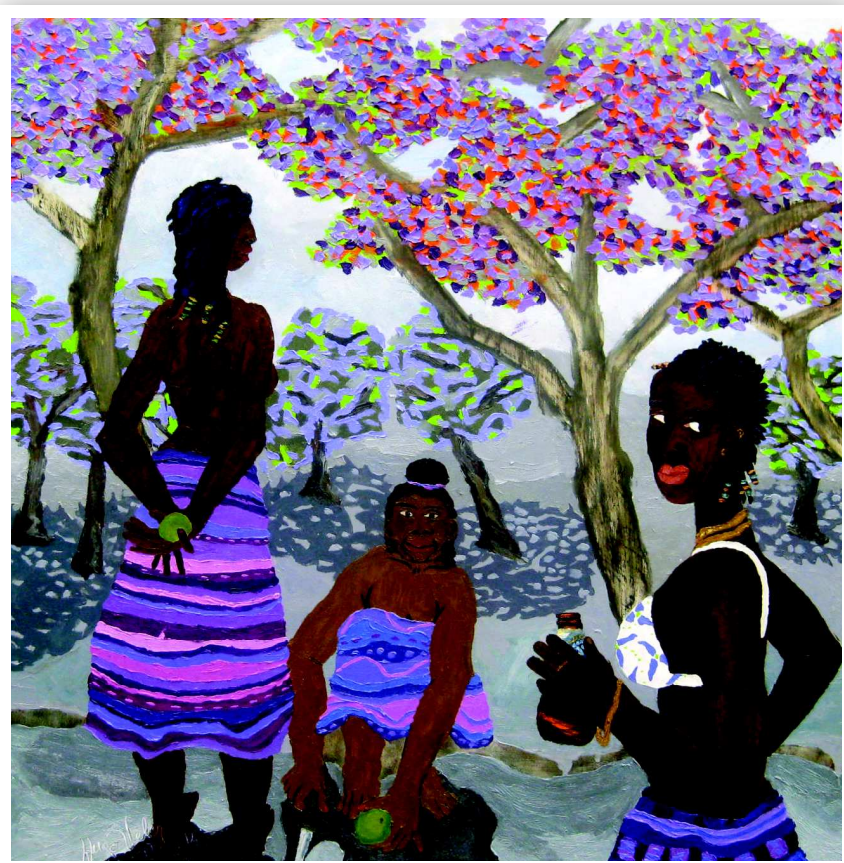


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Portada: "Al sur". Técnica: Oleo encausto
Autor: Hugo Velez Año: 2012

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Existential Understanding of Violence

Kim Hye Young¹

ABSTRACT

In this paper, violence is analyzed as a phenomenon through which a defective state of our understanding of *Being* (Seinsverstehen) reveals itself. In the framework of Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein*, the phenomenon of violence can be discussed in relation with the structure of the existential understanding of human *Dasein*.

PROLOGUE

Before we discuss the phenomenon of violence in the framework of Existentialism, I would like to have a close look into the following situations:

Scene 1: A pride of lions hunts a wounded Impala, who was left out alone. The Impala tries to fight back and run away, but eventually is caught by the lions and killed to be eaten.

Scene 2: A mother with a baby sees a presumably poisonous snake and kills it by smashing it multiple times. Even after the snake is dead, she keeps smashing the dead snake until it is no longer recognizable.

Scene 3: A young man comes into a house and starts beating an old man who was sitting in the house. The young man is a grown son of the old man, who used to beat up his wife, who is dead now, and his own children including the young man who now beats him.

These three scenes all include confronting situations between one and the other based on the unbalance of power. One might insist that all these three scenes contain violent contents. It is not uncommon to read instruction messages on the cover of media contents that warn the audience about violent scenes, and they recommend the appropriate age limit for viewers, because violence is an issue in our society and we want to deal with it carefully with sanity and justice. Violence is a sensitive issue and there is an incessant attempt to ablate it. However, violence is in the air, or rather, it is like the air itself: It is everywhere, but we cannot even grasp what it is. What is violence? We need to begin again with this basic question.

Let us have a look at the scene 1. Is there violence in this scene? Is it appropriate to call the pride of lions violent because they pick and kill a wounded Impala? The Impala tries to fight back despite its helpless situation; this animal must be in panic and it is imaginable that the Impala might be able to succeed to attack some of the lions with its horns and possibly injure them. Is the Impala violent in this case? A scene of violence could contain physical, verbal, psychological, sexual, social and political violence, among which the physical violence reveals the most primitive form of violence. The physical force of the lions oppresses the desire to live on the Impala. The lions, however, have to hunt as well in order to survive. This will to live is an instinctive-impulse for life of living beings,

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distinguished from the will to power or free will. There is a kind of tension between the opposite sides mentioned, likewise in the will to live in two different entities colliding, both based on the necessity of life. Before we answer the question whether scene one manifests the phenomenon of violence, I would like to move our attention to scene 2.

We can find similarity in this scene with the first in the sense that the presence of the snake conflicts with the mother's desire to preserve her child's life as well as hers. However, the question of necessity arises here, especially after the snake was already dead. The mother continues to beat the snake until it is broken into pieces. On the contrary, the question of necessity is posited from a different angle in scene 3. The young man's ferocious action is based on his past, namely his memory and the other person's previous action on him. It was a life-threatening situation for the young man and now for the old man, but not in the same sense as the lions' inevitable choice to destroy the life of the weak for the sake of preserving their own lives or the mother's urge to kill the snake to protect herself and her child's life. What can we say about violence in the scenes mentioned above?

First, there was a cause of the young man's actions in scene 3. His actions are the results of this one, grounded in the unfortunate events of the past. There is a cause of the actions of the lions against the Impala, which was their instinctive-impulse for survival. In scene 2, the mother's will to preserve the life of her child and herself was the cause of her action. However, the cause of the young man's action against the old man in scene 3 does not project his will to survive. The life of this young man is no longer threatened by the old man. The cause of his present action is placed in the past but dissolved in the present. In the first scene there are no human beings involved. The second scene shows the conflict between an animal and human entities. The third one, on the other hand, is based on the relationship between men. The conflict in the third situation cannot be explained within the realm of the effect of instinctive impulses or will to live. The fundamental cause of the conflicts between these two individuals is based on their history, which is constituted by the understanding of their time, *i.e.* life, which Martin Heidegger refers to as *temporality* [Zeitlichkeit] of their being. In the following paragraphs, Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein* will be briefly explained under the subthemes as follows: Existence of *Dasein*, *Dasein* as Being-In-the-World, Understanding of *Dasein*, and Temporality of *Dasein*: Geschichte, Angst, Authentic Understanding, Inauthentic Understanding, and Fear. Based on the analysis of *Dasein*, I would like to analyze the above-mentioned scenes and the phenomenon of violence with a phenomenological approach.

EXISTENCE OF *DASEIN*

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger analyzes the existence of human beings. Heidegger names *Dasein* the entity that takes its own being as an issue (Heidegger, 2006). In other words, *Dasein* asks the meaning of being and understands its own being in some way and with some explicitness (Heidegger, 2006). *Dasein* is not, however, a substitutive name of the human species. *Dasein* refers to each one of us. The terminology has not only appeared in the previous history of Philosophy, but is also a frequently expression in German everyday life. Da-sein literally means *being* [sein] *there* [da].

Nevertheless, Heidegger constitutes his idiosyncratic concept out of this "pure expression of being" (Heidegger, 2006, p. 12), which refers to an ontically

distinguished being of human beings among other beings (Heidegger, 2006). The fact that *Dasein* is ontically distinguished means that it is concerned about its own being through which it discloses itself to itself. This self-revelation of *Dasein* enables itself to understand itself. Understanding of *being* is a determination of being of *Dasein* (Heidegger, 2006): "The ontic distinction of *Dasein* lies in the fact that it is ontological" (Heidegger, 2006, p. 12). Namely, *Dasein* exists ontologically in the sense that it understands its very being. This *being* to which *Dasein* "can relate in one way or another, and somehow always does relate" (Heidegger, 2006, p. 12) is, according to Heidegger, *existence* [Existenz] (Heidegger, 2006). Therefore, "Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence, in terms of its possibility to be itself or not to be itself" (Heidegger, 2006, p. 12).

DASEIN AS BEING-IN-THE-WORLD

Dasein also has another name, which is *Being-in-the-world* [In-der-Welt-sein] (Heidegger, 2006). This discloses more than simply the place of its habitation, but the world itself constitutes the being of *Dasein*. *Dasein* is *thrown* [geworfen] in the world (Heidegger, 2006). It is *there* [Da-sein] as *having been there* [ist da gewesen] in the way it constantly *cares* [Sorge] (Heidegger, 2006) about its own being.

Heidegger refers to this way of existing as *facticity* (Heidegger, 2006). The facticity of *Dasein's* existence indicates the factuality of the fact that *Dasein* is thrown in the world and exists in the way it understands itself (Heidegger, 2006). In other words, *Dasein's* existing is always *factual*, i.e. *Dasein's* existentiality is essentially determined by facticity (Heidegger, 2006).

The being-in-the-World of *Dasein* is fundamentally related to and reveals the finiteness of *Dasein's* Being. The thrownness of *Dasein* is the ground of *Dasein's* finite being, which is, in other words, *Dasein's* being human. We exist in the world because we are thrown in the world. That is the beginning of *Dasein's* being as an entity who is hidden from the absolute beginning [absoluter Anfang] but seeks the end [Sinn] of being [von Sein], because it exists in the way that it runs towards the end. Everything that acts, acts for the sake of the end: *omne agens agit propter finem*. The thrownness in the world uncloaks the beginning and the end of *Dasein's* being. In this sense, Being-in-the-World is the ground for *Dasein's* understanding; therefore, its very existence.

In the world, *Dasein* is not alone. *Dasein* exists there with others, either other entities or things. The world is not an empty space, but it is filled with what *Dasein* encounters, hears, sees and understands. The world is the place where *Dasein's* existence happens through understanding. That is why *Dasein* exists through its understanding of the world and itself.

UNDERSTANDING OF DASEIN

As mentioned above, the understanding of *Dasein* is possible through the thrownness of *Dasein*, which is, in essence, thrownness into the mode of *projecting* [Entwurf] (Heidegger, 2006). In other words, *Dasein* understands itself through projecting itself to the possibilities of being in the future. *Dasein* understands itself in terms of possibilities; therefore, its existence is *futural* (Heidegger, 2006). However, "projecting has nothing to do with being related to a plan thought out, according to which *Dasein* arranges its being" (Heidegger, 2006, p. 145). Rather, the projecting discloses the possibilities of being for *Dasein*.

Heidegger's odd wording of projecting is actually what we are quite used to in our everyday life. For example, even at this moment of reading this paper, or this very line, we expect what is to come after this line, or what is to come on the next page, in order to understand the synthesis and the meaning of the text. This is how we can read a paper and understand it. Without this process of expecting what is to come next, the process of understanding doesn't work properly. This is actually not Heidegger's unique discovery.

Aurelius Augustine (2009) already talked about this process of understanding as he was explaining how we can sing. This singing is rather closer to saying, *i.e. dicere*, as in saying prayers. Augustine explains that when we sing a song that we know, as we begin singing, the expectation extends to the whole. Then once the song has begun, our memory extends from that expectation off to the past (Augustine, 2009). This is the process of understanding, which was described as the process of the perception of consciousness by Edmund Husserl in his theory of inner time-consciousness.²

Dasein understands itself through the process of projecting, which means that *Dasein* expects what it is going to *be* like in the coming moments, *i.e.* future. The possibilities of *being* are not specific plans nor precise expectations, which have to be fulfilled exactly how they were expected to be. It is not the same as making plans and scheduling the future time. The expression of *projecting* implies the distinction of the futural aspect of the existential and ontological understanding process from specific future plans.

The English translation of *projecting* misses out the structural significance of the original word *Entwerfen*. *Dasein's* act of projecting is *ent-werfen*, in which the word *werfen* is placed; this one means *to throw* as it is shown in the expression *geworfen in die Welt*, *i.e.* thrown in the world. Heidegger's wordplay is more than a pun; it reveals the necessary connection between the thrownness and the projecting of *Dasein*. *Dasein* is passively thrown in the world but it actively throws itself again into the future possibilities of *being*, in which it exists as an entity which understands the world and itself eventually. This is the basic structure of *Dasein's* understanding: as a thrown projection [geworfener Entwurf].

The essence of *Dasein's* existence is its understanding. This understanding is, however, not an intellectual process. It is a different process than reading a text or singing a song. It is not merely a perceptual process of consciousness, but it is an existential [existenzial] process of *Dasein's* ontological understanding. *Dasein's* ontological understanding relates to its very ontic difference in which it exists as an entity that *cares about* its own being. It is a self-happening [Selbstvollzug] of *Dasein's* existence as a whole, not only as an action of a mind. This happening [Geschehen] is constituted with the two-fold act of *Dasein's* understanding: self-projecting [Sich-entwerfen] and coming back [Zurückkommen].

TEMPORALITY OF *DASEIN*: GESCHICHTE

Once *Dasein* is thrown in the world, *Dasein* is *da*, there in the present. It *has been there* but the emphasis of the expression *having been* lies in *been*, *i.e.* *Dasein* is there, here and now. The process starts from this point, not the point of the birth or some other significant point in the past. The point from where *Dasein* projects itself is the present in the world. The other point where *Dasein* projects itself is

² See Husserl, E. (1991). *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1873-1917)*. Trans. J. Barnett Brough. London: Dordrecht Boston.

a point in the future, which has not come yet. This point of the future is there as a possibility. *Dasein* can project itself to the future possibilities of being by *caring about* its own being, this is what Heidegger formulated as “being-ahead-of-itself” (2006, p. 192) of *Dasein*. The core of *Dasein*'s existence lies in the fact that one's own *Dasein* is factually always dying, in other words, it is in a being-toward-its-end (Heidegger, 2006). Thus, this process is always future-oriented.

The act of projecting, though, always comes with its counterpart act, which is the act of coming-back to the thrownness. This two-fold movement happens between these two temporal points: one in the present as having-been there, and the other in the future. This happening [Geschehen] happens [geschieht], therefore, temporally [zeitlich]. This existential process of understanding is temporal, but not according to the everyday sense of time. *Dasein*'s temporality is not divided into the vulgar distinctions of the past, the present and the future. There are only aspects of temporality as phenomenal characteristics.

Future, having-been, and present show the phenomenal characteristics of “toward itself”, “back to”, “letting something be encountered”. The phenomena of toward[...], to[...], together with [...] reveal temporality as the *ekstatikon par excellence*. Temporality is the primordial “outside of itself” in and for itself. Thus we call the phenomena of future, having been, and present, the ecstasies of temporality. Temporality is not, prior to this, a being that first emerges from itself, its essence is temporalizing in the unity of the ecstasies (Heidegger, 2006, pp. 328-329).

In this sense, the process of temporality is existential and ecstatic. This temporal happening itself is the existence of *Dasein*. *Dasein*'s being, which is the problem for *Dasein* itself, is therefore the temporal happening of *Dasein*'s ontological understanding. This *Geschehen* [happening] is *Dasein*'s *Geschichte* [history/story], which is to be revealed and understood as each *Dasein*'s own history or story.

Each *Dasein*'s *Geschichte* finds its mine-ness [Meinigkeit] in its own-most possibility of being, which is the possibility of not being, *i.e.* the possibility of death. Once we are thrown in the world, we exist not as a lone entity in the world like the lone king of one of the planets from *Little Prince*. The only moment when one is truly revealed, standing out there [ex-stasis] as a completely lone entity, is the moment of facing death as the complete nothingness. This moment is there as a potentiality of being as long as one exists.

The uniqueness of *Dasein*'s existence or rather existential understanding lies in that *Dasein* is able to run to this possibility beforehand, before this possibility actually comes to reality, which Heidegger refers to as “pre-run towards death” [Vorlaufen zum Tode] (2006, p. 262). In everyday life, mostly, *Dasein* doesn't run towards its death as the possibility of its being, but there is a moment when we face this possibility, which is brought not by our intellectual understanding of life and death but by Angst. Why Angst? What does it do?

ANGST

Angst is not a mere feeling. Rather, Heidegger uses the expression *Befindlichkeit*, which stems from the verb *sich befinden*. It means that one is situated in a certain place, situation or condition. *Befindlichkeit* was translated as ‘state of mind’ (Heidegger, 1962) or ‘attunement’ (Heidegger, 1996). Both translations, though, lose the connotation of the German terminology *Befindlichkeit*, which is related to its verb form, as well as in the translation of *Sorge*, *Besorge* and *Fürsorge*.

There are different types of *Befindlichkeit*, but *Angst* is the most basic *Befindlichkeit* that is related to *Dasein's* nothingness. Heidegger explains that *Angst* does not know what it is anxious about (Heidegger, 2006): “Nothing of that which is at hand and objectively present within the world, functions as what *Angst* is anxious about” (Heidegger, 2006, p. 186). What *Angst* is about is indefinite (Heidegger, 2006), because what *Dasein* is anxious about is its nothingness, *i.e.* death. The nothingness of *Dasein* is *Dasein's* own-most potentiality of not being. Therefore, *Angst* points at the finiteness of *Dasein*, which is based on its Being-in-the-World. *Angst* as a fundamental *Befindlichkeit*, then, belongs to the essential constitution of *Dasein* as Being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 2006). Heidegger writes that “If what *Angst* is about exposes nothing, that is, the world as such, this means that that about which *Angst* is anxious is being-in-the-world itself” (2006, p. 187). Being anxious is a way of being-in-the-world as *Befindlichkeit*. *Dasein's* being-in-the-world is necessarily connected to its being finite. Thus, *Dasein's* own-most future potentiality of being as not being is basically its potentiality-for-being-in-the-world. Heidegger claims that the “complete phenomenon of *Angst* thus shows *Dasein* as a factual, existing being-in-the-world” (2006, p. 191).

It is interesting to see how we *find ourselves* out of our everyday life where we are mostly not concerned about the potentiality of not being. It is *Stimmung*, which is translated as ‘mood’ in English, and brings us to realize the thrownness of our *Dasein* (Heidegger, 2006). The most famous existential mood, as we all have heard of, is boredom. It is not a secret that Heidegger was conscious about Kierkegaard and his works, so Heidegger’s analysis of *Dasein*, in a way, is like his indirect answer to Kierkegaard’s existential and theological analysis.

In mood, we realize that *we are there*. Moods are ontically familiar (Heidegger, 2006), however they are taken as fleeting experiences that “color one’s whole psychological condition” (Heidegger, 2006, p. 340). Moods temporalize, namely, they come and go ‘in time’. It is a “trivial established fact” (Heidegger, 2006, p. 340) but certainly an “ontic and psychological fact” (Heidegger, 2006, p. 340). However, Heidegger clarifies that what we are eventually interested in is “to demonstrate the ontological structure of *Befindlichkeit* in its existential and temporal constitution” (Heidegger, 2006, p. 340), for which it is required to initially make the temporality of mood visible (Heidegger, 2006). The existential fundamental nature of mood brings *Dasein* back to its ‘having been thrown there’ (cf. Heidegger, 2006, p. 340). In this sense, *Befindlichkeit* is grounded in *having been*. Namely, *Befindlichkeit* always reveals a mode of having-been for the existential analysis (Heidegger, 2006). While understanding is primarily grounded in the future, *Befindlichkeit* temporalizes itself primarily in having-been (Heidegger, 2006).

The *Befindlichkeit* which “is able to hold open the constant and absolute threat to itself arising from the own-most individualized being of *Dasein*” (Heidegger, 2006, p. 266) is *Angst*. “In *Angst*, *Dasein* finds itself faced with the nothingness of the possible impossibility of its existence. *Angst* is anxious about the potentiality-of-being of the being thus determined, and thus discloses the most extreme possibility” (Heidegger, 2006, p. 266). The anticipation of *Dasein* absolutely individualizes [vereinzeln] itself, and in this individualizing, *Dasein* can be sure about the wholeness of its potentiality-of-being [Seinkönnen] (Heidegger, 2006). In this respect, *Angst* as the fundamental *Befindlichkeit* belongs to the self-understanding of *Dasein* in terms of its ground (Heidegger, 2006), hence that “Being-towards-death is essentially *Angst*” (Heidegger, 2006, p. 266).

Angst reveals in *Dasein* its *being* toward its own-most potentiality of being, namely, being free for the freedom of choosing and grasping itself (Heidegger, 2006). This is the moment of being oneself, wholly as an individual entity, facing the own-most potentiality of one's being. *Dasein* as Being-in-the-World gains its autonomous existential understanding through Angst.

The existential identity of disclosing and what is disclosed so that in what is disclosed the world is disclosed as world, as being-in, individualized, pure, thrown potentiality for being, makes it clear that with the phenomenon of Angst a distinctive kind of *Befindlichkeit* has become the theme of our interpretation. Angst individualizes and thus discloses *Dasein* as *solus ipse* (Heidegger, 2006, p. 188).

Angst causes one to have an uncanny [unheimlich] feeling (Heidegger, 2006). The word *Unheimlich* is composed of the prefix 'un-' with 'heim' which means 'home', thus it is the feeling of 'not being at home'. This *unheimlich* feeling is caused when *Dasein* is out of its comfort zone of everyday life. Angst brings *Dasein* to the face of the possibility of death as the potentiality-of-being. This finiteness of *Dasein* manifests, though, the wholeness of *Dasein* as an existential, ontological being, understanding itself. In Angst, *Dasein* understands itself in an authentic [eigentlich] way.

AUTHENTIC UNDERSTANDING

The possibility of not being is the most certain and inevitable possibility of *Dasein's* being, because *Dasein* is human, which means that it exists finitely. The essence of *Dasein's* being is based on the most authentic character of human being: Death. So the most authentic way of projecting for *Dasein* is revealed in the expression of *Being-towards-death* [Sein-zum-Tode] (Heidegger, 2006). *Dasein* runs towards its possibility of death and comes back [zurückkommen] to its *thrownness*. *Dasein's* being-in-the-world is the very ground of *Dasein's* being human. Thus, the character of projecting in *Dasein's* understanding constitutes the being-in-the-world of *Dasein* with regard to the disclosedness of its *there* as the *there of a potentiality of being* (Heidegger, 2006).

The possibility of not being, namely, the possibility of death, is still a possibility of being. This possibility lies always in the future, because this possibility counts as a possibility of being only under the condition that *Dasein is still there*, i.e. only when this possibility is there as a future possibility which has not been realized in the present. This possibility is the absolute and necessary possibility of being for the existence of *Dasein* as long as it exists as human *Dasein* in the world. This possibility of being is, in Heidegger's terms, the most authentic possibility of being for *Dasein*. However, we do not exist in the way that we always think of our possibility of not being. There are moments in life where we face the death of others and do ponder upon our death as a possibility, or rather the absolute possibility in the near or far future, but we do not or should not think of death day and night at every possible moment of life. Not to mention that it is also not a healthy way of living in a practical sense.

INAUTHENTIC UNDERSTANDING

Instead, we live our everyday life thinking about things in the world and details of our daily life rather than our possible being of not being. Heidegger refers to this way of *Dasein's* being in everyday life as *Dasein's* being *fallen in the They* [das Man] (Heidegger, 2006, pp. 167ff, 175ff). The They is the self of

everydayness, which is constituted in public interpretedness, which expresses itself in idle talk (Heidegger, 2006).

Through Angst, *Dasein* takes its very being as an issue, *i.e.* cares [Sorge] about its own being. In everyday life, however, what *Dasein* mostly is concerned with [Besorgen] or concerned for [Fürsorge] is not its own or its very being. In average everyday life, we are concerned about things and other entities around us. We interpret our world in this way –in an inauthentic [uneigentlich] way. This inauthentic understanding is not, however, a secondary nor a less important way of understanding for *Dasein*. Both authentic and inauthentic understandings together constitute *Dasein's* existential understanding. An inauthentic way of interpreting the world is as crucial as the authentic understanding.

In everyday life, thinking about death is publicly regarded as a cowardly fear in the midst of the They (Heidegger, 2006). Heidegger refers to this as the sign of insecurity on the part of *Dasein* and a dark flight from the world (Heidegger, 2006). In everydayness, being-toward-death reveals itself rather as a constant flight from death (Heidegger, 2006). Only when Angst is distorted into cowardly fear and in and overcoming fearful, *Dasein* can also make its own cowardliness known in the face of Angst (Heidegger, 2006).

FEAR

Very often, Angst and fear are used in such a way that they are not clearly distinguished from each other. As mentioned above, in everyday life, the They distorts Angst into the fear of a future event (Heidegger, 2006). Heidegger, however, distinguishes fear from Angst. To make a long story short, fear has an object while Angst has no object. Angst is indefinite but fear is about having a definite object to fear. According to Heidegger's definition (although it is actually not only Heidegger's definition), we cannot fear our death, we can only be anxious about our death because death as nothingness is not something that we can fear. When there is no object of fear, how can we fear? The They makes Angst ambiguous as fear and considers Angst as a sign of weakness, which a self-assured *Dasein* should not know (Heidegger, 2006). As seen above, Angst brings *Dasein* to the face of death as the most authentic potentiality of being of *Dasein*. This is what Heidegger says about *Dasein* as Being-towards-death and its anxious freedom:

What is characteristic about authentic, existentially projected being toward-death can be summarized as follows: Anticipation reveals to *Dasein* its lostness in the they-self, and brings it face to face with the possibility to be itself, primarily unsupported by concern taking care of things, but to be itself in passionate anxious freedom toward death which is free of the illusions of the they, factual, and certain of itself (Heidegger, 2006, p. 266).

However, the They of our everyday life does not permit us the courage to have Angst (Heidegger, 2006). Heidegger inserts a footnote next to the title of the paragraph 30 about fear in *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 2006) to indicate comparison with "Aristoteles, *Rhetoric*, B5, 1382 a20-1383 b11" (Heidegger, 2006, p. 140) without any further explanation nor interpretation of the Aristotelian definition of fear. Let's see what Aristoteles says about fear:

Let fear be defined as a painful or troubled feeling caused by the impression of an imminent evil that causes destruction or pain; for men do not fear all evils, for

instance, becoming unjust or slow-witted, but only such as involve great pain or destruction, and only if they appear to be not far off but near at hand and threatening, for men do not fear things that are very remote; all know that they have to die, but as death is not near at hand, they are indifferent. If then this is fear, all things must be fearful that appear to have great power of destroying or inflicting injuries that tend to produce great pain. That is why even the signs of such misfortunes are fearful, for the fearful thing itself appears to be near at hand, and danger is the approach of anything fearful (Aristotle, 1926, 1382 a20-1383 b11).

Besides, Heidegger analyzes the phenomenon of fear in three aspects: 1) what we are afraid of, 2) fearing, and 3) why we are afraid. These possible aspects of fear are not accidental but they belong together (Heidegger, 2006). According to the Aristotelian explanation, fear is aroused by an immediate threatening of destruction and pain. We fear what is near at hand, but we tend to not fearing what is very remote. That is why we do not fear death. Not based on the same ground, but Aristotle takes death out of the category of 'what men fear'. Death is not an object of fear. Instead, Heidegger confers the phenomenon of Angst on death, which is far not in the temporal sense but existential, in the respect that death is always only a possibility as long as *Dasein* exists.

What we are afraid of is always something that we encounter in the world, "either with the kind of being of something at hand or something objectively present or *Mitdasein*" (Heidegger, 2006, p. 140). In other words, we fear things or people in the world that are threatening. Here are few points Heidegger suggests consider in the analysis of fear:

1) What is encountered has the relevant nature of harmfulness. It shows itself in a context of relevance; 2) Thus harmfulness aims at a definite range of what can be affected by it. So determined, it comes from a definite region; 3) The region itself and what comes from it is known as something which is "unwell" [nicht geheuer]; 4) As something threatening, what is harmful is not yet near enough to be dealt with, but it is coming near. As it approaches, harmfulness radiates and thus has the character of threatening; 5) This approaching occurs within nearness. Something may be harmful in the highest degree and may even be constantly coming nearer but if it is still far off it remains veiled in its fearsome nature. As something approaching in nearness, however, what is harmful is threatening, it can get us, and yet perhaps not. In approaching, this "it can and yet in the end it may not" gets worse. It is fearsome, we say; 6) This means that what is harmful, approaching near, bears the revealed possibility of not happening and passing us by. This does not lessen or extinguish fearing, but enhances it" (Heidegger, 2006, pp. 140-141).

Death is a possibility of *being* for *Dasein*, but not as a possibility of not happening or passing us by. Actually, the distance to death could be very close, but it is always far. Thus, we cannot fear death. We can only be anxious. Fearing discovers what we are afraid of in its fearsomeness, and then fear can clarify what is fearsome by explicitly looking at it (Heidegger, 2006). Fearing, as a slumbering [schlummernd] possibility of an attuned [befindlich] being-in-the-world, discloses the world with regard to the fact that something like a fearful thing can draw near to us from this fearfulness (Heidegger, 2006).

This ability to draw near is itself freed by the essential, existential spatiality of being-in-the-world, and what *Dasein* is afraid of is actually the fearful being itself, namely, *Dasein* (Heidegger, 2006). It is because only the *being* who takes its very being as an issue can be afraid (Heidegger, 2006). Here we can see that

fearing is related with the ontological condition of *Dasein*. To be precise, *Dasein* can be afraid only because it understands itself existentially.

Fear always reveals *Dasein* in the being of its “there” in varying degrees of explicitness. However, fear discloses *Dasein* predominantly in a privative way (Heidegger, 2006), as endangered and abandoned to itself (Heidegger, 2006). Fear “bewilders us and makes us ‘lose our heads’ [kopflos]” (Heidegger, 2006, p. 141). Fear, as a mode of *Befindlichkeit*, closes off our endangered Being-in and fearing, as being afraid in the face of something, either privatively or positively, discloses entities within the world in their threatening or their being-in related to their threatenedness (Heidegger, 2006).

Fear is a *Befindlichkeit* that reveals the co-existence of *Dasein* with the Other. *Dasein* can fear about Others in the sense that it *fears for* them (Heidegger, 2006) and this *fearing for* is a way of having a “co-state-of-mind” [Mitbefindlichkeit] (Heidegger, 2006, p. 142) with Others. The *fearfulness* of *Dasein* is not to be understood in the ontic sense of factual *isolated* tendency, but as the existential possibility of the essential *Befindlichkeit* of *Dasein* in general, which is, however, not the only one (Heidegger, 2006).

Fear is the seed of violence, which grows in many different forms. In the second scene of the prologue, the mother’s fear leads her to destroy the snake. In the sense that fear is an existential *Befindlichkeit* of human *Dasein*, the conflicts of power in the first scene do not fall under the category of violence. Nevertheless, in the second scene, the mother’s action after the snake’s death exceeds the necessity of her will to live. It reaches the point where her action could be taken as violent. Her action was not moved by her will to live but her fear, which actually is fear of herself as the fearful being, and not anymore because of the dead snake. Her violence, though, is still different from the one of the young man from the third scene, because her temporary and spontaneous fear does not distort her existential understanding of herself.

FEAR AND VIOLENCE

We had a long detour to come to an existential discourse of violence. It started with the story of a young man and his father that required us to go through the Analysis of *Dasein* by Heidegger. The son of this story beats his old father. His father used to beat him. We see a circle that runs in time between these two men. The ground of their violence is placed in their history, which does not only refer to their past, but to their existential and temporal history [Geschichte] as their very existence.

This scene is actually from a movie called *Breathless*. If their violence is related to their *Geschichte*, it is necessary to hear their *Geschichte* first in order to understand the phenomenon of their violence. This young man has a father and a sister who has a different mother because his own died when he was young because of his father’s chronic domestic violence. He, as a grown man, lives off working for a loan-shark gang. His job is to threaten and harass debtors to pay the vicious interest. Now his father is old and feeble and beaten up by his grown son regularly.

Why does he beat his father now when he is not a threat to him anymore? This man is also, as each one of us, *Dasein* who is thrown in the world and exists in the way that he takes his own being as an issue and already understands himself in some way. The question in this context is the question of how he understands himself. His self-projection to the future, *i.e.* his future possibilities of

being seems significantly limited. He lives as if he were not afraid of anything or even death. He is not anxious.

He lives in the past. In other words, he lives as if he had no future. His *Geschichte* is cycling within the closed circle of *having-been* without reaching out to the future. In the movie it is in the night when this man comes back home and beats his father. The night is dark, without *ligh'*, which could reveal the world and the situation of himself to himself in order to give him understanding or sight [Sicht]. In his hopeless life, a faint ray of light is shed when he meets a girl who also lives in the circle of violence but speaks out as if she didn't give up on hope which lies in the future. He punches her down at their first encounter and knocks her down but she wakes up, fights back and *responds* to him, which leaves a crack on the shell of his *Geschichte* of the cycling violence, his history that paused in the past. Although they are still sitting in the night, as this crack starts to get bigger, they are sitting together and he asks her *how he could live*—an existential question. He was finally able to have this question only when he started fearing his future. This is the moment when he turns his back away from the past and turns to the future.

This man's world was not revealed to him with entities with whom he could co-exist before. His fear from his childhood overshadowed his whole life. It was when she, the Other, entered his world that he was able to turn his past to the future, fearing about the Other who is now *there* with him in the world. The moment when his fear becomes *fear-for*, his fear connects to the existence of the Other. His violence was a distorted phenomenon of his fear that bewildered him to *lose his head*, up to the point where he loses himself in violence. The very fear that has been driving him crazy [kopflos], ironically, opens up the door for authentic existential understanding.

TEMPORALITY OF FEAR

Violence is a reflection of fear, *i.e.* projection of fear that reveals itself in a distorted way. The *kopflos* [headless] condition of fear could lead one to the state of insecurity, and the defective way of self-revelation of fear appears in the form of violence. The 'proper' way of projection for understanding of *being* [Seinsverstehen] projects oneself to the future through Angst, but the distorted projection reveals itself in the phenomenon of violence.

Being anxious about death as their possibility of nothingness is different from being afraid of nothingness, *i.e.* fearing the meaninglessness of being as nothingness. The meaning [Sinn] as the entelechy of *Dasein's* existence lies in the facticity of *Dasein* that it exists temporally in the constant movement of *toward itself, back to, and letting something be encountered*. Losing the meaning of this temporal movement implies that this process is discontinued. Namely, fearing projects the memory, *i.e.* the past, only onto the present and the present of the Other instead of the future. This is a perverted way of self-projecting that disconnects the temporality from the future.

The fear of the son was temporally incomplete. His memory lost its connection to his future, which holds the possibility of the wholeness of the meaning [Sinn] of his existence. This is, ironically, where the discourse of hope can chip in: Hope always points at the future, and hope is not lost as long as one exists ontologically in its temporality. Fear reveals the being-in-the-world of *Dasein* but not the own-most potentiality of its being. One can fear only because one understands her very being, but at the same time, one cannot understand her

being as a whole only in fear. He was never able to find room in the midst of his everyday life, or rather, in his lostness in the They, neither to find space for himself to hear his own voice, the call from his own-most conscience.

The fearing of the meaninglessness of nothingness leads one to self-deception and self-destruction, which paralyze *Dasein's* authentic as well as inauthentic understanding process as a Being-in-the-world. Fear of death is different from fear of an empty house or of a war. Fear of death, *i.e.* fear of nothingness is to fear without an object. Objectless fearing loses its direction, which prevents *Dasein* from drawing the fearful object near to itself. When fearing loses its ability to draw near based on the essential and existential spatiality of *Dasein's* being-in-the-world, *Dasein* loses itself, because what *Dasein* is afraid of is fundamentally *Dasein* itself as the fearful being who takes its very being as an issue.

Violence reveals itself when fear loses its direction, *i.e.* the fearing subject itself. In this *lostness*, which differs from *Dasein's* lostness in the They, violence comes about as a desperate manner of self-protection from the *lostness*. In this sense, violence is the process of losing oneself, because one in violence has to mute one's own conscience, which calls one to be oneself in Angst, in front of the own-most authentic nothingness, not the meaningless nor nihilistic nothingness.

FEARING FOR THE OTHER AND VIOLENCE

In short, the phenomenon of violence is rooted in the distorted fear, which takes its object not in the (near) future, but in the past. The history of violence co-happens with the Other's history, which does not extend, however, to the future. In violence, *fearing for* is always only for oneself, paradoxically, even if one loses oneself in violence.

Violence is personal but at the same time very communal. It is communal in the sense that it is through memory with the Other that the self-understanding of *Dasein* is deformed, and this defective way of understanding affects the Other. In other words, the problem of one's violence always comes with one's background history of experiencing violence of the Other in the past. Violence is a defective phenomenal form of co-being [Mitsein] of *Daseins*. However, even inter-relational violence between different entities fundamentally points at the lostness of the self.

Mostly, in everyday life, *Dasein* fears for the Other, which enables *Dasein* to have the co-state-of-mind with the Other. Even so, when *Dasein* loses itself in fearing of nothingness, *Dasein* is isolated in itself, not in the same way of being isolated in an anxious way in the face of nothingness. The isolation of the former case locks up *Dasein* in its undirected fear with no sight, while the anxious self-isolation of the latter case as an autonomous and active self-understanding opens the world and *Dasein's* very being to *Dasein* itself. Violence is a defective and deceptive way of disclosing of the world and *Dasein* to itself, which disconnects *Dasein* not only from the Other in the world but from itself as well.

REMEDY FOR VIOLENCE

To sum up, *Dasein* asks about the meaning of its *being* and understands itself existentially. The phenomenological method of *Dasein's* existential understanding is found in the existence of *Dasein* itself as *Geschehen*, namely history. A story can be understood only by telling it, and a story can be told only when it is shared. Fear and Angst open a door for *Dasein* to understand its history by

turning away from and turning towards *Dasein's* authentic and inauthentic possibilities of *being*. However, when one is deprived of her room for an authentic existential understanding completely, *i.e.* disabled from being anxious about its own-most potentiality of being, her existential fear reveals her being only endangered and abandoned in a privative and distorted way. That is the moment when one stops hearing herself, the call of her conscience and the voice of the Other in herself. Violence is a deaf response of a blinded person who lost her future and thus the wholeness of her existence, namely her *Geschichte*. Failing to hear the voice of oneself could result in a series of exploitation of existential spatiality of the Other in one's world, who shares the world with oneself. This is how violence continues to survive in a vicious circle, like a contagious disease, spreading from one person to another. The one who is unable to hear one's own voice fails to hear the voice of the Other and fails to ask the meaning of one's own life. Therefore, the recovery from violence could be initiated when one listens to the *Geschichte* of the lost voice.

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