

Martin Heidegger
Being and Time
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Division One: Preparatory Fundamental Analysis of Dasein
V. Being-in as such
¶30. Fear as a Mode of State-of-Mind (H. 140-142)

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¶30. *Fear as a Mode of State-of-Mind* vi

There are three points of view from which the phenomenon of fear may be considered. We shall analyse: (1) that in the face of which we fear, (2) fearing, and (3) that about which we fear. These possible ways of looking at fear are not accidental; they belong together. With them the general structure of states-of-mind comes to the fore. We shall complete our analysis by alluding to the possible ways in which fear may be modified; each of these pertains to different items in the structure of fear.

That in the face of which we fear, the 'fearsome',² is in every case something which we encounter within-the-world and which may have either readiness-to-hand, presence-at-hand, or Dasein-with as its kind of Being. We are not going to make an ontical report on those entities which can often and for the most part be 'fearsome': we are to define the fearsome phenomenally in its fearsomeness. What do we encounter in fearing that belongs to the fearsome as such? That in the face of which we fear can be characterized as threatening. Here several points must be considered. 1. What we encounter has detrimentality as its kind of involvement. It shows itself within a context of involvements. 2. The target of this detrimentality is a definite range of what can be affected by it; thus the detrimentality is itself made definite, and comes from a definite region. 3. The region itself is well known as such, and so is that which is coming from it; that which is coming from it has something 'queer' about it.³ 4. That which is detrimental, as something that threatens us, is not yet within

¹ The earliest editions cite Section 39 rather than Section 40. This has been corrected in the list of *errata*.

² 'Das *Wovor* der Furcht, das Furchtbare . . .'

³ ' . . . mit dem es nicht "geheuer" ist.'

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striking distance [in beherrschbarer Nähe], but it is coining close. In such a drawing-close, the detrimentality radiates out, and therein lies its threatening character. 5. This drawing-close is within what is close by. Indeed, something may be detrimental in the highest degree and may even be coming constantly closer; but if it is still far off, its fearsomeness remains veiled. If, however, that which is detrimental draws close and is close by, then it is threatening: it can reach us, and yet it may not. As it draws close, this 'it can, and yet in the end it may not' becomes aggravated. We say, "It is fearsome". 6. This implies that what is detrimental as coming-close close by carries with it the patent possibility that it may stay away and pass us by; but instead of lessening or extinguishing our fearing, this enhances it.

In *fearing as such*, what we have thus characterized as threatening is freed and allowed to matter to us. We do not first ascertain a future evil (*malum futurum*) and then fear it. But neither does fearing first take note of what is drawing close; it discovers it beforehand in its fearsomeness. And in fearing, fear can then look at the fearsome explicitly, and "make it clear" to itself. Circumspection sees the fearsome because it has fear as its state-of-mind. Fearing, as a slumbering possibility of Being-in-the-world in a state-of-mind (we call this possibility 'fearfulness' ["Furchtsamkeit"]), has already disclosed the world, in that out of it something like the fearsome may come close. The potentiality for coming close is itself freed by the essential existential spatiality of Being-in-the-world.

That which fear fears about is that very entity which is afraid—Dasein.¹ Only an entity for which in its Being this very Being is an issue, can be afraid. Fearing discloses this entity as endangered and abandoned to itself. Fear always reveals Dasein in the Being of its "there", even if it does so in varying degrees of explicitness. If we fear about our house and home, this cannot be cited as an instance contrary to the above definition of what we fear about; for as Being-in-the-world, Dasein is in every case concerned Being-alongside.² Proximally and for the most part, Dasein *is*

¹ 'Das *Worum* die Furcht fürchtet, ist das sich fürchtende Seiende selbst, das Dasein.' While it is convenient to translate 'das *Worum* der Furcht' as 'that which one fears about', this expression must be

taken in a narrower sense than one would ordinarily expect in English. What Heidegger generally has in mind is rather the person *on whose behalf* or *for whose sake* one fears. (Cf. our remarks on 'um' in note 1, p. 93, H. 65, and note 2, p. 98, H. 69 above.) Thus 'fürchten um' comes closer to the ordinary meaning of 'fear for' than it does to that of 'fear about'. We shall soon see, however, that Heidegger also uses the expression 'fürchten für', for which 'fear for' would seem to be the natural translation. Notice that what he then has in mind—namely, our fearing for Others—is only a special case of 'fearing for' in the ordinary English sense, and likewise only a special case of what we shall call 'fearing about' in this translation.

² 'Sein bei'. Here our usual translation, 'Being-alongside', fails to bring out the connection. A German reader would recall at once that 'bei' may mean, 'at the home of' like the French '*chez*'. See our note 3, p. 80, H. 54 above.

in terms of *what* it is concerned with. When this is endangered, Being-alongside is threatened. Fear discloses Dasein predominantly in a privative way. It bewilders us and makes us 'lose our heads'. Fear closes off our endangered Being-in, and yet at the same time lets us see it, so that when the fear has subsided, Dasein must first find its way about again.

Whether privatively or positively, fearing about something, as being-afraid in the face of something, always discloses equiprimordially entities within-the-world and Being-in—the former as threatening and the latter as threatened. Fear is a mode of state-of-mind.

One can also fear about Others, and we then speak of "fearing for" m [Fürchten für sie]. This fearing for the Other does not take away his fear. Such a possibility has been ruled out already, because the Other, for whom we fear, need not fear at all on his part. It is precisely when the other is *not* afraid and charges recklessly at what is threatening him that we fear most *for* him. Fearing-for is a way of having a co-state-of-mind with Others, but not necessarily a being-afraid-with or even a fearing-with-one-another.¹ One can "fear about" without "being-afraid". Yet when viewed more strictly, fearing-about is "being-afraid-for-oneself".² Here what one "is apprehensive about" is one's Being-with with the Other, who might be torn away from one.³ That which is fearsome is not aimed directly at him who fears with someone else. Fearing-about knows that in a certain way it is unaffected, and yet it is co-affected in so far as the Dasein-with for which it fears is affected. Fearing-about is therefore not a weaker form of being-afraid. Here the issue is one of existential modes, not of degrees of 'feeling-tones'. Fearing-about does not lose its specific genuineness even if it is not 'really' afraid.

There can be variations in the constitutive items of the full phenomenon of fear. Accordingly, different possibilities of Being emerge in fearing. Bringing-close close by, belongs to the structure of the threatening as encounterable. If something threatening breaks in suddenly upon concerned Being-in-the-world (something threatening in its 'not right away, but any moment'), fear becomes *alarm* [Erschrecken]. So, in what is threatening we must distinguish between the closest way in which it brings itself close, and the manner in which this bringing-close gets encountered—its suddenness. That in the face of which we are alarmed is proximally something well known and familiar. But if, on the other hand,

¹ 'Fürchten für . . . ist eine Weise der Mitbefindlichkeit mit den Anderen, aber nicht notwendig ein Sich-mitfürchten oder gar ein Miteinanderfürchten.'

² 'ein Sichfürchten'. We have hitherto translated 'sich fürchten' with various forms of 'be afraid', which is its usual signification in ordinary German. In this passage, however, the emphasis on the reflexive pronoun 'sich' clearly calls for 'being-afraid-for-oneself'.

³ "'Befürchtet" ist dabei das Mitsein mit dem Anderen, der einem entrissen werden könnte.'

that which threatens has the character of something altogether unfamiliar, then fear becomes *dread* [Grauen]. And where that which threatens is laden with dread, and is at the same time encountered with the suddenness of the alarming, then fear becomes *terror* [Entsetzen]. There are further variations of fear, which we know as timidity, shyness, misgiving, becoming startled. All modifications of fear, as possibilities of having a state-of-mind, point to the fact that Dasein as Being-in-the-world is 'fearful' ["furchtsam"]. This 'fearfulness' is not to be understood in an ontical sense as some tactical 'individualized' disposition,¹ but as an existential possibility of the essential state-of-mind of Dasein in general, though of course it is not the only one.

¹ ' . . . im ontischen Sinne einer faktischen, "vereinzelt" Veranlagung . . .' While the verb 'vereinzeln' often means 'to isolate', Heidegger does not ordinarily use it in this sense. Indeed he contrasts it with the verb 'isolieren'. Cf. H. 188 below.