

## *Verfallen* → *Bruch* → *Verfüllen*:—the case of *Angst*

Ontics 101 teaches that we are concernfully involved with entities. In Katherine Withy's words, "Dasein is essentially entity-directed. . . . Whether I am engrossed in a puzzle, listlessly waiting for the bus, or staring out of the window on a rainy afternoon, I am directed towards, open to, absorbed in entities."<sup>1</sup> As Sheehan puts it, "I cannot *not* make sense of everything I meet because I cannot *not* be a priori opened up."<sup>2</sup> In Heideggerese: "Being-in-the-world . . . amounts to a non-thematic circumspective absorption in references or assignments constitutive for the readiness-to-hand of a totality of equipment."<sup>3</sup> Heidegger's *Verfallen*.

Then along comes the phenomenon of the break: "the presence-at-hand of entities is thrust to the fore by the possible breaks [*Brüche*] in that referential totality in which circumspection 'operates'."<sup>4</sup> The linguistic notion of markedness suggests taking readiness-to-hand as the unmarked category, presence-at-hand the marked.<sup>5</sup> Breaks mark the formerly ready-to-hand as present-at-hand. Equipmental 'breakage' (unserviceability, unusability, absence) manifests in the marking modes of conspicuousness, obtrusiveness, and obstinacy.<sup>6</sup>

"[W]hat we encounter within-the-world," Heidegger says, "has, in its very Being, been freed [in the mode of the ready-to-hand] for our concernful circumspection, for taking account." Now he wants us to go back, 'before' the ontic to the ontological, and so asks "What does this previous freeing [*diese vorgängige Freigabe*] amount to, and how is this to be understood as an ontologically distinctive feature of the world?"<sup>7</sup> But let's look forward, and notice that breakage in Heidegger's sense is also a freeing, it frees some component of the ready-to-hand to show up as present-at-hand. Then what? How is this secondary freeing to be understood as an ontologically distinctive feature of the world, if indeed it can be so understood?

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<sup>1</sup> Katherine Withy, "The Methodological Role of Angst in *Being and Time*," 43 *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 195 (2012) at p. 7 in the version here: <https://katherinewithy.weebly.com/writing.html> .

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (2015) 113.

<sup>3</sup> *Das unthematiscbe, umsichtige Aufgehen in den für die Zuhandenheit des Zeugganzes konstitutiven Verweisungen*. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* 76; *Being and Time* (tr. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson 1962) 107.

<sup>4</sup> *Being and Time* 107; *Sein und Zeit* 76.

<sup>5</sup> At the time they discovered markedness Trubetzkoy and Jakobson "were both deeply affected by Majakovskij's suicide . . . We understood his lines about unmarked, 'easy' death, and about the fact that 'to make a life is markedly more difficult,' and we realized that, according to this upside-down view of the world, not death but life 'required motivation.'" Roman Jakobson, "The Concept of Mark," *On Language* (ed. Linda R. Waugh and Monique Monville-Burston 1995) 136.. Nietzsche: *Hüten wir uns, zu sagen, dass Tod dem Leben entgegengesetzt sei. Das Lebende ist nur eine Art des Todten, und eine sehr seltene Art. Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* ¶ 109.

<sup>6</sup> *Auffälligkeit, Aufdringlichkeit, Aufsässigkeit*. *Being and Time* 104; *Sein und Zeit* 74.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* 114. *Sein und Zeit* 83.

The initial freeing frees entities for taking as ready-to-hand, as equipment deployable in concerned circumspection. *Second-order* freeing frees entities for *Umschlag*, change-over, to a new way of taking them, i.e., for thematizing, for inquiry:

“circumspective concern with the ready-to-hand changes over into an exploration [*Erforschung*] of what we come across as present-at-hand within the world . . . we are looking at the ready-to-hand thing which we encounter, and looking at it ‘in a new way’ [»*neu*« *ansehen*] as something present-at-hand. *The understanding of Being* by which our concerned dealings with entities within-the-world have been guided *has changed over* [*hat umgeschlagen*].”<sup>8</sup>

As Withy explains it, *Angst* plays the methodological role of *Bruch* in *Being and Time*. Our default state is *Verfallen*, and this “constitutive self-concealing,” she writes, “is a ‘flight’ of sorts from ourselves, towards entities. In order to see our own openness in a way that reveals its unity, we need an experience that disrupts or arrests this flight.” So “*Angst* is the direct revelation of the ontological, which disrupts our falling being-amidst entities.” This rent in *Verfallen* affords us a “direct line of sight into our unified being,” “the unity of our being,” “our distinctive *being*, in its unity.” *Angst* then is like “an ‘epiphany’ (in the Christian sense) or ‘apocalypse’ (in the Greek sense)” in that it affords ontological insight; i.e., “phenomenologically reveal[s] the unity of our being.”<sup>9</sup> By this account what *Angst* discloses has the ‘certainty of the immediately apprehended,’ *unmittelbaren Sicherheit der Anschauung* in Nietzsche’s phrase.<sup>10</sup>

If possibilizing an insight is *Angst*’s methodological role then we should heed Lonergan’s methodological rule that “insights are a dime a dozen, so critical reasonableness doubts, checks, makes sure.”<sup>11</sup> Critical reasonableness does not here doubt the *Angster* had an insight, that an insight-event occurred.<sup>12</sup> The question is whether a human being “is ever capable of perceiving itself entire, even just once.”<sup>13</sup> Withy intimates some such reservation when she writes, “to grasp the world *itself* in its worldhood, we need to directly experience the network of meaningfulness *as such*, as a totality viewed *in itself* rather than glimpsed through a particular

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* 408-409, 412; *Sein und Zeit* 357, 361.

<sup>9</sup> “The Methodological Role of *Angst*” 10, 25, 18, 25, 9.

<sup>10</sup> *Die Geburt der Tragödie* ¶ 1.

<sup>11</sup> Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (1971) 13.

<sup>12</sup> “an insight is neither a definition nor a postulate nor an argument but a preconceptual event.” *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan Volume 3; Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran 1992) 82.

<sup>13</sup> *vermöchte er auch nur sich einmal vollständig . . . zu percipiren?* Nietzsche, *Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne*. “Our psychological imagination . . . continually designs for us what seem to be convincing patterns as such, yet in the face of psychological reality these are no more than hypotheses that need to be tested.” Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology, Vol. I* (tr. of the 1959, last, edition, J. Hoenig and Marian W. Hamilton 1963) 356.

entity or subset of entities. The experience of angst *allegedly* provides this.” All emphasis mine, prompted by Nietzsche’s remarks on *Das „an sich“*.<sup>14</sup>

C. S. Peirce, some time before Heidegger did, also characterized break-and-changeover as a human universal. “Every inquiry whatsoever,” Peirce averred, “takes its rise in the observation . . . of some surprising phenomenon, some experience which either disappoints an expectation, or breaks in upon some habit of expectation of the *inquisiturus*; and each apparent exception to this rule only confirms it.”<sup>15</sup> So whenever “The surprising fact, C, is observed” it possibilizes a conjectural explanation: “But if A were true, C would be a matter of course, Hence, there is reason to suspect that A is true.”<sup>16</sup> Peirce called this fallible inference variously ‘retroduction,’ ‘hypothesis,’ ‘presumption,’ ‘originary argument,’ and ‘abduction.’ He readily acknowledged that “abduction is, after all, nothing but guessing.”<sup>17</sup> As we’ve learned from Gazzaniga’s work we should then ask ‘Why do that?’<sup>18</sup> I.e., Why guess an explanation at all, rather than not?

It turns out the left hemisphere of the human brain is dominant for hypothesis formation, the left brain generates abductions spontaneously. We can’t help guessing at the sense of things (“insights are a dime a dozen”), and in some contexts this leads to degraded performance. In contrast to the right hemisphere the left “engages in the human tendency to find order in chaos. The left hemisphere persists in forming hypotheses about the sequence of events even in the face of evidence that no pattern exists.”<sup>19</sup> Even more striking, in forming hypotheses

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<sup>14</sup> “The Methodological Role of Angst” 16-17. *Man hat sich besonnen und endlich festgestellt, dass es nichts Gutes, nichts Schönes, nichts Erhabenes, nichts Böses an sich giebt, wohl aber Seelenzustände, in denen wir die Dinge ausser und in uns mit solchen Worten belegen. Morgenröthe* IV ¶ 210. Cf. “I have on occasion stared dumbly when asked: ‘If one action can have many descriptions, what is *the* action, which has all these descriptions?’ The question seemed to be supposed to mean something, but I could not get hold of it. It ought to have struck me at once that here we were in ‘bare particular’ country: what is the subject, which has all these predicates? The proper answer to ‘What is the action, which has all these descriptions?’ is to give one of the descriptions. Any one, it does not matter which; or perhaps it would be best to offer a choice, saying ‘Take whichever you prefer.’” G. E. M. Anscombe, “Under a Description,” 13 *Noûs* 219, 220 (1979). It’s reported (sorry, lost the reference) that Foucault, sitting in the audience, began to fidget—he could sense what was coming—as he heard Derrida say *En écrivant une histoire de la folie, Foucault a voulu - et c’est tout le prix mais aussi l’impossibilité même de son livre - écrire une histoire de la folie elle-même. Elle-même. De la folie elle-même.* Jacques Derrida, “Cogito et histoire de la folie,” 68 *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 460, 463 (1963) (emphasis in original).

<sup>15</sup> *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce; Volume VI, Scientific Metaphysics* (ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss 1965) para. 469, p. 320.

<sup>16</sup> *Id. Volume V, Pragmatism and Pragmaticism* para. 189, p. 117.

<sup>17</sup> *Id. Volume VII, Science and Philosophy* (ed. Arthur W. Burks 1958) para 219. See Nancy Harrowitz “The Body of the Detective Model” in *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce* (ed. Umberto Eco and Thomas A. Sebeok 1985) at 181-185. Cf. “In general we look for a new [physical] law by the following process. First we guess it.” Richard Feynman, *The Character of Physical Law* (1965) 156.

<sup>18</sup> “It took us years to figure out the key question to ask after a split-brain patient performed this task: ‘Why did you do that?’” Michael S. Gazzaniga, “Who Is In Charge?” 61 *BioScience* 937, 938 (2011).

<sup>19</sup> Michael S. Gazzaniga, “Cerebral specialization and interhemispheric communication: Does the corpus callosum enable the human condition?” 123 *Brain* 1293, 1315-1316 (2000):

about the **explanation** of events, making sense of them. Gazzaniga describes the crucial experiment which revealed ‘the interpreter’:

“We showed a split-brain patient two pictures: a chicken claw was shown to his right visual field, so only the left hemisphere saw that, and a snow scene was shown to the left visual field, so the only right hemisphere saw that. He was then [after removal of the first two pictures] asked to choose from an array of pictures placed in full view [of both hemispheres] in front of him. Of the pictures placed in front of the subject, the shovel [snow-scoop] was chosen with the left hand and the chicken with the right. When asked why he chose these items [‘Why did you do that?’], his left hemisphere speech center replied, ‘Oh, that’s simple. The chicken claw goes with the chicken, and you need a shovel to clean out the chicken shed.’ Here the left brain, observing the left hand’s response without the knowledge of why it has picked that item, has to explain it. It will not say, ‘I don’t know.’ Instead it interprets that response in a context consistent with what it knows, and all it knows is ‘chicken claw.’ It knows nothing about the snow scene, but it has got to explain that shovel in the left hand. It has to create order out of its behavior. We called this left-hemisphere process ‘the interpreter.’”<sup>20</sup>

In addition to its production – the explanation – the interpreter suppresses awareness that it is guessing in ignorance (‘Oh, that’s simple’), thus entrenching self-confidence in its account. Apposite here is Freud’s claim to have discovered a fourth factor (*Moment*) in the formation of dreams, a factor he called ‘the secondary revision,’ *die sekundäre Bearbeitung*. There is no doubt, Freud says, “that the censoring agency, whose influence we have so far observed only in restrictions and omissions in the dream-content, is also responsible for interpolations and additions [*Einschaltungen und Vermehrungen*].” These supplements

“are always to be found in places where they can function to link two bits of the dream-content or set up a connection between two parts of the dream. . . . This function proceeds rather as the poet maliciously declares philosophers to do: with its snippets and scraps it patches the gaps in the dream’s structure [*mit ihren Fetzen und Flicker stopft sie die Lücken im Aufbau des Traumes*]. The result of its labours is that the dream loses its appearance of absurdity and

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<https://academic.oup.com/brain/article/123/7/1293/380106> . From trusting in the soundness of its ‘clinical judgment’ the left-brain is frequently bested by mechanical or algorithmic procedures in assessment and prediction tasks. As, e.g., by the right brain in the probability-guessing experiment that Gazzaniga describes. See William M. Grove and Paul E. Meehl, “Comparative Efficiency of Informal (Subjective, Impressionistic) and Formal (Mechanical, Algorithmic) Prediction Procedures: The Clinical–Statistical Controversy,” 2 *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* 293 (1996): <https://meehl.umn.edu/sites/meehl.umn.edu/files/files/167grovemeehlclinstix.pdf> .

<sup>20</sup> Michael S. Gazzaniga, “Spheres of Influence,” 19 *Scientific American Mind* 32, 36 (2008).

incoherence, and approaches the pattern of an intelligible experience [*dem Vorbilde eines verständlichen Erlebnisses*].”<sup>21</sup>

Freud characterizes the secondary revision as “indistinguishable from our waking thoughts” (*von unserem wachen Denken nicht zu trennen ist*), as that which “resembles waking thought” (*dem wachen Denken ähnliche*). He writes,

“our waking (preconscious [*vorbewußtes*]) thought behaves towards whatever random material presents itself to our perception in the same way as the function in question behaves towards the dream-content. It comes naturally to it to create order out of such material, to set up relations [*Ordnung zu schaffen, Relationen herzustellen*] and locate it where we can expect an intelligible context [*eines intelligibeln Zusammenhanges*]. . . . The reason we are fooled by conjurers’ tricks is because they rely on this intellectual habit [*intellektuelle Gewohnheit*] of ours. In our efforts to make a coherent and intelligible whole of the sensory impressions presenting themselves to us [*die gebotenen Sinneseindrücke verständlich zusammensetzen*], we often make the oddest mistakes or even falsify the truth of the material before us.”<sup>22</sup>

Lucky for psychoanalysis the secondary revision is rather hit-or-miss, *ein ziemlich inkonstantes Moment*:

“we treat the dream as we are in general accustomed to treat the contents of our perception: we fill in gaps and introduce connections [*Lücken auszufüllen, Zusammenhänge einzufügen*], and in doing so are often guilty of gross misunderstandings. But this activity, which might be described as a rationalizing one [*diese gleichsam rationalisierende Tätigkeit*] and which at best provides the dream with a smooth façade that cannot fit its true content, may also be omitted or only be expressed to a very modest degree—in which case the dream will display all its rents and cracks [*alle seine Risse und Sprünge*] openly.”<sup>23</sup>

Lucky because it is the very stuff that falls through the cracks, the snips that drop to the cutting-room floor, which psychoanalysis finds the most informative: “the material for its observations is usually provided by the inconsiderable events which have been put aside by the other sciences as being too unimportant [*als allzu geringfügig*]—the dregs [*der Abhub*], one

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<sup>21</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (tr. Joyce Crick 1999) 318-320. *Die Traumdeutung*, [https://www.gutenberg.org/files/40739/40739-h/40739-h.htm#VI\\_i](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/40739/40739-h/40739-h.htm#VI_i). Per Crick’s note ‘the poet’ is Heinrich Heine at no. 58 of the ‘Homecoming’ section of his *Book of Songs* (1827).

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* 319, 320, 326-327.

<sup>23</sup> Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* (tr. James Strachey 1964) 26; <https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/freud/vorles2/chap001.html>.

might say, of the world of phenomena.”<sup>24</sup> In dreaming put aside or not even reached by the secondary revision, probably because the abounding bizarreness of the dream-material overloads it with work. When everything coming at it is wild stuff the secondary revision may quickly run out of resources to cope with the demand to domesticate. When *everything's* a surprise the task of connecting it all in a coherent fiction may prove impossible for the processor.<sup>25</sup> The secondary revision, like the left-hemisphere interpreter, is an obligate but not a perfect bullshitter.<sup>26</sup>

As Freud saw it this psychic function acts both as censor and as copy-writer. We see now that its complementary functionality resembles the complementarity among the dozens of sub-processes constituting visual perception. E.g., ‘saccadic suppression’ refers to the brain’s censorship of the blurry input between focal rests of the eyeballs’ jerky track.<sup>27</sup> Whereas ‘filling in’ (supplementation) is the brain’s standard response to scotomas in the visual field—not only the blind spot where the optic nerve becomes the retina, but a host of others caused by deficits and accidents (*Brüche*) in the vision-processing regions.<sup>28</sup>

One such filling-in phenomenon is the scintillating scotoma, one form the migraine aura takes. It’s now known that the scintillating scotoma is accompanied by a wave of electrical excitations (a sort of squall) tracking across the cerebral cortex at about the same pace the scotoma tracks across the visual field. It is believed that the wave stimulates clusters of orientation-sensitive neurons in the visual cortex, “causing the patient to ‘see’ shimmering bars of light at different angles.”<sup>29</sup> The neuron clusters take stimulation as the signal to fire, and they do their job. But

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<sup>24</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* (tr. James Strachey 1963) 31; <https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/freud/vorles1/chap002.html> .

<sup>25</sup> “A wealth of information creates a poverty of attention and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the abundance of information sources that might consume it.” Herbert A. Simon, “Designing Organizations for an Information-rich World,” in *Computers, communication, and the public interest* (ed. M. Greenberger 1971) 38, 40-41.

<sup>26</sup> “Why is there so much bullshit? . . . Bullshit is unavoidable whenever circumstances require someone to talk without knowing what he is talking about.” Harry G. Frankfurt, “On Bullshit” in *The importance of what we care about: Philosophical essays* (1988) 132. For a finite entity which self-interprets and self-articulates to a vast extent unconsciously such circumstances are ubiquitous. So Frankfurt concludes, “Our natures are, indeed, elusively insubstantial — notoriously less stable and less inherent than the natures of other things. And insofar as this is the case, sincerity itself is bullshit.” *Id.* 133. I.e., ‘Let us beware of saying that bullshit and sincerity are opposite. Sincerity is only a type of, etc.’ — *Worauf sollen denn warten? Und wo sollen wir warten? Ich weiß bald nicht mehr, wo ich bin und wer ich bin. — Das wissen wir alle nicht mehr, sobald wir davon ablassen, uns etwas vorzumachen* [quit bullshitting ourselves]. Martin Heidegger, *Gelassenheit* (1959) 57: <https://archive.org/details/gelassenheit0000heid/page/36/mode/2up> . Can we quit? Or is it the case that *Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man etwas vorzumachen?*

<sup>27</sup> A. Thiele *et al.*, “Neural Mechanisms of Saccadic Suppression,” 295 *Science* 2460 (2002).

<sup>28</sup> V. S. Ramachandran, “Filling in Gaps in Perception: Part I,” 1 *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 199 (1992); “Part II: Scotomas and Phantom Limbs,” 2 *Current Direction in Psychological Science* 56 (1993).

<sup>29</sup> Oliver Sacks, *Hallucinations* (2012) 130.

evidently no higher-order *Bearbeitung* assembles their output into a stable image. The disruption (scotoma) in the visual field is simply ‘filled in’ with what the orientation-sensitive neurons are producing, elementary constituents of normal vision but jumbled into colorful shimmer-sparks (scintillae). This apparition has the certainty of an immediate apprehension and yet it is unreal to the patient: quite certainly ‘there’ but just as certainly not ‘out there.’

We can think of scintillating scotoma, a mild variety of hallucination, as a visual seizure. So far as I can find out all hallucinations are brain seizures of one sort or another, but not all brain seizures are hallucinations.<sup>30</sup> The classical image of insight as *cognoaffective* seizure is a naked man dripping wet running down the street yelling ‘I’ve got it!’ Bystanders incline to reply, ‘Mister, it’s got you.’

Heidegger says that *Angst* ‘does not know’ what it’s anxious about.<sup>31</sup> “Real *Angst* is rare,” arrives unbidden in no special circumstances, and is felt as strangling, stifling.<sup>32</sup> As Kandinsky said, “It is hardly pleasant to feel some concrete, wound-up automatism inside oneself.”<sup>33</sup> *Angst* yanks (*holt*) Dasein “back out of its entangled absorption in the ‘world,’” hauls (*holt*) Dasein “back from its falling prey,” and hurls (*wirft*) Dasein “back upon that for which it is anxious.”<sup>34</sup> Such is *Angst* as *Bruch* in Division I.

In Division II Heidegger describes the payoff, *Angst*’s reveal, *viz.*:

“the understanding [*Verstehen*] that follows the call of conscience [*Gewissensruf*] and that frees for death the possibility [*dem Tod die Möglichkeit freigibt*] of gaining power over the existence of Da-sein [*der Existenz des Daseins mächtig zu werden*]. . . . Together with the sober [*nüchternen*] *Angst* that brings us before our individualized potentiality-of-being [*Seinkönnen*], goes the unshakable joy [*gerüstete Freude*] in this possibility. In it Da-sein becomes free [*frei*] of the entertaining ‘incidentals’ that busy curiosity provides for itself.”<sup>35</sup>

The experience is a particular *Verstehen-Befinden*. The power-joy-freedom description accords with Nietzsche’s of *Inspiration*:

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<sup>30</sup> “Hallucinations are perceptions that spring into being in a primary way and are not transpositions or distortions of any genuine perception.” *General Psychopathology*, Vol. 1, 65. Sacks favors William James’s definition: “An hallucination is a strictly sensational form of consciousness, as good and true a sensation as if there were a real object there. The object happens to be not there, that is all.” *Hallucinations* ix fn. 1.

<sup>31</sup> *Diese »weiß nicht«, was es ist, davor sie sich ängstet. Sein und Zeit* 186.

<sup>32</sup> *es beengt und einem den Atem verschlägt. Ibid. figura etymologica: engen/Angst < IE angh-*.

<sup>33</sup> The Russian psychiatrist Victor Kandinsky as quoted in *General Psychopathology*, Vol. I 192.

<sup>34</sup> *Being and Time* (tr. Joan Stambaugh 1996) 176, 178, 175. *Sein und Zeit* 189, 191, 187.

<sup>35</sup> *Id.* 286. *Sein und Zeit* 310.

“The notion of revelation [*der Begriff Offenbarung*]*—*in the sense that suddenly, with ineffable assuredness [*Sicherheit*] and subtlety [*Feinheit*], something becomes *visible*, audible, something that shakes you to the core [*im Tiefsten erschüttert*] and bowls you over [*umwirft*]*—*provides a simple description of the facts of the matter. . . . Everything happens to the highest degree involuntarily [*im höchsten Grade unfreiwillig*], but as if in a rush of feeling free, of unconditionality, of power, of divinity [*aber wie in einem Sturme von Freiheits-Gefühl, von Unbedingtsein, von Macht, von Göttlichkeit*] . . .”<sup>36</sup>

As for *Göttlichkeits-Gefühl*, Jaspers writes of certain feeling-states which he has been describing that they “are found not only in the early experiences of schizophrenia. They also occur in toxic states (due to opium, mescaline, etc.) and they make a classic appearance in the brief moments *before* an epileptic seizure.” (my emphasis) He goes on to note that Dostoevski gave repeated descriptions of his epileptic auras, and quotes him thus:

“And I felt that heaven came down to earth and engulfed me; I experienced God as a deep and lofty truth; I felt invaded by Him. ‘Yes, there is a God,’ I shouted; after that I do not know what happened. You can have no idea of the marvellous feelings that pervade an epileptic a second *before* his attack. [my emphasis] . . . There are seconds when suddenly you feel the one eternal harmony that fills all experience. It is as if you suddenly feel the whole of nature within yourself and say: yes, this is the truth.”<sup>37</sup>

Elaborate forms of delirium and psychosis, Sacks writes,

“have a top-down as well as a bottom-up quality, like dreams. They are volcano-like eruptions from the ‘lower’ levels in the brain—the sensory association cortex, hippocampal circuits, and the limbic system—but they are also *shaped* [my emphasis] by the intellectual, emotional, and imaginative powers of the individual, and by the beliefs and style of the culture in which he is embedded.”<sup>38</sup>

The epileptic aura is neither delirium nor psychosis. But there is evidently a feeling-quality to the aura which takes its shape through some interaction between the volcano-like eruptions, the powers of the individual, and the beliefs and style of her culture.

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<sup>36</sup> *Ecce homo* (tr. Duncan Large 2007) 68-69. <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/EH-ZA-3> .

<sup>37</sup> *General Psychopathology, Vol. I* 116. It seems that Jaspers may have been slightly misled by Dostoevski’s account insofar as Jaspers follows him in describing aura as distinct from (‘before’) seizure. Rather, the aura is inchoate seizure, the prodromal feeling-phase of the convulsions about to occur.

<sup>38</sup> *Hallucinations* 197.



Sacks’s description of the generative dynamic of dreams and of hallucinations in delirium and psychosis – the bottom proposes and the top disposes – recalls Nietzsche’s understanding of Attic tragedy “as a Dionysian chorus which discharges itself over and over again in an Apolline world of images [*als den dionysischen Chor zu verstehen, der sich immer von neuem wieder in einer apollinischen Bilderwelt entladet*];” as “the Apolline appearances in which Dionysus objectifies himself [*Die apollinischen Erscheinungen in denen sich Dionysus objectiviert*].”<sup>39</sup> Tragedy is the union—a certain *Befinden-Verstehen*—of Dionysian upthrust and Apolline shaping-energy. For Apollo is “the god of all image-making energies,” *der Gott aller bildnerischen Kräfte*.<sup>40</sup>

In Heideggerian *Angst Die alltägliche Vertrautheit bricht in sich zusammen*. (SZ 189) ‘Everyday familiarity decoheres’ as if into an exploded-view diagram; relationality of all the pieces is conserved, but everything is out-of-play, disengaged, unmaterring (*ohne Belang, belanglos*).<sup>41</sup> We’re still in the *Bruch*-phase here. Jaspers remarks that “The elementary break-through of experiences, which are not understandable in their genesis, is manifested in unattached feelings. . . . These new and unfamiliar feelings press for some understanding on the part of the person who experiences them. Countless possibilities are contained in them which can be realised only when reflection, imagination and formative thought [*sc. the interpreter, die sekundäre Bearbeitung, Apolline energy*] have created some kind of coherent world.”<sup>42</sup> In the case of *Angst* when coherence is restored, the *Verfüllen* phase; accomplished, in Withy’s terms, by “the revelation of the world itself.”<sup>43</sup>

“I am revealed to myself,” she writes, “as a case of Dasein — as thrown projection, as a site of meaning-articulation and meaning-responsiveness.”<sup>44</sup> As the entity which *ist existierend seine Welt*, is its world existingly. (SZ 364) οὐδὲν τούτων ὅτι μὴ Ζεὺς Dasein.

Just here a certain delusion of reference may spring up. As Jaspers writes,

“From the phenomenological point of view the delusional experience is always the same . . . All primary experience of delusion is an experience of meaning . . . A basic feature of the first experience of delusional meaning is ‘the establishment

<sup>39</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings* (ed. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs, tr. Speirs 1999) 44, 46. *Die Geburt der Tragödie* ¶ 8.

<sup>40</sup> *Id.* 16. *Die Geburt der Tragödie* ¶ 1.

<sup>41</sup> *je suis au milieu des Choses, les innommables. Seul, sans mots, sans défenses, elles m’entourent, sous moi, derrière moi, au-dessus de moi. Elles n’exigent rien, elles ne s’imposent pas : elles sont là. . . . Et tout d’un coup, d’un seul coup, le voile se déchire, j’ai compris, j’ai vu.* Jean-Paul Sartre, *La Nausée* (1938) 164, 165.

<sup>42</sup> *General Psychopathology, Vol. I* 113, 115.

<sup>43</sup> “The Methodological Role of Angst” 17.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

of an unfounded reference'. Significance appears unaccountably, suddenly intruding into the psychic life."<sup>45</sup>

Nietzsche asserts that human understanding "has no further mission that might extend beyond the bounds of human life."<sup>46</sup> Any feeling of further mission, on this view, is an unfounded reference; as, e.g., of mission to be a light unto the universe. Thus Braver tells it: "As far as we know, we are the lone flickering of consciousness in all of existence. In this vast universe, all takes place in darkness, unknown and unexperienced, except in this clearing where things are lit up. Here there is a spark, the halo of a small, fragile light in which reality comes to know itself through us."<sup>47</sup> The delusion of reference here instanced is "to see, on all sides, the eyes of the universe trained, as through telescopes, on [Dasein's] thoughts and deeds."<sup>48</sup>

Leaving aside its liability to delusions of reference, we should also consider the possibility that the ontological insight of *Angst* is a concealment, a suppression.<sup>49</sup> Withy says that unlike ordinary strains of anxiety "angst has a positive valence."<sup>50</sup> The revelation of the unity of one's being as a site of meaning-articulation and meaning-responsiveness is accompanied by the rush of power-joy-freedom. But what is the fundamental movement of a meaning-articulating, meaning-responding entity? πάντες ἄνθρωποι . . . ὀρέγονται φύσει. *Sorge*-entities are constitutionally always out for something, *Auf-etwas-aus-sein*.<sup>51</sup> This inherent *orexis, conatus, Wille, Streben*, etc. is comprehended by Buddhism as *trṣṇā*, 'thirst,' desire. And rather than a source of power-joy-freedom *trṣṇā* is the *archē* of 'all our woe': *duḥkam duḥkam sarvam duḥkam*. The unity purportedly revealed in Heideggerian *Angst* is then just the marked aspect of our being. This marked aspect fills in as the whole and thereby masks the ruthless voracity of Dasein's mechanism, its churning automatism, *citta-vṛtti*.

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<sup>45</sup> *General Psychopathology, Vol. I* 103. Discussion of delusions of reference with many examples at 101-103.

<sup>46</sup> *Denn es giebt für jenen Intellekt keine weitere Mission, die über das Menschenleben hinausführte. On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense in The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings* 141.

<sup>47</sup> Lee Braver, "The Later Heidegger": <http://www.beyng.com/docs/LeeBraver-LaterHeidegger.html> .

<sup>48</sup> *von allen Seiten die Augen des Weltalls teleskopisch auf sein Handeln und Denken gerichtet zu sehen. On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense* 141.

<sup>49</sup> A favorite theme; see Katherine Withy, *Heidegger on Being Self-Concealing* (2022).

<sup>50</sup> "The Methodological Role of Angst" 4.

<sup>51</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*. GA 20: 408.

<https://www.beyng.com/gaselis/?vol=20.00&pg=408> .