

Moods and Appraisals: How the Phenomenology and Science of Emotions Can Come Together

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Abstract In this paper, I articulate Heidegger's notion of *Befindlichkeit* and show that his phenomenological account of affective existence can be understood in terms of contemporary work on emotions. By examining Heidegger's account alongside contemporary accounts of emotions, I not only demonstrate the ways in which key aspects of the former are present in the latter; I also explicate in detail the ways in which our understanding of *Befindlichkeit* and its relationship to moods and emotions can benefit from an empirically-informed study of emotions.

Keywords Phenomenology · Heidegger · Moods · Emotions · Attunement · *Befindlichkeit* · Appraisals

Introduction

It is perhaps one of the most striking claims of Martin Heidegger's existential phenomenology that moods (*Stimmungen*, singular: *Stimmung*) are constitutive of human existence: we are not only rational, social, or practical beings, but we are also beings whose everyday existence is permeated and shaped by our moods. Indeed, according to Heidegger, the very observation that we have moods is revealing not only of how we experience the world and relate to others but also, and most importantly, of the manner in which we are ontologically constituted. To wit, it is because we are beings who are capable of being in moods that we can find ourselves amidst worldly projects and social situations that already matter to us and emotionally affect us. The

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underlying structure that makes this affective and situated finding of oneself through mood possible is called *Befindlichkeit*.¹

In this paper, I set out to articulate Heidegger's notion of *Befindlichkeit* and its relationship to contemporary scholarship on emotions. Despite the fact that explicit avowal of Heidegger is rare for those who write on the emotions,² I show that there is substantial common ground between certain contemporary accounts of emotions and Heidegger's discussion of *Befindlichkeit* and *Stimmung* in *Being and Time*. To be sure, contemporary accounts of emotions are no match for Heidegger's grandiose ontological aspirations. Yet they have superseded Heidegger's account of *Befindlichkeit* in other respects. For instance, in their attempts to delineate the nature of emotions, such accounts have made substantial headway in articulating the relation between cognition and emotion (Damasio 1994; Lerner et al. 2004; DeLancey 2001), rationality and emotion (de Sousa 1987; DeLancey 2002; Elster 1999; Frijda 1986; Greenspan 1995; Nussbaum 2001), and moods and emotion (Griffiths 1997; Sizer 2000; Lormand 1985; DeLancey 2006); the evolutionary basis of emotions (Frank 1988; Griffiths 1997); the social construction of emotions (Armon-Jones 1986; Averill 1982); and, finally, the neurobiological basis of emotions (LeDoux 1996; Damasio 1994). In light of this burgeoning, interdisciplinary research program, a disservice is being done both to Heidegger himself and to Heidegger-inspired scholarship by ignoring the ways in which some of his most perspicacious observations about human existence relate to findings from contemporary research in philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science.

In this paper, I wish to rectify, to the extent that is possible, this lack of dialogue between Heidegger and contemporary work on emotions. By examining Heidegger's

¹ "Befindlichkeit" is Heidegger's neologism. It relates to the colloquial German expression "Wie befinden Sie sich?" ("How are you?" or literally: "How do you find yourself?"). In *The History of the Concept of Time*, Heidegger characterizes *Befindlichkeit* as the "finding of oneself in being-in-the-world" which "belongs with being-in-the-world as such" (1979/1992: 255; translation altered). In English, "Befindlichkeit" has been translated as "state-of-mind" (Macquarrie and Robinson), "attunement" (Stambaugh), "disposedness" (Kisiel, Dahlstrom, and Carman), "affectedness" (Dreyfus), or even "situatedness" (Guignon). Throughout the paper, I use the German term and thus provide no equivalent English term. Although some of the proposed translations of "Befindlichkeit" come closer to capturing the meaning of the term than others (for instance, "disposedness" is a much better translation than "state-of-mind"), none of them manages to convey all the philosophically important connotations that the German term carries. An additional reason for using the German term is that it safeguards us from any confusion that might arise from the fact that often the terms "Befindlichkeit" and "Stimmung" are both rendered in English as "attunement". For instance, Stambaugh in her translation of *Being and Time* translates "Befindlichkeit" as "attunement," whereas McNeill and Walker in their translation of *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (Heidegger 1983/1995) translate "Stimmung" as "attunement".

² The works of Robert Solomon and Matthew Ratcliffe are notable exceptions to this trend (see, especially, Solomon 2004; Ratcliffe 2002, 2005, 2008, 2009). The ways in which the account that I advance in this essay differs from Ratcliffe's position is discussed in note 27. I briefly discuss Solomon's view in section "The Role of Appraisals". The only other work that I know of that explicitly attempts to bridge contemporary research in emotions and Heidegger is an hitherto unpublished manuscript by Lauren Freeman (2013). Anthony Hatzimoysis (2010) provides an exceptionally clear and insightful account of Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of emotional experience. For an account of emotions that it is not explicitly Heideggerian but shares much with Heidegger's account, see Maiese (2011). Stephan Strasser's *Das Gemüt* deals with the relationship between *Stimmung* and feeling (see Strasser 1956). Lastly, for expositional accounts of Heidegger's notion of *Befindlichkeit* and analyses of its role within the context of his project of fundamental ontology, see, among others, Guignon (2003), Haar (1992), Mullhall (1996), and Staehler (2007).

phenomenological analysis of our affective existence and comportment to the world alongside contemporary accounts of emotions, I not only demonstrate the ways in which key aspects of the former are present in the latter; I also explicate the ways in which our understanding of *Befindlichkeit* and its relationship to *Stimmungen* and emotions can benefit from an empirically-informed study of emotions.

***Befindlichkeit* and Mood**

Understanding *Befindlichkeit*

Befindlichkeit is a fundamental *existentiale* of Dasein;³ it is constitutive of Dasein's existence and discloses in a primordial manner Being-in-the-world. In less esoteric terms, *Befindlichkeit* is an ontological structure of human existence: not only does it shape our engagement with the world and with others, it is the condition of the possibility of such an engagement. My objective in this section is to delineate what Heidegger means by *Befindlichkeit* by explicating its key aspects. If, as I have claimed, there is a connection between contemporary research in emotions and Heidegger's analysis of *Befindlichkeit*, then these key aspects of *Befindlichkeit* (or at least, a sufficiently large number of them) must be present in the emotions literature. The first step in establishing this interconnection is to be explicit about what is meant by *Befindlichkeit*.

Befindlichkeit is always manifested through mood (*Stimmung*).⁴ Examples of mood include: equanimity, moroseness, annoyance, contentment, bliss, melancholy, and anxiety. To this list, Heidegger adds, perhaps problematically, joy,

³ *Befindlichkeit*, understanding (*Verstehen*), and fallenness (*Verfallensein*) constitute the three basic existentials of Dasein, which are united in the structure of care (*Sorge*) (SZ 191ff./235ff., 221ff./263ff.). Care, according to Heidegger, is that which unifies and discloses Being-in-the-world. There are places in *Sein und Zeit* where Heidegger adds a fourth existential, talk (*Rede*) (see SZ 335/384), and there are places in which he replaces fallenness with talk (see SZ 133/172, 161/203). Although the paper focuses on *Befindlichkeit*, it would be a mistake to suggest that one can come to terms with Heidegger's rich account of human existence without specifying how *Befindlichkeit*, *Verstehen*, *Verfallensein*, *Rede*, and even *Entwurf* all relate to one another. Without a doubt, a paper that undertakes such an admittedly challenging project is of great value. It is, however, a project that goes beyond the strictures of this paper. Having said that, in section "[Finding *Befindlichkeit*](#)," I discuss the role and importance of *Befindlichkeit* in reasoning and understanding; briefly examine how *Befindlichkeit* relates to Being-in-the-world; and talk about the relationship between *Befindlichkeit* and thrownness. Although the comments found in section "[Finding *Befindlichkeit*](#)" constitute the beginning of a full presentation of how *Befindlichkeit* relates to the other existentials of Dasein, they still suggest that *Befindlichkeit* is only a moment in the ontological constitution of the "Da".

All references to *Sein und Zeit* will be indicated by "SZ" followed by both the German and English pagination. The German pagination corresponds to that of the seventh and later editions of the text. Unless otherwise stated, I will be using Macquarrie and Robinson's English translation of *Sein und Zeit* (Heidegger 1962).

⁴ Spelling out precisely the relationship between *Befindlichkeit* and mood (*Stimmung*) is no trivial matter. In keeping with Heidegger's distinction between the ontological and the ontic level, we can say that *Befindlichkeit*—as a permanent structure of (human) existence—belongs to the former level, whereas *Stimmungen*—as the various manifestations or content of *Befindlichkeit*—belong to the latter level. I should emphasize that for Heidegger the two levels (ontological vs. ontic) are interconnected. Although we can separate them in analysis, in actuality they are always together. Consequently, there is no mood without *Befindlichkeit* and there is no *Befindlichkeit* without mood.

boredom, fear, hope, and anger (1983/1995: 64; SZ 345/395f.). And to complicate matters even further, Heidegger speaks of anxiety as *Grundbefindlichkeit* (SZ 184ff./228ff.), of boredom as *Grundstimmung* (1983/1995), and of fear as an *inauthentic* mode of *Befindlichkeit* (SZ 341/391).

Putting these complications aside, it is clear that for Heidegger, we, as human beings, are always in a mood (*Gestimmtsein*)⁵ and always encounter the world through our mooded experience of it: the world is thus disclosed to us through moods. Indeed, Heidegger distinguishes between three ways in which our being-attuned through moods discloses to us aspects and features of the world and of our existence. Moods disclose (a) our thrownness (*Geworfenheit*); (b) “*Being-in-the-world as a whole*” (SZ 137/176); and (c) what matters to us. Let me explain.

Thrownness is a central characteristic of human existence. To say, as Heidegger does, that we are thrown is to underline the fact that we find ourselves always and already in the midst of situations—situations that, for the most part, we cannot alter and that were handed over to us. Thus, if Dasein is disclosed in its thrownness through moods,⁶ then what this means is that our openness and vulnerability to concerns and situations are also made manifest through moods.

Moods also disclose to us *Being-in-the-world as a whole*. They do so insofar as they make present to Dasein both the world and Dasein’s presence in it. Mood, as Heidegger writes, is not “an inner condition which then reaches forth in an enigmatic way and puts its mark on things and persons” (SZ 137/176). Instead, mood “comes neither from ‘outside’ nor from ‘inside,’ but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being” (SZ 136/176). Less cryptically, mood arises out of, and at the same time discloses, our very involvement with the world. One fails to make sense of fear, for instance, in the absence either of an agent who is afraid or of a fearful object. (Here, I go along with Heidegger and treat *Furcht* [fear] as a mood or more precisely, as a mode of *Befindlichkeit*.) Hence, to say that moods disclose *Being-in-the-world as a whole* is to make clear that what moods reveal is our place in, and our meaningful engagement with, the world.

Lastly, moods are revelatory in a yet another manner: it is by virtue of being in a mood that things matter to us and can affect us. Although all three revelatory functions of mood constitute “essential characteristics of *Befindlichkeit*,” this last one is crucial for the purposes of this essay (SZ 137/176). Compared to the other two ways in which mood is revelatory, this third manner, Heidegger tells us, “contributes above all towards a more penetrating [*eindringlicheren*] understanding of the worldhood of the world” (SZ 137/176). It is by already being in a certain mood that what is “unserviceable, resistant, or threatening” can affect us (SZ 137/176). The very fact that things matter to us “is grounded in *Befindlichkeit*”: “Only something

⁵ Macquarrie and Robinson translate “*Gestimmtsein*” both as “having a mood” and as “being-attuned”. In this paper, I use either “being in a mood” or “being-attuned” as equivalent translations of this term. The locution “having a mood” can be potentially a problematic rendition of “*Gestimmtsein*”. It can be taken to imply that, similarly to possessing goods or having money, the very having of mood—i.e., the being in one mood or another—is something that is not a necessary characteristic of human existence. See Heidegger (2001/2006: 61–63) for an attempt to spell out in what way one may be said to *have* anxiety.

⁶ “*Befindlichkeit* discloses Dasein in its thrownness and—proximally and for the most part—in the manner of an evasive turning-away” (SZ 136/175; translation altered).

which is in the *Befindlichkeit* of fear (or fearlessness) can discover that what is environmentally ready-to-hand is threatening” (SZ 137/176; translation altered). Hence, in order to experience something as threatening or hostile, as lovely or enjoyable, or even as indifferent, we must already be in a mood:

Under the strongest pressure and resistance, nothing like an affect would come about, and the resistance itself would remain essentially undiscovered, if attuned or mooded Being-in-the-world had not already submitted itself to having entities within-the-world “matter” to it in a way which its moods have outlined in advance. (SZ 137/177; translation altered)

In turn, moods reveal aspects of our existence that cannot, according to Heidegger, be disclosed by cognition. Our ontological constitution is such that it reveals the world to us *affectively* and such an affective disclosure is more revealing—in Heidegger’s words, “more primordially” revealing—than theoretical disclosure (SZ 136/175). It is more revealing or primordial insofar as “[t]he possibilities of disclosure which belong to cognition reach far too short a way compared with the primordial disclosure belonging to moods” (SZ 134/173). “Pure beholding [*Anschauung*],” Heidegger writes, “could never discover anything like that which is threatening” (SZ 138/177). He adds:

Phenomenally, we would wholly fail to recognize both *what* mood discloses and *how* it discloses, if that which is disclosed were to be compared with what Dasein is acquainted with, knows, and believes “at the same time” when it has such a mood. (SZ 135f./175)⁷

But affective disclosure takes precedence over theoretical disclosure in yet another sense: when we cognize or theorize, we do so always through the mode of being-attuned through mood (SZ 138/177). Thinking is not immune to mood but rather subject to it. And often enough, we are in a mood without even realizing it: “This being affected [*Zumutesein*] [which is related to *Befindlichkeit*] does not need to be conscious and can be a matter of complete indifference” (Heidegger 1979/1992: 256).

Our hitherto analysis of *Befindlichkeit* has yielded the following findings: (1) *Befindlichkeit* is a structure of human existence; (2) *Befindlichkeit* is manifested through mood; (3) mood discloses to us (a) our thrownness, (b) Being-in-the-world as a whole, and (c) things as mattering to us; (4) that which moods disclose to us cannot be fully disclosed by cognition; and (5) to be in a mood we do not need to be aware of being in a mood.

From (1), we can surmise that if *Befindlichkeit* is a *structure* of human existence, then it must be a permanent feature of human existence. Therefore, if *Befindlichkeit* is always accompanied by mood, then we get: (6) we are always in a mood (see SZ 136/175).⁸ From (3/c), we can deduce that if being in a mood is a necessary

⁷ Heidegger reiterates the primacy of affective disclosure in SZ 141/180. See also Heidegger (1979/1992) where he asserts that “*Befindlichkeit* is the apriori of discoveredness and disclosedness” (257).

⁸ The claim that our human existence is always mooded—that is, that we are always in some mood or another—is explicitly granted by Heidegger. “The fact that moods can deteriorate and change over means simply that in every case Dasein always has some mood [gestimmt ist]” (SZ 134/173). Or: “...we are never free of moods” (SZ 136/175). This point is of course widely recognized in the literature on

condition for experiencing things as mattering to us, then: (7) Being in a mood is also a necessary condition for having emotions. The move from (3/c) to (7) proceeds as follows. *Premise 1*: Being in a mood is necessary for experiencing things as mattering to us; *Premise 2*: Emotions require an engagement with the world that already makes it possible for things to appear to us as mattering; *Conclusion*: Being in a mood is a necessary condition for having emotions. Heidegger explicitly grants *Premise 1* in the first full paragraph of SZ 137/176 and *Premise 2* is a rather plausible claim about the nature of emotions. Note that *Premise 2* is not meant to express a claim that is specific to Heidegger's account. That is, I am not arguing that specifically for Heidegger emotions are such that require an engagement with the world that already reveals things as mattering to us. So far, I have not said anything about Heidegger's account of emotions. Rather, I am making a general claim about the nature of emotions. *Premise 2* is meant to capture the intuitive view that it is hard to imagine emotions in the absence of a world that matters to us. What would fear, happiness, or anger, for instance, amount to if our world were to lack any significance whatsoever? Any account of emotions that denies *Premise 2* flies in the face of our pre-theoretical and commonsensical understanding of emotions, so much so, I venture to add, that one can even deny that such an account is an account of *emotions*.

In light of our exposition of the key characteristics of *Befindlichkeit*, we are now in a position to articulate what is meant by my earlier claim that there is a connection between Heidegger's account of *Befindlichkeit* and contemporary theories of emotion. There is a connection between the two insofar as in the latter we find an account of our involvement with the world that meets items (1)–(7).⁹ It is precisely in this sense that I shall argue that there is common ground between contemporary accounts of emotions and Heidegger's discussion of affective existence.

Footnote 8 continued

Heidegger and *Befindlichkeit*, see, e.g., Guignon (2003), Hatzimoysis (2010: 216), Ratcliffe (2013), and Sludds (2009: 99).

⁹ If we look beyond §29 of *Being and Time*, our list becomes populated by additional items. From Heidegger's discussions of fear, anxiety, and their respective temporal structures we can gather the following: (8) Fear is a mode of *Befindlichkeit* (SZ §30); (9) Anxiety is a fundamental *Befindlichkeit* (SZ §40); (10) There is a distinction between *authentic* and *inauthentic Befindlichkeit* (SZ §68); (11) Fear is an *inauthentic* (mode) of *Befindlichkeit* (SZ 341/391); (12) Anxiety is the ground of fear (SZ 186/230); and (13) *Befindlichkeit* has a distinctive temporal structure (SZ §68). Finally, from *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, we also learn that (14) Boredom is a fundamental mood (*Grundstimmung*). In what follows, I treat items (8)–(14) as peripheral to our discussion. In fact, most of these points are idiosyncratic to Heidegger's commitment to fundamental ontology. How else are we supposed to make sense of the claims that anxiety is *Grundbefindlichkeit*, that boredom is *Grundstimmung*, or that fear is an *inauthentic* mode of *Befindlichkeit*? We should not then expect to find analogs of these claims in contemporary accounts of emotions.

Interlude: “Emotion” in Heidegger¹⁰

Before moving on to a discussion of contemporary theories of emotions, it is instructive to investigate to what, if anything, the English term “emotion” corresponds in Heidegger’s terminology. It is important to make clear that the intelligibility of this particular investigation rests on the antecedent and often times tacit assumption that there is some consensus regarding the meaning of “emotion”. In the absence of such an assumption, deciding to what the term “emotion” corresponds in Heidegger’s account would be a hopeless task. Hence, before we can proceed, we need to ask whether we are justified in assuming that the term “emotion” has an agreed upon intension or meaning. I believe we are. The intension of the term “emotion” can be approximately captured by the description “a state which is intentional, typically felt, revealing of the way the world is or appears to us, and integral to the way we live our lives”. I make no pretense that the aforesaid expression of the intension of “emotion” is complete or immune to revision. Scientific findings and/or conceptual analysis will likely refine the proposed intension of the term. Still, any discussion of emotions must begin from somewhere and the suggested intension constitutes a good beginning point since it meets two important desiderata: (1) it captures certain key aspects of the entities that we typically call “emotions” and in so doing, it fits well with our pre-theoretical understanding of emotions; (2) it leaves the ontology of emotions undecided. The importance of (1) is reflected in the fact that we expect that any plausible theory of emotions should maintain that emotions are intentional, typically felt, revealing of the world, etc. The importance of (2) is reflected in the fact that any agreed upon intension of the term “emotion” should not determine what *type* of entities emotions are. Not only is there no consensus about the ontology of emotions (see section “[Appraisals and Emotions](#)”), but we should also be wary of proposed explications of the meaning of the term “emotion” that settle from the armchair the ontological nature of emotions.

With a working account of the meaning of the term “emotion” at hand, we can now return to determining to what the term “emotion” corresponds in Heidegger’s terminology. Such an interpretative task is far from trivial and faces a number of difficulties. First, ordinary German does not have a word for “emotion”. Instead, the English word “emotion” is often translated as “Gefühl.” “Gefühl” is derived from the verb “fühlen” which means *to feel*. Furthermore, as Wierzbicka (1999) points out, use of “Gefühl” often fails to distinguish between what we might call bodily or somatic feelings such as the feeling of hunger (*Hungergefühl*), and mental or psychical feelings such as the feeling of shame (*Schamgefühl*). In contemporary German one does find the word “emotion,” but this word does not occur in *Being and Time*.

Second, in *Being and Time*, the difficult issue of how to properly understand the relationship between *Befindlichkeit*, mood, and emotions is not discussed in any detail by Heidegger. In fact, in that text he states that such an analysis cannot be provided given the delineated focus and methodology of the book. He writes:

¹⁰ The ensuing discussion owes much to the astute and helpful comments of two anonymous referees.

The different modes of *Befindlichkeit* and the ways in which they are interconnected in their foundations cannot be interpreted within the problematic of the present investigation. The phenomena have long been well-known ontically under the terms “affects” [*Affekte*] and “feelings” [*Gefühle*] and have always been under consideration in philosophy. It is not an accident that the first traditional and systematic interpretation of affects is not treated in the framework of “psychology”. Aristotle investigated the *pathe* in the second book of his *Rhetoric*. (SZ 138/178; translation altered)

What is more, the very terms that Heidegger uses to express the ontic “side” of *Befindlichkeit* in this particular passage, viz., “Gefühl” and “Affekt” (or their cognates), scarcely appear in *Being and Time* (SZ 109, 138f., 345). But given the sparse appearance of these terms, and Heidegger’s own pronouncement that in *Being and Time* there is no discussion of the relationship between *Befindlichkeit* and its ontic “side,” one might wonder whether it is even meaningful to talk about emotions in the context of Heidegger’s thought. I think this skeptical attitude is misplaced. Even if Heidegger did not explicitly talk about emotions, his discussion of *Stimmung* commits him to at least a nascent view of emotions.

Let us return to the passage that I quoted above (SZ 138/178). Although in this passage Heidegger announces that he will not concern himself with the ontic “side” of *Befindlichkeit*, the passage itself is rich in other ways. In it, Heidegger makes two claims that are important in relating the term “emotion” to his own terminology. First, he claims that the ontic “side” of *Befindlichkeit* is well known. This claim suggests that we—the folk—are not strangers to the phenomena that correspond to the ontic “side” of *Befindlichkeit*. Second, Heidegger points to Aristotle’s investigation of *pathe* as the first systematic interpretation of *Affekte*. In so doing, Heidegger explicitly links his term “Affekte” to the history of philosophy, thereby suggesting that “Affekte” is an adequate translation of “pathe.” But since “pathe”—at least, as the term is used in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*—can be translated as “emotions,” then the above passage constitutes evidence in favor of the claim that the English term “emotions” corresponds to “Affekte” (and “Gefühle”).^{11,12}

In regards to the suggested link between “pathe” and “emotions,” two points should be made. First, “pathe” (or “pathos”) lacks a singular meaning. In fact, in *Metaphysics*, Aristotle advances at least four different senses of the term in question (Aristotle 1970: V.21, 1022b15-22). (For more on the different senses of “pathos,” see Rorty 1984). Be that as it may, my concern here is not with providing a unified account of “pathe” as this is found in Aristotle’s entire corpus, nor with delineating the many senses of the term. I am interested instead in providing an adequate translation of the term as it appears in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. After all, it is that particular text that is singled out by Heidegger. Second, and relatedly, I should

¹¹ At least in §29, the terms “Affekte” and “Gefühle” are treated interchangeably. Hence, if “emotions” corresponds to “Affekte,” then it is reasonable to think that the same term also corresponds to “Gefühle.” This suggestion is in line with the common practice of translating “Gefühle” as “emotions.”

¹² The history of philosophy also supports a close connection between the terms “affects” and “emotions.” In many instances, what Seneca (*De Ira*) and Spinoza (*Ethics*, Part III) call “affects” are readily recognized as emotions.

emphasize that my claim is not that the term “emotions” corresponds to “*pathe*” simply because the latter is often translated as the former. What warrants, or at the very least, supports the suggested correspondence between the two terms is not merely an observation about translation practices or norms; it is also and most importantly the existence of a close relation between the meanings of those terms. To wit, it is integral to the very concept *emotions* that its extension picks out entities that are intentional and typically felt; entities which play a crucial role in our lives; and, finally, entities the possession of which can be deemed as justified or not. Indeed, in order for any account of emotions to reflect our pre-theoretical understanding of emotions it must accept that emotions have the aforesaid features. All these elements of emotions are found in Aristotle’s account of *pathe* as this is advanced in *Rhetoric*. Thus, if Heidegger understands *pathe* as *Affekte* and *Gefühle* and Aristotle’s theoretical account of *pathe* is in line with our pre-theoretical understanding of emotions, then the link between *pathe* and emotions (pre-theoretically and commonly understood) provides us, I believe, with good reasons to think that the term “emotions” has found its way in Heidegger under the guise of *Affekte* and *Gefühle*.

But the conclusion that the English term “emotions” corresponds to Heidegger’s “*Affekte*” and “*Gefühle*” leaves at least one important question unanswered: namely, what is the relationship between emotions and *Stimmungen*? It is crucial to note that this question is ambiguous. According to one reading, the question is asking: what is the relationship between emotions (as they are understood in the contemporary philosophical and scientific literature) and *Stimmungen*? But the question can also be read as asking, what is the relationship between emotions (understood as *Affekte* and *Gefühle*) and *Stimmungen*? In this paper, my main objective is to develop a dialogue between Heidegger and the contemporary philosophical and scientific emotions literature. To this end, sections “[Appraisals and Emotions](#)” and “[Finding Befindlichkeit](#)” are dedicated to answering the first reading of the question. The relationship between *Affekte* and *Gefühle*, on the one hand, and *Stimmungen*, on the other, also deserves our attention. Nonetheless, an examination of this relationship cannot be undertaken here; it would take us too far afield from present purposes.

Appraisals and Emotions

Introduction

What are the emotions? Love, hate, anger, sadness, fear, shame, disgust, joy, and envy are all readily recognized as paradigmatic examples of emotions and any theory of emotions should recognize them as such. If it does not, then it is incumbent upon it to provide compelling reasons as to why some of them should not be counted as emotions. In turn, conceptual analysis, commonsense, and first-person observation unveil to us certain features of emotions. As I mentioned before, paradigmatic emotions are agreed to be intentional, felt, revealing of the way the

world is or appears to us, and integral to the way we live our lives. As ordinary speakers of the English language we thus seem to possess not only a fairly good grasp of the extension of *emotion* but also a pre-theoretical conception of emotions.

Still, the question “what type of entities or states are the emotions?” remains a matter of controversy. Indeed, different authors have proposed differing and in some cases contradictory answers to that question. Some hold that emotions are perceptions either of the world (de Sousa 1987; see Roberts 2003) or of bodily changes (James 1884; Damasio 1999; Prinz 2004); others claim that emotions are judgments (Solomon 1980, 2004; Nussbaum 1990, 2001); others maintain that emotions are dispositions (Wollheim 2000); others take emotions to involve evaluations or appraisals (Arnold 1960; Lazarus 1991; see Scherer et al. 2001; Frijda 1986); others suggest that emotions are compound states such as feelings-and-beliefs, beliefs-and-desires, or judgments-and-feelings (Neu 2000; Marks 1982; Davis 1988; Oakley 1992; see Lyons 1980); and then there are others whose positions cannot be so easily summarized (e.g., Goldie 2000; Elster 1999; Greenspan 1995; Ben-Ze’ev 2000).¹³ To make the present discussion manageable, I propose to divide the logical space of theories of emotions in the following four-fold manner: appraisals are neither necessary nor sufficient for emotions (Type A theories); appraisals are necessary but not sufficient for emotions (Type B theories); appraisals are both necessary and sufficient for emotions (Type C theories); and appraisals are sufficient but not necessary for emotions (Type D theories).

By “appraisal” I simply mean an *evaluation*, which can be either automatic or deliberate, either conscious or unconscious and it may or may not involve propositional attitudes. It can also be evolutionarily hard-wired—for instance, a quick and instinctual reaction to a stimulus—or something sophisticated enough that may require both learning and substantial conceptual abilities from the agent.¹⁴ Defining appraisals in this manner grants me a certain dialectical flexibility: I can easily provide a typology of different types of emotions without having to worry about fine-grained differences between them. Furthermore, it

¹³ I do not wish to give the impression that theories of emotions which hold that emotions are judgments and theories which hold that emotions are certain compound states involving beliefs or judgments are necessarily distinct from theories of emotions which maintain that emotions involve evaluations or appraisals. I distinguish between the aforesaid types of theories of emotions only to underline the point that evaluations can be understood broadly and thus need not be assimilated to the category of judgment or belief.

¹⁴ For one of the first attempts to articulate the nature of appraisals and their relationship to emotions, see Arnold (1960). Although much of what I say about appraisals is in line with Arnold’s account, the notion of appraisals that I advance and explicate is ultimately broader. As such, it is not susceptible to objections typically launched against appraisal theories of emotions—i.e., theories that explain or individuate emotions in terms of appraisals. For instance, LeDoux (1996: 52) objects that although “appraisal theories came very close to getting things right... [they] took two wrong turns on the road to understanding the emotional mind. First, they based their understanding of appraisal processes largely on self-reports... [and second, they] overemphasized the contribution of cognitive processes in emotion”. Both of LeDoux’s objections are predicated on the assumption that there is a rather intimate relationship between appraisals and higher-order, introspectively accessible cognition. Nothing in my definition of appraisals demands such a relationship: although *some* appraisals might be introspectively accessible and influenced by propositional attitudes, not all of them are. For a more detailed account of the nature of appraisals, their role in emotions, and their current status in psychology and cognitive science, see the essays collected in Scherer et al. (2001).

permits me to evaluate whole groups of theories of emotions at once. In fact, in this section, I argue for a particular group of theories of emotions, viz. one that asserts that appraisals are necessary for emotions. In so doing, I manage to isolate a general feature of emotions that is (a) present in a number of theories of emotions and (b) crucial in explicating the nature of emotions, their relationship to propositional attitudes, their role in action, and their place in the rational life of the agent. By isolating such a feature of emotions, the task of examining whether there is a meaningful connection between Heidegger's account of *Befindlichkeit* and contemporary accounts of emotions is reduced to a much simpler and more parsimonious task: that of examining whether both camps assume, either implicitly or explicitly, this feature of emotions.

I should note that the methodological choice of approaching the rich and variegated philosophical and psychological literature on emotions in a synoptic manner has an additional benefit. Heidegger's account of *Befindlichkeit* is meant to be a phenomenological and ontological analysis of human existence that brings forth and clarifies the underlying structures of our affective comportment to the world. Heidegger is neither interested in providing a first-order account of emotions nor in explicating few interesting features of emotions.¹⁵ If accurate, Heidegger's account of *Befindlichkeit*—as an account that delineates the underlying structure of our comportment to and engagement with the world—should highlight certain features of *human* existence. As such, the features that it singles out should also be reflected by many accounts of emotions—assuming that those accounts are successful in explicating the character of emotions. Thus, a paper that successfully shows that there is common ground between a large number of contemporary theories of emotion and Heidegger's account of *Befindlichkeit* provides indirect support for the value and importance of Heidegger's analysis. For that reason, the findings of this paper are of relevance not only to theorists who are interested in Heidegger's thought but also to those who are concerned with its applications in the philosophy of mind and cognitive science.

The Role of Appraisals¹⁶

In this and the next subsection I argue that appraisals constitute an essential feature of emotions—if not for all emotions, at least for a large group of them.

¹⁵ Of course, this is not to say that for Heidegger some ways of affectively finding oneself are not more fundamental than others. See, for example, the emphasis that he places on *Angst* (SZ §40) and boredom (1983/1995).

¹⁶ I would like to alert the reader to the fact that the ensuing discussion in section “[Appraisals and Emotions](#)” does not implicate or discuss Heidegger's work. Instead, I examine a number of philosophical and scientific approaches that one can take towards emotions and advance a series of arguments in support of the conclusion that appraisals are necessary for emotions. In the following section, I shall argue that such a claim about the nature and ontology of emotions is also in agreement with Heidegger's account of *Befindlichkeit* and mood. Indeed, many claims that Heidegger makes about our affective existence can be understood and even explicated through the lens of appraisals. Hence, it is crucial that the arguments that I provide in section “[Appraisals and Emotions](#)” of the paper do not depend on Heidegger's account of affective existence. Indeed, if I were to argue that appraisals are necessary for emotions by somehow implicating Heidegger's

Appraisals are essential for emotions, I show, insofar as they are *necessary* for emotions.¹⁷

Although examples of Type B and Type C theories abound in the philosophical and psychological literature, it is much harder to find actual adherents of Type A theories.¹⁸ This scarcity of Type A theories is symptomatic of the many difficulties with which such theories are fraught. Suppose that appraisals are neither necessary nor sufficient for emotions. That is to say, emotions are neither identical to appraisals, nor do they involve appraisals as their parts, nor are they caused by appraisals. Construed as such, it is easy to see that Type A theories are ill suited to deal with what have been called higher-order emotions, that is, emotions which are cognitively demanding insofar as they require advanced cognitive and conceptual capacities (see Griffiths 1997). A typical example of such a higher-order emotion is shame. For instance, Oliver felt shame when he realized that his lustful staring at his aunt did not go unnoticed by his mother. If Oliver failed to make any appraisals concerning the situation that he found himself in, then in what sense are we to assume that he experienced shame? To put it differently, in the absence of appraising the lustful stare as inappropriate insofar as it is discordant with social norms, we have trouble making sense of the claim that Oliver felt the emotion we designate by *shame*. Since shame does not exhaust the class of higher-order emotions, problems for Type A theories quickly multiply. What goes for shame goes, *mutatis mutandis*, for guilt, pride, lust, and others.

Type A theories run aground in yet another respect: they are inadequate to explain how changes in an agent's stock of beliefs and desires can influence the agent's emotions. Consider the following example. I am woken up in the middle of the night by a sound that I fail to identify. I am scared. My heart races faster and faster. I turn on the light to realize that my partner is wrapping a present. My fear subsides. It might give way to annoyance or even to anger if I judge that this is a terribly inappropriate time for her to be undertaking such an activity. Or fear might give way to happiness if I realize that what my partner is wrapping is a gift *for me*. The complex interplay between emotions and beliefs is lost with Type A theories, for appraisals, according to Type A theories, play no role in the formation or constitution of emotions. Without a change in the way I appraise a situation, however, it is unclear why there would be a change in my emotional state.

Footnote 16 continued

account of affective existence, then section “[Finding *Befindlichkeit*](#)” would run the risk of begging the question. In other words, if what I wish to establish in section “[Finding *Befindlichkeit*](#)” is that there is common ground between Heidegger and contemporary accounts of emotions, I better not present contemporary accounts of emotions in a Heideggerian light.

¹⁷ Although the approach I take constitutes, in some sense, an attempt to provide a preliminary solution to what Prinz calls the “Problem of Parts” (2004: 4)—i.e., the problem of discerning whether some parts/components of emotions are necessary—I do not take the advanced solution to amount to a *reductive* account of emotions. To say that we have good reason to think that appraisals are essential to emotions is not to say that emotions are *nothing but* appraisals.

¹⁸ Proponents of either Type B or Type C theories include, among others: Arnold (1960), Ben-Ze'ev (2000), Elster (1999), Frijda (1986), Lazarus (1991), Lyons (1980), Marks (1982), Neu (2000), Nussbaum (1990, 2001), Solomon (1980, 2004), and Prinz (2004). See also LeDoux (1989: 271). I do not plan to explicate the respective position of every cited author and then specify whether it should be understood as a Type B or a Type C theory. Such a task would take me far afield from the purposes of the section.

But by acknowledging the role of appraisals in emotions we should not be misled into moving too far in the opposite direction: that is to say, we should not be tempted to construe emotions as nothing but conscious, full-blown appraisals, i.e., occurrent judgments or beliefs (see Solomon 1980, 2004; Nussbaum 1990, 2001; Marks 1982). Accounts of this sort are also subject to serious difficulties. Here, I limit my discussion to what I take to be the two most devastating problems with such accounts.¹⁹ The first problem of identifying emotions with either occurrent judgments or beliefs is that *conscious* appraisals do not seem to be necessary for emotions. This view is corroborated both by first-personal considerations and empirical results. Return to my previous example. It is hardly the case that I first hear a noise, then I make a judgment, and only then feel scared. Instead, it seems that what goes on is that I feel scared even before I make any conscious judgments or form any conscious beliefs about the noise. A plethora of empirical evidence also speaks against the identification of emotions with judgments and against making conscious beliefs a necessary part of emotions. For example, it has been observed that the presentation of percepts that are below the threshold of consciousness (i.e., subliminal) can affect the subjects emotionally (see Zajonc 1980, 1984). The inevitable conclusion to draw from these experiments is that emotions can occur in the absence of any (conscious) beliefs and judgments.

The second difficulty with the position under consideration is that it misconstrues the role of beliefs and judgments in emotions. If emotions are just judgments or beliefs, then a change in the relevant judgments or beliefs should bring about a change in emotions. Although this might hold true for some emotions, it is clearly not the case for all emotions. Granted, Oliver might cease to be angry with his girlfriend for not returning his calls once he finds out that her mother has been hospitalized. But such examples paint only a partial picture of the relationship between beliefs, judgments, and emotions: fear of flying, for instance, does not seem to dissipate with the acquisition of more and more beliefs about the safety of flying; nor does knowledge of the mechanics of roller-coasters really vitiate the fear that one might feel when taking a ride (see Stocker and Hegeman 1996).

What arises out of our discussion is that if appraisals are extricated from the nature of emotions, then not only do we have difficulties in explaining how certain higher-order emotions can occur, but we also fail to account for the interplay between emotions, beliefs, and desires. At the same time, however, the view that makes emotions nothing but full-blown, conscious appraisals (i.e., occurrent judgments or beliefs) is also problematic: it fails to account for “quick” emotions such as fear or surprise, it runs counter to a number of empirical findings, and it overestimates our influence on emotions.

Identifying emotions with conscious judgments or beliefs is thus problematic. But the notion of appraisals encompasses much more than judgments and beliefs. Should emotions then be identified with appraisals as such and not only with a specific subset of appraisals? After all, not all appraisals are conscious; nor is it part and parcel of the concept of appraisals that we have control over them. The answer

¹⁹ For additional difficulties, see Deigh (1994), DeLancey (2002), Stocker (1987), and Stocker and Hegeman (1996).

to this question obviously depends on our understanding of appraisals. If by appraisals we mean evaluative states or processes which are not necessarily accompanied by a phenomenal feeling, then the identification of emotions with appraisals will unavoidably leave out an important characteristic of emotions: namely, their phenomenal character. This result puts pressure on Type C theories. If one is committed to the view that appraisals are both necessary and sufficient for emotions, then one needs to show either (1) that appraisals are always accompanied by a phenomenal feeling, or (2) that emotions are not necessarily felt. The fact that I have allowed appraisals to be both conscious and unconscious renders (1) problematic. In fact, given the understanding of appraisals with which I am operating, it cannot be analytic that appraisals always come with a certain phenomenal feeling. Furthermore, (2) runs counter to both commonsense understanding of emotions and a number of philosophical accounts of emotions: they both agree that feelings are closely linked to emotions, so much so that by ignoring the former we leave something essential out of the latter.²⁰ The role of feelings in emotions is a vexing issue, and I will not attempt to adjudicate it here. For present purposes, it is enough to note that either emotions are necessarily felt and thus Type C theories should be rejected, or emotions are not necessarily felt and thus Type C theories are still viable theories of emotions. The importance of this disjunctive conclusion lies in the fact that neither of the disjuncts shows that appraisals are not necessary for emotions.

Let us now turn to Type D theories which are committed to the claim that appraisals are sufficient but not necessary for emotions. That is to say, the presence of an appraisal (or a set of appraisals) suffices to bring about an emotion, yet that emotion can also be brought about in the absence of an appraisal (or a set of appraisals). There are at least two problems with Type D theories—both of which also plague the other types of theories mentioned above. First, for a certain class of emotions—viz., higher-order or cognitively demanding emotions such as guilt, shame, or envy—it is hard to see how they would come about in the absence of an appraisal. This result casts doubt on the claim that appraisals are merely sufficient and not also necessary for certain emotions. Second, if appraisals are sufficient for emotions, then the presence of appraisals suffices to bring about the relevant emotion. But this would seem to be acceptable either under the assumption that appraisals are intimately connected to phenomenal feelings or under the assumption that emotions are not necessarily felt. As I stated above, the former assumption is incongruent with the operative understanding of appraisals, whereas the latter assumption runs in the face of both our commonsense understanding of emotions and a large number of philosophical accounts of emotions. Type D theories occupy a middle ground between Type A and Type C theories. As such, they inherit the problems of both types of theories.

²⁰ See, e.g., James (1884), Lyons (1980: 53), Stocker (2004: 144), Stocker and Hegeman (1996: 18–19), and Goldie (2000: 51). Neurobiological accounts of emotions are more lenient in permitting the occurrence of emotions without any accompanying feelings. Both LeDoux (1996: 17–20) and Damasio (1999), for instance, agree that there can be emotions without conscious experiences of them (see Zajonc 1994). Solomon (2004) protests that such neurobiological accounts provide an over-simplification of what we typically call “emotions”.

The most reasonable understanding of emotions is the one assumed by Type B theories: appraisals are necessary for emotions. Lest I be misunderstood, I do not take this claim to amount to the contention that *all* the things which have been and are called “emotions” by folk, scientists, and philosophers either have appraisals as their necessary constituents or require appraisals as their causal antecedents. In fact, so far, I have not defended Type B theories from objections—I do so in the following subsection. Instead, I argued for Type B theories by showing that in the absence of appraisals we are at a loss to understand the role of emotions in our lives. Although far more modest than the contention that appraisals are necessary for *all* emotions, the claim defended in this section is quite important for what follows. It states that there is a substantially large group of entities that have appraisals *either* as necessary constituents *or* as causal antecedents and that we take those entities to be paradigmatic instances of emotions.

Interlude: Two Objections to Type B Theories

I wish to consider two objections to the claim that appraisals are necessary for emotions. The first objection is based on findings that suggest that certain emotions can be generated even in the absence of appraisals. The second objection is subtler. It argues that the category or concept of emotion admits of a distinction between two types of emotions: whereas there are indeed certain emotions for which appraisals are necessary, there are other emotions for which appraisals are not necessary. I take up these two objections in the order I introduced them.

It is often stated that there is a substantial body of empirical evidence that suggests that certain emotional states can be generated by certain neural processes (Izard 1993) or by merely assuming or having a set of facial or physiological features (Ekman et al. 1983; Levenson et al. 1990). If such findings are taken to be conclusive, then appraisals cannot be necessary for all emotions: nonappraisal factors suffice to bring about certain emotional states. Does this conclusion spell trouble for Type B theories? It does, but only for a certain class of Type B theories. In fact, a wholesale rejection of Type B theories merely on the basis of such findings would be a mistake. To see this, we should draw a distinction between two ways of understanding the claim that appraisals are necessary for emotions. Appraisals can be necessary for emotions insofar as (1) appraisals are necessary *causal antecedents* of emotions, or insofar as (2) appraisals are necessary *constituents* of emotional states. If the relationship between appraisals and emotions is understood in line with (2), then the aforesaid empirical findings do not undermine the claim that appraisals are necessary for emotions. Instead, the findings only show that appraisals are not necessary causal antecedents for all emotions. Insofar as Type B theories are understood *disjunctively*, that is, as theories that claim either that appraisals are necessary constituents of emotions or that appraisals are causal antecedents of emotions, they are safe from findings that suggest that emotions can be generated by nonappraisal factors.

The second objection makes the conditional claim that if emotions do not form a homogeneous kind—insofar as emotions can be split into two classes: a class for which appraisals are necessary and a class for which appraisals are not—then the

fact that Type A or Type D theories do not account for higher-order emotions does not show that Type A or Type D theories cannot account for lower-level emotions such as joy, anger, disgust, surprise, and fear. Consequently, although appraisals are necessary for some emotions, there are other emotions (i.e., lower-level emotions) for which appraisals are not.

In response to this objection, it is first worth examining what evidence might be adduced in support of the claim that there are distinct classes of emotions. Typically, the following observations are given in support of the claim that emotions do not form a homogeneous class: (1) There are emotions that happen either too quickly or unconsciously, and, hence, it is unlikely that they involve beliefs or judgments (LeDoux 1996; Panksepp 1982; Damasio 1999, Zajonc 1980, 1984, 1994); (2) There are emotions which are shared not only by humans and infants (Watson 1930) but also by animals (LeDoux 1996); (3) There are emotions that seem to be pancultural (Ekman and Friesen 1989); and (4) There are emotions which are cognitively impenetrable (Griffiths 1997; LeDoux 1996).

Although observations (1)–(4) might support the claim that emotions should be divided in two classes—higher-level versus lower-level emotions—they do nothing to challenge the view that appraisals are necessary for both classes of emotions. Recall, that the operative notion of appraisal is quite flexible: it can be unconscious, non-propositional, and even evolutionarily hard-wired. As a result, there is no reason to assume that appraisals cannot happen fast and thus, in the absence of beliefs or judgments. Furthermore, if appraisals are not restricted to propositional attitudes and do not necessarily require conceptual abilities, then they can be present in animals and in infants. Also, if some appraisals are allowed to be evolutionarily hard-wired, then we should expect them to be pancultural. Finally, there is nothing in the very idea of appraisals as employed here that requires them to be cognitively penetrable. Indeed, my view is consistent with the claim that some appraisals are the products of modular cognitive mechanisms (Fodor 1983; Cosmides and Tooby 1994; Sperber 1994). Thus, evidence in support of the claim that emotions should be divided into two different types of emotions is concordant with the claim that appraisals are necessary for all emotions.

Furthermore, there are good reasons in support of the view that appraisals are necessary even for lower-level emotions—i.e., quick or short-term, and cognitively impenetrable or modular emotions that have characteristic autonomic nervous system arousal patterns and might be pancultural. To see why appraisals are necessary even for lower-level emotions we need to consider an essential characteristic of emotions, namely, the fact that emotions are intentional. A defense of the claim that emotions are intentional is well beyond the scope of this paper. I will instead simply assume it.

All emotions—whether quick, unconscious, cognitively impenetrable, or not—have to be intentional: they need to be directed towards something. The intentionality of higher-order emotions is usually accounted for by the fact that those higher-order emotions are either identified with judgments or taken to include judgments, beliefs, or desires as their proper parts. The intentionality of emotions is then borrowed, so to speak, either from the intentionality of that with which they have been identified (e.g., judgments), or from the intentionality of their proper parts (e.g., beliefs, desires). But

the scope of this account is limited. It only explains the intentionality of higher-order emotions. What about lower-level emotions?

One answer to this question is to adopt a rather minimal conception of intentionality and to hold that emotions are intentional insofar as they reliably co-vary with the presence of certain states of affairs (see Dretske 1981). For instance, the emotion of fear is intentional because it reliably co-varies with the presence of a certain situation, property, or object. However, the mere fact that a mental state co-varies with the instantiation of a certain property fails to make that mental state an *emotion*: other states may also co-vary with the same property. Reliable co-variation only bestows a state with a sense of intentional directness. Yet in addition to fixing the intentional object of the state, we also need to explain why the state should count as an emotion. The emotion of fear, for instance, does not co-vary with *any* type of situation but only with situations that are correctly described as fearful. Any account of that emotion owes us a story as to why the situation should be described as fearful. Fear, in addition to being accompanied by a certain feeling, is directed towards a situation that *poses for the agent who experiences the emotion some kind of threat, or that is in some way, incongruous with the agent's aims*. Without some sort of appraisal on behalf of the agent, it is hard to see how the situation could be construed as fearful.²¹ Since appraisals need not be conceptual, cognitively penetrable, or even conscious, there is no difficulty in maintaining that appraisals are constituents of lower-order emotions. It is appraisals that, in conjunction with intentional directedness and phenomenal character, render a state an emotion. Regardless of whether emotions admit of a distinction between higher-order or cognitively demanding emotions, on the one hand, and lower-order or “quick” emotions, on the other, the suggestion that appraisals are necessary for emotions still stands.²²

²¹ Instead of using appraisals to individuate emotions, one might propose that there is a distinct phenomenal feeling to each and every emotion and that is precisely what makes a given state an emotion. There are at least two problems with this suggestion. (1) Although widespread, the contention that all emotions are necessarily felt does not meet catholic acceptance (LeDoux 1996; Damasio 1999). This puts pressure on the idea that all emotions can be individuated in terms of their phenomenal character. (2) More importantly, phenomenal character is not logically sufficient to individuate emotions. It is not contradictory to hold that there can be two states which feel the same way to a subject, but only one of them is an emotion: for instance, the feeling of being anxious and the feeling of having certain gastric disturbances might be indistinguishable from a first-person perspective. A similar view is expressed by Solomon (1980: 254) who writes that “feelings are never sufficient to differentiate and identify emotions”.

²² Recently, some theorists have voiced skepticism concerning attempts to delineate the necessary and sufficient conditions of emotions (see, e.g., Griffiths 1997; Elster 1999: 241; Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 3). What we typically subsume under the category or concept *emotion*, such theorists argue, are items which are too heterogeneous compared to each other and thus they should not be considered of the same type. It should be clear from the arguments that I provided in this subsection and the rest of section “Appraisals and Emotions” that I am unconvinced by such skepticism. Not only do the observations in favor of the “heterogeneity” claim do not undermine the suggestion that appraisals are necessary for emotions, but there are also good theoretical reasons that support it: appraisals are needed to explain, among other things, the meaningfulness and intelligibility of emotions, the role of emotions in action, and the relationship between emotions and propositional attitudes. For a detailed defense of the use of conceptual analysis in the philosophy of emotion, see Roberts (2003).

Equipped with an understanding of the role of appraisals in emotions, I now turn to Heidegger and show how appraisals relate to his discussion of *Befindlichkeit* and mood.

Finding *Befindlichkeit*

Appraisals are relational. To appraise thus-and-so as such-and-such is already to assume a relationship between the agent and the object, subject, or event that is being appraised. When a subject *S* appraises object *O* as *D*, the subject appraises *O* as *D for someone*. For instance, when I appraise a fast-approaching car as dangerous, I appraise it as being dangerous *for me*. Appraisals can thus occur only insofar as the appraiser and that which is appraised are related in a certain manner. Appraisals are intelligible only under the assumption that subjects are susceptible to the world in certain ways.

In this section, I argue that the condition for the possibility of appraisals, i.e., that which needs to be already in place in order for an agent to be capable of appraising a situation, is the contemporary analog of Heidegger's *Befindlichkeit*: it is because the world of which we are a part is already "open" to us in certain ways—i.e., it is because we are already constituted in a way that we can have projects and form relationships with others—that we can appraise worldly features. Indeed, the parallel between Heidegger's account of *Befindlichkeit* and contemporary accounts of emotions can be developed further. I shall also argue that if the condition of the possibility of appraisals corresponds to *Befindlichkeit*, then being-attuned through mood (or being in a mood) must correspond to appraisals.²³ Or to put the same point differently: if *Befindlichkeit* (through moods) makes the having of emotions possible, and if appraisals are necessary for emotions according to contemporary accounts of emotions, then there is a connection between Heideggerian moods (*Stimmungen*) and appraisals. To substantiate my claims, I will consider the characteristics of *Befindlichkeit* that were singled out as crucial in section

²³ An anonymous referee raises an objection to my proposal that appraisals correspond to Heideggerian moods by noting that whereas appraisals or evaluations are typically active (e.g., they require willful action on behalf of an agent), Heideggerian moods are not. In response to this objection, I should clarify that my claim is that Heideggerian moods correspond only to a subset of appraisals. That is to say, not every appraisal is such that bears an important connection to a Heideggerian mood. Recall that my understanding of appraisals allows certain higher-order states, e.g., judgments, to count as appraisals. This understanding of appraisals is in line with how the term is ordinarily used. For instance, one might rightly say that after much deliberation the head of the police appraised the hostage situation to be dangerous for the lives of the hostages and that immediate action must be taken. Nonetheless, one can and does also appraise situations in an importantly different manner. For instance, when seeing something that looks like a snake, many of us will immediately act in certain predictable ways. But that type of behavior is revealing of the fact that we have already appraised the appearance of a snake as something unwelcoming or threatening. The appraisal of a snake as dangerous does not require much deliberation; we are not aware of a step-like process that has yielded as its end product the appraisal under question. Nor do we choose to appraise the appearance of a snake as dangerous or threatening. The appraisal occurs or "arrives" almost automatically upon perceiving the snake or what looks like a snake (LeDoux 1996). It is this second type of appraisals that according to my view correspond to or, at least, bear an important connection to Heideggerian moods. I am grateful to the referee for pressing me to address this issue.

“*Befindlichkeit* and Mood” and show how these translate into claims about the nature of appraisals.

The first point to note is that claims (2) and (7) are already accommodated by the suggested parallel between moods and appraisals. Consider claim (7): the claim that moods are necessary for emotions. If appraisals are the contemporary analog of Heideggerian moods (*Stimmungen*), then, just like moods, they must be necessary for emotions. But this is precisely the conclusion that was established in section “*Appraisals and Emotions*”.

Claim (2) states that *Befindlichkeit* is manifested through mood. But are appraisals manifestations of something analogous to *Befindlichkeit*? They are. Appraisals presuppose a relationship between the appraiser and the object of appraisal, in the same (or analogous) way that the intelligibility of moods (*Stimmungen*) presupposes the ontological structure of *Befindlichkeit* and the relationship between *Dasein* and world. Insofar as they do, then appraisals can be thought as manifestations of that which they presuppose. If I appraise a situation as dangerous, threatening, or friendly, then the very act of my appraisal is indicative of the further fact that I am capable of encountering the world in ways that matter to me. Indeed, to have appraised a situation as such-and-so is to have the world given to me in such-and-so manner.

To be clear, Heidegger’s claim that *Befindlichkeit* is manifested through mood does not mean that being in a mood will make transparent or evident to one the relevant ontological structure (see SZ 136/175). *Befindlichkeit* is manifested through moods insofar as the intelligibility of moods (or of being in a mood) already presupposes *Befindlichkeit*—i.e., a certain relationship and openness to the world. The claim that appraisals are manifestations of that which they presuppose should thus be understood in the same way: appraisals can be manifestations of a relationship between the appraiser and the object of appraisal insofar as appraisals are intelligible only under the assumption that such a relation is already in place.

Next, according to claim (3), moods have a three-fold revelatory function: they make manifest to us our thrownness, Being-in-the-world as a whole, and things as mattering to us. This revelatory function is shared by appraisals. Given its relational nature, to appraise thus-and-so as such-and-such is already to appraise it for someone and to appraise it in a given context. Appraisals are both subject- and context-sensitive. For instance, to appraise a situation as frightening, is to take it as something that matters to you in the here and now, for instance, as something that is dangerous, that stands as an obstacle to your projects, and as a feature of the world that needs to be overcome or dealt with. It is in this way that appraisals, similarly to moods, make manifest to us the fact that we exist as thrown: they disclose how we already find ourselves in the world in the midst of our projects and goals (see SZ 221/264, 340/389). At the same time, however, they do not disclose ourselves in isolation from the world, or the world insulated from us. In this sense, they relate once again to what Heidegger means by *Stimmung*. Through appraisals, like through mood, the world is disclosed with us as already an integral part of it. We could say then that appraisals also disclose Being-in-the-world as a whole.²⁴

²⁴ An anonymous referee makes the discerning observation that whereas *Befindlichkeit* through mood is disclosive of the world as such, appraisals are disclosive only of particular features or parts of the world. This difference between the disclosive functions of moods and appraisals would seem thus to stand as an obstacle to my claims that the two are similar in important respects. The referee is certainly right to

Furthermore, by disclosing to us our thrownness and our place in the world, appraisals, like moods, also reveal things to us as mattering. Here we should take care to distinguish between two ways in which something can matter to us. First, an entity in the world can matter to us insofar as it is taken by us to be a certain way, and the way in which it is taken to be is somehow of relevance to us. For example, a snake matters to us because we take it to be dangerous or threatening. According to this first sense of mattering, it is clear that appraisals reveal things as mattering to us. A snake is taken to be dangerous or threatening *because* we have appraised it as such. Yet, one might suggest, following Heidegger's account of *Befindlichkeit*, that there is an additional and more fundamental sense of mattering. Things matter to us insofar as we are the kind of creatures for whom the world is an integral part of our existence. Mattering in this sense is understood as a type of openness to the world and receptivity to entities within it. Are appraisals revealing even in this more fundamental sense? That is, in addition to being able to reveal the way in which specific entities relate to us, do they also reveal something regarding our underlying nature and existence in the world? I think they do. If I appraise, for example, a situation as unsafe or threatening then the very act of my appraisal is indicative of the fact that I am the kind of creature for whom survival is an issue. As such, it discloses something about our very nature. But this specific act of appraisal is also indicative of the fact that our projects, interests, and indeed our existence as such, are in a fundamental sense worldly. After all, they are revealed to us as being susceptible to situations that we may encounter in the world. Understanding the disclosing nature of appraisals in this way is not much different from the way in which Heidegger claims that moods reveal things to us as mattering. Therefore, the potential objection that *Stimmungen* are not appraisals (or more strongly, that they should not even be understood in light of appraisals) because the former disclose the world to us in ways that matter to us whereas the latter simply presuppose this mattering is not a convincing one. As I have shown, appraisals are indeed disclosive of things as mattering to us.

The three-fold revelatory function of moods is thus shared by appraisals. But we can strengthen the relationship between appraisals and moods even further by considering a recent suggestion regarding the functions of emotions. It has been suggested that, among other things, emotions play an essential role in rational decision-making processes insofar as they are responsible for delimiting what information is pertinent, and worth attending to, when we are making a decision (de Sousa 1994: 276; see also de Sousa 1987: 195ff.; Ketelaar and Todd 2001; Evans 2002). The idea is that rational decision-making would be impossible in the absence of a prior and “non-rational

Footnote 24 continued

maintain that appraisals disclose objects or features of the world as being in certain ways. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that appraisals are intentional acts or happenings. When one appraises or evaluates a situation one “reaches out” to the world. Appraisals presuppose that a certain relationship between appraiser and the world already exists. Specifically, to be in position to appraise or evaluate a situation one needs to have a world. The occurrence of appraisals, just like those of moods, shows that we are world-having beings. It is in this respect that appraisals can be thought of being revealing of the world as such, in addition to being disclosive of particular features of the world.

procedure for delimiting the range of consequences to be considered” (Evans 2002: 499). De Sousa explains this need for a non-rational procedure as follows:

The clearest notions associated with rationality are coherence and consistency in the sphere of belief, and maximizing expected utility in the sphere of action. But these notions are purely critical ones. By themselves, they would be quite incapable of guiding an organism towards any particular course of action. For the number of goals that it is logically possible to posit at any particular time is virtually infinite, and the number of possible strategies that might be employed in pursuit of them is orders of magnitude larger. Moreover, in considering possible strategies, the number of consequences of any one strategy is again infinite, so that unless some drastic preselection can be effected among the alternatives their evaluation could never be completed. (1994: 276)

The proposal that emotions “render salient only a tiny proportion of the available alternative and of the conceivable relevant facts” is reminiscent of Heidegger’s claim that moods disclose entities in the world as mattering to us (de Sousa 1994: 276). *Befindlichkeit*, according to Heidegger, “implies a disclosive submission to the world, out of which we can encounter something that matters to us” (SZ 138/177). Heidegger even adds that “[a]ny cognitive determining has its existential-ontological Constitution in the *Befindlichkeit* of Being-in-the-world” (SZ 138/177). This last sentence admits of both a weak and a strong reading. The weak reading maintains that no theoretical practice or cognitive activity is immune to (or can occur in the absence of) moods, whereas the strong reading holds that even theoretical reasoning is somehow constitutively dependent on *Befindlichkeit*. The suggestion that emotions determine what kind of information is relevant to rational decision-making allows us to see how the second reading of this statement can be true: emotions, as de Sousa writes, “provide the indispensable framework without which the question of rationality could not even be raised” (1994: 276).²⁵

It is no objection to the parallel suggested between appraisals and being-attuned through mood to claim that the disclosure of appraisals might go unnoticed by the subject. To voice such a worry is already to forget that moods are not always transparent to us (see SZ 136/175; Heidegger 1979/1992: 256). Appraisals might occur unconsciously and consequently, we might fail both to notice them and to capture them by propositional attitudes. These characteristics do not render them different from moods. In fact, they bring the two closer insofar as claims (4) and (5) are also accommodated: just like moods, appraisals happen even when we are not aware of them and appraisals disclose the world in a way that is more revealing (perhaps, even more fundamental) than cognition. Nor is it an objection to hold that, unlike moods, appraisals are within our control. Most of the time, we do not even have awareness of the ways in which we appraise situations, let alone control them. Of course, there are appraisals over which we do have control. But this seems to be in agreement with Heidegger’s comment that “Dasein can, should, and must,

²⁵ See also Maiese (2011), especially chapter 2 where she advances the idea of “affective framing”. In line with both de Sousa and Heidegger, Maiese maintains that “our way of viewing the world through emotionally contoured filters, allows us to find definite points, lines, and contours of salience in the complex worlds around us, and thereby helps us to orient ourselves in that world” (88).

through knowledge and will, become master of its moods” (SZ 136/175). To master our moods does not mean to get rid of them—which would be impossible on Heidegger’s account—but rather to replace them with different moods. The same goes for appraisals: to gain control over the way we appraise a situation is not to cease to have any appraisals about the situation, but rather to adopt a different evaluative attitude.

What about claim (1)? If *Befindlichkeit* is a structure of human existence, then the condition for the possibility of appraisals must also be a structure of human existence. Although such a claim lies outside the jurisdiction of psychology, we can still make a *prima facie* case for it by noting the relevance or even the necessity of appraisals in survival. If an agent is unable to appraise situations then the agent will have a hard time surviving. So there is an evolutionary story to be told regarding the presence of appraisals. If that is so, then we can suggest that what makes appraisals possible is a necessary feature of human beings. To be a human being is, among other things, to be able to appraise situations.²⁶ Finally, the nature of appraisals also takes care of claim (6), i.e., the claim that we are always attuned through mood. We are constantly appraising situations, even when we appraise them as not worthy of being (further) appraised. Given that appraisals need not be conscious, there is no difficulty in talking about constant appraisal.

Lastly, let me voice and then respond to a final concern regarding the suggested connection between appraisals and *Stimmungen*. One might wish to argue that despite the fact that appraisals, just like *Stimmungen*, are presupposed by emotions and are revealing of the world in certain ways, there is still an important difference between them, namely, that appraisals are intentional, whereas *Stimmungen* are not. On account of this difference, the suggestion that *Stimmungen* can be understood as appraisals should be rejected.

In response to this objection, I reject the claim that *Stimmungen* are non-intentional. The admission of states or phenomena that are non-intentional seems to fly in the face of Heidegger’s account of Being-in-the-world. How could *Stimmung* lack intentionality—i.e., be about nothing or have no intentional object—and still be an integral part of our existence in the world, disclose our thrownness, and reveal

²⁶ One might object that by relating *Befindlichkeit* to a biological category my account is rendered problematic insofar as I am downgrading an ontological category to a biological category. In Heideggerian terms, I am turning fundamental ontology into a regional ontology. That would indeed be a problem for my account, if I were arguing that in addition to Heidegger’s insights regarding *Befindlichkeit* and mood, one also finds fundamental ontology in contemporary accounts of emotions. Instead, my objective is to show that there is a parallel between moods and appraisals which maintains most (if not all) of the features that Heidegger singles out as characteristic to *Befindlichkeit* and which do not depend on fundamental ontology. See also note 9. An anonymous referee is concerned with whether Heidegger’s ontological approach can be regained in terms provided by a scientific view. Specifically, the referee asks: can the ontic dimension of emotions be conceivable apart from its ontological foundation? My answer to this question is “no”. In fact, if I am right to insist that a close relationship can be drawn between Heidegger’s account of *Stimmung* and appraisals then not only our account of *Stimmung* is enriched by understanding them through the lens of appraisals but also our understanding of appraisals (and therefore emotions) is enriched by taking to heart Heidegger’s observations about the fundamental role of *Stimmungen* in opening up and presenting the world to us. My aim in this paper is not to reduce Heideggerian notions or categories to scientific terms. The aim is rather to establish a mutually informative dialogue between the two approaches.

things as mattering to us? Indeed, rendering *Stimmung* non-intentional would make it into something that Heidegger specifically states that is not: i.e., a psychical or “inner condition” (SZ 137/176). Furthermore, if we turn to Heidegger’s discussion of fear and anxiety, we can see that those ways of being-mooded are also intentional. “Fear,” Heidegger says, “is a fear of something threatening” (SZ 341/391; translation altered). Or: “the of-which of fear [i.e., that of which one is afraid] has the character of something we encounter and confront in a worldly way” (Heidegger 1979/1992: 286). Even anxiety seems, by Heidegger’s own account, to be intentional. Anxiety is “anxiety about something” (1979/1992: 286) Specifically: “That which anxiety is anxious about is Being-in-the-world itself” (1979/1992: 286). Granted, the intentional object of anxiety is not as determinate as that of fear. It is, however, an intentional object nonetheless. Therefore, to insist that *Stimmungen* are not intentional seems to be a misreading of Heidegger’s position. At the very least, the claim that *Stimmungen* are non-intentional needs to be argued for and cannot be used as a premise for an argument that purports to show that *Stimmungen* cannot be understood in light of appraisals.

To sum up, by looking at contemporary accounts of emotions, we have found in them key features of Heidegger’s notion of *Befindlichkeit*. The uncovered relation, I should stress, is by no means one of exact replication. Yet, the similarities are remarkable: claims (1)–(7) which have been singled out as characteristic of *Befindlichkeit* are also to be found in theories of emotions that postulate appraisals as necessary elements of emotions. This speaks highly of Heidegger’s ability to bring forth and articulate what is distinctive and characteristic of our existence. Just like Heidegger’s account of *Befindlichkeit*, the hitherto delineated account of appraisal discloses a distinctive way in which we find ourselves in the world: a way in which we can be emotionally attuned to features of our environment.

Before I conclude, there is one final objection that I wish to address. In this paper, I have argued for the following two claims. First, I argued that a certain understanding of appraisals allows us to conclude that appraisals are necessary for emotions (either because appraisals are causal antecedent of emotions or because they are constituents of emotions). Second, I argued that there is an important and informative parallel to be drawn between appraisals and moods as Heidegger understands them (*Stimmungen*). One, however, might be skeptical of the value of the drawn parallel. Specifically, given my permissive understanding of appraisals, one might argue that it is not at all surprising that certain connections have been discovered between *Befindlichkeit*, *Stimmungen*, and appraisals. But if the parallel between Heidegger’s account of moods and *Befindlichkeit*, on the one hand, and contemporary accounts of emotions, on the other, is merely the product of a lenient way of understanding appraisals, then what is the benefit of drawing such a parallel?

My response to this objection is two-fold. First, regardless of how appraisals are understood, if I am right to insist that *Befindlichkeit* and *Stimmungen* can be understood in terms of appraisals, then certain features of Heidegger’s existential phenomenology are made amenable to empirical and scientific investigations. Although this might not have been Heidegger’s intent, it is, I believe, something that is worth keeping. For example, further scientific investigation can help us understand the

relationship between *Stimmungen* and embodiment—a topic that unfortunately received little attention from Heidegger himself. Second, I strongly disagree with the contention that a permissive understanding of appraisals renders the connection between appraisals and *Stimmungen* trivial. In sections “Appraisals and Emotions” and “Finding *Befindlichkeit*,” I have demonstrated that (1) appraisals, just like moods, are necessary for emotions; (2) appraisals share the revelatory structure of moods; and (3) appraisals, again like moods, presuppose a certain relationship between agent and the world. Claims (1)–(3) are far from trivial. They are substantial claims that can help us to delineate the relationship between moods, appraisals, and emotions. For all these reasons, I conclude that the proposed understanding of *Stimmung* is informative. Indeed, not only does it help us to understand the relationship between moods, emotions, and appraisals, but it also constitutes a novel interpretation of Heidegger’s discussion of *Stimmung* and *Befindlichkeit*.²⁷ Lastly, by bridging the gap between philosophical and empirical work on emotions and Heidegger, the connection between *Stimmung* and appraisals paves the way for some exciting new avenues of enquiry.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown that Heidegger’s discussion of *Befindlichkeit* and mood is in agreement with an understanding of emotions which is shared by a large number of contemporary accounts of emotions and which is well suited to explain key features of emotions. The connection between Heidegger and contemporary accounts of emotions is more than an interesting note in intellectual history; it contributes to our understanding of Heidegger’s work. As I have argued, the parallel

²⁷ In a series of publications, Ratcliffe has advanced and defended the notion of “existential feelings” (see, e.g., Ratcliffe 2005, 2008, 2012). Existential feelings, according to Ratcliffe, “are ways of finding oneself in the world and with other people, which shape all experience, thought and activity” (2012: 28). Such feelings, which for Ratcliffe are *bodily* feelings, are not just feelings of the body (or of the world); instead, they are feelings *through* which one encounters the world. Indeed, existential feelings “determine what kinds of intentional states are amongst one’s possibilities” (2012: 32). Undoubtedly, there is a close relationship between the Heideggerian idea of *Stimmung* and Ratcliffe’s notion of existential feelings. Both *Stimmungen* and existential feelings are ways of finding oneself in the world; they “open up” the world to us by rendering certain features of the world salient; and they are presupposed by emotions. To readers familiar with Ratcliffe’s work, the close connection between his and Heidegger account comes as no surprise: to a certain extent, Ratcliffe’s work appeals to and builds upon Heidegger’s. Ratcliffe acknowledges Heidegger’s influence: “If it allowed that modes of *Befindlichkeit* involve the feeling body, my account of existential feeling can be construed as an attempt to elaborate, in certain respects on Heidegger’s discussion of mood” (2009: 210). Or: “Heidegger’s conception of ‘mood’ closely approximates what I have called ‘existential feeling’” (2005: 54). (For a critique of Ratcliffe’s use and appropriation of Heidegger’s account, see Guignon (2009). Ratcliffe (2009) responds to that critique. In that article, he also discusses the ways in which his position differs from Heidegger’s.)

Given the proximity of Ratcliffe’s account to Heidegger’s conception of *Stimmung*, it is important to clarify how my reading and articulation of Heidegger differs from Ratcliffe’s position. What differentiates my project from Ratcliffe’s is the importance that I assign to appraisals. Ratcliffe is not interested (or at least, he is not primarily interested) in addressing the role of appraisals in emotions. For my purposes, however, this task is a crucial one: as I hope to have shown, it is the notion of appraisals that allows us to understand better the nature of emotions and that of *Stimmungen*. Therefore, despite the similarities between Ratcliffe’s articulation and defense of existential feelings, on the one hand, and my reading of *Stimmungen*, on the other, there are still important differences between the two positions.

between appraisals and moods sheds light on the relationship between *Stimmung* and emotions (as understood in contemporary philosophical and scientific literature) and provides a scientific backing to Heidegger's remarks on the nature of moods and their influence on our everyday behavior. The task of rendering Heidegger's account consistent with contemporary findings in psychology and cognitive science, while maintaining most of his insights, is indeed difficult. I have only taken the first step towards this long and important task.

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