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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

Phenomenally Happy:  
An examination of the ways Heidegger can  
critique and support positive psychology

by  
**Samantha Crow**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Philosophy

University of Notre Dame, Fremantle

June 2009

“I testify that this dissertation is my own work. It does not contain material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other university or institution. To the best of my knowledge, this dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation.”



.....  
Samantha Crow

Date: 19 June 2009

## **Abstract**

This thesis argues that Positive Psychology, one of the newest branches of Psychology, conforms to sets of ideas about the human person which have been accepted from within the Western philosophical and scientific traditions, and that these ideas obstruct its dual ambitions to provide a balance to the weakness model in Psychology and to enhance human flourishing, since these require a comprehensive account of the human person. Heidegger's work is nominated as a likely source of remedy, for three key reasons: Both systems of thought share superficial similarities which provide the basis for the clarification and development of key ideas within Positive Psychology. Further, Positive Psychology can benefit from Heidegger's challenges to assumptions within Philosophy and the sciences. Finally, and most importantly, Heidegger's work can supply the ontological underpinning which Positive Psychology needs in order to appreciate the human person in its entirety.

## **Acknowledgements**

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# Introduction

## **Background: Phenomenology, Psychology and Positive Psychology**

Over one hundred years ago, phenomenology arose out of the frustrations philosophers had with the broad and often invalid assumptions which abounded in academic thought, the sciences, and in nascent Psychology. Since that time, the reasons for philosophical reservation in relation to Psychology have been well rehearsed – but with little discernable effect on mainstream Psychology. Though some movements within Psychology have taken these criticisms seriously (namely the Phenomenological and Existential streams), for the vast majority it has been a case of ‘business as usual’. This ‘business’ focused on describing and treating abnormal psychological states, disease and weakness - in short, the varieties of mental illness. More recently, Psychologists have endeavoured to balance this one sided approach, by attending to the study and enhancement of mental health and wellbeing, and a ‘Positive Psychology’ has emerged.

Positive Psychology is a worthy enterprise, since its goals are beneficent. Primarily, Positive Psychology seeks to provide a balance to the ‘weakness model’ of the human person, (which centres on the treatment of mental illness), dominant in Psychology, by promoting research into human strengths: “at this juncture of living history, what Positive Psychology seeks is ...recognition as a viable, new paradigm – a rigorous science on the positive side of what it means to be human.”<sup>1</sup> Clinical psychologists have been working on aspects of positive affectivity over past decades, however it was Martin Seligman, who ‘provided the necessary spark for Positive Psychology’ as a coherent movement during his period as President of the American Psychological Association, beginning in 1998.<sup>2</sup> He spearheaded this new field within Psychology in opposition to the general “unspoken assumption in the social sciences that negative

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<sup>1</sup> Snyder, C.R., & Lopez, Shane, ‘The future of Positive Psychology’, in Snyder, C.R., & Lopez, Shane (Eds.), *The Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2005, p. 752

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; Martin, Mike, ‘Happiness and Virtue in Positive Psychology’, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 2007, vol. 37, no.1, p. 89

traits are authentic and positive traits are derivative.”<sup>3</sup> Seligman, (and by extension all others who align themselves with Positive Psychology), seeks to move beyond the treatment of the mentally ill to provide instead the means to a ‘pleasant life’, a ‘good life’ and a ‘meaningful life’ for those who enjoy psychological health.<sup>4</sup> Those working within the Positive Psychology model seek to “show what actions lead to wellbeing, to positive individuals and to thriving communities’ by adapting ‘what is best in the scientific method to the unique problems that human behaviour presents to those who wish to understand it *in all its complexity*.”<sup>5</sup>

Positive Psychology’s influence began in the United States but is gaining momentum around the world, both within academic circles as a field for research and the broader community. Here in Australia, *Sydney University* had its first conference devoted to Positive Psychology in 2008,<sup>6</sup> and had plans to instigate a post graduate program in Positive Psychology in 2009.<sup>7</sup> At Sydney’s *Geelong Grammar School*, ‘Wellbeing and Positive Psychology’ has been incorporated within the school culture since 2007.<sup>8</sup> Now, Positive Psychology is also being used in government schools (like Sydney’s *Riverside Girls School*).<sup>9</sup> In Western Australia, many schools throughout the state are using the ‘Optimistic Thinking Skill’, program designed by Curtin University to “develop children's social competence, self-management, and positive thinking.”<sup>10</sup> Thus investigation into this field, and the assumptions built into the

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<sup>3</sup> Seligman, Martin, & Csikszentmihalyi, Mihlay, ‘Positive Psychology, An Introduction’, *American Psychologist*, 2000, vol. 55, no.1, p. 12

<sup>4</sup> Seligman, Martin., *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*, Random House Australia, Sydney, 2002, p. 249

<sup>5</sup> Seligman, Csikszentmihalyi , ‘Positive Psychology, An Introduction’ p. 7; My emphasis

<sup>6</sup> First Australian Positive Psychology and Well-Being Conference call for papers accessed on 30 July 2008 from [http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/coach/pp2008/Call\\_for\\_Papers\\_PP2008.pdf](http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/coach/pp2008/Call_for_Papers_PP2008.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Sydney University , Faculty of Science, Psychology, accessed on 30 July 2008 from [http://www.science.usyd.edu.au/fstudent/postgrad/research/pgr\\_psychology.shtml](http://www.science.usyd.edu.au/fstudent/postgrad/research/pgr_psychology.shtml)

<sup>8</sup> Wellbeing@GGS accessed on 30 July 2008 from <http://www.ggs.vic.edu.au/index.asp?menuid=200.020.010>

<sup>9</sup> Aedy, Richard ‘Positive Psychology at school’, *Life Matters*, Radio National Broadcast, accessed on 15/05/09 from <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2009/2565148.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Curtin University of Technology, Aussie Optimism.accessed on 48/04/09, from <http://psych.curtin.edu.au/research/aussieoptimism/index.cfm>  
For an example, see. *St Hilda’s Anglican School for Girls* Newsletter 4/02/2009 accessed on 16/04/09 from [http://www.sthildas.wa.edu.au/Linked%20Documents/Newsletters/SS\\_February\\_2009.pdf](http://www.sthildas.wa.edu.au/Linked%20Documents/Newsletters/SS_February_2009.pdf)

techniques it advocates, is timely and has particular importance in the Australian context.

### **The Method**

For all the good Psychology has achieved over the past century, criticisms of Psychology are as valid today as they were in its inception, and there is no exception in the case of the latest incarnation of psychological investigation. The assumptions implicit within Positive Psychology conceal *ad hoc* ontological foundations which can distort conclusions drawn about the nature of the human person, and in turn, affect the legitimacy of claims that arise from within the field. This claim finds support in the following thesis via the critical evaluation of Positive Psychology from a phenomenological perspective. This evaluation will progress along two main fronts: general and particular. In relation to the former, the legitimacy and fecundity of some of the broad suppositions inherent in Positive Psychology will be challenged. In the main these come in the form of implicit frameworks which Positive Psychology has inherited from the Western philosophical and scientific tradition. These include a Dualist ontology and the unwavering belief in the merit of empiricism as a means of coming to a full understanding of the human person. For the latter, the impact these broad assumptions have on Positive Psychology's theorising in relation to particular constructs such as states of mind, the structure of emotion, and the nature of authenticity is then critiqued.

The main method of this project, then, is to survey relevant literature in order to demonstrate that Heidegger's ontology (in particular that developed in his early work, *Being and Time*), can make a significant contribution to the theoretical base of Positive Psychology. The first chapter, 'Heidegger's Relevance for Positive Psychology,' begins the exploration of how his ontic-ontological distinction, and treatment of the nature of the sciences and the 'theoretical attitude' can elucidate the reasons why Positive Psychology's ambition to arrive at an appreciation of the human person *in all its complexity* is set to flounder.<sup>11</sup> In terms of epistemology, Heidegger's

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<sup>11</sup> Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, John Maquarrie, & Edward Robinson, (Trans.), Blackwell, Oxford, 1996, H p. 138



work can provide a justification and frame for Positive Psychology's ontic questions, positioning them within an ontological context, thus making them more reliable. These themes are continued throughout the thesis as it is argued, in addition to providing an ontological grounding, Heidegger's deconstruction of key ideas within the Western philosophical canon can benefit Positive Psychology. Those unexamined ideas which currently frame Positive Psychology are shown as obstructive to its aim to gain a complete picture of the human person. It is argued, along with Heidegger, that the human person is distinct in that it is ontological (or always operates with a pre-ontological or not yet formally developed understanding of the world, the self and others) and thus to understand humanity in all its complexity requires an appreciation of this ontological nature. As this argument progresses, the comparison between Heidegger's work and certain ideas within Positive Psychology reveals points of similarity, (which may surprise the reader). Moreover, these parallels often highlight areas within Positive Psychology which need further clarification. This project seeks to point the way towards the use of Heidegger's work as a critique and support for Positive Psychology. To this end, each subsequent chapter works on the basis of such a potential similarity between Heidegger's work and Positive Psychology: 'authenticity', 'mind' and 'mood'.

The second chapter, 'Authenticity in Heidegger and Positive Psychology,' contends that the notion of authenticity in Heidegger can expand on that proffered by Positive Psychology. Some time is spent ascertaining what the term 'authenticity' means for Heidegger and how it relates to *Being and Time* in general. Positive Psychology's conception of authentic happiness is then woven into this framework in order to demonstrate some striking parallels, but also that Positive Psychology's notion of authenticity is superficial in relation to Heidegger's. So, it is suggested that, by recourse to Heidegger, Positive Psychology's use of authenticity can be made more potent.

Chapter three, '*Befindlichkeit* and Dualism,' argues that Positive Psychology would benefit from adopting Heidegger's notion of *Befindlichkeit* or 'attunement' in place of

the dualist conception of 'states of mind.' The many reasons for this radical shift in theoretical orientation are outlined - first with reference to Heidegger's critique of Descartes and then in relation to the obstacles this theoretical outlook creates for Positive Psychology. In essence, it is held that since the 'object' of Positive Psychology's investigations is the human person, a theoretical bias which misinterprets the basic reality of this entity is counter productive. Positive Psychology must, of course, operate with a 'theory of mind', but this theory should not misconstrue the phenomenon of the human experience of cognition as part of engaged agency, and thus obstruct Positive Psychology's aims. Therefore it is recommended that the obsolete ontological assumptions Positive Psychology unwittingly makes should be eschewed. Furthermore, what this might mean in practical terms for the Positive Psychologist is sketched, noting possibilities for future development.

The fourth chapter, 'Emotion and Mood,' discusses how Positive Psychology's view of emotion compares with that proffered by Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of moods. The ground is established by a brief description of how Psychology's relation to emotion has changed over time, and how Positive Psychology's understanding of mood has been influenced by this history. Currently there seems to be some confusion within Positive Psychology as to what exactly constitutes an emotion and whether this concept should be likened to, or differentiated from, mood and where it sits in relation to traits, strengths and virtues. These central concepts are mapped diagrammatically in order to bring some clarity, before links with Heidegger's notion of mood and attunement are suggested. These links demonstrate that connecting Positive Psychology's view of emotion to Heidegger's mood creates the means for Positive Psychology to account for the human person's intrinsic relation to Being. This brings Positive Psychology closer to the full account of the human person it seeks.

# 1. Heidegger's Relevance for Positive Psychology

## *Establishing the Argument*

Positive Psychology's need for an explicitly realised ontological underpinning is the dominant theme throughout this project. Rather than beginning the discussion of authenticity, mind and mood which will be broached in subsequent sections, the following will make a more general case for Heidegger's relevance to Positive Psychology in terms of Heidegger's ontic-ontological distinction and the epistemic reasons for supplying an ontological base.

### **The Ontic-Ontological Distinction**

Philosophy in general (and Phenomenology in particular) is critical of Psychology's ability to meet its more ambitious aims. Indeed, Seligman is not immune to such doubts, expressing the concern, that "a science of positive emotion will merely float on the waves of self-improvement fashions unless it is anchored by deeper premises."<sup>12</sup> Positive Psychologists frequently give the false impression that since the 'weakness model' in Psychology can now be balanced, the human person will finally be studied 'in its entirety'. For example, Snyder and Lopez claim that "Positive Psychology unfetters the search for understanding *all aspects* of human nature"<sup>13</sup> but such enthusiasm does not grant that the methods Psychology has at its disposal are inadequate to the task. This theoretical blind spot has been noted in the past. As far back as 1927, Heidegger complained that "pure psychology" merely made "one-sided reflections" which "are only possible on the basis of the concrete totality of man."<sup>14</sup> For Heidegger, this concrete totality includes both ontic and ontological considerations, which he is often at pains to differentiate. Throughout this work, ontology is taken to mean the investigation into the nature of existence or Being as

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<sup>12</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 251

<sup>13</sup> Snyder & Lopez 'The future of Positive Psychology', p. 753; My emphasis

<sup>14</sup> Letter to Husserl dated 22 October 1927, quoted in Guignon, Charles, 'Moods in Heidegger's Being and Time', in Solomon, Robert, *What is an emotion? Classic And Contemporary Readings*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 181

such. In other words, ontology asks “what is being as being”.<sup>15</sup> Heidegger seeks the answer to this question through an “analytic of Da-sein”: the investigation of the ontological nature of the human person in its particular relation to Being.<sup>16</sup> Although each individual has an existential (ontological) reality, in that each person is an exemplar of that entity which relates to Being, it is important to recognise that the ‘analytic of Dasein’ relates to ontological structures as such. Particular examples of this ontological structure would require recourse to the ontic domain, and so Heidegger demarcated them as Daseinanalysis.<sup>17</sup> The ‘analytic of Dasein’ must be kept separate from an analysis of individual *existentiell* (ontic) reality, in which the individual is such and such person, existing at this point in time, with this family these likes and dislikes etc. This kind of investigation would be closer to an ‘ontic anthropology’ but which would ideally bear “the stamp of the analytic of Dasein”.<sup>18</sup>

The difficulty comes as the Psychologist seeks an answer for which he cannot frame the question. To explain: the Psychologist, who approaches the human person from the standpoint of science, necessarily adopts a ‘theoretical outlook’. Thus the Psychologist who seeks to understand ‘all aspects of human nature’ asks ontic questions in the hope of revealing the whole of human reality which necessarily presupposes the ontological structures of the human person. The project must fail due to an inconsistency between the objective (which is in part ontological) and the means to that objective (which is purely ontic). Heidegger makes the distinction between these two modes of inquiry clear, saying that ontological “inquiry is indeed more primordial, as over and against the ontical inquiry of the positive sciences.”<sup>19</sup> This is not to say that there is no place for ontic investigation. In fact, the theoretical attitude, which creates a distinction between the subject and the object under investigation, has been immensely fruitful: the great technological advances of the recent era would not have been possible without it. It must be recognised, however, that these very

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<sup>15</sup> Heidegger, Martin, *Zollikon Seminars, Protocols-Conversations-Letters*, Boss, Medard (Ed.), (Mayr, Franz, & Askay, Richard, Trans.), Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 2001, p. 122

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 125

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. pp. 124 -125

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 125

<sup>19</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 11

techniques which dim the experience of Being through engagement with the world are disadvantageous to the clear-sighted construction of a theory of the human person as such, for the human person is “distinctive in that it is ontological.”<sup>20</sup>

Ontic examination of human traits cannot fully explicate the nature of the human person, since it must be silent with regard to ontology. Though the “roots of the existential analytic...are ultimately *existentiell*, that is, ontical” an ontological investigation requires a phenomenological method, rather than the theoretical attitude.<sup>21</sup> Phenomenology allows for an appreciation of everyday experience as engaged agency whereas scientific investigation approaches the human person as already disengaged, the subject of an experiment - split into a mind and a body. Thus the scientific method, the principal tool of the Psychologist, has no access to the essential, ontological, aspects of the human reality, which results in Positive Psychology drawing conclusions based on *ad hoc* and unrecognised ontological foundations.<sup>22</sup> This deficiency, noted at Psychology’s inception, has not been successfully redressed. As Psychology’s latest manifestation, Positive Psychology deserves the opportunity to respond. The use of arguments from within Phenomenology, specifically those of Heidegger, will highlight these deficiencies inherent within Positive Psychology so that they may be rectified, thus making the field more substantial. If successful, this critique will make Positive Psychology a more robust discipline: a rigorous ontic science of the human subject, strengthened and informed by an explicit ontology. This should go some way to assuaging Seligman’s concern.

### **Epistemic Considerations**

The focus of this thesis is not the dismantling of Positive Psychology’s epistemic orientation. However, the case for the incorporation of a developed ontology cannot be made without at least some reference to epistemological considerations. In any

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<sup>20</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H pp. 138, 12

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. H p. 13; The particulars of the theoretical attitude will be covered in more detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>22</sup> Or, in Maslow’s words, ‘the unconscious, unexamined philosophies that they picked up as children.’ Maslow, Abraham, ‘Existential Psychology – What’s in it for Us?’ in May, Rollo, (Ed.) *Existential Psychology*, Random House, New York, 1966, p. 54

case, Philosophical honesty requires that one confess one's own epistemological bias. Note, however, that while epistemic concerns are raised, they are not treated in great depth.

Apart from the difficulties Positive Psychology suffers as a discipline (mentioned above), it is internally coherent. In general, those engaged in the field share an appreciation for Cognitive Theory, they acknowledge that there is an "urgent" need to "redress the balance" within Psychology to "supplement what we know about madness with knowledge about sanity," and they posit that the inclusion of some form of Virtue theory into the discipline is the best means of achieving this.<sup>23</sup> Internal coherence should be the standard for any branch of learning, so while it is valuable; it is not, in itself, praiseworthy. In fact, the sole reliance on Coherentism has created, (all-be-they unrecognised), difficulties for Positive Psychology, since "beliefs can be comprehensively coherent without amounting to knowledge."<sup>24</sup> To explain, a discipline may have a system of coherent beliefs which are nonetheless false. Alternatively, beliefs which cohere with each other may be true, but due to simple luck. For Positive Psychology, the former does not seem to be the case, since the area has had remarkable success; its theories are borne out by experimental data and increases in reported subjective wellbeing. The pragmatist would likely retort that the fecundity of the scientific method is ample demonstration of its value as the means to attaining knowledge. In reply, it should be noted that ontic investigations will only discover the answers to the questions they pose, and since (it is argued here) there is more to the human person than a mere ontic examination can reveal, the pragmatist only knows part of the story. This means the latter is likely: it is just coincidence that Positive Psychology operates with true belief, since the rationalization for belief cannot come from within the circle of coherent ideas, and no support has been sought from without. It is true that Positive Psychology has collected and incorporated beliefs and systems which cohere with its central beliefs, but this does not amount to

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<sup>23</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 256

<sup>24</sup> Sosa, Ernest, 'Philosophical Scepticism and Epistemic Circularity', in Keith DeRose and Ted Warfield (Eds.) *Skepticism: A Contemporary Reader*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1999 p. 97

justification. Positive Psychology's devotion to the scientific method has produced success simply because the results gained so far *just-so-happen* to align with the ontological structures of the human person. Making these ontological structures explicit and incorporating them into the justification for Positive Psychology's knowledge makes the whole practice more robust.

That the methods employed by Positive Psychologists will not assist in the adequate justification of their core beliefs can be seen in the following example.<sup>25</sup> To determine how the good life might be lived, and whether the discernment of factors intrinsic to the good life was ubiquitous, a team of Positive Psychologists examined a range of philosophical and theological systems. These included Confucianism, Hinduism, Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophy, and the Bushido samurai code. From these, six core virtues were distilled: wisdom, courage, love, justice, temperance and spirituality.<sup>26</sup> This form of investigation seems to have been favoured on pragmatic grounds. On the one hand, looking to the traditions of the world in order to gain insight into the 'good life' may be expedient, or perhaps even wise, on the other hand; it may just be a form of *argumentum ad populum*, *argumentum ad participans* or an argument from the *status quo*. In any case, a cross cultural taxonomy of virtue was collated for use in developing an "agreed upon classification system" which could be used to diagnose and enhance the experience of "authentic happiness" in the general population.<sup>27</sup> However, rather than acting as a means of justification, these systems have merely become part of the "web of belief" – a network which seems to be true, but not for any significant or steadfast reason. A significant reason would more likely come from the analysis of virtue in light of the nature of the human person, than from an assortment of traditions.

For Positive Psychology to be assured of future success in its task and to gain epistemological rigour, the element of luck must be removed. Two possible ways this may be achieved are suggested here. The first endorses a Reliabilist account of

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<sup>25</sup> This example is reiterated in Chapter 3.

<sup>26</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 11

<sup>27</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, pp. 131-132

knowledge. For the Reliabilist, knowledge is justified because an external (or objective) connection is made between the truth of the belief and the belief-producing cognitive process.<sup>28</sup> In other words, the beliefs of which Positive Psychology is comprised may be made more reliable by the recourse to an external qualification of such a belief-producing process. To take the above example, the belief that the enactment of the virtues enhances happiness in the virtuous was corroborated in the *ad hoc* way described. While it is true, the process through which the Positive Psychologists arrived at the belief was flawed and thus did not arguably produce reliable knowledge. The preference for that particular method (the assemblage of examples) was most likely generated by the scientific culture Positive Psychology prides itself on. This process is suited to the general tasks the Positive Psychologist is presented with in her investigation into ontic questions. However the question “*why* are the virtues conducive to happiness?” or, alternatively, “*why* is this *true*?” remains unanswered. The mere collection of Virtue theories is unsuitable to the task of providing an external connection between the belief that virtue enhances happiness and the truth of that belief. Therefore, this belief would be strengthened by verification derived from an external source. This requires that Positive Psychology reach beyond ontic considerations, outside its network of beliefs about the means to achieving happiness, toward the discovery of the *prerequisite* of these means. To be made reliable, Positive Psychology requires the addition of a different method of investigation, one that is “opposed to all free-floating constructions and accidental findings”.<sup>29</sup> One such suitable methodology is phenomenology. In other words, verification of the beliefs which make up the basic premises of Positive Psychology must come from an assessment of the phenomena itself; that is, from within ontology.<sup>30</sup>

How Positive Psychology can make its beliefs more robust through Reliabilism deserves further explication. To take a different example, it is true, as Positive

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<sup>28</sup> Axtell, Guy, *Knowledge Belief and Character: Readings in Virtue Epistemology*, accessed on 12/12/2008, from <http://www.scsr.nevada.edu/~axtell/introduction.html>, p. 5

<sup>29</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 28

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*; *N.B.* Heidegger describes phenomenology as the methodology of ontology.



Psychology suggests, that emotional states are a pervasive aspect of human life, that “a positive mood jolts us into an entirely different way of thinking from a negative mood” and that there is barely any gap between.<sup>31</sup> That this is the case is observable in the laboratory as subjects’ temperature is measured and affective states are recorded. But such confirmation of the structure of mood, derived from ontic methodology, is again unsuitable to the task of providing an external connection between the belief that moods are omnipresent and the truth of that belief. Absent is the response to the question “*why* are moods pervasive?” The answer, which can create the necessary truth-connection, comes from an understanding of the nature of the human person, an understanding gained through the use of a different methodology: phenomenology. Furthermore, that such an approach has potential fecundity is evident in this example. The insight that there is ‘barely any gap between’ which Seligman proposes so tentatively can be affirmed and strengthened once Heidegger’s views of the human person are accepted. There *is* no gap between one mood and another for that “we are never free of moods” is an ontological reality.<sup>32</sup> In other words, that we are always subject to some mood is characteristic of the kinds of beings we are. In each case, Process Reliabilism obliges Positive Psychology to move beyond its traditional ontic methodology and to seek justification for its beliefs in ontology.

The foregoing pre-empts the second way in which the element of epistemological luck involved in Positive Psychology’s successes can be removed. In short, the work of Positive Psychology may be bolstered if provided with a foundation in Heideggerian ontology. The term ‘foundation’ is used reluctantly, since it connotes a Cartesian bias which will be rejected later in this work. Foundationalism has its critics, and rightly so. Broadly, their opposition takes the form that it is difficult (if not impossible) to identify any criterion which is ‘suitably primal’ to act as the basis of

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<sup>31</sup> Seligman, *Authentic happiness*, pp. 41, 38, xiv

<sup>32</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 136; This point will be developed further in Chapter 4.

knowledge.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, it is unhelpful to suggest that Positive Psychology should be precariously balanced on one ‘clear and certain’ point. Rather, Positive Psychology should be embedded within the larger context of the entirety of meanings, phenomena, and experiences which constitute human being, which is a Being-in-the-world.<sup>34</sup> Heidegger makes the connection between a person’s Being and their place *in* the world.<sup>35</sup> The point is that existence of the self entails the existence of a world, and that, to borrow Wittgenstein’s phrase, “‘the limits of my world are the limits of myself’.”<sup>36</sup> Therefore, to seek to use Heidegger’s ontology as the foundation for Positive Psychology is to set the latter within a larger system of coherence, since the scientist can only understand herself as the kind of being which 1) relates to Being, and 2) which has a ‘world’. There is nothing ‘outside’ this system of meaning. The ‘limit’ of knowledge is, therefore, the existence of Dasein, with its world and relation to Being. Or in other words the existence of Dasein, the ontological structures of Dasein is ‘suitably primal.’

Every human endeavour, including ontic investigation, is inescapably conducted within this context: for as “ways in which man behaves, sciences have the manner of Being which this entity – man himself – possesses.”<sup>37</sup> All investigation operates with this prior understanding of the nature of the subject; else the investigation could not begin.<sup>38</sup> One needs a sense of what one is looking for before a search can start. All science, including Positive Psychology operates with this implicit understanding of Being, because science is conducted by Dasein, which has a privileged relation to Being. So, making the phenomenological structure of the ontological base of Positive Psychology explicit creates a suitable underpinning for the field:

Laying the foundations, as we have described it...leaps  
ahead, as it were, into some area of Being, discloses it for

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<sup>33</sup> Taylor, Charles, ‘What’s Wrong with Foundationalism?: Knowledge Agency and World’ in Wrathal, Mark, & Malpas, Jeff, (Eds.), *Heidegger, Coping and Cognitive Science: Essays in Honor of Herbert L. Dreyfus*, Vol.2, MIT Press, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 116-117

<sup>34</sup> Heidegger’s use of the term Dasein will be treated in detail in Chapter 2.

<sup>35</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 54

<sup>36</sup> Young, Julian, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 58-59

<sup>37</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 11

<sup>38</sup> Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 125

the first time in the constitution of its Being, and ...makes it available to the positive sciences...<sup>39</sup>

For Heidegger, a key task is to make the implicit relation to Being (under which the sciences necessarily operate) explicit, to disclose the “possibility of those ontologies themselves which are prior to the ontical sciences and which provide their foundations.”<sup>40</sup> Heidegger notes that the nature of the human person is generally “tacitly assumed as something ‘self evidently’ ‘given’... [and that] the decisive ontological foundations of anthropological problematics remain undetermined.”<sup>41</sup> Importantly for the current project, he argues that this “is no less true of ‘psychology’”.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, since one aspect of Heidegger’s work seeks to describe the structures that are necessarily prior to science; it is reasonable that Positive Psychology should be founded on Heidegger’s ontology. In sum, the external criterion which this thesis recommends for Positive Psychology’s knowledge is also that which is most primal, the ontological structures of human existence. Heidegger’s work, (in particular that contained in *Being and Time*), is put forward as the ontology which is most likely to be of service to Positive Psychology, for three main reasons:

Firstly, Heidegger’s ontology is more accurate than previous investigations into Being and the human relation to it. Since its method is phenomenology, it does not fall victim to the fractured reality which blights constructs derived from the theoretical attitude. Note, that given the complexity of the subject, it would be foolhardy to posit that Heidegger’s formulation is entirely accurate, and that is certainly not what is being suggested here. Rather, his ontology is more accurate than other possible ontologies due to its phenomenological method. Using phenomenology, Heidegger seeks to exhume the assumptions and philosophical games of the past which, rather than bringing metaphysics closer to an understanding of human being

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<sup>39</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 10

<sup>40</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 11; see also Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 128

<sup>41</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 49

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

and its relation to Being as such, obscured the task. Through phenomenology, Heidegger sought to return to “the things themselves!”<sup>43</sup>

Secondly, since Heidegger’s task is to challenge the assumptions inherent within Philosophy, this can in turn serve to challenge the assumptions at work within Positive Psychology – of which there are many. Since Positive Psychology does not have an explicit ontology (theory of Being and then how the human person relates to Being), it has assumed a gaggle of ontological presuppositions which have found their way from within the Western philosophical canon into common thought. Taking inspiration from Heidegger, this thesis will endeavour to make these assumptions plain, and will use Heidegger’s critique of the underlying philosophical constructs to demonstrate why these assumptions are often detrimental to Positive Psychology’s primary aims.

Thirdly, although Heidegger can be classed within the tradition of thought which is commonly characterised by the negative outlook which Positive Psychology deplores, the two approaches to the human person share some important similarities. For instance, both Heidegger and Positive Psychology treat authenticity in terms of temporality and give a central place to mood as formative for a person’s engagement with the world. Granted, these thematic similarities differ in detail, which can only be expected since Heidegger is concerned with ontological structures of human being, whereas Positive Psychology approaches these subjects ontically. Far from representing a difficulty, these differences in approach are advantageous, since this project seeks to use Heidegger’s ontology as a supportive framework for Positive Psychology’s ontic endeavours. In relation to Heidegger’s so called ‘negative attitude’, it is not the lone emphasis within his work. In fact, although Heidegger discusses fear, boredom, indifference, sadness, melancholy and desperation, he also notes the place of hope, joy, enthusiasm, equanimity, gaiety, and elation in our

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<sup>43</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 28

everyday experience.<sup>44</sup> The content of Heidegger's work may not be balanced on the whole, however, the theoretical thrust may well be:

Along with the sober anxiety which brings us face to face with our individualized potentiality-for-Being, there goes an unshakable joy in this possibility.<sup>45</sup>

It is perhaps this 'unshakable joy' contained in the possibility for each individual to realise their own 'potentiality-for-Being' that is the most inspiring similarity between Heidegger and Positive Psychology.

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<sup>44</sup> Guignon, Charles, 'Moods in Heidegger's Being and Time', in Solomon, Robert, 2003, *What is an emotion? Classic And Contemporary Readings*, 2003, p. 184

<sup>45</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 310

## **2. Authenticity in Heidegger and Positive Psychology**

*What does authenticity mean for Heidegger, and how does it relate to Positive Psychology's conception of authentic happiness?*

The forgoing discussion noted that Positive Psychology, like the positive sciences in general, operates within a set of unquestioned assumptions. It was suggested moreover, that these assumptions, while being beneficial to the development of modern science, are disadvantageous to the clear-sighted construction of a theory of the human person. Obviously, a coherent theory of the human person is essential to the field of psychology in general and Positive Psychology in particular. So, in order to supply this much needed theoretical underpinning, the task becomes one of laying bare implicit assumptions that they may be assessed as favourable or unfavourable to Positive Psychology, and of providing a more constructive set of primary principles where needed.

The overarching aim of this research is to see whether Heidegger's ontology may provide this coherent and constructive set of founding principles, which is lacking in Positive Psychology. Given that both Heidegger and Positive Psychology make use of the notion of authenticity, it seems likely that Heidegger's theorising on the nature of human Being could indeed act as a context for Positive Psychology. The way in which Positive Psychology and Heidegger use the idea of authenticity is, however, different: Firstly, they approach the idea of authenticity from the perspective of different fields: psychology and ontology. Secondly, this means that they operate on different levels of engagement with Being: ontic and ontological. If it becomes clear that these two notions of authenticity are incommensurable, then this project is set to be unsuccessful. Thus a clear description of the ways in which both Heidegger and Positive Psychology use the notion of authenticity is essential. Once this is accomplished, the two conceptions of authenticity are compared and contrasted in order to demonstrate the ways in which that they might usefully work together.

In order to achieve these aims, this chapter first outlines Heidegger's use of 'authenticity' briefly describing how the concept sits within the general scope of his

thought. For ease, this explanation is broken into sections on fundamental ontology, temporality, inauthentic temporality then authentic temporality. Following this, a critique of the loose way in which Positive Psychology employs ‘authenticity’ and related terms, supports an argument for the inclusion of Heidegger’s developed articulation of authentic Being. First, Positive Psychology does not provide a definite account of authenticity, thus its use of the word lacks clarity. Heidegger can furnish an articulate account (which is not too distant in content from the beginnings which are offered by Positive Psychology) and thus can make authenticity a more meaningful aspect of Positive Psychology’s endeavour. Secondly, at some points Positive Psychology casts authenticity as exclusively connected with the present, while at others it extends authenticity across past, present and future. Heidegger’s rendering of the temporal nature of authenticity, when linked with Positive Psychology, can assist in overcoming this contradiction. Thirdly, Positive Psychology may inadvertently promote inauthenticity in its question for authenticity through gratification. However, if gratification is coupled with Heidegger’s ‘resoluteness’, this potential pitfall can be avoided.

### **Fundamental Ontology**

To understand Heidegger’s use of the notion of authenticity, one must have knowledge of the thrust of his work overall. Describing Heidegger’s project is difficult, not least because of his (so called) ‘tormented language,’ made more obscure at times by the various ways in which it is translated into English and rendered throughout the secondary literature.<sup>46</sup> The matter is compounded further by the circular evolution of his thought, where one set of insights leads onto another, which calls the reader to revisit and clarify the first: tracing out a hermeneutic circle.<sup>47</sup> A primary reading of Heidegger’s *Being and Time* then, would take his task (continued in subsequent works such as *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*) as the reclamation of the ‘question of Being’ from what he saw as tired and rigid ‘self-

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<sup>46</sup> Kaufmann, Walter, *From Shakespeare to Existentialism*, Anchor Books, New York, 1960, pp. 339, 365

<sup>47</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 17; Stephen Mulhall, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger and Being and Time*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 31

evident' structures of theorising within metaphysics, which have been passed down through the history of Western philosophy.<sup>48</sup> We must emphasise the qualification that this is a *primary* reading, which allows for the shifts which necessarily develop within Heidegger's later work, and for the dissention within the ranks of Heideggerian scholars.<sup>49</sup> Thomas Sheehan, for example, against the mainstream interpretation of Heidegger, is adamant that "Heidegger's central topic is not 'being'"<sup>50</sup> and that "Heidegger's focal topic never was being in any of its forms".<sup>51</sup> Sheehan's point, whilst at odds with many, is nuanced and appears faithful to Heidegger's intention. The meaning of Sheehan's perspective will become clearer below.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger argues that traditional views of Being obstruct an accurate account of Being by tacitly assuming a human subject which is nothing more than a thinking 'thing': "Ontologically, every idea of a 'subject'...still points to the subjectum along with it...Thinghood itself which such reification implies."<sup>52</sup> Left unexamined, this notion has generated some of philosophy's most well known conundrums such as the evasiveness of the 'proof of reality', the 'mind body problem' and the "theoretical problematic of understanding the psychical life of others" or in other words, the 'problem of other minds.'<sup>53</sup> According to Heidegger, these seeming paradoxes, ("with which first-year philosophy students have been tormented since time immemorial"<sup>54</sup>) are nothing but the outcome of the misconception of the fundamental question of Being, and of our relation to it. Thus, the 'tormented language' which readers of Heidegger often bemoan is the result of his

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<sup>48</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 21-22

<sup>49</sup> Sheehan, Thomas, 'A paradigm shift in Heidegger research,' *Continental Philosophy Review* pp. 183-185 accessed on 15/04/09 from <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/relstud/faculty/sheehan/pdf/parad.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> Sheehan, Thomas, 'How (Not) To Read Heidegger,' *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, LXIX, 2, Spring, 1995, p. 275

<sup>51</sup> Sheehan, 'A paradigm shift in Heidegger research,' pp. 187-188

<sup>52</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 46

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* H pp. 205, 60, 124

<sup>54</sup> Young, Julian, *Heidegger, philosophy, Nazism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p.



attempt to avoid entrenched nomenclature which has beleaguered past scholarship, and fed into the misinterpretation of Being.

Heidegger sets out to critically engage lingering philosophical misinterpretations of Being. It is an ambitious (some would say arrogant) aim to set aside the tradition of which you are a part in order to ascertain the 'true' nature of Being which two thousand years of metaphysics 'misconstrued.' Heidegger is resolute, however, that the confusion can be overcome, if slowly. In order to "destroy the traditional content of ancient ontology" with its various assumptions, Heidegger employs a particular mode of inquiry – phenomenology – which he maintains is the only method which makes "ontology possible."<sup>55</sup> In its interrogation of Being, phenomenology looks to "the things themselves!" in how they manifest in our everyday lives, rather than relying on the distillation of academic tradition.<sup>56</sup> These 'things' which shall be the focus of this method are the variety of beings which fill our worlds, for "Being is always the Being of an entity."<sup>57</sup> Since ontology is always the study of the being of entities, Heidegger chose "that entity which is ontologico-ontically distinctive, Dasein in order to confront the cardinal problem – the question of the meaning of Being in general."<sup>58</sup> In other words, Heidegger chose the human person as "the primary example to be interrogated in the question of Being".<sup>59</sup> While this has the disadvantage that this phenomena is "*ontologically that which is farthest*" (for the same reason that one cannot see the forest whilst in it), it has the advantage that the human person is that entity which has a natural proclivity toward the understanding of Being.<sup>60</sup> The human person is "ontologically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it".<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Young, *Heidegger, philosophy, Nazism*, p. 22, 36

<sup>56</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 28

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* H p. 9

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* H p. 37

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* H p. 8

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* H p. 15

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* H p. 12

Heidegger takes a common German word –Dasein– as a starting point for his investigation of the human person.<sup>62</sup> The term is apt since, in German it is an ontological term, in so far as it sets humanity and the type of being it instantiates apart from other modes of being.<sup>63</sup> When translated, ‘Dasein’ is commonly rendered literally as ‘there-being’ or ‘Being-there’, as in the Maquarrie and Robinson translation of *Being and Time*. Sheehan views the translation of ‘Da’ as ‘there’ as “one of the least happy moves of Heidegger-scholarship” arguing that “Heidegger understands *Da* not as “the there” but as “the open.””<sup>64</sup> Hofstadter, along a similar vein, reads the term ‘Dasein’ as “to-be-da” which casts the human being as “the mediator between being and beings, the one who holds open the difference between them.”<sup>65</sup> This rendering is more fruitful since it emphasises the role Dasein plays in relation to Being. Dasein is set apart because of the particular relationship it has with Being: “Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological.”<sup>66</sup> That we understand ourselves in relation to our existence – that we have a possibility to be or not to be a particular way – is peculiar to Dasein.<sup>67</sup>

Dasein’s understanding of Being is “pre-ontological” in that it is generally not explicit in a theoretical sense, but is evidenced in the ways in which we think about ourselves, our lives and the ways in which we interact with the other beings we encounter.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, the notion of Being is only meaningful given the existence of that entity which can conceive of, or better, have a relationship toward, Being.<sup>69</sup> Hofstadter makes the point that unless

there is an openness, a clearing in which the distinction  
between being and beings can appear...there can be no

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid. H pp.11-12

<sup>63</sup> Mulhall, Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger and *Being and Time*, p. 14

<sup>64</sup> Sheehan, ‘A paradigm shift in Heidegger research,’ p. 193

<sup>65</sup> Heidegger, Martin, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Hofstadter, A. (Trans.), Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1988, Translator’s Appendix: A note on the *Da* and the *Dasein*, pp. 333-334

<sup>66</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 12

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. H p.12

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. H p. 11

<sup>69</sup> Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Translator’s Introduction, p. xxiv

such phenomena at all as beings, being and their mutual belonging together.<sup>70</sup>

This reciprocity between Being and Dasein must be highlighted. Dasein is the entity which provides this ‘clearing’, and by “rendering things intelligible-as, the clearing gives being.”<sup>71</sup> This ‘clearing’ is afforded by the fact that we are, fundamentally, ‘sense making creatures’ – we apply “references” and “assignments” to the entities which surround us and thus create the totality of the world in which we operate.<sup>72</sup> In other words, humans are the ‘openness’ which allows beings to be made present and for Being to be perceived.<sup>73</sup> We are now in a position to revisit Sheehan’s earlier insight: “Heidegger’s central topic is not being...but rather what he calls the “clearing” of and for being...the *Da* of *Sein*”.<sup>74</sup> In *Being and Time*, Heidegger interrogates the nature of Dasein, that entity which is peculiar in its instinctive understanding and relation to Being, in order to prepare the ground for the investigation of Being as such. Or, in Heidegger’s words, the “question of Being is nothing other than the radicalization of an essential tendency-of-Being which belongs to Dasein itself – the pre-ontological understanding of Being.”<sup>75</sup> This settles the question of the subject matter of the phenomenology: “*fundamental ontology* ... must be sought in the *existential analytic of Dasein*.”<sup>76</sup>

## Temporality

Heidegger is vague, at some points, in relation to the precise way in which Dasein understands Being, saying we “understand something like Being” or that there is “some way in which Dasein understands itself in its Being” or again, “somehow the Dasein knows something about being.”<sup>77</sup> At others, he is direct: “whenever Dasein tacitly understands and interprets something like Being, it does so with *time* as its

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, Translator’s Appendix, p. 334

<sup>71</sup> Sheehan, ‘A paradigm shift in Heidegger research,’ p. 193

<sup>72</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 107; Sheehan, ‘A paradigm shift in Heidegger research,’ p. 191

<sup>73</sup> Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, pp. 4, 120-121

<sup>74</sup> Sheehan, ‘How (not) to read Heidegger,’ p. 275

<sup>75</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 15

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. H p. 14

<sup>77</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 17, 12; *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 319

standpoint.”<sup>78</sup> This does not mean ‘time’ in the sense of that which we read off our clocks, that which we ‘waste’ and that which we regularly ‘run out of’, but the unity of past, present and future – Temporality.<sup>79</sup> “Temporal projection makes possible the objectification of Being and assures conceptualizability, and thereby constitutes ontology in general as...a *Temporal* science.”<sup>80</sup> The interrelationship between Dasein, Being and time is complex because they are related through this mechanism of ‘projection.’ ‘Projection’ is the term Heidegger uses to describe the “existential structure of understanding”.<sup>81</sup> All that is understood is projected upon a ‘horizon’, where the ‘horizon’ is that which enables understanding.<sup>82</sup> Given that we are ‘sense making creatures,’ ‘projection’ takes an important place in our relation to Being and time. Hoftsadter explains that,

Being is itself the horizon for beings: they are encountered and understood only as they are projected upon their own being as horizon. But being itself needs another horizon to be projected upon if it is to be understood...and it is *time* which is the horizon upon which being itself is projected.<sup>83</sup>

In other words, we understand ourselves, as individual beings, in the context of Being, and we understand Being in light of Temporality. Importantly for the question we are examining here, this “projective understanding can either be authentic or inauthentic.”<sup>84</sup>

### **Inauthentic temporality**

In order to be as philosophically honest as he could, Heidegger sought not to predict the relations between Dasein and Being, and then to make a case for his prediction, but to assess Dasein’s nature “proximally and for the most part”; or how this manifests “as a rule”, “in the “with one another” of publicness”.<sup>85</sup> This means he

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<sup>78</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 17

<sup>79</sup> Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 228, Translator’s Introduction, p. xxv

<sup>80</sup> Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 323

<sup>81</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 145

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* H pp. xxiv - xxv

<sup>83</sup> Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Translator’s Introduction, p. xxv

<sup>84</sup> Mulhall, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger and Being and Time*, H p. 82

<sup>85</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H pp. 43, 370

seeks Dasein in its “average everydayness”.<sup>86</sup> The ‘average everydayness’ of Dasein is characterised by inauthenticity since we simply,

understand ourselves in an everyday way...not authentically in the strict sense of the word, not with constancy from the most proper and most extreme possibilities of our own existence, but inauthentically...<sup>87</sup>

Heidegger observes that ‘proximally and for the most part’, we are absorbed in what we are doing at any one moment, caught up in our affairs, and the affairs of others. Inauthenticity is generally the character of the bustle of our lives “– when busy, when excited, when interested, when ready for enjoyment.”<sup>88</sup> As Guignon puts it, “[i]nauthentic Dasein is dispersed into a multiplicity of humdrum routines”.<sup>89</sup> We keep ourselves occupied with the “idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity” that characterises the “fallenness” of the everyday.<sup>90</sup> As a rule, we lose our selves in the “publicness of the “they”” – the ‘they’ being “not this one not that one, not oneself, not some people and not the sum of them all.”<sup>91</sup> This highlights the fact that, in everyday life, one does not guide daily action by the vision of the ‘extreme possibilities’ of one’s existence, but rather fails “to stand by one’s Self” by neglecting this vision.<sup>92</sup>

Heidegger is careful to point out that the idea of inauthenticity “does not signify any ‘less’ Being or any ‘lower’ degree of Being” since “even in the mode of inauthenticity, the structure of existentiality lies *a priori*.”<sup>93</sup> This structure is, of course, temporal. Dasein relates to Being as projected upon the horizon of Temporality, where past present and future are inexorably intertwined as a “future

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid. H p. 43

<sup>87</sup> Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 160

<sup>88</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 43

<sup>89</sup> Guignon, Charles, 2006, ‘Authenticity, moral values, and psychotherapy,’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, Guignon, Charles, (Ed.), Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2006, p. 279

<sup>90</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 175

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. H pp. 175, 126, 167

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. H p. 128

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. H p. 43, 44

which makes present in the process of having been”.<sup>94</sup> When engaged in ‘average everydayness’, Dasein has an inauthentic relation to each of these, which is ‘closed’ to the promise inherent in everyone.

For Heidegger, the present is formed through relation to the past and future. If Dasein is not resolute, what is present, for the most part, “gets entangled in its own self, lets itself be drawn along by things... [so that] the past becomes a forgetting and the future becomes an expecting”.<sup>95</sup> In the inauthentic present, Dasein’s “thrownness gets “closed off”” from the extreme possibilities of its existence.<sup>96</sup> We get lost in the banalities of the present, absorbed in what Heidegger calls ‘making present’ or ‘enpresenting’.<sup>97</sup> In the face of thrownness, Dasein is “irresolute”, and “flees to the relief which comes with the supposed freedom of the they-self.”<sup>98</sup> In fact, it is the ‘they’ that keeps Dasein from “taking the possibilities of Being.”<sup>99</sup> As ‘fallen’, the “Dasein makes no choices, gets carried along by the nobody, and thus ensnares itself in inauthenticity.”<sup>100</sup> This irresolute stance toward the present is supported by the ‘forgetting’ of the past. This type of forgetting is not to be confused with ordinary lapses in memory, for it signifies something much more grave: the denial, or “backing away in the face of” what one has been.<sup>101</sup> (This in turn impacts on the present, since it is always what we have been which shapes what we are here and now.) Inauthentic existence means that what “we are – and what we have been is always contained in this – lies somewhere behind us, forgotten.”<sup>102</sup> This irresolute forgetfulness creates the conditions for Dasein’s relationship with a future where “Dasein has forgotten its ownmost thrown potentiality-for-Being”.<sup>103</sup> As inauthentic “existence is lost in the dispersal of making present” the future becomes obscured by involvement in the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid. H p. 326

<sup>95</sup> Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 287

<sup>96</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 276

<sup>97</sup> ‘gegenwärtigen’ in Maquarrie and Robinson’s, and Hofstadter’s translations respectively.

<sup>98</sup> Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 287, *Being and Time*, H p. 276

<sup>99</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 268

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. H p. 339

<sup>102</sup> Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 290

<sup>103</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 339

‘they’ and the necessities of the now.<sup>104</sup> Heidegger names this disposition toward the future ‘expecting’ or ‘awaiting.’<sup>105</sup> An inauthentic existence causes us to forget who we were, lose who we are and so give up what we can be.

### **Authentic temporality**

As in the case of inauthenticity, authenticity is “characterized by a distinctive temporal structure.”<sup>106</sup> Inauthenticity and authenticity, whilst having the same ontological structure relate to the past, present and future differently.<sup>107</sup> The main difference is whilst inauthentic Dasein flounders in the present (forgetting the past and ignoring the possibilities of the future), the authentic Dasein is primarily futural.<sup>108</sup> Heidegger uses the active “*anticipation*” rather than the passive ‘awaiting’ to describe the authentic attitude toward the future, and this dynamic is evidenced in its impact on the present and the past.<sup>109</sup> The authentic present is set apart by ‘resoluteness,’ the attitude in which we act in the present in accordance with our imagined future.<sup>110</sup> When ‘enpresenting’ is coupled with ‘resoluteness’, the present moment is not an unthinking drifting with the currents of the moment, but is the ‘instant’ in which the decision to pursue a particular potential for self actualization is made real.<sup>111</sup> Heidegger expresses it well:

resoluteness is our name for authentic existence, the existence of the Dasein in which the Dasein is itself in and from its own most peculiar possibility, a possibility that has been seized on and chosen by the Dasein.<sup>112</sup>

This possibility is realized against the backdrop of the ultimate conclusion of our own particular future. When Dasein understands the inevitability of its own “death, Dasein stands before itself in its ownmost-potentiality-for-Being.”<sup>113</sup> Guignon explains that

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<sup>104</sup> Guignon, ‘Authenticity, moral values, and psychotherapy,’ p. 282

<sup>105</sup> ‘*gewärtigen*’ in Maquarrie and Robinson’s, and Hofstadter’s translations respectively.

<sup>106</sup> Guignon, ‘Authenticity, moral values, and psychotherapy,’ p. 282

<sup>107</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 43

<sup>108</sup> Guignon, Charles, ‘History and commitment in the early Heidegger’ in *Heidegger: a Critical Reader*, Dreyfus, Hubert, and Hall Harrison, (Eds.) Blackwell, Oxford 1992, p. 137

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. p. 336

<sup>110</sup> Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 287

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. p. 287

<sup>112</sup> Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 287

<sup>113</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 250

we are “‘being-toward-death not in the sense of facing our demise or fulfilling our potential, but in the sense that everything we do contributes to making us people of a particular sort.”<sup>114</sup> The future or ‘being-toward-death’ provides the context for our self creation. Likewise the past contributes to the development of our potential, since what we have been, and the world of meaning into which we have been thrown, determines what we can be in the future. The link to the past comes in the form of the “fateful repetition of possibilities that have been”.<sup>115</sup> We understand our ‘selves’ from what we have been in the past and project this into the future which gives shape to the present moment. In other words, the “present that is held in resoluteness is held in the specific future (self precedence) and past (repetition) of resoluteness.”<sup>116</sup>

But if one is in a state of inauthenticity, how is the recovery of authenticity possible? Inauthenticity “can be reversed only if Dasein specifically brings itself back to itself from its lostness in the They.”<sup>117</sup> Escape from the ‘lost state’ is facilitated by the “voice of conscience” which “has the character of the appeal to Dasein by calling it to its ownmost potentiality for Being”.<sup>118</sup> Precisely how “Dasein’s spontaneous, bootstrapping response to the call of conscience” occurs is left unanswered – which is unsatisfactory to the curious mind.<sup>119</sup> Mulhall goes so far as to posit a third person as the caller –an ‘authentic friend’ or even Heidegger himself.<sup>120</sup> This is an unnecessary step, particularly since Heidegger is quite clear that “the call undoubtedly does not come from someone else who is with me in the world.”<sup>121</sup> Rather it is Dasein’s “ownmost potentiality-for-Being-itself functions as the caller”.<sup>122</sup> For Heidegger, the demand for verification of the shared experience of the call which “comes from me and yet from beyond me” rests “upon an ontological perversion of the phenomenon.”<sup>123</sup> Conscience is that which calls us from inauthenticity to authenticity,

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<sup>114</sup> Guignon, ‘Authenticity, moral values, and psychotherapy,’ p. 278

<sup>115</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 391

<sup>116</sup> Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 287

<sup>117</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 268

<sup>118</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H pp. 269, 270

<sup>119</sup> Carman, Taylor, *Heidegger*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003, p. 311

<sup>120</sup> Mulhall, Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger and *Being and Time*, pp. 144-145

<sup>121</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 275

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. H p. 275

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. H pp.275, 269



by challenging us to ‘choose to make the choice’ to live in authentic relation to our own existence.<sup>124</sup>

### **Normative or Descriptive?**

To reiterate an earlier significant point, Heidegger does not advise whether authenticity or inauthenticity is the preferred mode of existence. To do so is extraneous to his purpose in describing the essential structures of Dasein in order to reveal the nature of Being. Both reveal the nature of Dasein’s relation to Being. Guignon and Mulhall, however, posit that there is a normative aspect to Heidegger’s work. Guignon remarks that “Heidegger’s concept of ‘authenticity’ is supposed to point to a way of life that is higher than that of average everydayness.”<sup>125</sup> Similarly, Mulhall, thinks that “Heidegger’s words offer themselves as a pivot for their reader’s self-transformation”.<sup>126</sup> Heidegger’s language, with its “negative characterizations of inauthenticity”, does seem to support authenticity and oppose inauthenticity, as Carman notes.<sup>127</sup> However, since Heidegger explicitly states, in a number of places throughout his work, that his task is descriptive rather than normative, we cannot agree that his intentions veer toward ethical theory, no matter what impact his ontology may have upon its readers.<sup>128</sup>

Obviously, the development of an ethical theory is best left to the ethicists, and thus Heidegger is correct in declining to ascribe value to either authenticity or inauthenticity. Seligman, coming from a background in science is also aware that it “is not the job of Positive Psychology to tell you that you should be optimistic, or spiritual, or kind...it is rather to describe the consequences of these traits”.<sup>129</sup> However, unlike Heidegger, it seems that Seligman’s intentions must be to guide the populace toward a more authentic existence.<sup>130</sup> Else, one wonders at the motivation

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<sup>124</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 268

<sup>125</sup> Guignon, ‘Authenticity, moral values, and psychotherapy,’ p. 281

<sup>126</sup> Mulhall, Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger and *Being and Time*, p. 147

<sup>127</sup> Carman, Heidegger, p. 267

<sup>128</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H pp. 43, 44, 167, 175– 176, 179, 339; Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 289

<sup>129</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 129

<sup>130</sup> Martin, Mike, ‘Happiness and Virtue in Positive Psychology’, p. 90; For evidence of this attitude, see Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, pp. 16, 43, 44, 120, 121

behind his founding contribution to the Positive Psychology movement which “points the way toward a secular approach to noble purpose and transcendent meaning”.<sup>131</sup> Guignon argues that with the modern decay of belief systems and close communities, “therapists are now asked to serve as moral authorities” “addressing questions about what constitutes the good life”.<sup>132</sup> It is clear that, despite his protests to the contrary, Seligman’s project is precisely this.<sup>133</sup> How Seligman’s vision of Positive Psychology as a positive science can be reconciled with its concern with the good and meaningful life is difficult to say. However, if we accept that, at the ontic level, “moral concerns are an inescapable part of any project of understanding humans” then a comprehensive ontic science of humanity would necessarily require thought on moral theory.<sup>134</sup> In this sense, Positive Psychology would be a marked improvement on its scientific forebears, which “aimed at being value free and objective” thus missing an essential feature of the human person.<sup>135</sup> If this reinvigorated ontic science can be further enhanced by Heidegger’s ontology, then Positive Psychology has the possibility to become an integrated theory of the human person.

### **Positive Psychology and ‘Authenticity’ in light of Heidegger**

The integration of Heidegger’s ontology into Positive Psychology’s work on authenticity does not seem implausible. Seligman argues that when “well-being comes from engaging our strengths and virtues, our lives are imbued with authenticity.”<sup>136</sup> On the other hand, positive emotion “alienated from the exercise of character leads to emptiness, to inauthenticity”.<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, Seligman makes the point that in this state we more readily succumb to depression and the “gnawing realisation that we are fidgeting until we die.” There are recognisable links here to Heidegger’s notion of ‘choosing to make the choice’ to live authentically in the face

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<sup>131</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 14

<sup>132</sup> Guignon, ‘Authenticity, moral values, and psychotherapy,’ pp. 269, 270

<sup>133</sup> Slife, Brent, & Richardson, Frank, ‘Problematic ontological underpinnings of Positive Psychology’, *Theory & Psychology*, Vol. 18, No. 5, 2008, p. 699

<sup>134</sup> Guignon, ‘Authenticity, moral values, and psychotherapy,’ p. 271

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.* p. 270

<sup>136</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 9

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.* p. 8

of our own mortality or our 'Being-toward-death'.<sup>138</sup> In essence, then, both approaches acknowledge the importance of taking a resolute stance toward our place within the world.<sup>139</sup> Beyond these similarities, Heidegger's theory can be of benefit in demonstrating deficiencies in Positive Psychology's currently underdeveloped theory of authenticity, so that resulting drawbacks may be avoided.

The first way in which Heidegger can support Positive Psychology is by the provision of an articulate account of the ontological structure of authenticity. Heidegger uses the terms authenticity and inauthenticity as equal descriptors of two possible modes of Being-in-the-world. Seligman on the other hand, speaks more of authenticity than inauthenticity, most likely in order to right the bias that he sees in the humanities, encapsulated in the "belief that happiness (and even more generally, any positive human emotion) is inauthentic."<sup>140</sup> He claims to "have taken care to use [his] terms in consistent and well-defined ways".<sup>141</sup> However, even though one of his primary works is entitled *Authentic Happiness* the concept of authenticity and how it supplements a comprehensive account of the human person is never fully explicated. Admittedly authentic 'positive feeling' is described as that which "arises from the exercise of strengths and virtues" and that the exercise of a signature strength will afford "a sense of ownership and authenticity ("This is the real me")".<sup>142</sup> Authenticity itself is not defined. Similarly, happiness (which, from the title of the book one might guess is linked with authenticity) is left undefined since Seligman claims "it is not [his] intention to add to the clutter..." to which the many varied definitions of happiness contribute.<sup>143</sup> Rather than defining happiness, it is seemingly acceptable merely to measure it. Furthermore, the terms 'happiness' and 'well-being' are used interchangeably and will "sometimes refer to feelings and sometimes refer to activities in which nothing is felt."<sup>144</sup> Such indistinct use of key terms complicates the analysis of Seligman's use of authenticity and its comparison with Heidegger's

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<sup>138</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H pp. 268, 250

<sup>139</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 263

<sup>140</sup> Ibid. p. xii

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. p. 16

<sup>142</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, pp. 8, 160

<sup>143</sup> Ibid. pp. 15-16

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. p. 261

complex yet systematic treatment of the concept. Contrast with Heidegger highlights Positive Psychology's need for clarity – a clarity which Heidegger can help provide. For example, Heidegger can suggest why respondents using their signature strengths report that they feel “it is the real me”. Through use of their ‘signature strengths’, and indeed through engagement with the tenets of Positive Psychology, a person takes up the challenge of self creation. They have become cognisant of the fact that they exist within a particular *existentiell* reality, a particular set of meanings, and work to create their own meaningful existence within those. In short, authenticity comes from the awakened relation to one's Being-in-the-world.

The second way Heidegger can inform Positive Psychology relates to how authenticity relates to time. The similarity between the two theories, beyond their use of the term authenticity, is that they frame authentic being in relation to time. From the forgoing, it is clear that authenticity for Heidegger requires a future orientation. For the Positive Psychologist, authentic happiness may seemingly be enhanced by “changing how you feel about the past, how you think about the future and how you experience the present.”<sup>145</sup> It only *seems* as if ‘*authentic* happiness’ may be enhanced by this means, since, elsewhere, Seligman relates authenticity directly and specifically with ‘gratification,’ which is only associated with the present: “happiness in the present moment consists of very different states from happiness about the past and future, and it embraces ...pleasures and gratifications.”<sup>146</sup> Seligman discriminates here between the past present and future, whereas for Heidegger they are necessarily interrelated. So it would seem that there is a difference between Heidegger's and Positive Psychology's use of authenticity, since for Heidegger authenticity relates to the entire temporal structure whereas Seligman captures authenticity in the present. It would make more sense if Positive Psychology adopted Heidegger's stance which can nonetheless keep the general thrust of Positive Psychology's position in tact. For Heidegger, authenticity has a future orientation, but that necessarily impacts present action (as one creates the imagined future in the present) and is derived from the past

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<sup>145</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 63

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* p. 102

(as the present evolves out of past system of meanings experienced in the past). For Positive Psychology to cohere with this temporal understanding of authentic self creation, all that is required is that gratification is understood as authentic since it already has a future orientation (in that it brings about psychological development<sup>147</sup>) and that it is derived from the past (this strength is gratifying within this system of meaning, and feels right to me since it is characteristic of what I have been in the past). It is evident that this formulation is not far from the general character of Seligman's work – it merely makes the temporal structure of authenticity less ambiguous.

Thirdly, Heidegger can improve Positive Psychology's conception of 'gratification' by coupling it with 'resoluteness'. The experience of gratification "consists in total engagement and in the loss of self-consciousness."<sup>148</sup> Such 'absorption' or 'engagement' in activities is taken as necessarily positive, and thus as a contributing factor toward authenticity. When thus engrossed in using signature strengths one has the feeling of being authentic or the "real me".<sup>149</sup> Such an experience is described by Csikszentmihalyi as 'flow.'<sup>150</sup> When experiencing flow,

there is an absence of emotion, [since consciousness] and emotion are there to correct your trajectory, when what you are doing is seamlessly perfect, you don't need them.<sup>151</sup>

This is strikingly similar to the way in which Heidegger describes our common engagement with the world. However, Heidegger's nuanced understanding of authentic temporality can be used to warn of the dangers of gratification or 'flow' when not paired with 'resoluteness'. He argues that absorption in a task is, for the most part, a necessary expression of Being, but one which easily succumbs to (and

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<sup>147</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 117

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. p. 9

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. p. 160; Of course, one would not experience this at the time due the nature of being engrossed, but that is by-the-by

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. p. 290

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. p. 116

indeed is most often characterised by) inauthenticity. Gratification or the total absorption in current goings on may in fact be indicative of inauthenticity rather than authenticity. We become lost in activities on daily basis, and are only aware of our engagement in such activities when they are interrupted – for example when an object ‘ready-to-hand’ breaks and is no longer suited to its purpose it becomes ‘present-at-hand.’<sup>152</sup> It is only at such times that we glimpse our Being-in-the-world.<sup>153</sup> As Seligman notes, “we do not think, we are barely conscious, until something goes wrong.”<sup>154</sup> Thus ‘flow’ or gratification alone is not a sufficient criterion for authenticity. Only when absorption in the present or ‘enpresenting’ is coupled with resoluteness can this engagement realise authenticity. Only present activity driven by a resolute forward-looking stance, which recognises one’s ownmost potentiality for self creation will allow for authenticity.

So, if Heidegger’s notion of authenticity is integrated into Positive Psychology, it clarifies the latter’s use of the term, it corrects the inconsistencies in Positive Psychology’s theory of authenticity and time and protects against the unwitting embrace of authenticity through a misuse of gratification.

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<sup>152</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 71

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. H p. 41

<sup>154</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 37

### **3. *Befindlichkeit* and Dualism**

*Can Positive Psychology's 'states of mind' be reconciled with Heidegger's Befindlichkeit that seeks to overcome the notion of mind/body duality?*

From the outset it seems unlikely that there can be any reconciliation between two such diverse systems of thought as contained within Psychology (and Positive Psychology, its offshoot) and Heidegger's work. Positive Psychology, as much as it seeks to reorientate the tradition's approach toward mental health care, is, like its parent discipline, based on a particular theory of mind which can trace its historical pedigree back to 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dualism. Indeed, Dualism has permeated almost all theorising on the nature of the human person to this day, and has become entrenched in the common person's understanding of the nature of the self. One of Heidegger's chief aims is to challenge such "deep-seated presuppositions that give us a distorted view of ourselves" that have prevailed in Western philosophical thought.<sup>155</sup> Thus he is careful not to employ terms which connote any such schism within the individual. Rather, he holds that what "is decisive for ontology is to prevent the splitting of the phenomenon – in other words to hold its positive phenomenal content secure."<sup>156</sup> Thus, the Dualism (which implicitly informs Positive Psychology) and the phenomenological work of Heidegger are antithetical: the 'self' of Dualism "does not coincide with Dasein either ontically or ontologically."<sup>157</sup>

It will be argued here that although this theoretical gap cannot be bridged, the use of Heidegger's ontology *in place of* Dualism would give Positive Psychology an explicit theoretical founding which is a more accurate reflection of the existence of the human person. The theoretical attitude, (which is part and parcel of a Dualist outlook), distances Being, and thus disallows the full engagement with the structures of Dasein, since Dasein is 'that entity for which Being is an issue'. In short, Psychology's aim to understand the human person is ultimately thwarted by its methods. Thus Positive Psychology would benefit if the total and blinkered reliance on the theoretical attitude

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<sup>155</sup> Guignon, Charles, 'Moods in Heidegger's Being and Time', in Robert Solomon, *What is an emotion? Classic And Contemporary Readings*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 181

<sup>156</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 132

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.* H p. 66

as laid to rest and the structure of attunement were kept in the foreground of its ontic endeavour. To this end, the following clarifies Heidegger's concept of *Befindlichkeit*, or attunement, which is inaccurately rendered in the Maquarrie & Robinson's translation of *Being and Time* as "states of mind".<sup>158</sup> Secondly, the unquestioned integration of the Dualist perspective into the theoretical frameworks that Positive Psychology utilises is uncovered. Thirdly, Heidegger's critique of Cartesian Dualism, as it relates to the clear vision of the human person is examined, exposing why this particular assumption is problematic for the Psychological sciences. It will be suggested throughout that the particular problems that Positive Psychology faces as an outcome of its Dualist bias can be overcome if Heidegger's ontology is adopted.

### **Heidegger's Concept of *Befindlichkeit***

Heidegger "attempts to capture the "concrete totality of man" as *agency* in everyday situations prior to any of the philosophical splits into mind versus body, subject versus object, or consciousness versus thing."<sup>159</sup> In this attempt to describe how we find ourselves in the world, "Heidegger consistently tries to avoid giving the impression that Dasein exists inside a subjective sphere, such as a mind."<sup>160</sup> Thus, instead of phrases which might be readily understood to connote 'mind,' Heidegger employs the neologism *Befindlichkeit*. When translating *Befindlichkeit* into English, it is difficult to keep the meaning of this word intact since "there is no ideal English equivalent".<sup>161</sup> However, given Heidegger's opposition to Dualism, "Maquarrie and Robinson's rendition of the word as "state-of-mind" is inappropriate."<sup>162</sup> Maquarrie and Robinson admit as much, saying that although they have chosen to render *Befindlichkeit* as "state-of-mind," the term is closer in meaning to the phrase "the state in which one may be found."<sup>163</sup> Further, they affirm that "'of mind' belongs to the English idiom, [and it] has no literal counterpart in the structure of the German

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<sup>158</sup> Polt, Richard, *Heidegger, An Introduction*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1999, p. 65

<sup>159</sup> Guignon, 'Moods in Heidegger's Being and Time', p. 182

<sup>160</sup> Polt, *Heidegger, an Introduction*, p. 65

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. p. 65

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. Also see, Guignon, 'Moods in Heidegger's Being and Time', p. 184

<sup>163</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 134, translator's note



word, and fails to bring out the important connotation of finding oneself.”<sup>164</sup> Heidegger scholars have tried to overcome the difficulty in various ways: Polt, for example, chooses to use Stambaugh’s approximation “attunement,” whereas others “have tried “situatedness”, “disposedness”, “affectedness”, “so-foundness”, “attuned self finding”, and even “where-you’re-at-ness”” and “disposition.”<sup>165</sup> This paper will follow Polt’s lead and side with Stambaugh’s “attunement” since it seems to capture Heidegger’s meaning best.

Simply, by *Befindlichkeit* Heidegger means to indicate that which is “the most familiar and everyday sort of thing; our mood our Being-attuned.”<sup>166</sup> *Befindlichkeit* is intimately connected with mood, since it is through these means that “how one is, and how one is faring” is made manifest.<sup>167</sup> However, this simplicity given by the familiarity of *Befindlichkeit*, masks a complex structure. Heidegger suggests that, unlike the common impression of the structure of ‘mind’, attunement is not “itself an inner condition which reaches out... and put its mark on Things.”<sup>168</sup> Instead, attunement has two basic features: first, it discloses Being-in-the-world as a whole, and second, it reveals the world, our Being-with and our particular mode of existence (as Dasein) simultaneously.<sup>169</sup> In other words, being attuned reveals the fact that Being-in-the-world is an existential condition of our natures while it also reveals the particular *existentiell* worlds we are in, how we relate (or comport ourselves) to them and to other people. Heidegger uses ‘fear’ as a practical example of attunement, in order to illustrate how these features are enabled by its tripartite structure; there is (1) that in the face of which we fear, (2) fearing, and (3) that about which we fear.<sup>170</sup> (Fear, unlike anxiety, is not central to Heidegger’s overall project but merely a convenient vehicle for the description of the structure of attunement. The description could easily have been rendered with the aid of other moods. In the case of love for example, there is (1) the beloved, (2) loving, and (3) the lover.) It should be noted that

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<sup>164</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 134

<sup>165</sup> Polt, *Heidegger, an Introduction*, p. 65

<sup>166</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 134

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. H p. 134

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. H p. 137

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. H p. 140

fear and anxiety, though related, are constituted differently. We fear some entity within the world, whereas we experience anxiety in the face of “Being-in-the-world as such.”<sup>171</sup> Thus there are two levels of attunement at play – the former *ontico-existenciell*, (relating to individual situations) the latter *ontological-existential* (relating to our shared participation in Being).<sup>172</sup>

Clients attend mental health clinics for assistance with both levels of attunement. Although, at first glance, providing assistance in such cases would arise out of the ‘weakness model’ of Psychology, the treatment of *ontological-existential* anxiety can compliment the aims of Positive Psychology. Once anxiety in the face of “Being-in-the-world as such” is identified, this can be recognised as the impetus for an authentic relation to Being. An authentic relation to Being is thus enabled because anxiety “makes manifest in Dasein its *Being towards* its ownmost potentiality-for-Being – that is *Being-free* for the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself.”<sup>173</sup> This example alerts us to the fact that while Positive Psychology is right to seek a balance to the one-sided focus of the ‘weakness model,’ if it restricts itself only to the enhancement of ‘positive’ mood to the exclusion of the ‘negative’ it becomes equally one-sided. The Positive Psychologist, in her eagerness, must not lose sight of the fact that people are integrated wholes, whose way of being attuned can be led from *ontico-existenciell* pessimism to optimism, and that *ontological-existential* anxiety is the harbinger of authenticity. In short, she must not neglect the place ‘negative’ moods have in the search for the authentic moments within the good life.<sup>174</sup>

### **Dualism and Positive Psychology**

Heidegger makes the point that “any science is grounded in a tacit ontology of its object domain.”<sup>175</sup> This is true of Positive Psychology, which does not have an

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<sup>171</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 186

<sup>172</sup> It is important that anxiety felt in relation to particular circumstances and the anxiety which is aroused in the face of a person’s relation to finitude be kept distinct.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. H p. 188

<sup>174</sup> There is little cause for concern on this front since Seligman notes the place of negative mood. Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 37

<sup>175</sup> Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 122

explicit, developed ontology which informs its relation to, and theorising on, the existential human person. Instead it has taken on an ontology handed down to it along with the other natural sciences; namely Dualism. Positive Psychology has developed on the back of the general abandonment of Behaviourism within Psychology. The principle flaw within Behaviourism is that its Materialist leanings left the ‘inner life’ of the subject inaccessible to study by the Psychologist which meant that certain traits could not be accounted for (such as optimism and future mindedness, since these did not cohere with the model of conditioned-response.) Thus Behaviourism was abandoned in preference for models which did not suffer these difficulties. Principle among them is Cognitive Theory.<sup>176</sup>

Heidegger, as a forerunner to Kuhn, held that it is a mark of scientific maturity if a discipline can undergo a “crisis in its basic concepts.”<sup>177</sup> Over the last half century, Psychology has indeed experienced “freshly awakened tendencies to put research on new foundations.”<sup>178</sup> However, these developments, whilst making the ‘inner life’ more accessible to the theorizing of the Psychologist, do not represent as radical a shift as the initial assessment reveals. For, these ‘new foundations’ brought with them a “new understanding of the human *mind*”, an approach which merely switched sides within the traditional debate – from the Materialist perspective of Behaviourism toward the Dualism assumed by Cognitivism.<sup>179</sup> So, while these developments are encouraging, a more radical reformulation of the beliefs which are *prior to* the Cognitivist foundation of Positive Psychology is still required.

Basically, Dualism rests on the idea that the mind and body are separate: that I am somehow ‘in here’ relating to a world that is ‘out there’. Furthermore, the mind and body are ontologically distinct – one being the *res cogitans*, the other the *res extensa* respectively. The mind, or the ego of the self, is defined by thought in opposition to the spatial extension of the body. Arguably, this model arose out of the impression of

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<sup>176</sup> Also see Chapter 4: psychology and emotion

<sup>177</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 9; See Kuhn, Thomas, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1962

<sup>178</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 9

<sup>179</sup> Seligman, *Learned Optimism*, p. 9, my italics

the self one is afforded when reflecting, alone, in a ‘stove heated room.’<sup>180</sup> Seventeenth Century thinkers distrusted the accuracy of perception which arose out of an embedded engagement with the world, and thus a starting point void of presuppositions was sought for the sciences.<sup>181</sup> The senses, being easily misled could not provide such a certain foundation for the newly emerging scientific enterprise. Famously, Descartes set himself the task of providing a solid foundation for the sciences and claimed “that he was putting philosophy on a new and firm footing.”<sup>182</sup>

This ‘firm footing’ required a different relation to the world, a new attitude and thus the scientific attitude of ‘objectivity,’ took priority. Scientific objectivity is characterised by a disengagement from everyday involvement in the world, a “getting free of the perspective of embodied experience.”<sup>183</sup> It is in this disembodied attitude that the link between the mind and the subject, as opposed to the body and the object, becomes clear. These two perspectives work in tandem. This Dualist dichotomy has permeated the sciences and seeped into the common conception of what constitutes the essential features of human person. It is precisely such ‘common sense’ ideas which obscure an honest assessment of our Being-in-the-world, which is why Heidegger is so keen to take them to task. His contention is that Psychology’s emphasis on, and understanding of, the mind “has originated at the outset from epistemological considerations” and thus cannot supply an ontology of the human person in total.<sup>184</sup> The assumption of Dualism, rents the human person in two, ‘splitting the phenomenon’ which inhibits an accurate perception of the human person. This perspective therefore necessarily obstructs the main task of the Psychological sciences – the development of a clear and comprehensive understanding of the human person. So, not only has Positive Psychology, (and psychology generally) failed to adopt an explicit ontology, but the one it has implicitly accepted is flawed to the point of frustrating its aims.

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<sup>180</sup> Descartes, Rene, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, Donald Cress, (Trans.), Hackett Publishing Company, Cambridge, 1998, p. 7

<sup>181</sup> Taylor, Charles, ‘Engaged agency and background in Heidegger,’ *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 322

<sup>182</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 24

<sup>183</sup> Taylor, ‘Engaged agency and background in Heidegger’, p. 323

<sup>184</sup> Guignon, ‘Moods in Heidegger’s Being and Time’, p. 181

## Heidegger and Descartes

Heidegger's critique of Cartesian Dualism works on many levels, some of which will be outlined here. In brief, the following will include Heidegger's assertions against Descartes that his project was misconceived and that, because of it, Being remains unclarified and is even made more distant, that the person was thus removed (in theory) from space and from the 'world,' and that Descartes inappropriately privileged the theoretical attitude, and overemphasised thought as a characteristic of human Being.

From the first, Heidegger disagrees with Descartes' ambition to rid the sciences of all presuppositions, recognising that all understanding arises against a background of tradition.<sup>185</sup> (Alternatively, Heidegger favours a mode of inquiry which lays initial assumptions bare and then realigns them with that which is discovered throughout the course of investigation. This is the essence of his hermeneutic approach, which is cyclical in structure, rather than foundational, since it has a "relatedness backward and forward".<sup>186</sup>) Further, Heidegger argues that there "is no existential-ontological justification for removing the structures of how we relate to the world and reducing our selves to a mind attended to something present-at-hand."<sup>187</sup> The imperative to do this, to find the certainty with which to assuage finitude, evident throughout the history of Western Philosophy, comes from a flight from Being, itself an inauthentic mode of existence.<sup>188</sup> Thus, in his attempt to keep the phenomenon whole, Heidegger will not carry on the debate surrounding whether something exists 'outside the mind' or not. Rather, he sees his task as pointing out the fundamental inappropriateness of the question:

The question of whether there is a world at all and whether its Being can be proved, makes no sense if it is raised by Dasein as Being-in-the-world; and who else would raise it?<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 20

<sup>186</sup> Ibid. H p. 8

<sup>187</sup> Ibid. H p. 136

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. H p. 206

<sup>189</sup> Ibid. H p. 202

The formulation of such a question (the ‘scandal’ of philosophy) is token of the crass misinterpretation of the structure of Dasein as divided into internal mind and external matter, rather than an integrated whole, whose being is characterised by a Being-in-the-world.<sup>190</sup> The attainment of a presuppositionless foundation for the sciences is impossible and demonstrates the fundamental mischaracterisation of Dasein, and further the flight from Being. The regrettable outcome of Heidegger’s analysis is that no certainty, the likes of which Descartes was seeking, remains – unless it is the far better certitude of ‘always already’ Being-in-the-world, which Cartesian Dualism removes from us.<sup>191</sup>

So, Descartes’ endeavour is misplaced in the first instance. The second mistake Descartes makes is to uncritically take over the theories of the Middle Ages which take existence, *sum* or Being as self-evident.<sup>192</sup> Consequently, Descartes “leaves the *sum* undiscussed, even though it is regarded as no less primordial than the *cogito*.”<sup>193</sup> In other words, within the *cogito sum* formula, the *cogito* (thought) is emphasised whereas the *sum* (existence) is ignored. The meaning of the type of Being which Descartes employs “remains unclarified because it is held to be self-evident.”<sup>194</sup> Beyond taking the questions of the Schoolmen for his own without critical evaluation (or perhaps because of this), Descartes errs in that he “takes the Being of ‘Dasein’...in the same way as he takes the Being of *res extensa* – namely as substance.”<sup>195</sup> For Descartes, the “ego is a *res* which shares the realitas of...ready-to-hand [and the] present-at-hand”.<sup>196</sup> Admittedly, Descartes draws a sharp distinction between the spatiality of the body, the *res corporea*, and the non-spatiality of the mind, the *ego cogito*.<sup>197</sup> The being of the corporeal substance is defined in terms of extension in space, which in turn leads him to define the ‘world’ in terms of spatiality,

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<sup>190</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 205

<sup>191</sup> Ibid. H p. 68

<sup>192</sup> Ibid. H pp. 25, 93

<sup>193</sup> Ibid. H p. 46

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. H p. 93

<sup>195</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 98

<sup>196</sup> Marion, Jean Luc, ‘Heidegger and Descartes’, in *Critical Heidegger*, MaCann, Christopher, (Ed.), Routledge, London, 1996, p. 84

<sup>197</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 89

in opposition to the mind. However, the human person is essentially defined as a thinking *thing*, which for Heidegger is a mischaracterisation: “Dasein is essentially not a Being-present-at-hand; and “spatiality” cannot signify anything like the occurrence at a position in world space”.<sup>198</sup> Descartes’ theory misconstrues Dasein’s Being, since it is “conceived as something obvious or ‘self evident’ in the sense of the *Being-present-at-hand* of other created things.”<sup>199</sup> Moreover, in taking the *sum* as self evident, Descartes stands accused of “failing to discuss the meaning of being which the idea of substantiality embraces”.<sup>200</sup>

The mind or *ego cogito*, is defined as non-physical, and is thus removed from its engagement with the physical world (interaction between the two thus becoming a problem for the Dualist). The ego is a deficient rendering of the self since it lacks spatiality, whereas “*Dasein* is neither non-extended in the manner of the ego cogito nor extended: it is spatial”.<sup>201</sup> The self, in contrast, is conceived of as isolated within the capsule of the body. The unfortunate repercussion of this is that it is removed from its involvement in the “referential totality” which constitutes the “worldhood-of-the-world.”<sup>202</sup> According to Heidegger, the Being of entities within the world can only be encountered on the basis of the phenomena of the ‘world.’ The objective attitude adopted by science, implicit in Descartes’ theorising, clouds our pre-ontological relation to Being, since it does not allow for our relation to the ‘world.’ The mind is that which coolly observes the world, not that which is actively engaged in it.

This theoretical stance which removes our natural relation to Being is less a difficulty for science than it is for Descartes. Generally, ontic inquiry seeks the facts which ontic science can supply, so the theoretical attitude is not misplaced. However, the objectivity which separates the subject from the object to be examined, and from the world in general, conflicts with Descartes’ aim to further ontology. This is because

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<sup>198</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 103

<sup>199</sup> Ibid. H p. 49

<sup>200</sup> Ibid. H p. 93

<sup>201</sup> Marion, ‘Heidegger and Descartes’, p. 85

<sup>202</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 76

Dasein, in its familiarity with the ‘relational totality’ of the ‘world’ – not abstracted from the ‘world’ into the lonely place of the subject, – is the condition in which the Being of Dasein is disclosed, allowing for the disclosure of the Being of things-in-themselves (the ready-to-hand) and finally Being as such.<sup>203</sup> Descartes’ emphasis on science, and his adoption of an objective attitude toward ontology, approaches Being from an ontic standpoint – a point from which Being can never be encountered.<sup>204</sup> By separating the self from its system of involvements, Descartes forever closed the door to an ontology of Dasein which reveals the nature of Being.

However, as noted, this emphasis on objectivity is not detrimental to the natural sciences, and in fact has proven immensely useful – its effects are manifest in the massive technological advances which have transformed our world since Descartes’ era. The utility of the scientific attitude is in no doubt. However, for Heidegger, the scientific attitude is an impoverished relation to the world, for all its utility:

By looking at the world theoretically, we have already dimmed it down to the uniformity of what is purely present at hand, though admittedly this uniformity comprises a new abundance of things which can be discovered...<sup>205</sup>

Doubt can and should be raised, then, as to whether this ‘dimmed attitude’ is a suitable means to define the human person as such. In itself, the theoretical attitude is unproblematic, but the difficulty comes when this attitude is used in the delineation of human Being. “The fateful move was...the ontologizing of this perspective, reading it into the depth constitution of the mind itself”.<sup>206</sup> Thus, since Descartes looks to the nature of the human person to clear his doubt and provide a firm foundation for the sciences, the method he employed was ill suited to the task. The theoretical or objective attitude was the instrument with which Descartes sought human Being, and thus he discovered, not Dasein, but the *thinking* being. Descartes privileges the *ego cogito* rather than the *ego sum*, defining the human person in light of the ability to

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<sup>203</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 87

<sup>204</sup> Ibid. H p. 76

<sup>205</sup> Ibid. H p. 138

<sup>206</sup> Taylor, ‘Engaged agency and background in Heidegger,’ p. 322



think rather than the ability to relate to Being.<sup>207</sup> Descartes' bias toward cognition is an inaccurate rendering of the human person since it does not describe the whole person, but merely one faculty of the person, and takes this as definitive. Descartes' limiting *cogito* defines the human person by its capacity for thought, whereas Heidegger's "*Da* imparts upon everything else nothing less than *Sein*, being."<sup>208</sup> In short, the *ego cogito*, as the model of human Being, is deficient, and for these various reasons Heidegger's theory is a better reflection of how we actually are.

Some clarification of Heidegger's position may be useful at this point. The 'relational totality', which Heidegger identifies as the structure in which Dasein exists and encounters Being, is permeated with meaning. But this is not to say that this phenomenon is thus dissolved into "pure thinking."<sup>209</sup> Dasein's embeddedness in the world is fundamentally meaningful, but this meaning arises in connection with what the human person is involved with daily, what she is 'along-side,' that which she encounters 'proximally.' Furthermore the foregoing discussion should not create the impression that Heidegger is against objectivity. Heidegger himself employs objectivity, but in the sense of a "willingness to revise one's point of view in the light of what one discovers."<sup>210</sup>

### **Dualism as Problematic for the Psychological Sciences**

For the reasons outlined above, the model of human Being presented by Dualism is deficient. If the sciences assume a form of Dualism then they will similarly make the gross error of viewing the human person as essentially 'substance' capable of 'thought.' The lack of access to Being delivered through an unconscious accord with Dualism may not present a problem for the ontic sciences in general, after all, their aim is not to uncover the nature of Being. However, it is certainly a problem for those ontic sciences which concern themselves with the human person – Psychology and

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<sup>207</sup> Marion, Jean Luc , 'The Ego and Dasein', in Dreyfus & Wrathall (Eds.), *Heidegger re-examined: Language and the critique of subjectivity*, Vol.4, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 93

<sup>208</sup> Marion, 'Heidegger and Descartes', p. 84

<sup>209</sup> Ibid. p. 87

<sup>210</sup> Polt, *Heidegger, an Introduction*, p. 71

thus Positive Psychology among them. If Dasein is that entity for which 'Being is an issue,' a science, (which has poor access to the nature of this relation to Being), which seeks to understand the human person, will fail at its task. To reiterate earlier arguments, ontic investigation provides no means of coming to a theory of the human person as such, but can only generalise from data collected on particular individuals.<sup>211</sup> The Psychologist adopts a theoretical outlook and thus asks ontic questions in the false hope of revealing the nature of the Being who is fundamentally ontological. Ontic question cannot provide answers which account for the ontological character of Dasein. Thus it is essential that the assumption Dualism with its adamant championing of the theoretical attitude be corrected.

Beyond this central difficulty, the unthinking adoption of Dualism leads to further problems for the sciences which take the human person as their subject. Deiner, Lucas and Oishi note that scientists "who study subjective well-being assume that an essential ingredient of the good life is that the person herself likes her life. Subjective well-being is defined as a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life."<sup>212</sup> The predominance of the cognitive 'introspection' in the assessment of optimal human function is apparent in this rendition of subjective well-being. Whilst it is impossible to gain an impression of subjective well-being without causing the subject to reflect, such reflection causes the subject to disengage from the world, and seek answers 'within'. This strategy of assessment of the human person is flawed, as it removes the subject from the totality of engagements in which she was previously immersed. Isolated reflection, a derivative of the theoretical attitude, is an impoverished way of apprehending the self, since "Dasein arrives at a theoretical attitude only...by a procedure of subtraction."<sup>213</sup>

Heidegger argues that attaining "knowledge of the self is not a matter of perceptually tracking down and inspecting the point called the "Self", but rather one of seizing

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<sup>211</sup> See Chapter 1: The Ontic-Ontological Distinction

<sup>212</sup> Deiner, Ed, Lucas, Richard, & Oishi, Shigehiro, 'Subjective Well-Being' in Snyder, C.R., & Lopez, Shane, (Eds.), *The Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2005, p. 63

<sup>213</sup> Marion, 'Heidegger and Descartes', p. 85

upon the full disclosedness of Being-in-the-world”.<sup>214</sup> Once ‘self reflection’ begins, the test subject, being influenced by the traditional ontology passed down through Western culture, treats herself as an object ‘present-at-hand.’ Thus, she gives a satisfactory answer to the mode of question put to her, but this answer fails to capture her existential reality, as a person who is engaged in the finite act of self creation within a system of meaning. In this instance it is clear that “the possibilities of disclosure which belong to cognition reach far too short a way with the primordial disclosure belonging to moods.”<sup>215</sup> So the suggestion that attunement be kept in the foreground of ontic endeavour is not to recommend an attenuation of the rigour of ontic science, or that we should “surrender science ontically to feeling”.<sup>216</sup> On the contrary, the aim is to correct the view which has led science away from an accurate apprehension of the existential reality of Dasein, which in turn clouded comprehension of the psychical. For, as Polt explains, moods as “ways of experiencing thrownness, disclose the world more fundamentally than any propositions, affirmative or negative, that we may express. Our sense of being as a whole is what allows us to take up particular relationships to entities, including scientific entities.”<sup>217</sup> Harr makes the point in another way, “[b]y pretending to deduce totality as objective, (starting, for example, from the principle of reason), traditional metaphysics forgets the prerequisite self-giving of the open.”<sup>218</sup>

Moreover, empirical studies of subjective well-being will not allow for an accurate picture of human flourishing because Dasein does not share the same kind of being as those objects of science which can be examined from within the theoretical attitude as ‘present-at-hand’. Ontic inquiry is well suited to the revelation of the particular characteristics of substances. Scientists can perform experiments on the ‘present-at-hand’ to discover how it will change under various conditions. The difficulty comes when the person is equated with substance, even if a ‘special kind’ of substance. It is,

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<sup>214</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 146

<sup>215</sup> Ibid. H p. 134

<sup>216</sup> Ibid. H p. 138

<sup>217</sup> Polt, *Heidegger, an Introduction*, p. 126

<sup>218</sup> Harr, Michael, ‘Attunement and thinking’, in *Critical Heidegger*, Christopher MacCann (Ed.), Routledge, London, 1996, p. 162

of course commonplace to perform ontic experiments on human subjects. Psychology in general has a history of viewing “human beings as passive foci: [for whom] stimuli came on and elicited responses”.<sup>219</sup> This bias is persistent. For example, Deiner, Lucas and Oishi suggest that the questionable validity of self-report instruments may be overcome via the use of a “battery of subjective well-being measures” and “many more longitudinal studies”.<sup>220</sup> The inadequacy of ontic inquiry for getting to the fundamentals of the nature of the human person and thus the question of human flourishing will not be rectified by substituting one experiment for more.

This solution will not suffice since the ‘questionable validity of self-report instruments’ comes from their basis in empirical science in the first instance. Such experiments are designed to illustrate, repeatedly, what states can be expected under certain conditions. If, as in Positive Psychology, happiness is under investigation, and this is understood in terms of flourishing, (as Positive Psychology does) then the *type* of being which is ‘under the microscope’ must be established first. In other words, these experiments require that the ontology of the human person is laid out for the experiments to have any meaningful context. Ontic inquiry cannot ascertain the ontological nature of the human person, or Dasein. Scientists may perform experiments on human subjects in order to gauge, for instance, “emotional reactions to events” but such an approach will only reveal the person in the same way as an object is revealed.<sup>221</sup> An ontic examination can only reveal facts, but not a clear rendition of the existential nature of human being. To inquire into the existential reality of a person using ontic modes of inquiry is to make a category mistake, which will ultimately doom the project to failure. To investigate the human person in the same mode as one would investigate an object is to neglect the essential nature of the subject. This is because the nature of Dasein is defined by a primordial relation to Being. The investigation of this fundamental relation to Being, which is essential to the kind of Being the human person *is*, is beyond the scope of the ontic sciences.

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<sup>219</sup> Seligman, Martin, ‘Positive Psychology, Positive Prevention and Positive Therapy’ in Snyder, C.R., & Lopez, Shane (Eds.), *The Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2005, p. 4

<sup>220</sup> Deiner, Lucas, & Oishi, ‘Subjective Well-Being’, p. 69

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.* p. 63

The theoretical attitude creates a proclivity for collecting facts, which again can be detrimental to the pursuit of clear understanding of Dasein. As Seligman describes, a team of Positive Psychologists took a census of philosophical and theological “traditions flung across three thousand years and the entire face of the earth” in order to determine what virtues might be consistently reported in the attainment of the good life.<sup>222</sup> Polt explains the dangers in this method: this “procedure is simply backwards, because the lifeworld is what gives all facts their meaning.”<sup>223</sup> Science “cannot reconstruct the lifeworld by taking quantities, scientific facts and piling values on top of them.”<sup>224</sup> While the process afforded a ‘cross cultural taxonomy’ of virtue, the experience of virtue and how it relates to the nature of Dasein was not investigated. This approach demonstrates how the phenomenon, (what the attunement that comes with the embrace of these virtues means for Dasein and how, in turn, this could enhance an authentic relation to Being), is obscured by the modes of objective science. Again it is clear that Positive Psychology’s mission is obstructed by its *modus operandi* which is based in the theoretical assumptions it leaves unassessed.<sup>225</sup> Entrenched in the theoretical attitude, the Positive Psychologist is unable to realize to the importance of Being for Dasein. The ontological foundations necessary for this realisation remain hidden, even though they are “always ‘there’ already, even when that empirical material simply gets *collected*.”<sup>226</sup>

On another note, the assumption that self evaluation is a sufficient means to provide a definition of the good life is questionable, since the “uncertain validity of self-report instruments” is recognised as a “major concern” within the field.<sup>227</sup> The person who meanders aimlessly through life following the whims of popular culture or ‘the They’ without giving the import of their own Being any consideration, would likely report that they feel happy. Such happiness, however, would merely be the numb lack of the depth of passion which a life lived authentically entails. This subjective report of

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<sup>222</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 132

<sup>223</sup> Polt, *Heidegger, an Introduction*, p. 58

<sup>224</sup> Ibid. p. 58

<sup>225</sup> Snyder & Lopez, ‘The future of Positive Psychology’ p. 753

<sup>226</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 50

<sup>227</sup> Deiner, Lucas, & Oishi, 2005, ‘Subjective Well-Being’, p. 64

what is in fact inauthentic ‘well-being’ cannot be held to be symptomatic of the good life. This is not to say that angst or anxiety must be the ‘basic mood’ which constitutes the good life. Seligman is rightly suspicious of the general “unspoken assumption in the social sciences that negative traits are authentic and positive traits are derivative.”<sup>228</sup> However, this bleak outlook does make room for positive emotion, as noted earlier.<sup>229</sup> Casting anxiety as the predominant mood certainly does not seem a jubilant perspective but as anxiety is the response to our *Being-toward-death* and our recognition of our relation to Being, it motivates us toward an authentic life, in which genuine well-being and authenticity can be realised.

All of the above problems may be overcome if ontic investigation is grounded in the ontological structure of Dasein. That is, what constitutes the good life can only be discovered in relation to the Being for which it is the good life. The nature of Dasein must be kept in the foreground. This is because, (to follow Aristotle’s formula), the good life, *eudaimonia*, or personal flourishing can only be defined with regard to the kind of being it is which flourishes.<sup>230</sup> This will then clarify the conditions under which that particular kind of being flourishes. To take an arbitrary example, the house cat requires a different range of conditions in order to flourish than does the leopard. The assessment of what makes these two creatures flourish, or experience the good life, *qua* cat can only be defined in light of the specifics of their Being. Every particular type of creature needs a certain set of conditions to flourish – even within the cat family, the differences are marked. This difference is amplified once we cross species in order to consider what constitutes the good life for the human person. Since Dasein is that entity for which ‘Being is an issue’, only a life in which the primacy of the individual’s relation to Being is realised, can be understood as the good life. The good life is not defined by enduring authenticity but by the quest for those moments of authenticity which require a conscious acknowledgement of the human relation to Being.

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<sup>228</sup> Seligman, & Csikszentihalyi, ‘Positive Psychology, An Introduction’, p. 12

<sup>229</sup> See Chapter 1: Epistemic Considerations, and also Guignon, ‘Moods in Heidegger’s Being and Time’, p. 184, Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 310

<sup>230</sup> Aristotle, *Ethics*, Thomson, J. A.K. (Trans.), Penguin Books, London, 1976

If Positive Psychologists are to take advantage of this new approach to unveiling the human person set in an explicit Heideggerian ontology, it will require a reformulation of their investigation of the human person, one which keeps structure of Dasein's relation to Being in view. It is possible for Positive Psychology to reorientate itself away from the detrimental assumptions held within Dualist perspective toward the theory which keeps the phenomenal content of human being secure. This will require recognition of Positive Psychology's unnamed reliance on Dualism and its acceptance if this associated conception of the person as a 'thinking substance.' Then this assumption may be set aside so that Positive Psychologists can investigate the human person as attuned to the world in which she finds herself. The notion of attunement opens up research into how we engage with our particular reality as well as how we experience our ontological caste. The human being is always attuned to the world and this reveals her Being-in-the-world as an ontological reality. Any Psychology which does not understand this is unable to account for this aspect of human experience, and is thus deficient.

Thankfully, although Positive Psychology is committed to adapting "what is best in the scientific method to the unique problems that human behaviour presents", there already seems to be some inclination toward a Heideggerian model.<sup>231</sup> First, all the various connections found between the two paradigms above support this contention. Second, Maloney, who contributed to *The Handbook of Positive Psychology*, recognises this ever so subtle shift away from traditional ontology.<sup>232</sup> He frames his discussion in relation to constructivism rather than Heidegger, however, the language he uses is decidedly Heideggerian. Although constructivism is vastly reductionist in comparison to Heidegger, given that it defines the "activity of the organism [as] his or her primary means of expressing attempts to adapt to prevailing circumstances", the two positions, at least as rendered by Maloney, are strikingly similar.<sup>233</sup> For example, he describes 'self-organising processes' as those in which "we actively "project" our

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<sup>231</sup> Seligman, & Csikszentihalyi, 2000, 'Positive Psychology, An Introduction', p. 7

<sup>232</sup> Maloney, M., 'Constructivism and Positive Psychology,' in Snyder, C.R., & Lopez, Shane, (Eds.), *The Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2005

<sup>233</sup> Maloney, 'Constructivism and Positive Psychology,' p. 747

past onto our future. In the process of such anticipatory projection, we shape the present moment.”<sup>234</sup> In the same chapter, he draws on Kelly to illustrate what this understanding of the human person would mean in practical terms for a Psychologist: “the role of the therapist is to skilfully challenge the client’s ways of construing the self, others, the world, and their possible relationships.”<sup>235</sup> Further, as mentioned above, the therapist with an appreciation of Dasein’s relation to Being, will more likely be able to assist their client in the movement toward authenticity. The client’s particular ontic experience must be seen in the light of the ontological nature of which she is an exemplar. In other words, engagement with a particular client can ‘reach back’ “to the realm of an ontology of Da-sein.”<sup>236</sup>

To extrapolate from this, experimental design which takes Heidegger’s rendering of Dasein into account may seek to ascertain how the process of self creation with in a context is realised, or how the subject is attuned to the world in which she finds herself. Such investigation can still make use of the scientific method, but without the bifurcation of Dasein into mind and body. Keeping the theoretical attitude in check and attunement in the foreground would mean that, rather than affording a theory of the human person as ‘subject of experimental design’ Positive Psychology would investigate the human person as she is in the world. Thus Positive Psychology would not fall victim to the diminution of the appreciation of the human reality as Psychology has, but would become a psychology of the fullness of human experience.

Snyder and Lopez note that ‘what Positive Psychology seeks is ...recognition as a viable, new paradigm – a rigorous science on the positive side of what it means to be human.’<sup>237</sup> If this is to be achieved, the theory of ‘what it means to be human’ must be recognized as beyond the scope of ontic science and thus beyond Positive Psychology. The fullness of ‘what it means to be human’ needs supplementation from ontological science. Such supplement can only come from within philosophy, and the

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<sup>234</sup> Maloney, ‘Constructivism and Positive Psychology,’ p. 748

<sup>235</sup> Ibid. p. 747

<sup>236</sup> Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 124

<sup>237</sup> Snyder & Lopez, ‘The future of Positive Psychology’, p. 752



best candidate to provide this is Heidegger, since he addresses the very issues from which an ontic investigation into human Being suffers.

## 4. Emotion and Mood

*How does Positive Psychology's view of 'emotion' compare with that proffered by phenomenological analysis such as Heidegger's 'moods'?*

The interrelationship between attunement (*Befindlichkeit*) and mood (*Stimmung*) means that the following comparison of Heidegger's concept of mood and Positive Psychology's concept of emotion is, in part, a continuation of themes of the foregoing section. Some work has already been done to reveal the basic structure of attunement and mood, and this will be extended in the following. In addition, the nature of emotion, as Positive Psychology uses the term, is explored. This requires a fairly extensive critique of the way Seligman, in particular, uses language in the description of emotion and its relation to past, future, and present. Although the two terms can be used interchangeably in common parlance, there are differences between what Heidegger takes for mood, and what Positive Psychology takes for emotion. These differences make it seem unlikely that an argument for a structural relationship between Heidegger's notion of mood and Positive Psychology's emotion can be made. However, that the two positions can interrelate in a constructive way is precisely the argument advanced here. If Positive Psychology's emotion can be understood in light of Heidegger's concept of mood, a theoretical relation can be forged between emotion and Being. This in turn has potential to embed Positive Psychology's theory of the human person in a theory of Dasein, that entity which has essential relation to Being.

### Psychology and Emotion

Historically, the dominant views on the human person within Psychology have shifted, which has meant that it has not always embraced the concept of emotion.<sup>238</sup> Psychology has never been anchored to an explicit ontological framework, which has meant that theoretical perspectives on the nature of the human person were left to drift with the flow of fashion within clinical research circles. (This in itself provides a firm reason for the adoption of an explicit ontology by Psychology, even if it is not an argument in favour of Heidegger *per se*. However, an ontology which places the nature of the human person in the foreground is an obvious choice.) The changes in

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<sup>238</sup> Seligman, Martin., *Learned Optimism*, Random House Australia, Sydney, 2002, pp. 8-9

how Psychology has conceived of the human person over time have had repercussions on how emotion has been characterised, and even on whether the concept of emotion was included in the model of psychological processes.<sup>239</sup>

Seligman provides a brief but serviceable account of this evolution of thought. He recalls, “[w]hen I was a graduate student in Psychology ...people were assumed to be a product of their environment... “pushed” by their internal drives or “pulled” by external events”<sup>240</sup> During the 1960’s this thesis was disputed on a number of fronts, most notably ranging from Chomsky’s critique of Skinner, the formulation of techniques for studying Developmental Psychology by Piaget, and the emergence of the field of Cognitive Psychology.<sup>241</sup> All these, in their various guises, contended that “self direction”, rather than internal drives or external forces were a preferred descriptor of human action, and thus represented the challenge to Behaviourism.<sup>242</sup> Seligman was not left unaffected by these changes, and saw them reflected in his own research on learned helplessness which convinced him that “the behaviourist program was dead wrong”.<sup>243</sup> In the main, Behaviourism could not adequately account for the ‘future mindedness’ or expectation which seemed to be at work in experiments on learned helplessness, and neglected the cognitive aspects of complex behaviour.<sup>244</sup> According to Seligman, as an antidote to these failings, “cognitive therapy works.”<sup>245</sup>

### **Possible Difficulties with Enhancing Positive Emotion**

Positive Psychology, remember, finds its impetus in opposition to the prevailing culture within Psychology which maintains an “exclusive emphasis on discovering deficits and repairing damage.”<sup>246</sup> The ideal life, or one which is authentically happy, takes advantage of the higher reaches of each person’s ‘set range’ of happiness.<sup>247</sup> To achieve this, Positive Psychology recommends ‘positive emotion’, and the diminution

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<sup>239</sup> Seligman, *Learned Optimism*, pp. 8-9

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. p. 9; Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 69

<sup>242</sup> Seligman, *Learned Optimism*, p. 9

<sup>243</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 32

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.; Seligman, *Learned Optimism*, p. 9

<sup>245</sup> Ibid. p. 89

<sup>246</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 22

<sup>247</sup> Ibid. p. 62

of ‘negative emotion.’ Emotions are judged as either positive or negative on pragmatic grounds: for example, optimism is correlated with better social integration, achievement at school work and on the playing field, greater immunity to infectious disease, better health habits and longer life.<sup>248</sup> Negative traits or emotions, on the other hand, are not correlated with the long, healthy happy life that the Positive Psychologist seeks to promote. Whilst the drive to improve people’s lives in this way is admirable, it brings with it three possible difficulties.

First, the achievement of the higher reaches of one’s ‘set range’ of happiness may come at the expense of authenticity. The positive self assessments which provide for correlation between happiness and longevity (etc.) may accurately reflect an avid engagement with the ‘surface’ activities of life - fulfilment in work, love, family life. These are admittedly worthy goals; however, one must ask whether they are indicative of ‘authenticity’ or if they are only an egoic definition of flourishing which is in fact constrained by ‘the They.’ This version of optimal functioning can exist alongside the negation of Being. A long life lived superficially, without reflection on the kinds of beings we are and without resolute engagement with Being cannot be viewed as positive. It is a half life. Thus Positive Psychology may furnish the world with objectively happy, resilient, optimistic individuals who nevertheless never acquire the attunement which allows engagement with Being, finitude and authenticity. We can be optimistically inauthentic. The definition of authentic flourishing must be derived from the nature of Dasein, not the immune system or longevity. The accuracy of Positive Psychology’s ontic definition of flourishing must be measured against an ontological understanding of the human person.

Secondly, in its attempts to correct the imbalance within Psychology at large, Positive Psychology may overstep the mark and understate the place of negative emotion in the spectrum of human development. Both Psychology and Positive Psychology seem to shy away from the negative emotions; the first because it will rid us of them, the

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<sup>248</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 42; *Learned Optimism*, p. 14; Here I am accepting that optimism can be classed as an emotion for the sake of argument.

second because it urges us to strive toward the positive. What is experienced as negative, whilst unpleasant, may nonetheless be valuable, and thus positive. Anxiety is unpleasant, (sometimes in the extreme) but not negative, for “anxiety reveals Dasein as the being who, holding itself out into the nothing, is always already beyond beings, confronting being as a whole in the very withdrawal of beings.”<sup>249</sup> Heidegger’s idea of anxiety is particular: it is a form of attunement and cannot be reduced to a trait, or emotion. But the ‘burden of anxiety’ need not be judged as wholly negative, since it is this burden which brings Dasein closest to itself: “Dasein as an “actual burden” is a never ending task and demand. It is in this very decision for existence – “resoluteness” – that Dasein is first opened to its ownmost possibilities of thought and action, that it becomes free for its own freedom.”<sup>250</sup> Admittedly, Positive Psychology does note the place of negative mood, to a degree, since we should fit our mood to the task at hand, (for example filling out a tax return is complimented by a sombre mood).<sup>251</sup> However, negative mood is limited to such specific tasks, and isolated from the sometimes deeply felt and pervasive dark moods that often accompany and signal psychological growth.

The third difficulty calls once more for a developed ontology. It is clear that, despite Seligman’s protestations to the contrary, Positive Psychology goes beyond the descriptive realm of the ontic sciences into the prescription of action and attitude.<sup>252</sup> Positive Psychology recommends certain dispositions, virtues and practices as the best means to attaining ‘the good life’. Such recommendations, in so far as they serve to answer the question “how should we live” fall within the domain of ethics. As mentioned previously, this in itself may represent an improvement, since a comprehensive study of the human person cannot neglect human interaction, and thus morality becomes relevant. An ethical theory which is not grounded in a developed and accurate ontology is, at best, likely to be inexact, and at worst meaningless, and

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<sup>249</sup> de Beistegui, Miguel, *Thinking with Heidegger: displacements*, Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 2003, p. 66

<sup>250</sup> de Beistegui, *Thinking with Heidegger*, p. 77

<sup>251</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 37

<sup>252</sup> Martin, ‘Happiness and Virtue in Positive Psychology,’ p. 90; Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, pp. 16, 43, 44, 120, 121

subject to the cycles of moral fashion. This argument takes for granted that the *telos* of an entity (to flourish or lead the good life) cannot be gauged if there is no appreciation of the kind of being whose telos is in question. The telos of a particular being is necessarily linked with the nature of that particular kind of being. The telos of the human person is distinct from that of the bonobo, the octopus, the mushroom or even Aristotle's famous knife. If the purpose of the human person is to flourish *qua* human person, then this requires sets of conditions and excellences which derive from the nature of the human person. Similarly, if the knife is to fulfil its telos, it must exist under certain conditions and embody the excellences which derive from the nature of knives.

If an ethical theory without a definite ontology affords the good life, then this is merely by chance. Positive Psychology is able to correlate positive emotion with longer, healthier and happier lives. This in itself makes the enterprise worthy of support. However, the reasons justifying these beliefs, beyond correlation, are absent. For Positive Psychology to be assured of success in its task, the element of luck must be removed, and instead the discipline must be grounded in an accurate ontology. Since Positive Psychology draws on an Aristotelian view of the human person in a cursory way, it would seem that, from within the Western canon, a form of Aristotelian ontology would be a likely candidate to supply an explicit metaphysical support for Positive Psychology. However, it is precisely the use of Aristotelian thought within Positive Psychology which excludes it as a means of critique. For, the phenomenologist would argue, it is such pervasive beliefs about the human person which should be 'bracketed' if real knowledge is to come to light.

### **Positive Psychology and the Definition of Emotion**

The merit of developments within Psychology aside, it is clear that Positive Psychology has evolved out of a Cognitive Theory of mind which, according to Seligman, holds that all "emotions have a feeling component, a sensory component, a

thinking component and an action component.”<sup>253</sup> Seligman does not go far beyond this definition, claiming that it is “so uncontroversial... as to be boring.”<sup>254</sup> To a degree, we can treat this omission charitably, since the text in question, *Authentic Happiness*, is not designed as a means of expounding the philosophical attributes of emotion, but as an introduction to the central tenets of Positive Psychology for the uninitiated. However, such an omission is unusual since Seligman’s “most basic concern...is measuring happiness’s constituents – the positive emotions and strengths”.<sup>255</sup> Since

Positive Psychology has three pillars: First is the study of positive emotions. Second is the study of the positive traits, foremost among them the strengths and virtues<sup>256</sup>

it would be reasonable to expect a more detailed account of this ‘first pillar.’ This lack of detail in definition creates some befuddlement concerning the precise nature of these related, yet distinct, terms.

Though undefined, emotion, particularly positive emotion, nonetheless plays an important part in Positive Psychology. Seligman explains Frederickson’s research into positive emotion, and her claim that “positive emotions have a grand purpose in evolution” with great enthusiasm exclaiming, “This is life-changing!”<sup>257</sup> This ‘grand purpose’ is afforded by their capacity to “transform” people into “more creative, knowledgeable, resilient, socially integrated and healthy individuals.”<sup>258</sup> Not only do positive emotions “*signal* optimal functioning” but they also “*produce* optimal functioning, not just within the present moment, but over the long term as well.”<sup>259</sup> Feeling “positive emotion is important not just because it is pleasant in its own right

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<sup>253</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 31

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid. p. 16

<sup>256</sup> Ibid. p. xiii

<sup>257</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 35

<sup>258</sup> Barbara Frederickson, ‘Positive Emotions’, in Snyder, C.R., & Lopez, Shane, (Eds.), *The Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2005, p. 123

<sup>259</sup> Frederickson, ‘Positive Emotions’, p. 120

but because it causes much better commerce with the world.”<sup>260</sup> So, the key to greater happiness overall is to “move your emotions in a positive direction”.<sup>261</sup>

Moving ‘emotions in a positive direction’ requires that emotions concerning the past, present and future are augmented. For example, contentment with the past “can be increased by gratitude” and hope for “the future can be increased by ... [disputing] automatic pessimistic thoughts.”<sup>262</sup> Strangely, rather than remaining central to the development of “authentic happiness” as one might assume, positive emotion in the present is of less importance. Positive Psychology advises that the individual should “tone down the pursuit of pleasure”, in preference for gratification. This means limiting positive emotion since “pleasures are about the senses and the emotions.”<sup>263</sup> To ‘tone down’ the pursuit of pleasure then, is also to ‘tone down’ the experience of positive emotion. Positive emotion is similarly demoted when characterised as a by-product of utilising a strength which “usually produces authentic positive emotion in the doer.”<sup>264</sup> It is the strength that should be valued as a means to gaining fulfilment and wellbeing, rather than the emotional ‘side effect’. These recommendations do not sit well with the idea that positive emotions have a ‘grand purpose’ in ‘transforming lives’. In short, Seligman’s development of the place of the emotions in his framework stands in opposition to Frederickson’s thesis (mentioned above), which he applauds.

This ‘toning down’ of positive emotion is recommended in relation to the attainment of ‘authentic happiness’ in the present. Happiness in the present “embraces two very distinct kinds of things: pleasures and gratifications.”<sup>265</sup> The pleasures, as mentioned above, are associated with the sensuous “raw feel” and the emotions whereas in the case of gratifications “emotions are completely absent.”<sup>266</sup> It is the “total absorption, the suspension of consciousness, and the flow gratifications produce” which sets them

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<sup>260</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 43

<sup>261</sup> Ibid. p. 62

<sup>262</sup> Ibid. p. 248

<sup>263</sup> Ibid. pp. 112, 119

<sup>264</sup> Ibid. p. 138

<sup>265</sup> Ibid. p. 102

<sup>266</sup> Ibid. p. 111



apart from the pleasures, and emotion.<sup>267</sup> ‘Flow’ is a technical term for the positive Psychologist, indicating “*the state of gratification that we enter when we feel completely engaged in what we are doing.*”<sup>268</sup> Here the use of ‘feel’ might be misleading, if we take it to be indicative of emotion. The text sometimes uses ‘feeling’ and ‘emotion’ interchangeably. It is generally made clear that “it is the absence of emotion, of any kind of consciousness that is the heart of flow.”<sup>269</sup> However, compare these descriptions to the following: “Flow, you will remember, is a positive emotion about the present with no conscious thought or feeling attached.”<sup>270</sup> So, from this, flow could be described as an emotion with no emotion – evidently not what the author intends. Further, compare: “[p]ositive emotion about the present divides into ...pleasures and gratifications”<sup>271</sup> with the “good life... is not about maximizing positive emotion, [but in] successfully using your signature strengths to obtain abundant and authentic gratification.”<sup>272</sup> Here, gratification is a class of positive emotion, yet in seeking gratification one should not emphasise positive emotion. Such careless use of language may easily engender confusion.

The conflation of terms and the difficulty it brings is demonstrated further in the description of optimism. Seligman initially classes optimism as a ‘trait,’ which is an “abiding disposition” and this is contrasted with feelings, which are “states, [or] momentary occurrences”.<sup>273</sup> A “strength is a trait” so optimism is seen as “one of two dozen *strengths*.”<sup>274</sup> Later, Seligman claims that “[p]ositive *emotions* about the future include faith, trust, confidence, hope and optimism” which presents a difficulty if “engaging in a strength usually produces authentic positive emotion”.<sup>275</sup> In one sense optimism is likened to the “squirt of felt positive emotion” which accompanies the exercise of a strength, and then in another sense as a strength in its own right. Perhaps

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<sup>267</sup> Seligman, *Authentic happiness*, p. 111

<sup>268</sup> Ibid. p. 113

<sup>269</sup> Ibid. p. 138

<sup>270</sup> Ibid. p. 173

<sup>271</sup> Ibid. p. 248

<sup>272</sup> Ibid. p. 249

<sup>273</sup> Ibid. p. 9

<sup>274</sup> Ibid. pp. 10, 137 my italics

<sup>275</sup> Ibid. pp. 82, 138 my italics

optimism can be both a strength and an emotion. However, it seems that they should be treated separately because rather than being synonymous with each other, strengths and emotions are causally related to each other: deep “emotional satisfaction comes from building and using the signature strengths.”<sup>276</sup> Emotion cannot be a strength if it is produced by strength. Perhaps we may also treat this apparent confusion charitably. Emotion must inevitably be treated differently throughout the text, as diverse spheres of experience are covered. It is to be expected that the (seemingly consistent) nature of emotion would alter in the context of the past, present, or future. But the extent to which charity should be extended must be limited. It is a “mark of the trained mind never to expect more precision in the treatment of any subject than the nature of that subject permits” but also to demand more precision when it is lacking.<sup>277</sup>

This careless use of language is exasperating, to say the least, but it also allows for conceptual difficulties. One must look carefully to decipher the relation between emotion, trait, virtue, strength and happiness. Peterson recognises this as an impediment to the development of “Positive Psychology as a whole [which] would be benefited – indeed shaped and transformed – by agreed-upon ways for speaking about the positive”.<sup>278</sup> He set to correcting this problem by devising a classification of human strengths and virtues, to act as the companion text to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) of the American Psychological Association.<sup>279</sup> While this document does not employ the term ‘emotion’ it at least clarifies the use of virtue, strength and trait. “Character strengths are the psychological ingredients – processes or mechanisms- that ...are distinguishable routes to displaying one or another of the virtues.”<sup>280</sup> Strengths are taken as the ‘natural category’ which “encompasses a group of related traits.”<sup>281</sup> Thus, a hierarchy emerges: traits are the subdivision of strengths which lead to virtues.

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<sup>276</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 13

<sup>277</sup> Aristotle, *Ethics*, p. 65

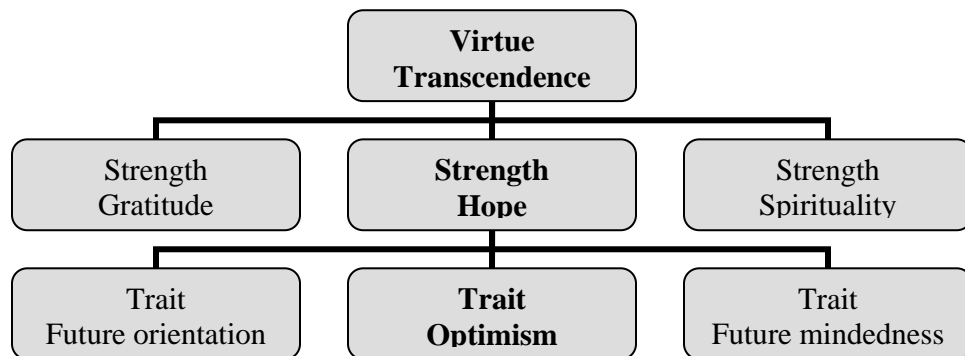
<sup>278</sup> Peterson, Christopher, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*, Oxford University Press, Cary, 2004, p. 5

<sup>279</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 132; Peterson, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*, pp. 4, 6

<sup>280</sup> Peterson, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*, p. 15

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16

To illustrate with the example of ‘transcendence,’ one of the six primary virtues listed: ‘transcendence’ is the virtue given by “strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning”.<sup>282</sup> One of these strengths is hope “expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it”.<sup>283</sup> In turn, hope is sub-divided once more into the traits “optimism, future mindedness and future orientation”.<sup>284</sup> This relation can be diagrammed thus:



**Figure 1: Virtue, strength and trait**

To link this to Seligman’s treatment of emotion, it seems that if strength is the ‘natural category’ of traits, and strengths are psychological processes, then emotion can be taken as an example of a trait, and thus as an example of a strength.

### **A More Thorough Definition**

Even though this schema has made the place of emotion somewhat less vague, it is worthwhile sourcing a clarification of a Cognitive Theory of emotion elsewhere. Solomon, who has been labelled as “cognitivist” (although he wears the term with some discomfort as it is an overly simplistic account of his position), can supply some of the theoretical clarity which is absent from Seligman’s text.<sup>285</sup> Further, with Solomon’s assistance, some of the charges against a cognitivist account of emotion

<sup>282</sup> Peterson, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*, p. 30

<sup>283</sup> Ibid. p. 30; See Figure 1.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid. p. 30

<sup>285</sup> Solomon, Robert, ‘Emotions, thoughts and feelings: emotions as engagements with the world’, in Solomon, Robert, (Ed.), *Thinking About Feeling, Contemporary Philosophers on Emotion*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, pp. 76, 78

can be met, and (via Solomon's existentialist leanings) the first glimmer of a meeting between Positive Psychology and Heidegger's conception of these phenomena can be seen.<sup>286</sup> As Cognitive Psychology has gained authority, a "cognitive theory of emotions" has "become the touchstone of all philosophical theorising about emotion, for or against."<sup>287</sup> Even so, it is "not a happy term" since on the one hand, it leads to the false assumption that emotions are to be taken as aspects of the intellect, and on the other hand, it neglects the element of emotion as active engagement with the world.<sup>288</sup> Solomon notes that the term 'emotion' encapsulates a "fascinating variety of phenomena".<sup>289</sup> They can take the form of brief "interruptive reactions" or "substantial processes that last a long time"; they are necessarily experiences which "span conscious and nonconscious awareness"; and they can be either involuntary or "at least sometimes, "chosen" and voluntary."<sup>290</sup> This complex structure goes some way to explaining the descriptive difficulties which taint Seligman's work.

Beyond these varied characteristics, Cognitive Psychology holds that emotions are also 'evaluative judgements', in the sense that they are "a way of cognitively *grappling* with the world."<sup>291</sup> (That 'emotions are judgements' transcends debate between the primitivist and the cognitivist as to whether emotion precedes and drives cognition, or whether cognition precedes and drives emotion.<sup>292</sup> This, in turn, could explain the cause of recent research findings on cognition and emotion which demonstrate that "each drives the other at times."<sup>293</sup>) More importantly for this thesis, all of the above characteristics, combined, form a view that "*emotions are subjective engagements in the world*" – not merely in the sense that they are "*about* (or "directed to") the world but [are] actively entangled in it."<sup>294</sup> Thus, Solomon's formulation, reproduced here in brief, demonstrates that a Cognitive Theory of mind, such as

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<sup>286</sup> Solomon, Robert, 'Emotions, thoughts and feelings: emotions as engagements with the world' p. 87

<sup>287</sup> Ibid. p. 78

<sup>288</sup> Ibid. pp. 78, 77

<sup>289</sup> Ibid. p. 84

<sup>290</sup> Ibid. pp. 78, 80, 82,

<sup>291</sup> Ibid. p. 77

<sup>292</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, p. 65; Solomon, 'Emotions, thoughts and feelings: emotions as engagements with the world,' pp. 78-79

<sup>293</sup> Ibid. p. 65

<sup>294</sup> Solomon, 'Emotions, thoughts and feelings: emotions as engagements with the world,' p. 77

found in Positive Psychology, *can* transcend ‘mind’ in its treatment of emotion and remain internally consistent.<sup>295</sup>

### **Heidegger’s Concept of Mood (*Stimmung*)**

The previous chapter noted the close relationship between attunement (*Befindlichkeit*) and mood (*Stimmung*). It is a useful distinction to think of mood as the ontic counterpart to ontological attunement since what Heidegger indicates “*ontologically* by the term state-of-mind [attunement] is *ontically* the most familiar and every day sort of thing; our mood...”<sup>296</sup> For as attuned, Dasein finds itself “in the mood that it has”. In this case, people are not the progenitors of mood, but will find themselves in some mood. This ‘finding’ works on two levels – first, a person ‘finds herself’ in a mood in so far as it is part-and-parcel of Being-in-the-world. Second, a person ‘finds herself’ in so far as the particular mood reveals something about the ontic facts of her existence.<sup>297</sup> Mood is the colouring of the everyday concern with which Dasein is involved with the world. The ways “we slip over from one [mood] to another, or slip off into bad moods” is an experience to which every person can relate. Dasein is ‘always already’ disclosed as Being-in-the-world through mood.<sup>298</sup> Mood shows Dasein as ‘always’ in the world since there is no point in a person’s life when she is without mood. Even the seemingly lifeless mood of ‘catatonic’ boredom is in fact a way of Being-in-the-world: the “pallid, evenly balanced lack of mood is far from nothing at all.”<sup>299</sup> Mood shows Dasein as ‘already’ in the world since Dasein finds herself thrown into existence, and facticity elicits mood. As Held describes it, “thrownness in the “having-to-project-itself” manifests itself in the moods which tell Dasein how it fares with respect to its factual situatedness in the open range of possibilities, or “world””<sup>300</sup> or more simply, “mood is the response to the call of

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<sup>295</sup> Remember, however, that the preceding chapter held the narrow explanatory power the concept of ‘mind’ has in relation to the theory of the human person as an argument for its dissolution.

<sup>296</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 134; de Beistegui, *Thinking with Heidegger*, pp. 63-64

<sup>297</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 135

<sup>298</sup> Ibid. H p. 134

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

<sup>300</sup> Held, Klaus, ‘Fundamental Moods in Heidegger’s Critique of Contemporary Culture,’ Steinbock, Anthony (Trans.), in *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations*, Sallis, John (Ed.), Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 1993, p. 288

Being.”<sup>301</sup> In her factual situatedness, Dasein usually flees from the possibility of a confrontation with Being which the mood presents. This flight in itself provides evidence for that from which Dasein flees, so “even in that to which mood pays no attention, Dasein is unveiled in its Being-delivered-over-to the “there”.”<sup>302</sup>

Mood is referred to in the Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics, as *Grund-stimmung* the “fundamental or grounding attunement.” Here, this fundamental mood “reveals Dasein as the entity who is open to Being, and it is in this mode of attunement that the basis of metaphysics unfolds.”<sup>303</sup> It also reveals the historical nature of the relationship to Being, in the sense that Dasein’s comportment toward being changes over time- from the awe or wonderment of ancient Greek minds, to the boredom of the current technological age. Held argues that deep “boredom is a fundamental temperament like anxiety; the difference is that, from now on, the expression “fundamental mood” replaces the concept of fundamental temperament [attunement].”<sup>304</sup> However, given Heidegger’s usual exacting use of language, it would be surprising if he would so easily slip from the use of *Befindlichkeit* into *Grund-stimmung*. There must be some cause for this shift in language. One possibility is that where the attention of *Being and Time* is devoted to Dasein, and how Dasein is the ‘opening’ via which Being is revealed, this later work turns its attention to Being and how it ‘reaches toward’ Dasein.<sup>305</sup> So these, admittedly related terms, actually denote a difference in orientation: a difference in the movement of Dasein toward Being (*Befindlichkeit*), or of Being toward Dasein (*Grund-stimmung*). It is interesting to note the root of the German word for mood in this connection. ‘*Stimmung*,’ or mood, has its base in ‘*stimme*’ which is equivalent to ‘voice’.<sup>306</sup> Thus, at the heart of moods is the ‘voice of Being’ which calls Dasein into resolute relation- it is the call to authenticity.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> Held, ‘Fundamental Moods in Heidegger’s Critique of Contemporary Culture,’ pp. 288, 289

<sup>302</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 135

<sup>303</sup> de Beistegui, *Thinking with Heidegger*, p. 67

<sup>304</sup> Held, ‘Fundamental Moods in Heidegger’s Critique of Contemporary Culture,’ p. 290

<sup>305</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Angus Brook for this insight.

<sup>306</sup> Harr, ‘Attunement and thinking,’ p. 160

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

Of course, in “*Being and Time* itself, the historical referentiality of moods [such as exhibited in the *Grund-stimmung* of boredom] does not yet emerge.”<sup>308</sup> The discussion of *Grund-stimmung* will be kept to a minimum here, in order not to stray too far from *Being and Time* as a primary text, and in order to restrict the discussion of mood to the individual context which coheres better with Positive Psychology. However, the fundamental-mood (*Grund-stimmung*) is noteworthy as a means to highlight a possible flaw in Positive Psychology’s enterprise. The fundamental-mood of “profound boredom is only one attunement among others, one point of entry into the domain of metaphysics.”<sup>309</sup> Heidegger identifies boredom as fundamental-mood of the current era.<sup>310</sup> This boredom is the outcome of the theoretical attitude, which has enabled the technological age. Society has the feeling that all questions can be answered, and thus the awe with which Dasein approached being two thousand years ago is overcome by a “universal smug contentment in not being endangered”.<sup>311</sup> In the technological attitude, there is no longer any desire to grapple with the mystery of Being: “[w]e concern ourselves only with learned competencies that can be instilled.”<sup>312</sup> These ‘learned competencies’ seem familiar as the optimistic attitude, the employment of the strengths and the manipulation of explanatory style: what Positive Psychology recommends as the means to authenticity. The technological attitude disallows full engagement with Being, and the full realisation of Dasein’s nature, since it promotes the ‘smug contentment’ of boredom, and the false idea that authenticity is a matter of accruing a selection of ‘learned competencies.’

### **Heidegger’s Mood and Positive Psychology’s Emotion**

The central difference between Heidegger’s concept of mood and Positive Psychology’s concept of emotion is that Heidegger emphasises Being through linking mood with attunement and Being-in-the-world. Psychology’s emotion does not take

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<sup>308</sup> Held, ‘Fundamental Moods in Heidegger’s Critique of Contemporary Culture,’ p. 289

<sup>309</sup> Ibid. p. 67

<sup>310</sup> Heidegger, Martin, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, McNeill, William, & Walker, Nicholas, (Trans.), Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 1995, p. 164; de Beistegui, *Thinking with Heidegger*, p. 160

<sup>311</sup> Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, p. 76

<sup>312</sup> Ibid. p. 164

note of this relation to Being. For Heidegger, mood is the ontic expression of the ontological condition of attunement. As attuned in a certain way, “Dasein is always brought before itself...in the sense of finding itself in the mood that it has.”<sup>313</sup> Held argues that that emotion is the response to “the day to day tribulations of facticity, whereas mood is the response to the call of Being”.<sup>314</sup> However, since Heidegger characterises mood as “*that which makes it possible to direct one’s-self toward something*”, and does not use the term ‘emotion’, it is probably better to think of mood as both caught up in ‘day to day tribulations’ and the ‘response to the call of Being’.<sup>315</sup> For the call of Being cannot be found outside day to day tribulations. Such engagements are what make up our Being-in-the-world. The call of Being is ever present. The manner of response may, of course, be either authentic (as in taking on a resolute Being-toward-death) or inauthentic (as in a flight into ‘the They’).

Beyond this primary difference between the two theories, Heidegger’s conception of mood and Positive Psychology’s conception of emotion resonate well with each other. Both maintain that the person is always subject to mood, and that one mood is merely changed for another. Heidegger claims that the “Dasein is always in some mood,” and she will “slip over from one [mood] to another”.<sup>316</sup> For Seligman, one mood is replaced by another: “positive emotions undo negative emotions” and “positive mood jolts us into an entirely different way of thinking from a negative mood.”<sup>317</sup> Moreover, Heidegger’s ‘mood’ shares the involuntary and “sometimes, “chosen” and voluntary” aspect of emotions to which Solomon alludes. Mood “assails us,” yet we can be the “master of our moods.”<sup>318</sup>

Becoming the master of one’s mood requires “knowledge and will” so it is an “act of volition and cognition”.<sup>319</sup> This is similar to the ‘learned competencies’ of Positive Psychology, but with an essential difference. The learned competencies with which

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<sup>313</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 135

<sup>314</sup> Held, ‘Fundamental Moods in Heidegger’s Critique of Contemporary Culture,’ p. 289

<sup>315</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 137; Heidegger’s emphasis

<sup>316</sup> Ibid. H p. 134

<sup>317</sup> Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, pp. 41, 38, xiv

<sup>318</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 136

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.



Positive Psychology shapes mood are blind to Dasein's relation to Being, whereas the "knowledge and will" Heidegger imagines makes Dasein resolute in its relation to Being. It requires that Dasein discover its own possibilities for the creation of life, or its ownmost-Being-toward-death. In other words, the 'mastery of mood' does not coincide with authenticity, but prepares the way for an authentic relation to Being. So happiness, or optimism can be the means through which Being may conceivably be revealed, but they are not themselves exemplars of an authentic relation to Being. So, for Heidegger, the term 'authentic happiness' would denote that positive mood which would allow for a relation to Being. In effect, happiness, or moods generally, can be viewed as a means to an end, where the end is Being. More accurately, mood is the 'disclosure' by which "Dasein is brought before the "that it is" of it's as "there.""<sup>320</sup> Of course, happiness would probably not be the kind of mood which would lead to an encounter with Being, (for a "mood of elation" can alleviate the burden of Being inherent in Dasein), but it is not impossible.<sup>321</sup>

A word of caution: for all these similarities, one should not be quick to *reduce* mood to emotion, since all "mood, even individual, escapes reduction to subjective sentiment."<sup>322</sup> For being distracted by "what Dasein is acquainted with, knows, and believes at the same time" as having a mood would "wholly fail to recognise both what mood discloses and how it discloses".<sup>323</sup> Whilst both emotion and mood are caught up in the facticity of life, mood has the added dimension of its relation with Being, in ways which emotions do not. Rather than reducing mood to emotion, a theory of emotion can be enhanced by connection with mood. The relation which can be forged between mood and emotion is then one where, as one moves toward mood beyond emotion, one also moves from the ontic toward the ontological. A connection with mood provides emotion a connection with Being and thus has potential to complete Positive Psychology's theory of the human person – that entity which is always in relation with Being. Schematically, this relationship is represented below:

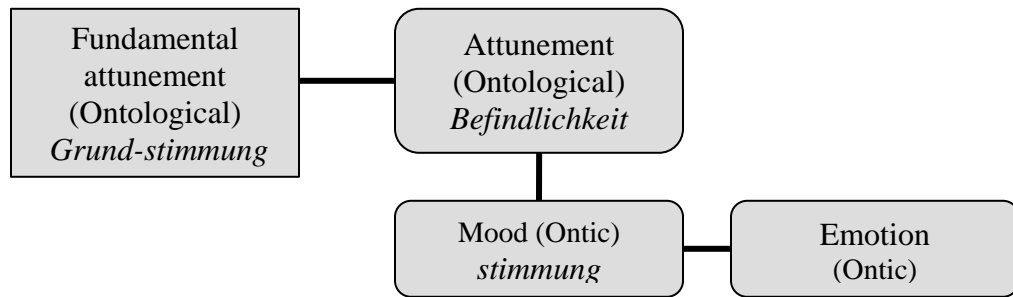
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<sup>320</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 136

<sup>321</sup> Ibid. H p. 135

<sup>322</sup> Harr, 'Attunement and thinking,' p. 160

<sup>323</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H p. 136



**Figure 2: The relation between mood and emotion**

This schema underscores the way in which Heidegger’s ontology can extend and enhance the ontic investigations of Positive Psychology. It is natural that ontic science should concern itself with measurable traits, but it is desirable that the results from these investigations be set within the context of the prior ontological givenness of what is being investigated. In this case, Positive Psychology’s emotion would work in parallel with Heidegger’s mood. Once the former succeeds in clarifying the exact nature of emotion and its connection to strength and virtue, the relation between the two paradigms could be deepened. There is potential, particularly via the virtue of transcendence, for a conceptual bridge between emotion and Being to form. Remember that transcendence encapsulates those strengths which “forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning”.<sup>324</sup> This creation of connection and meaning could be profitably aligned with and enhanced by an appreciation of Dasein’s Being-in-the-world, which is ‘always already’ connected to Being from within the context of a system of meanings.

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<sup>324</sup> Peterson, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*, p. 30

## **Conclusion**

In the forgoing, it was maintained that Positive Psychology requires a developed ontological underpinning to succeed in its aims to enhance human flourishing by the provision of a balance to the weakness model in Psychology since these require a comprehensive account of the human person. It was argued that Heidegger's ontology could best supply this deficiency.

It has been suggested that Positive Psychology assumes certain ideas which are prevalent within the Western philosophical and scientific traditions. The most problematic of these were an implicit acceptance of Dualism and an unswerving allegiance to the scientific outlook. Chapter one, 'Heidegger's Relevance for Positive Psychology,' argued that reflection on Heidegger's ontic-ontological distinction serves to clarify why the use of ontic research to come to a full understanding of the human person is a flawed enterprise. The flaw arises because Dasein has an appreciation of Being and is thus ontological in nature, so ontic research, while useful in discovering ontic facts, cannot speak to the fullness of human being. Furthermore, epistemological reasons for creating a base in Heidegger in order to make Positive Psychology more reliable were canvassed. This discussion points to a need for Positive Psychology to explicitly tackle the epistemological biases which come along with the theoretical attitude.

The assumptions that Positive Psychologists work with impact the way in which they investigate and understand the human person. Chapter two, 'Authenticity in Heidegger and Positive Psychology,' highlighted that Positive Psychology uses a narrow concept of authenticity (which, moreover, suffers from inconsistencies in relation to temporality) in comparison to Heidegger's more developed account. The ontic restrictions which Positive Psychology is bound by can be circumvented, and their notion of authenticity can be expanded upon, by an inclusion of an ontological structure of authenticity derived from Heidegger. Thus authenticity is made more accurate and distinct for Positive Psychology as not only that which 'feels like the real me' but that which comes from the awakened relation to one's Being-in-the-

world. Further research in this area should work toward an expanded and more detailed rendering of the ways in which Heidegger's authenticity can enhance Positive Psychology's use of the term.

The hidden ontological biases within Positive Psychology become particularly evident in its treatment of the human mind. Chapter three, '*Befindlichkeit* and Dualism,' made the radical proposal that Positive Psychology should abandon its unnamed Dualist outlook for one which comes closer to an accurate rendering of the experience of the human person. The Dualist treatment of the person as split into mind and body coheres with the distinction drawn between the subject and the world. In general, the subject of Psychological research is distanced from the environment and asked to introspect. This approach only allows for the collection of information limited by these methodological constraints which, in turn, creates a distorted view of the human person. While it was admitted above that the scientific method is by-and-large fruitful, it was suggested that it be tempered by an appreciation of how Dasein is attuned to the world, and 'always already' embedded within a world. This radical suggestion has implications for the methodology that Positive Psychology currently employs – providing an impetus for the development of new forms of experimental design.

Chapter four, 'Emotion and Mood,' spent some time delineating the difficulties inherent in the description of emotion and mood within Positive Psychology, and suggested a schematic formula and Solomon's rendition of emotion as possible means to providing clarity. What was gleaned from this investigation was that the main difference between Positive Psychology and Heidegger in relation to mood is that the latter does not relate mood beyond the individual's experience of the world to her fundamental relatedness to Being. Again, Heidegger can support this ontic science by supplying reflection on ontological aspects of Dasein's being-in-the-world. Further work in this area would challenge Positive Psychology to clarify emotion as uses the term so that links to Heideggerian notions of mood can be seamlessly incorporated thus forging stronger links to Being.

The unaddressed theoretical biases within the strands which have been outlined above hamper Positive Psychology in its task of coming to a full and accurate understanding of the human person. This presents a particular difficulty for the field since it wishes to provide a balance to the one-sidedness of the weakness model within Psychology as a whole and to promote the means to human flourishing. Both of these ambitions require a complete picture of the human person in order to achieve success. Overall, the aims of Positive Psychology can be furnished by and acknowledgement of criticisms Heidegger raises against the Western Philosophical and scientific traditions and by the inclusion of an underpinning ontology which overcomes these criticisms – in short an ontology such as Heidegger provides.

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