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DISPOSEDNESS (*BEFINDLICHKEIT*)

DISPOSEDNESS IS THE formal title for the dimension of *affectivity* within the ontic concretions of DASEIN (i.e., human existence). It is a constitutive moment in the dynamic of the DISCLOSEDNESS of being, and it exemplifies Heidegger's unique approach in the *Being and Time* phase with regard to the simultaneity of an ontological and a quasi-anthropological understanding. Accordingly, we can draw from it both a directive for understanding the ontological condition of any manifestation of being whatsoever, particularly given its profound entanglement with TEMPORALITY, and a more specific directive for coming to terms with affectivity as a foundational factor in BEING-IN-THE-WORLD. This latter aspect of the notion's significance explains why disposedness is one of those concepts that have given rise to productive elaboration in relative independence of Heidegger's own endeavor. More or less regardless of what Heidegger was himself driving at in the *Being and Time* phase, one might take his account of MOODS – the prime ontic concretion of disposedness – as the kernel of a productive philosophical perspective on emotion and affect (see Elpidorou and Freeman 2015, Ratcliffe 2008, Ratcliffe 2013, Withy 2015c, Slaby 2015, for attempts to this end).

Heidegger introduces disposedness in Division I of *Being and Time* (§§29 and 30) as part of an analysis of being-in-the-world as one of the three equiprimordial modes of being-in (*In-sein als solches*). Given this, it is not off the mark to gloss it as a “ground floor” dimension of INTENTIONALITY, even though Heidegger abandoned the term intentionality for systematic reasons. Disposedness is the passive-receptive dimension of Dasein's “openness to the world” (SZ 137) – inextricable from and on the same footing as its active (*Verstehen*) and discursive (*Rede*) dimensions. As such, affectivity prepares and enables the concrete *directedness toward* . . . characteristic of INTENTIONALITY as usually understood (and retained in a transformed guise in Heidegger's earlier works): “*The mood has already disclosed, in every case, Being-in-the-world as a whole, and makes it possible first of all to direct oneself toward something*” (SZ 137 – italics in original). As a constitutive dimension of being-in, disposedness is equiprimordial with its other constitutive modes, UNDERSTANDING and DISCOURSE: “every understanding has its mood. Every attunement is one in which one understands . . . The understanding which has its mood . . . articulates itself with relation to its intelligibility in discourse” (SZ 335). This has to be kept in mind especially given the tendency in much scholarly work to pry apart and deal separately with presumed affective, cognitive, and agentic dimensions of human comportment.

Moreover, like everything else in the ontological make-up of Dasein, these interlocking modes of being-in are constitutively prone to FALLING (*Verfallen*), so that disposedness's ontic concretions – mundane instances of moods or other affective states – will for the most part unfold in their inauthentic forms (cf. SZ 335). When it comes to the modes of *disclosure* proper to disposedness, it will by and large be an “evasive turning away” (SZ 136), i.e., everyday affectivity discloses exactly by *not* revealing a content lucidly, but by way of distractions, by giving rise to shallow diversions, by keeping Dasein from seeing and grasping what goes on with

it in its situated existence. Most notably is this the case with the basic moods ANXIETY and BOREDOM – more of which below.

These characteristics already indicate that Dasein is never *not* in the mode of disposedness – it is constantly attuned to its surroundings in certain ways and thus specifically disposed; what happens in this dimension of its being is always only a change of one mode of affectedness or disposedness into another, never a change from a state that is without mood to one that is with mood or vice versa (cf. SZ 134). Heidegger emphasizes the ubiquity and depth of moods also when discussing the nature of a “fundamental mood” (*Grundstimmung*) of Dasein, in his lecture course *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (cf. GA29/30:§17):

attunements are *not side-effects*, but are something which in advance determine our being with one another. It seems as though an attunement is in each case already there, so to speak, like an atmosphere in which we first immerse ourselves in each case and which then attunes us through and through. It does not merely seem so, it is so; and, faced with this fact, we must dismiss the psychology of feelings, experiences and consciousness. It is a matter of *seeing* and *saying* what is happening here. (GA29/30:100)

This is quite a mouthful, so we will have to consider carefully whether Heidegger’s understanding of affectivity as both a foundational dimension of existence and an alternative to all sorts of psychological or mentalistic approaches can live up to its billing.

An intuitive first route to a workable understanding of disposedness begins by taking its hints from the term’s verbal meaning in the German original. Heidegger adopted the German word for disposedness – *Befindlichkeit* – as a term of art, by way of a nominalization of the verb *sich befinden*. This can mean – in a somewhat old-fashioned usage – “feeling a certain way” with a close association to “faring so and so” (and this is no doubt what Heidegger draws on when he chooses this term to denote the overall dimension of affectivity). But the dominant literal meaning of *sich befinden* is first of all, and quite simply: *being somewhere* – being located or situated, as in, for instance, “Ich befinde mich in Paris” (“I am in Paris”). Thus, when one takes this as the core meaning, one might just render *Befindlichkeit* as “situatedness”: finding oneself *right here*, at this particular place, in these concrete circumstances. However, there is also another, less common dimension of the term’s colloquial meaning, namely “to decide, determine, deem as,” as in “für gut befinden” (“to deem something good”), which can be used to refer to explicit acts of evaluative judgment but also denote a more tacit mode of “finding something so and so” (used in this key, *befinden* has a slightly snobbish ring to it, just as “deem as” sounds a little more snobbish than “find so and so” in English). All these semantic and connotational dimensions play into the philosophical concept of *Befindlichkeit* as Heidegger envisioned it.

Given all this, it is not at all off the mark – although quite odd-sounding in English – to translate *Befindlichkeit* as *findingness* or even *so-findingness* (as John Haugeland once suggested; see Haugeland 2013, 196, and Haugeland 2000, 54). Even more crude English renditions become understandable, as for instance Hubert Dreyfus’s “where we’re at ness” (Dreyfus 1991, 168). For those who prefer it plain, “situatedness” works well enough as a first take, albeit yielding little specificity. A somewhat ill-advised attempt to find a literal turn of phrase in English that covers a similar segment of real-life cases was “state of mind,” as suggested by Macquarrie and Robinson in their 1962 translation of *Being and Time*. But an invocation of “mind,” even as part of a standing phrase like this, sits uneasily with Heidegger’s anti-

mentalism, particularly given the fact that his anti-mentalism is quite prominent exactly in his discussion of *Befindlichkeit*. A much better gloss is “disposedness” (Blattner 2006) – a term that captures much of the complexity of *Befindlichkeit* as an attitudinal complex combining experiential openness (or closed-off-ness), evaluative orientation, and action-readiness. One should note that “disposedness” is true to the Aristotelian roots of Heidegger’s concept of *Befindlichkeit* – in his lecture course *The Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, Heidegger glosses Aristotle’s *diathesis* – usually understood as ‘disposition’ – as *Befindlichkeit* (see GA18:122). The conceptual lineage ignited by Aristotle’s term reaches all the way to Foucault’s concept of a *dispositif of power* – an arrangement of heterogeneous elements coalescing into an operative formation at a certain place and time (see, e.g., Foucault 1995).

“Attunement,” as suggested by Joan Stambaugh in her 1996 translation of *Being and Time*, is also a decent gloss, as it captures some of the literal meaning of the German term *Stimmung* (mood) in its contemporary usage. Although “attunement” enjoys a wide acceptance among scholars, this term is geared more closely to *Befindlichkeit*’s ontic concretions – moods and other specific affective compartments – and less to the formal ontological dimension of the concept. Attunement surely has phenomenological plausibility, as it evokes a spectrum of possible ways of being in tune (or out of tune) with one’s surroundings (a dimension well-captured in the German term for mood: *Stimmung*; see Wellbery 2003 for an excellent history of the concept). In light of this tableau of terminological options, I decline to opt for one favored English term and recommend a context-sensitive conceptual practice instead. *Affectivity* might be used to refer to the general dimension, *attunement* is good in talking about specific manifestations of moods or mood-like affective states, *disposedness* is excellent for getting at the conceptual range of *Befindlichkeit* and at its temporal logic (and this translation will be used as the default option), and *findingness*, while understandably shunned by language purists, drives home the sense of *radical situatedness* that Heidegger wishes to invoke with his choice of term (cf. Slaby 2017b).

In the remainder of this entry, I will do two things. First, I will continue to discuss the main textual passages on disposedness in Division I of *Being and Time*. This is in order to present an informed take on three interlocking “roles” that Heidegger predominantly assigns to disposedness (some of this has already surfaced above). Second, I will relate this standard interpretation to what is – presumably – most crucial about it in Heidegger’s own perspective: the relationship of disposedness to time and temporality, which gets elaborated only in Division II of *Being and Time*, in passages much less discussed by Heidegger-inspired philosophers of emotion. As we will see, the best way to understand – and productively continue with – a Heideggerian approach to affectivity is to take affectivity’s temporal character more fully into one’s stride (see Slaby 2015).

Against the background of Dasein’s constantly being-attuned, three closely related core characteristics of disposedness come into view. First, and most importantly from an ontological perspective, disposedness in the sense of “findingness” discloses Dasein’s FACTICITY or “THROWNNESS” – the inevitability of its factual being, the brute “that it is and has to be” (cf. SZ 134). Most conspicuously in “negative” moods, findingness is the becoming-manifest of the *burdensome* facticity of one’s own being, i.e., that one has no choice but to *be* here and now as this particular entity (with these and that characteristics etc.) in this particular (i.e., specifically constrained and limited) space of possibilities. “Thrownness” refers to Dasein’s concrete situatedness insofar as it is tied up with and determines its “having to be” (cf. Withy 2014). This again shows why “findingness” is the appropriate ontological notion for the existential

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dimension of mood and emotion: moods pertain to the various ways in which Dasein *finds* “itself” – i.e., “comes to itself” as situated amidst, and itself part of, factual circumstances with which it has to put up in one way or another; one might speak of “ways of finding oneself in the world” (cf. Ratcliffe 2013). One can make a case for “disposition” or “disposedness” here as well, but not without reinterpreting these terms in the more directly spatial sense in which Aristotle’s *diathesis* is to be understood.

Importantly, the way in which findingness discloses facticity is not explicit awareness, but rather – at least for the most part – a peculiar “turning-away” (*Abkehr*). Saddled by a gloomy mood, a dash of sadness for example, Dasein will most probably not openly acknowledge its brute and enigmatic facticity (the *naked* “there” of its being), but instead tend to evade this potential existential insight by laboriously turning away from it and onto some entity or other in the world. There are at least two noteworthy examples in Heidegger’s oeuvre for how this pervasive “turning-away” unfolds, and they both hint at the fundamental role of findingness for the being of Dasein, i.e., they are used by Heidegger as illustrations of how ontic moods reflect ontological findingness and thus reveal the outline of the fundamental mode of being of Dasein. The first is the seminal exposition of anxiety in *Being and Time* (§40); the second is the in-depth phenomenology of boredom in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1929/30).

To anxiety Heidegger grants a crucial methodological role in the analytic of Dasein (in this, he is taking important hints from Kierkegaard). Anxiety is a mode of disposedness understood as attunement in which the ontological structure of EXISTENCE (CARE) is brought out in a clear manner. However, and crucially, in everyday life anxiety unfolds such that its very structure is for the most part evaded. It is part of anxiety’s everyday guise that Dasein constantly flees from it so that the insight into Dasein’s predicament that is offered by anxiety is *not* confronted head-on. The same goes for boredom. Although ultimately disclosing the meaninglessness and ungroundedness of (either a certain span or even all of) one’s momentary existence, boredom does not bring this to explicit recognition. Instead, nascent boredom will bring us for the most part to laboriously struggle to distract ourselves, busy ourselves somehow so as to not face up to the existential insight original to this mood (cf. Slaby 2010). To be sure, when bored, Dasein *is* confronted, deep down, with what is going on, but it won’t let itself be brought to acknowledge this affective “message” in a direct manner.

This is what Heidegger means when he says moods disclose, for the most part, in the mode of evasion or “turning away.” This makes it clear that the way disposedness discloses facticity is a form of “having manifest” radically different from – and deeper than – any kind of reflective self-awareness. The brute facticity of Dasein’s existential predicament is somehow “there” in mood, but not as a cognitive or perceptual presence but as the “enigma of naked being” lurking underneath all superficial distractions:

even if Dasein is ‘assured’ in its belief about its ‘whither’, or if, in a spirit of rational enlightenment, it supposes itself to know about its ‘whence’, all this counts for nothing as against the phenomenal fact of the case: for the mood brings Dasein before the ‘that-it-is’ of its ‘there’, which, as such, stares it in the face with the inexorability of an enigma. (SZ 136)

Like a silent scream of horror in the depths of our being, the awareness of facticity is what we usually do not make clear to ourselves. But it is still “there” at all times, just usually drowned under a layer of laboriousness, talkativeness, or some kind of distracting mental activity. Still,

the enigmatic facticity that is us stands ready to burst forth at any moment. Only in few and outstanding instances of our affective lives – authentic anxiety and profound boredom among them – the enigma of our being is lit up lucidly as what it is. Only then will Dasein come face-to-face with the “naked there” of its facticity, which thereby gets revealed – in the last instance – as radical ungroundedness, as the utter contingency of existence.

The second fundamental characteristic of disposedness in the sense of findingness was mentioned above already: Findingness has always already disclosed being-in-the-world *as a whole*. And only on the basis of this initial holistic disclosure is any directedness toward something specific at all possible. In virtue of this holistic character of its way of disclosure, findingness is the backdrop to all specific modes of directedness, in the manner of a simultaneous disclosure of world, one’s own being, and one’s BEING-WITH others (cf. SZ 137; see Ratcliffe 2013 for elaboration). A key emphasis here is on “*as a whole*” – i.e., not this or that entity or aspect of the world is revealed as being such and such in findingness, but the world and Dasein’s being-in it as a whole gets specifically disclosed (this is reminiscent of Wittgenstein’s remark: “The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man,” *Tractatus*, 6.43). One can see here that this second point is basically already implied in the first characteristic, i.e., that findingness discloses facticity. Consider anxiety again: how might the facticity of *our being* be disclosed other than by lighting up the *entire structure* of our current dwelling in the world? What is also evident from this is the way that self-disclosure and world-disclosure are inextricable in findingness. Self and world are “there” only in constitutive mutuality (cf. Slaby and Stephan 2008). Outside of artificial and belated cognitive maneuvers, there is no self-disclosure without world-disclosure and no world-disclosure that is not equally self-disclosure (self-disclosure here meant in the non-cognitive way just hinted at). Crucially, the peculiar way that the “self” figures in disclosure is provided for by affectivity. This is because *being affected* amounts to this: a non-reflective mode of self-involvement, a *being-brought-back* to oneself (see, e.g., SZ §68). In this more precise, holistic, and *self-involving* manner, affectivity is pervasive in Dasein’s disclosedness.

The third fundamental characteristic of Heideggerian disposedness – disposedness as affectivity – directly continues the second point. The way the world is encountered in our everyday practical dealings (*Besorgen*) is crucially determined by affectivity:

existentially, affectivity (*Befindlichkeit*) implies a disclosive submission to the world, out of which we encounter something that matters to us. Indeed from the ontological point of view we must as a general principle leave the primary discovery of the world to ‘bare mood’. (SZ 137–38)

The encountering entities amidst one’s projects and dealings unfolds in the form of “being affected by . . . ,” i.e., we are bothered by the unhandy, stricken with fear by the dangerous, angered by the offensive, elated by the good, or contented by what works seamlessly (and so on). These various modes of being-affected by aspects of the current situation are enabled by a broad range of prior attunements or “affectabilities” (*Angänglichkeit*), such as fearfulness, irritability, shamefulness, and so on. Thus, Heidegger construes affectivity broadly as an interplay of general background attunements (i.e., ground-level modes of world-disclosure) with more focused, situational foreground affects (roughly, specifically directed intentional affective compartments). A basic enabling structure consists of various modes of affectability on the basis of which concrete affects – specific ways of being-affected-by – take shape in line with current

circumstance. This is the way in which Heidegger construes how disposedness constitutes Dasein's fundamental openness to the world, namely that it is articulated in a range of distinct *dimensions of affectability* in terms of which entities are encountered in everyday life. This marks the way in which the world is always already disclosed in general ways – namely, in terms of dimensions of *possibility*: as that which *has the potential* to scare, to please, to anger, to elate, to bore, or embarrass us (cf. Ratcliffe 2008). On the flip side, disposedness equals the respective “how” of Dasein's current dwelling in the world, in the sense of the multiplicity of ways in which its own being is an issue for it – how the world comes to specifically matter to it.

This will all become more clear when we explicate the specifically temporal character of disposedness. Right before he embarks upon the quest of a temporal reinterpretation of disposedness, Heidegger presents the upshot of his initial characterization of it by way of a succinct summary to start §68b; we can use it here to sum up the key points discussed thus far:

the “there” gets equiprimordially disclosed by one's mood in every case – or gets closed off by it. Having a mood brings Dasein *face to face* with its thrownness in such a manner that its thrownness is not known as such but disclosed far more primordially in ‘how one is’. Existentially, ‘being-thrown’ means finding oneself in some attunement or other (*sich so oder so befinden*). One's disposedness (*Befindlichkeit*) is therefore based upon thrownness. My mood represents the specific way in which I am primarily that thrown entity. (SZ 339–40)

All the crucial points are in there: Moods disclose the facticity of Dasein's thrownness not in the manner of cognition but in a more primordial way, i.e., through “how it is for one” – which might as well – and usually does – amount to a kind of closing-off of the THERE (*Da*). The precise meaning of the term *Befindlichkeit* is made clear: *to find oneself “here” in this way or that*, so that one can say that mood is the specific way in which I am the thrown (factually situated) entity that I am. Quite fundamentally, then, moods are the ways of *our being*. This resonates with a gripping passage in the *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, where Heidegger explicitly discusses the term “way” (*Weise*) as in “way of being,” stating that “way” is meant in the sense of a melody that literally “sets the tone” for our being:

it is clear that attunements [*Stimmungen*] are not merely something at hand. They themselves are precisely a fundamental manner and fundamental way of being, indeed of being-there [*Da-sein*], and this always directly includes being with one another. Attunements are ways of the being-there of *Da-sein*, and thus ways of being-away. An attunement is a way, not merely a form or mode, but a way [*Weise*] – in the sense of a melody that does not merely hover over the so-called proper being at hand of man, but that sets the tone for such being, i.e., attunes and determines the manner and way [*Art und Weise*] of his being. (GA29/30: 100–01)

With this, we are now well prepared to enter into the temporal reinterpretation of disposedness that Heidegger conducts in Division II of *Being and Time* (see Blattner 2005 for a good general take on temporality in *Being and Time*). We can start from Haugeland's memorable gloss of disposedness in the form of a sigh: “Well, I guess we'll just have to go on from *here*” (Haugeland 2013, 234). Being in an affective state amounts to finding oneself “here,” at this particular juncture, confronted by what has been, what is factual, what has come to be so that we have no choice but to go on from *here* – an ungrounded yet factually inevitable givenness disclosed by

moods. This “here,” from which, alas, we *have* to go on, and which is specifically and saliently disclosed in affectivity, has a straightforward temporal interpretation. It presents the dimension of the past, more precisely of our “having been.” There is a clear link between facticity and the past – even already on the verbal level: literally, a fact is that which “has been made,” what *has come to be* (Heidegger accordingly speaks of “beenness”). Facticity can be construed as what happened or has been brought about so that it is now there, forming the inevitable backdrop, enabling condition and starting point for whatever will happen from now on. This is what affectivity discloses: the past in its continued weighing on – and setting the stage for – whatever will unfold or be done from now on. This is what the term “thrownness” makes vivid, both the burdensome character of finding oneself situated – in Heidegger’s more precise terms: “delivered over” to a situation – and the inevitability of having to go on *from here* (cf. Withy 2014). The “here” indicates what we have factually become (past) so that we ended up where we’re currently at (present) and thus what we will inevitably have to “drag along” when moving forward (future).

In order to grasp the specific temporal character of disposedness, we have to combine this with the peculiar way in which modes of attunement are indeed *self*-disclosive. This is what “being affected by something” amounts to: something in the world, immediately present or looming in the future, becomes manifest – impresses itself – in such a way that it makes me “roll back upon myself,” so to speak. My factual being (what *I have been* and thus, in a sense, still am) dawns on me. This unfolds in such a way that the present encounter – either in an instant or in a longer sequence of becoming attuned – brings home to me affectively what I cannot deny I am. My existential beenness (past) weighs on me by forming the backdrop against which I encounter whatever thereby comes to matter – *disposing* me toward specific ways of orienting or positioning myself in the world. “Weighing on” here has the double sense of factual and affectual: by presenting an inevitable givenness, the concrete past is *felt* as a weight, as a burden in moment-to-moment existence. In this way, the existential past (beenness) is highlighted in attunement, yet this is so only in dynamic entwinement with the other temporal dimensions, present and future. Beenness only becomes manifest in this way as already *summoned toward* understanding projection, and is thus disclosed according to its relevance for prospective ways of going on (here, again, “disposedness” works well as it gets at this complex temporal dynamic of *Befindlichkeit*). Heidegger’s account is here reminiscent of Husserl’s construal of temporality in terms of the coordinated interplay of retention, protention, and primal impression (see Husserl 2001a). Yet, this interplay of temporal dimensions is transposed by Heidegger from the plane of an individual’s experience to the unfolding of worldly events at large. *Everything* in the world adheres to this tripartite temporal dynamics, not just individual streams of consciousness. Of course, on Heidegger’s account, everything *is* ultimately only in relation to – i.e., as disclosed by – Dasein (cf. SZ 230).

Thus, affectively disclosed thrownness is the burdensome “drag” that grounds projection (*Entwurf*), i.e., the inevitability of projection unfolding within a *factual* space of possibilities that one – individuals, nations, ages, institutions, etc. – cannot shake free of. (Affective) disposedness reveals the daunting inevitability of factual being, the acknowledgement of which inauthentic everyday Dasein will most likely have already evaded in diverting absorption in some worldly issue or other. In light of these characteristics, disposedness must be understood both in terms of individual comportment and in a historical-collective manner, and it is at the point of juncture between individual and collective existential temporality where things get particularly interesting.

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Given this, it should now be obvious enough why Heidegger's account can serve as an excellent starting point for philosophical accounts of affectivity, and affective world-disclosure in particular (see Slaby and Stephan 2008, Withy 2015c). The perspective on temporality that is coded into the deep structure of affective comportment helps to relate even putatively fleeting affective states to more encompassing situational and worldly conditions, and moreover in a dynamical fashion that always points ahead of the concrete "now" into essentially open yet always already pre-fashioned dimensions of possibility.

Various potential ways of elaborating this core conception present themselves. For instance, one might focus on the way a collectively instituted historical facticity is effectively shaping habits, ways of being, institutions, and objective life chances in the present (cf. Ahmed 2007). This might be spelled out for an entire nation or culture, or for more circumscribed domains of practice (such as scientific disciplines, political movements, specific institutions, or traditions). Taking the temporality of disposedness as a starting point can help to bring out the extent to which human affectivity is inextricable from collective historicity, while it at the same time it lets us reckon with powerful tendencies and efforts to prevent this circumstance from surfacing explicitly (as there likely will be rampant inauthenticity on both the individual and collective plane). In this key, the philosophical study of affectivity might be mobilized as a critical means for rendering visible and making vivid ongoing histories of oppression, of violence, and their enduring consequences, and also as a means for revealing layers of distrust, dishonesty, and inauthenticity within our collective lives (see, e.g., Freeman 2015). Philosophical affect theories that stay true to this aspect of Heidegger's groundwork – while they are well advised to steer clear of some other aspects of it (see Slaby 2017a) – will not be detached, depoliticized, merely descriptive endeavors. Rather, they will concern the concrete fabric of particular strands of historical becoming, and aim at critical, transformative forms of understanding.

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REFERENCES IN HEIDEGGER

- Disposedness** SZ 133–42, 148, 160–62, 187–91, 343–46; GA18:49, 53–55, 95–97, 163–64, 170–71, 181, 192, 242–45, 259–62; GA27:125, 328–31; GA64: 33–36; GA71:220–21
- Disposedness and thrownness** SZ 135; GA27:328–31
- Temporality of/and disposedness** SZ 339–46; GA64:111; GA71:218
- Stimmung (mood)** SZ 133–40; GA29/30:89–103

DISPOSITION (STIMMUNG). SEE MOOD.

DISPOSITION (FÜGUNG). SEE FITTINGNESS.