced, phenomenon such as anxiety. The question is immediately raised as to what qualifies anxiety as a unique state-of-mind to play such a crucial role in disclosing the Being of Dasein. Heidegger’s response to this question is that anxiety is distinctive as a state-of-mind not because in it Being-in-the-world is disclosed. This is not a unique characteristic of anxiety. In fact, “it is essential to every state-of-mind that in each case Being-in-the-world should be fully disclosed” (BT: 235). But the disclosure of Being-in-the-world in anxiety is nevertheless unique because in anxiety all the involvements with entities within the world are removed. In anxiety Being-in-the-world shows itself as what it is in itself undisguised by the entities within the world. It is through this pure encounter with Being-in-the-world that anxiety individualizes, i.e. reveals to Dasein that authenticity and inauthenticity are genuine possibilities of its Being.

Thus, in this way it seems that what qualifies anxiety as a unique state-of-mind is the fact that it is not caused by any entity within the world. That in the face of which anxiety is anxious is ‘completely indefinite.’ It is nothing that comes from nowhere but nevertheless threatens. But, as mentioned earlier and as Heidegger reminds us later in the book, it would be a mistake to think of this nothingness as the absence of entities within the world. In anxiety Dasein does not experience the absence of the world in which it exist. The entities within the world lose their significance and are encountered in such a way that they do not have any involvement whatsoever. But in a way, this character of having no involvement opens up the space for the entities within-the-world to show themselves in light of the originality of the nothing, “in an empty mercilessness”(BT: 393).

The nothing in the face of which anxiety is anxious, that is, the nothingness that is revealed in anxiety, is more original than the absence or negation of beings. Heidegger discusses this matter in more details in his 1929 inaugural lecture of 1929 titled “What is metaphysics?”. This lecture, delivered soon after the publication

of *Being and Time*, is significant not only because it sheds more light on Heidegger's view on anxiety and nothingness, but also because in its analysis the seeds of his later 'turn' could be detected. I will return to the significance of the turn on the analysis of anxiety later in the essay, but for now, let us see what makes anxiety a unique state-of-mind according to "What Is Metaphysics?".

The totality of beings as whole, Heidegger writes in "What Is Metaphysics?", is revealed in various kinds of moods such as boredom, love, etc. But the negation of this whole is not the experience of nothingness. The negation of beings as a whole would merely be "the formal concept of the imagined nothing" but not the nothing itself (WM: 99). This is because the nothing is more original than the 'not' and negation. The relation between nothingness and beings cannot be elucidated through the laws of formal logic. Therefore, the experience of nothingness could happen only in a correspondingly original mood. This original mood, rare and short lived as it is, is the fundamental mood of anxiety.

Anxiety is unique because in it the nothingness that belongs to the Being of

beings reveals itself. But this revelation of the nothing in anxiety is not in any way equivalent with its grasping. The nothing does not reveal itself as a being. It does not become manifest quite apart from beings as a whole. It is encountered "at one with beings as a whole" (WM: 102). This nothing is more original than beings because without the original revelation of the nothing, human existence cannot approach and penetrate beings. Insofar as existence is essentially in relation with beings, one could say that human existence emerges as it is from the nothing already revealed. As Heidegger puts it, "Da-sein¹ means: being held out into the nothing" (WM: 103).

It is not that the nothing comes out of the negation of the beings as a whole; quite the contrary, the not of negation originates from the nothing: "the nothing itself nihilates" (WM: 103). In this way, the nothing is not merely a counterconcept of beings, nor the indeterminate opposite of beings; rather, it belongs to the essential

1. The term Dasein could be written in two ways: Dasein and Da-sein. Later in *Zollikon Seminars*, Heidegger suggests that the preferable way of writing it is with the use dash, because it lays emphasis on the significance of the Da. As he puts it, "the *Da* of [Da-sein's] *Being* distinguishes the humanness of the human being" (*Zollikon* :120).

unfolding of beings: “the nothing makes possible the openedness of beings as such” (WM :104). Anxiety, as the original revelation of the nothing is always there, however concealed or repressed. It is the ground upon which the Being of Dasein as transcendence is founded: “Being held out into the nothing – as Dasein is – on the ground of concealed anxiety is its surpassing of beings as a whole. It is transcendence” (WM: 106). Nothingness and Being belong together because “Being itself is essentially finite and reveals itself only in the transcendence of Dasein which is held out into the nothing” (WM: 108). This means that metaphysics as going beyond is the basic occurrence of Dasein (WM: 109).

Anxiety is anxious in the face of the nothing, which is not merely a no-thing: this implies that the occurrence of the phenomenon of anxiety does not directly depend on the contingencies of beings, of the entities within the world. It can therefore occur in the most innocuous situations, in complete assurance and self-sufficiency of Dasein’s average everydayness (BT :234). If this is the case, then the fact that ‘essential’ or ‘original’ anxiety is quite rare, begs an explanation.

If anxiety can occur at any time and any situation without a need for an entity within the world to cause it, why is it so rare? Why are we not aware of it all the time? Moreover, does not the fact that such an experience of anxiety, as Heidegger portrays it, is quite rare in Dasein’s average everydayness pose a problem to Heidegger’s analysis?

Heidegger’s response in *Being and Time* is that the not-at-home of anxiety is the more primordial phenomenon as compared to the at-home of publicness.¹ It is not that we are at-home in our average everydayness and suddenly in a moment of anxiety we feel not-at-home. Quite the contrary, “when in falling we flee *into* the ‘at-home’ of publicness, we flee *in the face of* the ‘not-at-home’; that is, we flee in the face of the uncanniness which lies in Dasein – in Dasein as thrown Being-in-the-world” (BT: 234). In the state of falling, which is the state in which Dasein exists proximally and for the most part, original anxiety is rare because even “when Dasein ‘understands’ uncanniness in the everyday

1.Uncanniness, i.e. the not-at-home, is a fundamental structure of human existence; it is, as David Farrel Krell writes “the pristine ontological mark of humankind” (Krell 44).

manner, it does so by turning away from it.” Even in the rare cases that the uncanniness is felt, Dasein often turns away from it by involving itself with the entities within-the-world, by searching for the causes and conditions of anxiety, or by analyzing the factual symptoms accompanying it and thereby reducing it to some form of physiological or psychological anxiety. But, Heideggerian anxiety is not merely one rare form of anxiety among others; it is rather the ground of possibility of all forms of psychological anxiety. Even fear, as a state-of-mind, is grounded in anxiety. Only because essential anxiety belongs to the Being of Dasein, can Dasein become fearful or experience psychological anxiety (BT: 234).

Heidegger repeats this view with slight, but significant changes, in “What Is Metaphysics?”. The reference to the state of falling, and the possibilities of authenticity and inauthenticity that would naturally come with it, are gone. Anxiety, as Heidegger puts it in “What Is Metaphysics?”, is always there, but it is often repressed, sleeping (WM : 105-6). Anxiety’s sway is thoroughgoing, but it only rarely springs, because our *finitude* is

so entrenched in our existence that we cannot bring ourselves originally before the nothing. The nothing that shows itself in the experience of anxiety reveals to us “our proper and deepest limitation” (WM: 106). But we are so finite that we do not even have the freedom to willingly bring ourselves face to face with this limitation.

From Being to the Nothing

According to Richard Capobianco, the phenomenon of anxiety portrayed in “What Is Metaphysics?” diverges from the earlier description in *Being and Time* to the extent that it is fair to ask whether this new phenomenon is still *Angst* or not. As he puts it, in the 1929 lecture the phenomenon of anxiety is not sharply distinguished from joy, or wonder, so that it seems to refer to a “quiet and calm” mood in which “[compared to the phenomenon of anxiety in *Being and Time*] Dasein’s unsettledness is far less unsettling” (Capobianco: 77).

To be sure, the analysis of anxiety in “What Is Metaphysics?” does differ in some ways from *Being and Time*. Capobianco is, it seems to me, justified in claiming that Heidegger’s account of anxiety “suggests that how we find ourselves ontologically in *Angst* (calm) is

markedly different from how we find ourselves as ontically anxious (trembling)” (Capobianco :77). However, this does not constitute a departure from *Being and Time*. Heideggerian anxiety was never meant to have such a similarity with psychological anxiousness characterized by trembling, raised heartbeat, blushed face, etc.

Heidegger’s analysis does undergo a change in the inaugural lecture as compared to *Being and Time*, but the change that occurred was not what Capobianco suggests. If formerly one could see a close relation between anxiety and psychological anxiousness, this was more a result of Heidegger’s – perhaps unsuccessful – attempt to find pre-ontological confirmation for his ontological analysis, rather than an essential relation. Heidegger’s idea in *Being and Time* was that the fact that we undergo a group of psychological experiences usually termed as anxiousness confirms that we are pre-ontologically capable of experiences founded upon the basic possibility of anxiety. The point of his analysis was not to identify a distinct mental state through ontical characterization, but rather to open up the

possibility of a moment in Dasein’s experience in which it comes face to face with its Being-in-the-world as a totality and sees itself as Being-possible.

The ontical similarity or dissimilarity with psychological states, such as anxiousness or joy was only a matter of secondary importance. In both cases, Heidegger strives to keep open the possibility for Dasein to come face to face with Being, undistracted by the entities within the world. If the moment of *Ansgt* is reduced to the rank of a distinct mental state, Heidegger’s project would undermine itself because Being cannot be encountered in the same manner that beings are disclosed to Dasein. In other words, the revelation of Being in anxiety cannot belong to the realm of experience as if Being can be disclosed as an object. Being, as he writes in “What Is Metaphysics?” and elsewhere, is always co-disclosed in any state-of-mind and in any disclosure of beings, but it is always distorted and distracted. Anxiety for Heidegger refers to a state-of-mind in which Being is encountered in the manner that is proper to its disclosure.

If there is a change that occurs between the analysis of *Being and Time* and the

lecture is that in the former the focus is on the disclosure of Being-in-the-world, while in the latter it is on the disclosure of the nothing. This I believe is a sign of Heidegger's move towards a further decentralization of the subject, which he himself refers to as 'the turn' in "Letter on Humanism" (Letter :231).

The Turn

What is known as "the turn" has caused numerous debates and perhaps misunderstandings in Heidegger scholarship. Heidegger himself speaks about the turn in various occasions. In *Contributions to Philosophy*, he describes the turn as the bond between Dasein and Being (Heidegger, qtd in Sheehan: 82) and in "Letter on Humanism," he refers to the turn as the reversal of Being and Time, i.e. Time and Being. Thomas Sheehan distinguishes three different meanings for the turn: 1) the basic and proper sense, i.e. the bond between Dasein and Being, as defined in *Contributions to Philosophy*. 2) the shift in Heidegger's treatment of that bond, occurred in the 1930s. For this, Sheehan focuses on Heidegger's description of the turn in "Letter on Humanism." And 3) the act of resolve as a

transformation in one's relation to that bond (Sheehan: 82). In the remaining of this essay, I shall examine Sheehan's understanding of only the first two readings of the turn that are directly relevant to my discussion of anxiety.

Sheehan argues that if the turn originally signified the bond between Dasein and Being, then it is in fact not an occurrence in the thought of Heidegger, but rather his central topic. In order to grasp what the turn signifies, he proposes a translation of Heidegger's thought from its seemingly ontological register into a proper phenomenological one. The turn is the translation of the German word *Kehre*, literally meaning reciprocity, back-and-forth-ness. According to Sheehan, this refers to Heidegger's understanding of the reciprocal need of Dasein and Being for each other. This would become clear if the ontological terms such as beings and the Being of beings are understood in their proper phenomenological sense: "when Heidegger speaks of *das Seiende* ('beings'), he is referring to things not as just existing-out-there (*existens*) but rather in so far as they make sense within human concerns and thus are meaningful and significant ... in short, *das Seiende*

[beings] is ‘the meaningful’, and *das Sein* [Being] gives it meaning” (Sheehan 83).

With this phenomenological translation, the question of Being would become the question of the source of meaning: how does meaning occur at all? What is important for the understanding of the turn – that is, the bond between Dasein and Being as the central topic of Heidegger’s philosophy – is that Being, as the meaning-giving source of the meaning of the meaningful, should never be thought of as independent from Dasein. Sheehan offers a new phenomenological translation of Heidegger’s description of the basic idea of his thinking in 1969:

The basic idea of my thinking is precisely that meaning [Being], i.e. the process of meaning-giving [the openness of Being], requires human being [Dasein]; and conversely that human being is human in so far as it stands in ... the process of meaning-giving [openness of Being] (Heidegger, qtd. in Sheehan :87-8).¹

In other words, there would be no *Sein* without *Dasein*, and no *Dasein* without *Sein*.

As Heidegger writes in “Letter on Humanism,” the division three of *Being and time* was supposed to reverse the direction of analysis, from ‘Being and Time’ to ‘Time and Being.’ But he abandoned this project because thinking and the language of metaphysics proved to be inadequate in the saying of this reversal. According to Sheehan this is mostly a reference to the inadequacies of the transcendental methodology employed in the first two divisions of *Being and Time*. The first two divisions conduct an analysis of Being starting from the everyday experience of Dasein, that is, they follow a transcendental procedure from Dasein to Being. But, from the beginning, the third division was supposed to reverse the procedure and present the movement from Being to Dasein. But in the process of working out his analysis in his 1927 course, “Basic Problems of Phenomenology,” where he basically continued to use the transcendental approach to analyze the move from Being to Dasein, Heidegger realized how little progress that approach could offer (Sheehan :89). The second turn which occurred in the 1930s, is basically Heidegger’s attempt to replace the

1.This is Sheehan’s translation. I have provided the traditional/ontological translation of the terms in brackets.

transcendental approach with what he calls *seingeschichtlich* for the analysis of the reverse movement, from Being to Dasein.

The change in Heidegger's approach from transcendental to *seingeschichtlich* could be described by taking note of the two ways through which Dasein is *a priori* related to meaning, Being or to world: " 'actively,' by projectively holding open, sustaining, and grounding the meaning-giving world" and " 'passively,' in so far as man is claimed by or thrown into sustaining the world" (Sheehan: 88). The term *seinsgeschichtlich* is traditionally translated as 'being-historical.' But according to Sheehan, this is a mistake. Rather, the term is closely connected to *Es gibt Sein*, which is commonly translated as 'it gives Being.' Sheehan's phenomenological translation for the term *Es gibt Sein* would read as: "meaning-giving is a priori operative wherever there is human being" (Sheehan :90) or "meaning-giving occurs with human being" (Sheehan :100).

According to Sheehan, two closely connected points characterize Heidegger's 1930s approach, *seinsgeschichtlich*. First, it presupposes that meaning, or Being, is not merely an outcome of some projective

activity on the part of Dasein, but rather it is "always-already given with the human being" (Sheehan: 91). Second, this means that in *seinsgeschichtlich* approach the emphasis is "less on man projectively *holding open* the world and more on man's *being required* to hold open the world," i.e. less on the active relation of Dasein to Being, and more on the passive relation of man being thrown into sustaining the world.

Heidegger's emphasis on Being-in-the-world in *Being and Time* and his later focus on the appropriation of Dasein by Being nicely represent the distinction between the active and passive relations. According to Sheehan, if the meaning-giving source of the meaning of the meaningful refers to "the a priori process whereby anything meaningful has its meaning" (Sheehan :86), then this process appears in early Heidegger's analysis of Dasein as Being-in-the-world and in late Heidegger as appropriation (*Ereignis*), or more precisely "the *a priori* 'appropriation' of man for sustaining meaning-giving [Being]" (Sheehan 91).

In "Letter on Humanism," Heidegger suggests that the outlines of this new approach could be found as early as 1930,

in the essay “On the Essence of Truth.” (Letter 231). It is in this essay that Heidegger first shows that Being, as the meaning-giving source of all meaning, is intrinsically concealed, that the concealment of Being “is older than every openness of this or that being ... older than letting-be itself” (On the Essence of Truth 130). This intrinsic characteristic of Being results in the forgetting of Being on the part of Dasein, i.e. in ‘the oblivion of Being’ being the dominant status of the Being of Dasein. In short, the characteristic of *seinsgeschichtlich* is that it takes Dasein as a priori appropriated by Being, while it lives, proximally and for the most part, in the state of the oblivion of Being.

Equipped with this understanding of ‘the turn,’ it seems to me that the focus on the nothing rather than Being-in-the-world as what is disclosed in anxiety refers to Heidegger’s preliminary observation that the transcendental approach of *Being and Time* would inevitably bring Dasein back into the center, inherently incapable of acknowledging Dasein’s a priori appropriation by Being. With such a change, anxiety would have to further be detached from the everyday experience of

anxiousness – or any other psychological-ontical mental state for that matter.

In this sense, Capobianco is right in his observation that in “What Is Metaphysics?” Heidegger “seems to be stretching the meaning of the term *Angst* to its limits” and that there “the word seems overburdened and barely able to capture his additional concerns in characterizing the defining affective disposition of Dasein’s ex-sistence” (Capobianco :77). For the reasons discussed above, it seems justifiable to argue that Heidegger reluctance to use the term *Angst* in most of his later writings could be connected to his realization that such an overburdened and exhausted concept of anxiety would perhaps fail to do any good to his analysis. Although the similarity of the term anxiety to some everyday psychological experiences could bring to mind the pre-ontological confirmation that he needed, but it would distract from what is supposed to be conveyed by the term to the extent that would cause more confusion than it could illuminate. Perhaps this is what motivates later Heidegger to instead of anxiety use terms such as wonder and awe whose ambiguity and other-worldliness seem to

deliver a better sense of Dasein's absolute passivity in the face of what it encounters.

However, Capobianco goes too far by concluding that after 'What Is Metaphysics?', Heidegger "never again accorded to the mood of *Angst* such a unique and privileged status" (Capobianco :77). The postscript to "What Is Metaphysics?", written in 1943 and revised in 1949, testifies to the contrary. As Heidegger writes in the postscript, "as that which is altogether other than all beings, [B]eing is that which is not" (Postscript 233) but, this nothing is not a mere nullity; it is not unreal. Of course, Being, or the nothing that is its veil (Postscript: 238), cannot be represented or brought forth like an object; its disclosure would occur in a way other than the disclosure of beings. But, this does not close off all the possibilities of encountering Being. According to Heidegger in the Postscript, "an experience of [B]eing as that which is other than all beings is bestowed in anxiety" (Postscript: 233).

But in order for this experience to be possible, we are required to prepare ourselves for it. The experience of being in anxiety occurs "provided that, out of 'anxiety' in the face of anxiety, i.e. in the

mere anxiousness that pertains to fear, we do not evade the silent voice that attunes us toward the horror of the abyss" (Postscript :233). Anxiety is one of the essential sites of this speechlessness, in which the abyss of the nothing does not exhaust itself as an empty negation of all beings, but rather reveals itself as belonging to the Being of beings. Readiness for anxiety is readiness to let the awe that dwells close to the abyss reveals itself, clear and undistorted (Postscript :234 -237). But this readiness requires sacrifice on the part of Dasein. The sacrifice that Heidegger describes here is detached from all compulsion: it belongs to the 'abyss of freedom' because it is a sacrifice that is "that of the human essence expending itself" (Postscript: 236).

Such a description of anxiety, as mysterious and other-worldly as it may seem, can at least assure us that in 1949 Heidegger still preserves a fundamental role for anxiety. Moreover, his description in the Postscript emphasizes, once again, the distinction between the phenomenon of anxiety and psychological anxiety. Attempting to clarify the issue, Heidegger admits that "if we dissociate anxiety, as the mood attuned by that [silent] voice, from its relation to the nothing, then we are left

with anxiety as an isolated ‘feeling’ that can be distinguished from other feelings and dissected amid a familiar assortment of psychic states observed by psychology” (Postscript: 234). It is what Heidegger here calls ‘essential anxiety,’ as a site of speechlessness and in its relation with the silent voice of the nothing, which “assures us the enigmatic possibility of experiencing being” (Postscript :234). No pure ontical-psychological description of everyday mental states can provide such assurance.

Freudian Uncanny and Heideggerian Being-not-at-home

What I hope to have achieved from the analysis of anxiety so far is twofold: 1) the concept of anxiety occupies a central place in Heidegger’s thought, early and late alike; 2) Heidegger’s analysis of anxiety is ontological and is thus fundamentally different from any empirically defined notion of psychological anxiety, which would necessarily be limited to the realm of the ontical. The question I would like to engage with in the last section of the essay is: where should we put Freud’s analysis of the uncanny in relation to Heideggerian Being-not-at-home revealed in anxiety?

Should we simply dismiss Freudian uncanny as just another ontical description or could the unhomelike character of the uncanny bring it the Being-not-at-home of Heideggerian anxiety?

The relation between Heidegger and Freud has been a recurrent topic in the literature. Joseph Kockelmans, for example, has defended Daseins analysis against Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Inaugurated by Ludwig Binswanger and continued by Medard Boss and others, Daseins analysis is an existentialist approach to psychoanalysis heavily influenced by the thought of Heidegger. According to Kockelmans, while Freudian psychoanalysis is still entrapped within the framework of scientism, Daseinsanalysis effectively resists every type of scientific reductionism and thus is able to do away with the sketchy notion of the unconscious (Kockelmans: 22-25). On the other side of the spectrum, one can find someone like William Richardson who argues for the almost perfect compatibility of Heidegger and Freud through a Lacanian mediation (Richardson: 98-9).¹

1. For more on this matter, see Dallmayr, pp: 244-49.

The problem of course is that the thought of each of them is indeed demanding enough to discourage anyone searching – perhaps madly, as David Farrell Krell puts it – for a bedrock on which to construct a juxtaposition of Heidegger’s thought and Freud’s psychoanalysis (Krell :43). For this reason, in this section of the essay, I will try to as much as possible avoid general comments on the compatibility or incompatibility of the thoughts of the two thinkers, but rather focus on a particular concept, i.e. the uncanny, with the hope of finding where Freud’s analysis of the uncanny should be located in relation to Heidegger’s Being-not-at-home.

There are arguments to be made about the possibility of direct influence that the two might have had upon each other – more probably Freud on Heidegger than Heidegger on Freud considering the date of their writings on uncanny and the fact that when Freud was writing on the topic, he was a well-known thinker and Heidegger only a senior assistant to Edmund Husserl at the University of Freiburg. Freud’s famous paper “the Uncanny” was published in 1919 and the theme was repeated the next year in *Beyond the*

Pleasure Principle. Heidegger’s thought on uncanny dates back to his 1925 lecture course “Prolegomena to the history of the concept of time.” Krell offers some speculations on the possibility of the direct influence (Krell 49-50). But what we know is that even if there was a direct influence or at least a familiarity with each other’s works involved in forming their ideas on uncanny, they did not officially announce it.

In his essay “*The Uncanny*,” Freud suggests that what is “uncanny” belongs to the larger category of the fearful. He then asks: what is that peculiar quality which “allows us to distinguish as ‘uncanny’ certain things within the boundaries of what is fearful” (Uncanny: 75). Since the term cannot simply be defined and since its usage varies significantly from context to context, the obvious first question is to find the courses that are open to an analysis of the uncanny. Freud suggests two courses of analysis: we can either look into the various meanings that “has come to be attached to the word ‘uncanny’ in the course of its history” (Uncanny: 76). Or, we can try to “collect all those properties of persons, things, sensations, experiences, and situations which arouse in us the

feeling of uncanniness, and then infer the unknown nature of the uncanny from what they all have in common. He does both.

The term uncanny is the English translation of the German term *unheimlich*. An analysis of the dictionary meanings of the word *heimlich* results in a curious conclusion: the word *heimlich*, among its various shades of meaning, moves towards ambivalence until it comes to also exhibit a meaning which is identical with its opposite, that is, *unheimlich*. *Heimlich* means, on the one hand, familiar, homely, and congenial, and on the other, that which is unfamiliar, concealed and kept out of sight. Freud concludes this section with a definition for uncanny, which he borrows from Schelling: “everything is uncanny that ought to have remained hidden and secret, and yet comes to light” (Uncanny: 79).

Next, he engages with a series of examples from literature to life experiences of his patients and his own, the most famous being his reading of Hoffman’s story: *The Sand-man*. Throughout the analysis, he rejects the theory of intellectual uncertainty as the root of uncanniness – i.e. the theory that, in reading *The Sand-man*, suggests that

doubts whether an apparently animate being is really alive or a mere automaton, or conversely the uncertainty over the possibility that an apparently lifeless object might in fact turn out to be alive, is the source of the feeling of uncanniness aroused by the story. One outcome of Freud’s discussion is the idea of ‘the double’ – that is, put simply, the idea that a faculty is slowly formed within the ego and during its evolution that divides and interchanges the self so that a part of the ego is formed to oppose the rest of it (Uncanny: 86). Without claiming that he has found the single root cause of all feelings of uncanniness, Freud suggests that “the quality of uncanniness can only come from the circumstance of the double being a creation dating back to a very early mental stage, long since left behind” (Uncanny: 87). In any event of a “harkening back to particular phases in the evolution of the self-regarding feeling, a regression to a time when the ego was not yet sharply differentiated from the external world and from other persons” the feeling of uncanniness is aroused (Uncanny: 87).

Through a theoretical maneuver over the concept of the double and with the use of a few other examples, he reaches the

following conclusion as the gist of his study of the uncanny:

If psychoanalytic theory is correct in maintaining that every emotional effect, whatever its quality, is transformed by repression into morbid anxiety, then among such cases of anxiety there must be a class in which the anxiety can be shown to come from something repressed which recurs. This class of morbid anxiety would then be no other than what is uncanny, irrespective of whether it originally aroused dread or some other affect (Uncanny :90).

Therefore, for Freud uncanniness is not merely a peculiar type of fearfulness. It is closely connected to the central concepts of anxiety and repression. For Freud, repression is the very mechanism of anxiety. What is repressed returns as anxiety. Moreover, the return of the repressed is uncanny because it brings to the fore what has long been familiar but had been kept out of sight. It is the coming to light of what ought to have remained in concealment.

The emergence of what has been repressed does not mean it's coming to light at the level of consciousness. When repression is primal, the return of the

repressed is utterly beyond all thought of subjectivity. Thus, Krell concludes, the Freudian uncanny, that is, “[the] unhomelike return of the repressed is a thought of being” (Krell :56). This however seems to me to be a hasty conclusion. As we have seen, Heidegger arrives at the concept of the uncanny from a totally different path, making any simplistic and direct comparison with Freudian uncanny, such as Krell's, question begging. The mere fact that Freud's concept of the uncanny soars beyond consciousness does not necessarily make his analysis ontological, in the way that Heidegger would expect.

The unknown of the unconscious is not the same as the unknown of Being. To be sure, Freudian experience of the uncanny appeals to a realm that does not satisfy the traditional criterion of experience as the adequation of thought with its object. However, it denies this criterion only to re-affirm it at another level of analysis. Not any mystery is a mystery of Being. Freudian unconscious, as the source of explanation of a wide range of human experiences, still receives its mystical character from beings. It still operates at

the level of the ontical and does not belong to the Being of beings.

A look at what Heidegger himself says about Freud would confirm this conclusion. Heidegger's most explicit comments on Freud can be found in *Zollikon Seminars*. Following his famous claim in *Being and Time* – that the existential analytic of Dasein, due to its ontological character, is prior to any psychology, anthropology, and biology, whose investigations remain at the level of the ontical (*BT*: 71-5) – in *Zollikon Seminars*, Heidegger restates the idea of the priority of ontology over ontical investigations by arguing that human existence “in its essential grounds is never just an object which is present-at-hand; it is certainly not a self-contained object,” such as ego, subjectivity, or inner psyche (*Zollikon*: 3). His substitution for these limited concepts is of course the view of Dasein as being-in-the-world, whose way of existing “consists of ‘pure,’ invisible, intangible capacities for receiving-perceiving” (*Zollikon* :3).

According to Heidegger, Freudian psychoanalysis shares psychology's reductive view of human existence and remains at the level of the ontical. What

Freud understood as analysis was “a matter of a reduction [of the phenomenon under study] to its elements in the sense that the given, the symptoms, are dissolved into elements, with the intention of explaining the symptoms by the elements obtained in the manner” (*Zollikon*: 113). Therefore, analysis in the Freudian sense consists in a dissolution of the phenomenon in order to develop a causal explanation. Following his attachment to a reductive scientism, he too is unable to study the phenomenon as what it is.

Collecting symptoms and gathering information the way Freud does obstructs our access to the Being of beings (*Zollikon*: 58). It substitutes the collection of data for the phenomenon with the aim of finding the causal relationship that could explain the multitude of symptoms. As we have seen, Heidegger's inquiry in contrast is not after reducing the symptoms to the elements in the manner of Freud. His quest is rather “after those traits characterizing the being of Da- sein regarding its relation to [B]eing in general” (*Zollikon* :120). For Heidegger the Da of Dasein implies that the humanity of human consists in its standing in the openness of being. So, he asks: “In the entire construct of Freud's

libido-theory, is there even any room for 'man' (or human existence)?" (Heidegger, qtd in Dallmayr: 238).

In raising the question of the uncanny which seems to open up a horizon beyond common empirical psychology due to its appeal to the unknown of the unconscious, Freud right away turns to ask what the symptoms that all the experiences of uncanny share in common are, leading ultimately to the idea of the return of the repressed as the root cause of the uncanny. In other words, although Freud's analysis of the uncanny moves beyond experience in its traditional sense, his quasi-naturalistic libido-theory lies still within the framework of Newtonian science which seeks causal explanation and prediction and thus does not leave any space for the existential quality of human Being. In this way, ultimately, Freudian uncanny remains to be an ontical category, in contrast with Heidegger's Being-not-at-home which is ontological, explicitly concerned with the relation of Dasein to Being, or to the openness of Being.

Conclusion

For Heidegger, the term anxiety refers to an aspect of Dasein's Being. It is

ontological. That is to say, it does not belong to the realm of empirically perceivable phenomena, i.e. ontical phenomena, but to the not sensually perceivable realm of the ontological which is secondary in thinking and perception but prior in the sense that they are the grounds upon which the ontical phenomena become possible. In this sense, Heideggerian anxiety is the ontological ground upon which various spectrums of psychological anxiety, which are ontic, reveal themselves.

The concept of anxiety, as a mode of state-of-mind in which Dasein comes face to face with the totality of its Being, is central to Heidegger's thought, early and late alike. Perhaps late Heidegger's much less frequent use of the term alludes to his realization that the similarity of the concept with the experientially familiar concept of psychological anxiety would cause more confusion than it could illuminate.

Finally, although Freud might seem to have moved beyond the realm of empirical psychology in his analysis of the uncanny, his quest for scientific explanation and prediction leads him to causally define the uncanny in terms of the return of the

repressed. In this way, he closes down any possibility for the existential quality of human Being to show itself, thus limiting his analysis to the level of the ontical.

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مفهوم تشویش در اندیشه هایدگر

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در آثار بزرگ هایدگر در دهه‌ی بیست میلادی، مانند هستی و زمان (۱۹۲۷) و "متافیزیک چیست؟" (۱۹۲۹)، مفهوم تشویش (anxiety) جای‌گاه محوری دارد. اما پس از دهه‌ی بیست، هایدگر به ندرت از این واژه استفاده می‌کند تا آنجا که برخی تحلیل‌گران تشویش را مفهومی حاشیه‌ای در اندیشه‌ی هایدگر متاخر می‌دانند. در برابر این نگاه، نوشتار حاضر در پی تبیین کردن جای‌گاه محوری مفهوم تشویش در اندیشه‌ی هایدگر، چه متقدم و چه متاخر است. این مقاله نخست تمایز اساسی تشویش در نگاه هایدگر با تشویش در مفهوم روان‌شناختی آن را نشان داده و سپس استدلال می‌کند که این تمایز کلید درک جای‌گاه این مفهوم در فلسفه‌ی هایدگر است. تمایز بین تشویش از منظر هایدگر و از دیدگاه روان‌شناختی به ایده‌ی اساسی "تمایز هستی‌شناسانه" (the ontological difference) ارجاع می‌دهد، یعنی تفاوت بین هستانه (ontical) و هستی‌شناسانه (ontological)، یا به بیان دیگر، تفاوت بین چیزها و هستی چیزها. توصیف روان‌شناختی در مرتبه‌ی هستانه متوقف می‌شود و در نتیجه ابزار لازم برای درک ابعاد هستی‌شناسانه‌ی پدیده‌ی تشویش را ارائه نمی‌کند. نوشتار حاضر تحلیلی هستی‌شناسانه از پدیده‌ی تشویش ارائه می‌کند و بر اساس آن مدعی می‌شود که این مفهوم در اندیشه‌ی هایدگر متاخر، چنان که در هایدگر متقدم، نقش محوری دارد. در انتها، بخش کوتاهی به تحلیل فروید از مفهوم امر غریب (uncanny) و رابطه‌ی آن با اندیشه‌ی هایدگر اختصاص داده شده است. استدلال این بخش از مقاله این است که اگرچه تحلیل فروید از امر غریب به تعبیری از حیطة روانشناسی تجربی فراتر می‌رود، اما در تحلیل نهایی رویکرد شبه علمی و نگاه علت-معلولی حاکم بر اندیشه‌ی فروید، مانع از فراتر رفتن او از مرتبه‌ی تحلیل هستانه می‌شود.

واژگان کلیدی: هایدگر، تشویش، تمایز هستی‌شناسانه، هستی‌شناسی، هستی، امر غریب، فروید.

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