

**Experiencing Factual Life in Its Originality
Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religion and His Hermeneutic Turn
Against the Background of His Confrontation of Life-Philosophy
and Early Christianity
on the Way to *Being and Time***

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Abstract: The paper attempts to show the significance of Heidegger's phenomenology of religion as an important step on his way to his *magnum opus*. In particular, I wish to exhibit traits characteristic of, and to prove decisive for, Heidegger's path of thinking in terms of his confrontation with the leading philosophical tendencies of the age, thereby centring discussion around the reciprocal connections of phenomenology, historicism, hermeneutics, and *Lebensphilosophie*. Specifically, I will argue that it was with an eye to, and drawing upon, his previous understanding of religion and religious life, as well as of the relation between faith and theology, that Heidegger was to conceive of philosophy and its relation to human existence in *Being and Time*. He performed his hermeneutic turn through a reciprocal fusion and radicalization of phenomenology and life-philosophy – an operation permeated by the attempt to return to factual life and factual life experience in its originality. Rather than consciousness and its intentional acts, as conceived by Husserl, the thing itself philosophy had to return to was for Heidegger factual life. – The argument will be elaborated in two steps. First, I will sketch an outline of Heidegger's development in the post-war years; second, against the background of this sketch I will focus more specifically on his 1920/21 course on the *Phenomenology of Religion* by selecting and highlighting some of the features I think are salient for Heidegger's thinking no less than for the *Sache selbst*.

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Introduction

Martin Heidegger's thinking has had a durable and powerful influence not only upon the philosophy of the 20th Century, but upon a number of disciplines within the humanities as well. One of the disciplines that Heidegger influenced most was undoubtedly theology – both Catholic and Protestant. Indeed, we have reason to say that this was the discipline that Heidegger's thinking affected most.¹

The relevance of Heidegger's thought for theology is shown by the fact that both Catholic and Protestant thinkers have been able to find dimensions of his thought fitting to their world-view and to be adopted or drawn upon in several important respects. Those dimensions have of course been different according to confessional concerns and interests as these have taken shape, and come to be traditionally developed, during the past centuries. While Protestant theologians have tended to draw upon the early Heidegger's analysis of human existence, and in turning to the later Heidegger they became fascinated by the philosopher of the language-event, Catholic theologians, or theologically interested Catholic philosophers, have primarily been attracted by Heidegger's coupling of the ontological approach with the transcendental-philosophical method and his incessant pursual of the Being question.²

It is important to realize however that there is a reciprocal influence operating here: the question of how Heidegger's thought – and

¹ "Surely, theology was the discipline," wrote Otto Pöggeler in the eighties, "in which the impulses coming from Heidegger proved to have the most decisive effects." (Otto Pöggeler, *Heidegger und die hermeneutische Philosophie* [Freiburg/München: Alber, 1983], 414.)

² See Richard Schaeffler, *Frömmigkeit des Denkens? Martin Heidegger und die katholische Theologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), X; Alfred Jäger, *Gott. Nochmals Martin Heidegger* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1978), 84. See also John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas. An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), 95: "Rahner, Lotz, and Coreth have all attempted to develop a transcendental Thomism which goes back not only to Kant but specifically to Being and Time [...] They have tried to root St. Thomas' notion of *esse* in an inherent dynamism of the intellect." Caputo called to mind that "[i]n a brief but quite illuminating study of Heidegger's 'existential philosophy', written in 1940, Karl Rahner argues, in keeping with Heidegger, for the importance of taking up the question of Being from a transcendental standpoint," the reason being that "an access to Being through the human subject must first be established." See further Caputo, "Heidegger and Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 274, 279f., 284.

from time to time exactly which dimension(s) of it – influenced theology should be integrated by the reverse issue concerning the decisive import of theology for Heidegger's philosophical beginnings and his whole path of thinking. The latter point was openly acknowledged by Heidegger himself later in the fifties in a dialogue of *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. In a retrospect remark he stated here quite clearly that without his theological origins he would never have come onto the path of thought, that is, philosophy,¹ a remark which we see cropping up in a recently published autobiographical passage already in the second part of the thirties (GA66, 415). But even earlier, in a letter to Karl Löwith on August 19, 1921, Heidegger made reference to his “intellectual and wholly factic origin” in terms of being a “Christian theologian”.² His theological origins might then be, on a first approach, the reason for (and the cause of) Heidegger's subsequent impact on theology.

In the above-mentioned dialogue Heidegger made a further point which is equally important for the purposes of the present paper. He mentioned that it was also in the course of his early theological studies that he first came across and grew familiar with the term “hermeneutics” – a term he found somewhat later in Dilthey too, who, in like manner as he himself did, derived it from his own theological studies, especially out of his concern with the work of Schleiermacher.³

Heidegger's theological origins are then relevant not only for his becoming a philosopher in general, but also, more especially, for the specific kind of hermeneutical attitude he was to adopt in philosophy and

¹ *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 7th ed. (Pfullingen: Neske, 1982, hereafter: US) 96. (Heidegger's works will be cited with abbreviations. The *Gesamtausgabe* volumes will be cited as GA followed by volume and page numbers, other works will be cited with full bibliographical data at their first occurrence, then with abbreviations. If there are references to both the original German text and the corresponding English translation the German pagination and the English pagination are separated by a slash. For example: “GA24, 31/23,” the number before the slash indicating the German edition, the one after the slash the English edition. Other abbreviations: WS = Wintersemester; SS = Sommersemester.)

² See “Drei Briefe Martin Heideggers an Karl Löwith”, ed. Hartmut Tietjen, in *Zur philosophischen Aktualität Heideggers*, eds. Dietrich Papenfuss and Otto Pöggeler, vol. 2: *Im Gespräch der Zeit* (Frankfurt/Main: Klostermann 1990), 29.

³ As it turns out, Heidegger was registered as participant of a course of Gottfried Hoberg on “Hermeneutik mit Geschichte der Exegese” during the summer semester 1910; see *Heidegger-Jahrbuch*, vol. 1: *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*, eds. Alfred Denker, Hans-Helmuth Gander, Holger Zaborowski (Freiburg/München: Alber, 2004), 14.

to develop in detail. Seen in the perspective suggested by the confessionally specified Christian theological influences, the provisional end point of his youthful itinerary, *Being and Time* might even be claimed to attempt to bring together the Catholic and the Protestant traditions – the former suggesting the ontological perspective characteristic of neo-Scholasticism and dating back to Heidegger's early reading of Brentano's dissertation *Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles* as well as of Carl Braig's *Vom Sein: Abriß der Ontologie*, while the latter, extremely critical of Scholasticism, is shifting the focus from an ontological perspective upon the divine order and harmony of the world on to the individual believer's living or enacting his/her faith, thereby drawing heavily on Luther's critique of Aristotle and taking up motives in St. Paul, Augustine, Pascal, Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Dilthey. Indeed, the explicit program of *Being and Time*, the elaboration of a fundamental ontology in terms of an existential analytic of the human being in an effort to retrieve and work out the Being question, may even be construed as making an attempt to unite and forge both traditions. Roughly, fundamental ontology as the discipline destined to elaborate the Being-question may be seen to be of Catholic origin, whereas the existential analytic, as a continuation and radicalization of the early hermeneutics of facticity, may be traced back to (and seen to take up and radicalize in a specifically formalized and de-theologized manner) the Luther-Kierkegaardian sort of Protestant tradition centring around subjectivity and the believer's existential enactment of faith.

My aim, in the present paper, is to show the significance of Heidegger's phenomenology of religion as an important step on his way to his *magnum opus*. In particular, I wish to exhibit traits characteristic of, and to prove decisive for, Heidegger's path of thinking in terms of his confrontation with the leading philosophical tendencies of the age, thereby centring discussion around the reciprocal connections of phenomenology, historicism, hermeneutics, and *Lebensphilosophie*. Specifically, I will argue that it was with an eye to, and drawing upon, his previous understanding of religion and religious life, as well as of the relation between faith and theology, that Heidegger was to conceive of philosophy and its relation to human existence in *Being and Time*.

I will elaborate my argument in two steps. First, I will sketch an outline of Heidegger's development in the post-war years; second, against the background of this sketch I will focus more specifically on his 1920/21 course on the *Phenomenology of Religion* by selecting and



Borbála Varga: *Unclothing*

highlighting some of the features I think are salient for Heidegger's thinking no less than for the *Sache selbst*.

I. Heidegger's Philosophical Development After World War I

It was due to a radical re-orientation – a veritable turn, as it were – going on in Heidegger's thinking right after World War I that he was to find his own voice and to start the gradual move toward *Being and Time*. Educated and grown up in the Scholastic tradition, but extremely responsive to new logical-epistemological ways of philosophizing, Heidegger started out as a talented young student, committed in his academic writings first and foremost to mainstream anti-psychologism, characteristic of contemporary philosophy, as represented by neo-Kantianism and phenomenology. The philosophical perspective of anti-psychologism reposed mainly on purely logical grounds, it was however, although perhaps indirectly, in full harmony with the Scholastic defence of the objectivity of truth and thereby with the apologetic tendency of anti-modernist Catholic thinking. Heidegger's critique of psychologism, and his unconditional early adherence to anti-psychologism in general, can, in this perspective, be seen to convey a sense of apologetic interest and effort.¹ Although it is plausible to speak about quite a few proto-hermeneutic motifs in Heidegger's early academic writings as well as about various anticipatory signs of what was to come (e.g., Heidegger's appreciation of Duns Scotus' concept of *haecceitas* as conveying a sense of "proximity to real life" and being a "primal determination of living reality" in his habilitation work² clearly suggests a growing sense for individuality, leading all the way, through the thematization of factual life and, together with it, of the phenomenon called *Selbstwelt* in the

¹ See Holger Zaborowski, "'Herkunft aber bleibt stets Zukunft.' Anmerkungen zur religiösen und theologischen Dimension des Denkweges Martin Heideggers bis 1919," in *Heidegger-Jahrbuch*, vol. 1, 149.

² GA1, 203, 253. Dilthey was to exercise a long-lasting influence on Heidegger thinking. His turn to "life" can be understood as a turn to "facticity" and to individuality; for an interesting occurrence of the term *haecceitas*, used pretty much in the later Heideggerian sense of facticity and *Dasein*, see Wilhelm Dilthey, *Grundlegung der Wissenschaften vom Menschen, der Gesellschaft und der Geschichte*, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 19, eds. Hans Johach, Frithjof Rodi (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 348: "In der Struktur des Lebens äußert sich eine individuelle Tatsächlichkeit, eine *haecceitas*, welche vom Verstande nicht als notwendig aufgezeigt werden kann."

post-war years, up to Dasein's *Jemeinigkeit* in *Being and Time*) the prevailing atmosphere that permeates those writings remains nonetheless a Platonizing-*wissenschaftstheoretisch* one.

This outlook fades away soon after the war and gives way to a radical re-orientation. Rather than continue working comfortably in the flow of some of the contemporary philosophical tendencies as a devoted follower – relying with confidence on their presuppositions and striving, at best, at contributing to their further advancement –, Heidegger embarks upon a radical undertaking of re-examining the roots of those tendencies. Thereby he sets out on, and becomes soon and indeed life-long engaged in, an overall confrontation with the whole Western philosophical tradition. This move marks the point of his becoming an autonomous thinker: Heidegger ceases to be dependent on the prior (and, by necessity, naive) acceptance of philosophical positions whatsoever. Instead, his efforts are directed to inquire into as well as to reappropriate the fundamental presuppositions underlying the most various and even contrasting philosophical positions. This operation is given the name of destruction; it means “a critical process in which the traditional concepts, which at first must necessarily be employed, are deconstructed down to the sources from which they were drawn.” It is “a de-constructing of traditional concepts carried out in a historical recursion to the tradition... not a negation of the tradition or a condemnation of it as worthless; quite the contrary, it signifies precisely a positive appropriation of tradition.”¹

It was with the help of the strategy of destruction that Heidegger turned to re-examine, and did indeed re-appropriate, the philosophical trend he felt most close and committed to from the very beginning, that is, Husserlian phenomenology. In a sense it might be said that the strategy of destruction itself derived from, and was a radicalization of, phenomenology's innermost claim: Back to the things themselves! – a weapon, as it were, grown out of, and immediately turned against, its producer. It turned out to be a tool with which Heidegger turned phenomenology against itself – by showing, e.g., characters in it that proved to be “unphenomenological” – and, eventually performed its hermeneutical transformation. Given the importance of this point, it will be of use to develop it in some detail.

The Hermeneutical Transformation of Phenomenology: A Reciprocal Radicalization of Phenomenology and Life-Philosophy

¹ GA24, 31/23. See also e.g. GA59, 35, 180ff.; GA17, 117ff.

Heidegger's appropriation of Husserl's phenomenology was far from being a neutral assimilation; rather, it showed from the very beginning a highly critical attitude prompted by the simultaneous assimilation of some leading motifs of life-philosophy. Appropriation and transformation were apparently going on hand in hand – which is a good example of Heidegger's own theory of the fore-structure of understanding in *Being and Time*. Seeking to confront the leading philosophical movements, Heidegger's strategy strived to uncover what he perceived to be the common deficiencies inherent in the philosophical positions of the day – positions that often stood in sharpest opposition to each other. Epistemologically oriented scientific philosophy is criticized for not being scientific enough, life philosophy is accused of failing to grasp life itself, existential philosophy is charged with not seizing upon existence, historicism is called to account for losing sight of history, and, last but not least, phenomenology is accused of not being phenomenological enough – indeed, of being “unphenomenological.” Heidegger's devastating critique of contemporary trends of philosophizing employed thereby the strategy of taking them seriously, taking them at their word, as it were, and then uncovering the extent to which they can be shown to fail to do justice to their own claims. In what follows I will focus discussion on phenomenology.

While Heidegger's remarks on phenomenology in his academic writings scarcely amount to more than a faithful recapitulation, exposition, or adherence to its basic tenets the post-war observations display a tendency toward a comprehensive confrontation of its basic concepts and theoretical fundamentals. WS 1919/20, bearing the title *The Fundamental Problems of Phenomenology* begins with the following characteristic statement: “For phenomenology, the fundamental problem of phenomenology – its most acute problem, a problem that can never be extinguished, its most original and decisive problem – is phenomenology itself.”¹ Phenomenology should, for Heidegger, not just occasionally be concerned with itself. On the contrary: if it is to be radical enough it should bring to bear its criticism also upon itself – indeed, primarily *against itself* (see GA58, 6, 145, 237).

Heidegger heartily welcomed the innermost effort of phenomenology, the proclamation of returning to “the things themselves,” as well as what it implied: the suspending of traditional philosophical strategies, the dismissal of the authorities, the preference of

¹ GA58, 1. See also GA9, 36.

description over construction, in short: the effort to bring out the phenomena by going back to the original sources of intuition conceived of in terms of the only legitimizing instance for philosophical statements and theories. Indeed, phenomenology, thus conceived, became for Heidegger identical with philosophy. From the earliest post-war period up to his latest years he repeatedly maintained phenomenology was not just a philosophical “trend”, one “standpoint” among many possible others, but was equivalent with the innermost possibility of philosophy itself.¹ It is important to see that phenomenology, for Heidegger, was a possibility rather than an actuality, that he thereby sharply distinguished between phenomenology as a way of doing philosophical research, and phenomenology as this particular research became concretized in the form Husserl gave it in his work. This is one of the reasons why he claimed in *Being and Time*: “Higher than actuality stands *possibility*. We can understand phenomenology only by seizing upon it as a possibility.”²

It was precisely this character of open possibility, characteristic of and indeed indispensable for any kind of serious and autonomous philosophical inquiry, that Heidegger found fascinating in adhering to Husserl's phenomenology after the war. By contrast, from the very beginning he had serious doubts and made critical remarks about the transcendental concretization of it carried out by Husserl. KNS (= Kriegsnotsemester) 1919 shows already some important reservations about Husserl's *actual* phenomenology (and together with it the outlines of another *possible* phenomenology). These remarks are woven into Heidegger's criticism of epistemologically oriented Neo-Kantian philosophy as such, and appear in the form of an attack against the primacy of the theoretical (this attack is motivated by Dilthey, life-philosophy and historicism, and is brought to bear upon the whole metaphysical-ontological tradition going back to Aristotle). Heidegger observes that the distortive representations of life and the environing world are due not simply to the prevalence of naturalism, as Husserl

¹ See GA56/57, 110; GA61, 187; GA63, 72; “Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation)”, ed. H.-U. Lessing, *Dilthey Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Geschichte der Geisteswissenschaften* 6 (1989), 247 (hereafter: PIA); GA20, 184; GA21, 32, 279f.; SZ 38; GA24, 3; GA29/30, 534; US 95; *Zur Sache des Denkens*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1976, hereafter: SD) 90.

² *Sein und Zeit*, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1979, hereafter SZ), 38. Italics in original. See already in the early lecture courses, e.g., GA63, 107; GA17, 263.

thinks they are, but to the domination of the theoretical in general.¹ Heidegger here interprets Husserl's "principle of all principles" to the effect that it is not of a theoretical character, but expresses the most original attitude (*Urhaltung*) of life itself, that of remaining close to its own experiencing.² It expresses indeed a fundamental attitude (*Grundhaltung*) rather than a (scientific) method. To claim phenomenology was a standpoint would be a "mortal sin" because it would restrict its possibilities. But, Heidegger immediately asks, is it not already a deviation, of the character of a hidden theory, to turn the sphere of living experience into something given?³ This doubt is one of the very first signs of Heidegger's fundamental dissatisfaction with Husserlian phenomenology, which will lead up to the grandiose critique of 1925 in which Husserl will be charged with dogmatism (an unphenomenological attitude) regarding nothing less than the delimitation of the ownmost research field of phenomenology itself, i.e., transcendental consciousness.⁴ The world of lived experience knows of no such duality as that between object and knowledge.

If we leap forward to Heidegger's most detailed critique of Husserl's phenomenology as provided in the 1925 lecture course we see that its central theme is, once again, the delimitation of the specific research field of phenomenology itself, in other words, the self-concretization of phenomenological philosophy out of its own initial principle or maxim. The basic issue is related to whether and how phenomenology achieves access to (comes to delimit) its own research field, whether the procedure thereby employed is phenomenologically coherent or not. Over against the charges of dogmatism, as formulated by Rickert, Heidegger comes, after detailed analyses, to the conclusion that it is not intentionality as such that might legitimately be claimed to be

¹ GA56/57, 87.

² GA56/57, 109 f. On several occasions, Heidegger will later return to interpret Husserl's "principle of all principles". In retrospect, he will say in the sixties that he wanted to rethink exactly this principle and, together with it, the specific "matter" of phenomenology itself (cf. SD 69ff.). See especially the following hints: "die Phänomenologie bewußt und entschieden in die Überlieferung der neuzeitlichen Philosophie einschwenkte [...]" "Die Phänomenologie behielt die 'Bewußtseinserlebnisse' als ihren thematischen Bereich bei [...]" (Ibid., 84)

³ GA56/57, 111. ("zu einem Gegebenen zu stempeln" = give it a stamp of something given, to seal it, to reify it, as something given). See also GA58, 221.

⁴ See GA20, 159, 178. For the same point in historical perspective going back to Descartes, see GA17, esp. 105.

dogmatic, but rather that to which intentionality gets tacitly linked, or bound, or tied, that which is built under this structure – in other words, that of which it is claimed to be the specific structure. In fact, intentionality is held to be the specific structure of the psyche, reason, consciousness, etc. (rather than, say, nature), all of which are ontological regions that are naively, i.e., traditionally and therefore dogmatically assumed rather than phenomenologically discussed and delimited. Rather than an ultimate explanation of psychic reality, Heidegger observes significantly, intentionality is a way to overcome such traditional ontological realities as psyche, consciousness, reason.¹

The question is whether access to that of which intentionality is declared to be the structure is attained in a phenomenological way. The issue concerns the delimitation of the “thing itself” in a phenomenological way, the question of whether the linking of intentionality to pure consciousness, or to the transcendental ego, is carried out phenomenologically, and not simply by taking over the leading idea of modern Cartesian-Kantian philosophy – a doubt that proves to be well-founded.² Although Husserl claims to suspend, put into brackets, “assertions concerning being”, and thereby leaves the being of intentionality obscure, he nevertheless tacitly links it to an ontological region called transcendental consciousness. Moreover, he makes distinctions of Being like the one between Being as consciousness and transcendent being – which he called himself, symptomatically, “the most radical of all distinctions of being”.³ Remarkably enough, while prohibiting making assertions concerning being, phenomenology tacitly commits itself to certain ontological positions – i.e., without thematizing the access to those positions phenomenologically.⁴ That phenomenology

¹ GA 20, p. 62ff. “It is a question of understanding the subject on the basis of intentionality, rather than understanding intentionality on the basis of preconceived ideas about the subject” (Rudolf Bernet, “Husserl and Heidegger on Intentionality and Being”, *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 21 [May 1990]: 143).

² See GA20, 147.

³ See GA20, 155, 157f., 178. See also GA17, 264. Husserl’s distinction see in his *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. I. Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, §76, *Husserliana*, III/1, ed. by K. Schuhmann (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1976), 159.

⁴ See GA20, 140, 157ff., 178. Husserl’s claim concerning *Voraussetzungslosigkeit* should not be misinterpreted, Herbert Spiegelberg writes, “in the sense of a total rejection of any beliefs whatsoever, and of a program to start the philosophic enterprise from absolute zero . . .” It “stands for

may be shown to be intrinsically incoherent or inconsistent, i. e., “unphenomenological”,¹ affected with metaphysical bias, is significant enough. Insofar as the principle of phenomenology (“To the things themselves!”) requires suspension of every unwarranted construction and subjecting the unquestioned domination of philosophical theories to critical examination, as well as the return to the original sources of intuition, Heidegger’s objection strikes home – it turns out to be eminently phenomenological.

The access to the transcendental region of pure consciousness, as erecting itself upon and replacing the experience of empirical reality is characterized by Husserl in terms of a change in attitude. In the natural attitude, the world is present as a spatio-temporal sequence of events, including the psychic processes going on in the minds of empirically existing people. As opposed to the new realm, i.e., the pure region of consciousness that we are about to enter, humans appear here merely as living beings, zoological objects among others. However, Heidegger objects, we may legitimately ask: *does* one really experience oneself in the manner described here in this alleged “natural attitude”? In other words, *is* this attitude indeed so natural? Is it not rather artificial or, in any case, theoretical? Do I really experience myself “naturally” as a living being, a zoological object, out there, present-at-hand as any other?²

an attempt to eliminate merely presuppositions that have not been thoroughly examined, or, at least in principle, been presented for such examination. It is thus not freedom from all presuppositions, but merely freedom from phenomenologically unclarified, unverified, and unverifiable presuppositions that is involved.” (Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, 3rd ed. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1984), 77. It is important to see that Heidegger’s above criticism does apply to Husserl even and precisely in the sense in which Spiegelberg reconstructs Husserl’s claim concerning *Voraussetzungslosigkeit*.

¹ GA20, 159, 178. The term “unphänomenologisch” crops up already in 1923 in a remark stating that it is unphenomenological to hold mathematics to be an ideal of scientificity (GA63, 72).

² See GA20, 131f., 155f., 162, 172; SZ 120. “Husserl tended to see man in the natural attitude, e.g. the empirical ego, simply in connection with psychophysical and neurological processes, hence as a thing-entity of nature. In that regard, Heidegger considered the ‘natural attitude’ in Husserl not to be natural enough” (Th. Sheehan. “Heidegger’s Philosophy of Mind”, in *Contemporary Philosophy: A New Survey*, ed. G. Floistad, Vol. 4: *Philosophy of Mind* [The Hague: Nijhoff, 1983], 294).

The flow of Heidegger's critical considerations is, as can be seen, wholly phenomenological. It is completely in line with Husserl's "principle of all principles"¹ according to which what it comes down to is to proceed in an unprejudiced way, without any prior bias, and to simply accept whatever offers us in intuition. It would indeed be hard to deny that it is not as zoological objects that we primarily do experience ourselves in the world of natural attitude – that in order to experience ourselves in that way we must previously have shifted over into an attitude of a particular theory.

The (phenomenological) implications of this most phenomenological criticism of phenomenology for a radicalization or transformation of it are simple enough: an attempt should be made to experience the intentional being more originally, in a more unprejudiced way, in its "natural" setting, thereby no longer taking the traditional definition of man as "*animal rationale*" for granted. What is required is to experience the natural attitude more naturally, thereby making the distinctions empirical-transcendental, ideal-real, etc., not only superfluous, but indeed unphenomenological and empty. And, when we look at the matter more closely, this is precisely what *Being and Time* will do with the title of existential analytic.

Heidegger's criticism of Husserlian phenomenology, his transformation and radicalization of it, thus reposes on eminently phenomenological grounds; it is, it seems, as immanent a criticism as one may ever be claimed to be. Nevertheless, as I contend, it could never have been carried out had Heidegger previously not assimilated some basic motives of life-philosophy. These were indeed very much in play in his confronting Husserlian transcendental phenomenology and contributed decisively to its hermeneutical transformation.

¹ See Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, I, § 24: "No conceivable theory can make us err with respect to the *principle of all principles: that every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition*, that *everything originally* (so to speak, in its 'personal' actuality) *offered to us in 'intuition' is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being*, but also *only within the limits in which it is presented there.*" (Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie* § 24, *Husserliana*, III/1, 51: "Am Prinzip aller Prinzipien, daß jeder originär gebende Anschauung eine Rechtsquelle der Erkenntnis sei, daß alles, was sich uns in der 'Intuition' originär (sozusagen in seiner leibhaften Wirklichkeit) darbietet, einfach hinzunehmen sei, als was es sich gibt, aber auch nur in den Schranken, in denen es sich da gibt, kann uns keine erdenkliche Theorie irre machen.")

Heidegger's post-war turn may comprehensively be characterized as an overall attempt at appropriation and reappropriation, i.e., as an effort to come to terms with the significant tendencies of contemporary philosophy – inclusive of the philosophical tradition in general – and, more importantly, with what philosophy really is, inclusive of its subject matter, i.e., life. Whatever the underlying motivation may be that catalyzed this turn, his post-war password sounds: back to life in its originality! This was the way Heidegger came to understand Husserl's password and translated it into his own conceptuality. He specifically did so at the lecture course 1919/20 on *The Fundamental Problems of Phenomenology* which started with the above-cited urge for phenomenology's self-renewal and self-criticism. The thing to which philosophy had to find its way back, and which was the origin of all meaning, was, for Heidegger, not transcendental consciousness, but life in its originality. In the course of this lecture he kept designating life as the "primal phenomenon" (*Urphänomen*)¹ for phenomenology in general. Phenomenology thus conceived, centring around life as being both the origin and the subject matter of philosophy, was repeatedly called pre-theoretical "primal science" or "science of the origins" (*Urwissenschaft, Ursprungswissenschaft*).

In a sense, the tendency to gain a new access to life was widespread at the time and reflected the efforts of the age,² so Heidegger may be seen to have just taken seriously and to have radicalized this urge coming from thinkers, such as Natorp, Dilthey, Bergson, Simmel, Jaspers, Scheler, James.³ In the midst of various devastating criticisms, more often than not Heidegger takes great pains to note that there is a positive, an original impulse inherent in life-philosophy – that he indeed does appreciate the impulse, while what he rejects is just its insufficient (because parasitic) realization. When Heidegger, for all his criticism, emphasizes the positive tendencies of life-philosophy the philosopher he most frequently has in mind is Dilthey.⁴ And we can hardly conceive of

¹ GA59, 15, 18, 23, 39, 40, 176.

² This historical background is referred to by Heidegger several times in his early lectures. See GA58, 1ff.; 25ff.; GA59, 12f., 15 ("Die Problematik der gegenwärtigen Philosophie ist um das 'Leben' als das 'Urphänomen' zentriert ...") 97; GA9, 14f. ("So ist denn die Problematik der gegenwärtigen Philosophie vorwiegend um das 'Leben' als das 'Urphänomen' zentriert ...").

³ See GA58, 3, 162; GA61, 117, 174, 189; GA63, 64, 69; GA9, 14f.

⁴ See e.g. GA63, 42: "Die eigentliche Tendenz Dilthey ist nicht die, als die sie hier [sc. by Spranger] angegeben ist [...]"), see further GA9, 13 f. ("Die

Heidegger's historicist opposition to Husserl's transcendental ego, the stress upon "*das Historische*" without Dilthey's influence.¹ Heidegger suggests that the basic effort of life-philosophy is correct, he seems even to share the view of contemporary philosophy that the object primarily to be approached and investigated is "life".² What he objects to and disapproves of is that rather than developing conceptual means adequate to its ownmost object, i.e., "life", life-philosophy relies upon the tools of the adversary for its own concepts.³ That is also the reason why, having realized that the tools are not equal to the task, life-philosophers tend to come inevitably to the conclusion that life, history, and existence are irrational.⁴ The point Heidegger makes could be put as follows:

Lebensphilosophie, vor allem eine solche von der Höhenstufe Diltheys [...] muß auf ihre *positiven* Tendenzen befragt werden, daraufhin, ob in ihr nicht doch . . . eine radikale Tendenz des Philosophierens vorwagt. Im Absehen darauf bewegt ich diese Kritik" [italics in original]; GA61, 7; GA17, 301, 320; GA64, 7ff.; SZ 46f. See also Heidegger's retrospective remark GA66, 412.

¹ For Heidegger's stress on the historical see GA9, 31, 32f., 36, 38; GA56/57, 85, 88f., 117, 206; GA61, 1, 76, 111, 159, 163; GA63, 83, 107; GA60, 31ff. and *passim*. Heidegger frequently spoke of Dilthey's appreciation of Husserl (see, e.g., GA56/57, 165; GA20, 30); this may have led him to think that what he was called to do was to unite the impulses of both thinkers.

² See GA 17, 112 and the references in note 24 above. That philosophy has life as its subject matter appears clearly in a passage of SZ also, where Heidegger suggests that the expression "philosophy of life" amounts to nothing more than "botany of plants" – really a pleonasm–, and that in a genuine "philosophy of life" "there lies an unexpressed tendency towards an understanding of Dasein", that is, existential analytic (SZ 46/BT 72 [= *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962)]; see also GA64, 40). For an anticipation of this see GA9, 14f.

³ See Heidegger's use of the term "Begriffssurrogat" (GA 9, 10).

⁴ See GA61, 82 ("[...] kommt es nicht zur aneignenden Aufhebung der *positiven Tendenzen* der modernen Lebensphilosophie" [italics in original]), 117 ("Damit ist eine innerhalb der Lebensphilosophie unausdrücklich lebendige Tendenz ergriffen [...]"); GA9, 4, 13f. ("Die Lebensphilosophie, vor allem eine solche von der Höhenstufe Diltheys [...] muß auf ihre *positiven* Tendenzen befragt werden, daraufhin, ob in ihr nicht doch, wenn auch ihr selbst verdeckt und mit traditionell aufgerafften, statt ursprünglich geschöpften Ausdrucksmitteln, eine radikale Tendenz des Philosophierens vorwagt. Im Absehen darauf bewegt ich diese Kritik" [italics in original]); GA58, 3 ("Was heißt: 'Leben in Begriffe fassen' ... 'in Worte bringen', wo doch die Worte als volle Ausdrücke zugeschnitten sein sollen auf unsere Umwelt, auf den Raum ..."), 231f. ("Es ist ein in der gegenwärtigen Philosophie viel vertretener Standpunkt, daß das faktische Leben

irrationalist philosophy is really too rational. In claiming its objects to be irrational, it uncritically borrows the measure or concept of rationality from the adversary rather than elaborating a rationality or conceptuality of its own, one that conforms to its object.¹

The traditional concept of rationality stems from a theoretical attitude, based in its turn on a conception of the humans as rational beings – one more reason why Heidegger strives to disengage himself from the traditional view of man as a rational animal, and together with it from the rational-irrational distinction, so as to explore dimensions of man's being underlying theoretical comportment. Phenomenologically seen, theoretical comportment has indeed gained mastery over the entire Western philosophical tradition. The domination of it has been undisputed even where it has been bitterly opposed. One of Heidegger's earliest passwords sounds therefore: "This hegemony of the theoretical must be broken."²

dem Begriff gänzlich unzugänglich sei. Aber das ist nur die Kehrseite des Rationalismus dieser Philosophie"); GA59, 154 ("Die Lebensphilosophie ist für uns eine notwendige Station auf dem Wege der Philosophie, im Gegensatz zur leer formalen Transzendentalphilosophie"); GA60, 50 ("Der Begriff des Lebens ist ein vieldeutiger und von diesem ganz allgemeinen, formalen Gesichtspunkt aus hätte eine Kritik der heutigen Lebensphilosophie einen Sinn. Nur wenn es gelingt, diesen Begriff ursprünglich positiv zu fassen, ist eine Kritik berechtigt, in einem anderen Sinn aber nicht, sonst verkennt sie die eigentlichen Motive der Lebensphilosophie [...]"); GA63, 69 ("Die Tendenz der Lebensphilosophie muß aber doch im positiven Sinne genommen werden als Durchbruch einer radikaleren Tendenz des Philosophierens, obgleich die Grundlage ungenügend ist"), 108 ("Die Polemik gegen die Lebensphilosophie [...] verfehlt alles, sieht den Gegenstand Lebens überhaupt nicht ursprünglich [...] Deshalb ist die Polemik gegen Begriffslosigkeit rein negativ [...] [Heidegger has Rickert in mind]).

¹ See e.g. GA63, 45: "Was heißt irrational? Das bestimmt sich doch nur an einer Idee von Rationalität. Woraus erwächst deren Bestimmung?". This view of Heidegger's was to be held through four decades up to the sixties (see SD 79). For a fuller discussion of Heidegger's treatment of rationalism and irrationalism see my paper "Heidegger und Lukács. Eine Hundertjahresbilanz", in *Wege und Irrwege des neueren Umganges mit Heideggers Werk*, ed. István M. Fehér (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1991), 43–70.

² GA56/57, 59 ("Diese Vorrherrschaft des Theoretischen muß gebrochen werden ..."). See also *ibid.*, 87, 89, 97. See also GA59, 142 ("Beherrschtheit [des heutigen Lebens] durch das Theoretische"). By centring his destructive strategy around an overall confrontation with the theoretical Heidegger takes up once again, and gives a thorough elaboration to, another basic impulse of

It is in the course of his destructive efforts to penetrate behind theoretical comportment and conceptuality in an attempt to gain a new and fresh (so to speak “unprejudiced”) access to life that the hermeneutic problematic emerges in Heidegger’s post war lecture courses. As early as in the immediate post-war years Heidegger offers, in alternative to rational concepts and theoretical knowing, what he calls “hermeneutical concepts”,¹ or – over against pure or theoretical intuition – “hermeneutical intuition”.² “Hermeneutics”, “hermeneutical”, emerge as rival concepts to “theory”, “theoretical”, understood in terms of “theoretically neutral”.³ The description of life, or “facticity”, becomes hermeneutical, obtains an over-all hermeneutic character, precisely in virtue of the realization that interpretation cannot be regarded as something added, as a kind of extension or annex, as it were, to some theoretically neutral (and, as such, allegedly “objective”) description of a state of affairs: rather, preliminary “interpretedness” is inherent in all kinds of description, in all kinds of seeing, saying, and experiencing.⁴ If there is no “pure” theory (for “theory” is a derivative mode of being or comportment of one particular being called human), there is no pure description either. What this insight implies for an adequate description of life or facticity is that theoretical concepts, as well as the language that

contemporary philosophy, as represented primarily by Emil Lask. What Lask called the “intellectualistic prejudice” gives preference to “thinking” in gaining access to the non-sensible; “faith” is understood in a negative sense mainly owing to the intellectualistic distinction between “knowledge” and “faith.” The “theoretization of a-theoretical comportment” also further affects all those distinctions we usually make between, e.g., “theoretical and practical,” “logical and intuitive,” “theoretical and aesthetic,” and “scientific and religious” knowledge (see Emil Lask, *Gesammelte Schriften* 3 vols, ed. E. Herrigel [Tübingen: Mohr, 1923], vol. 2, 204f., 208; vol. 3, 235. Heidegger did not fail acknowledge that Lask was “one of the most powerful [stärksten] philosophical personalities of the time”, adding how much he owed to him (see GA56/57, 180). See more details in my paper “Lask, Lukács, Heidegger: The Problem of Irrationality and the Theory of Categories,” in *Martin Heidegger. Critical Assessments*, ed. Christopher Macann (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1992), vol. 2, 373–405.

¹ GA9, 32.

² GA56/57, 117.

³ “*Kategorie ist interpretierend und ist nur interpretierend, und zwar das faktische Leben, angeeignet in existenzieller Bekümmern*” (GA61, 86f.).

⁴ See explicitly, e.g., GA17, 294 (“Wir sehen die Welt immer in einem *als*”); further PIA 241, 264. Later GA20, 75, 190, 416; SZ 169, 383.

theory speaks, should be abandoned in favour of a language growing out of everyday life and able to let things be seen in their interpretedness, that is, exactly the way we encounter and have to do with them (a hammer, e.g., is primarily encountered *as* a tool for hitting nails into the wall rather than as a neutral thing out there having the property of weight). Theoretically (and ahistorically) neutral knowledge is opposed to, and gives way to, existentially (and historically) involved understanding (or pre-understanding) and interpreting – whereby knowledge becomes at best a subdivision of understanding.¹ All these efforts are in the service of seizing upon “life”. The main character of the latter is claimed to be concern (*Sorge*) rather than knowledge.²

The science which is destined to provide access to life in its originality is, as should be clear from what has been reconstructed, intrinsically interpretive, i.e., hermeneutical – an insight which explicitly crops up in a note of the 1919/20 lecture course saying: “the science of the origins is ultimately the *hermeneutical* science”.³ And in Oskar Becker’s lecture note of the course SS 1919 we can read: “phenomenology, the primal science of philosophy, is an understanding science.”⁴

To sum up: the radicalization of phenomenology leads Heidegger to the thematization of factual life (to a kind of life phenomenology)⁵ whereas the description of the latter, in its turn, requires a conceptuality of its own, a hermeneutic perspective, a disposition to remain as close to life in its originality as possible (since theoretical comportment means having distanced oneself from genuine life, having displaced oneself into a derivative attitude). This proximity to genuine life, as well as the willingness to accompany it, to come along with it all the way (*Mitgehen*), to be achieved by hermeneutic attitude

¹ See, e.g., GA64, 32: “Das primäre Erkennen... ist *Auslegung*.” Ibid., 36: “Auslegen ist das primäre Erkennen.” See then SZ 147.

² See GA 61: 89ff.; PIA 240.

³ GA58, 55: “... Ursprungswissenschaft letztlich die *hermeneutische* ist.”

⁴ GA56/57, 216.

⁵ Heidegger was known and reported by contemporaries to have developed a “phenomenology of life” in his post war lecture courses; H. Tanabe, presumably the first to write on Heidegger abroad, reported about his German experiences in Japan in 1924 with the title: “A New Turn in Phenomenology: Heidegger’s Phenomenology of Life” (see Otto Pöggeler, “Neue Wege mit Heidegger?” *Philosophische Rundschau* 29, n. 1/2 [1982]: 57; see also his “Zeit und Sein bei Heidegger”, *Zeit und Zeitlichkeit bei Husserl und Heidegger*, ed. by Ernst W. Orth, *Phänomenologische Forschungen* 14 [1983]: 155).

and conceptuality, is a disposition Heidegger symptomatically and semi-religiously calls *humilitas animi*.¹

A common feature of Heidegger's criticism of both phenomenology and life-philosophy is the following: both are accused of proceeding not sufficiently unprejudiced. As to phenomenology: when viewed more closely, the thing itself it has to return to as well as to centre around is not consciousness, but life. As to life-philosophy: the field of research is all right, but the approach to it is not without bias. Life is approached not as it is being lived and enacted, in a lively manner, as it were, but by measures and conceptual tools alien to it which falsify or in any case do not do justice to the way it does really come to pass.

II. Religious Life As a Paradigm of Facticity

We are now in a position to assess the significance of Heidegger's religion courses for his philosophical development. This significance may be spelled out in a concise way by summing up his path of thinking from the post-war years up to the early twenties as follows. Under the influence of life-philosophy Heidegger radicalizes Husserlian

¹ GA58, 23. For *Mitgehen*, see GA58, 23, 158, 162, 185, 255, 262; for later, see GA29/30, 296ff. The proximity to life (*Lebensnähe*) was also an urge of the age which Heidegger has taken up and reacted upon; see GA63, 64. It may be of some importance to note that the semi-religious tone that occasionally permeates this lecture course may be partly due to the fact that precisely in that semester (WS 1919/20) Heidegger had also announced, and been preparing to deliver, a course on the *Philosophical Foundations of Mediaeval Mysticism*. Although he had been working hard on it, due to lack of time he could not get ready with the preparation, therefore in a letter to the Faculty dated August 30, 1919, he asked for permission to cancel it and to transform instead the other course on *Selected Problems of Pure Phenomenology* from a weekly one-hour into a two-hour course (see GA60, 348; GA58, 265). It is plausible to assume that at least part of the material Heidegger worked through and destined for the *Mysticism* course, infiltrated, as to atmosphere and tone, into the phenomenology course. Indeed, the occasional semi-religious character that this course displays is not just vaguely religious, but has a definite tendency towards mysticism, as Heidegger understood it at the time in terms of immediate religious enactment and in opposition to the rigid conceptual schemes of Scholasticism. The tone of this religiosity is submission, humble devotion (for *humilitas*, see also GA60, 309; for *Hingabe* *ibid.*, 322), and as such it is fairly different from the tone of distress and fight the permeates the phenomenology of religion course one year later. For a characteristic occurrence of *Mitgehen* at the Phenomenology of Religion course, see GA60, 72: "die Explikation geht immer mit der religiösen Erfahrung *mit* und treibt sie."

transcendental phenomenology and transforms it into a (hermeneutic) phenomenology of life. The phenomenology of life, however, which Heidegger comes to elaborate understands itself, and reveals itself, when looked at more closely, as a phenomenology of *religious* life.¹

In this formulation two points must be stressed. First, religion is for Heidegger, in accordance with his distancing himself from the Scholastic tradition and embracing the Protestant problematic, primarily life, that is, praxis, not theory, doctrine or speculation. To put it bluntly: religion is religious life, or it is none. Religion can meaningfully be conceived of only in terms of religious life.² Therefore it was entirely appropriate that Heidegger collected his papers and notes pertaining to this problematic under the designation *Phenomenology of Religious Life*, and it was equally a happy decision that the editor chose this title for GA60. It is also characteristic and of importance that on another envelope Heidegger's original title sounded "Phenomenology of Religious Consciousness," and that Heidegger later cancelled from this title the last word and substituted it by "Life."³ The substitution of this single word alone characteristically exhibits Heidegger's appropriation of and attitude to Husserl's phenomenology: rather than consciousness, it is life that should be the matter for philosophy.

Second: it must be noted that in the formulation life is, for Heidegger, primarily religious life, the two phenomena, life and religious life, are not to be sharply distinguished. Nor are the two disciplines, phenomenology of life and phenomenology of *religious* life. With regard to Heidegger's repeated rejection of conceiving either of life or of consciousness in regional terms – as object fields cut off from the whole of being – it would be misleading to think of a phenomenology of religious life as a kind of subdivision, or specification, of some allegedly

¹ With an eye to Heidegger's appropriation and transformation of Husserl's phenomenology his coming to concentrate on religion may schematically be put as proceeding along the following itinerary:

phenomenology of transcendental consciousness → phenomenology of life → phenomenology of religious life.

² This was, again, a widespread tendency of the time. "Glaube ist nicht Lehre, sondern Leben, die erlebte Tat-sache [sc. Sache der Tat], der »Geburt Gottes« in der Seele", Natorp wrote during the war (see Paul Natorp, *Deutscher Weltberuf. Geschichtsphilosophische Richtlinien. I. Buch. Die Weltalter des Geistes*, [Jena 1918], 87; see more on this point in my paper "Heideggers Kritik der Ontotheologie," in *Gottes- und Religionsbegriff in der neuzeitlichen Philosophie*, eds. Albert Franz, Wilhelm G. Jacobs [Paderborn: Schöningh, 2000], 200–223).

³ See GA60 345.

comprehensive, all-embracing phenomenology of life. To say that, for Heidegger, life is primarily religious life, amounts rather to saying that religious life displays for him in a concentrated way the characters of life – that it serves as a sort of paradigm for life. Thereby Heidegger understands life, inclusive of religious life, in wholly this-worldly terms. Something such as eternal life or the immortality of the soul remain out of the question. Life is always already factual life, or facticity. That is one of the reasons why he focuses his investigations upon Paul's letters, that is, the factual life of the earliest Christian communities and the inner dynamics inherent in the (this-worldly) life of the believers belonging to them. The dialectics thereby in play is a kind of inverse movement, or – to borrow Gadamer's term – a fusion of horizons. Religious life does become a paradigm of life for Heidegger on the one hand, but it is approached and viewed with an eye to factual life, as a concentration of it and wholly exempt from all other-worldly characters, on the other. It is the this-worldly living and enacting of faith, the way one becomes a Christian and lives it all the way through, that Heidegger is interested in and concentrates upon.

Religion is, in this perspective, an "object" of study for phenomenological philosophy much like death becomes one in his main work. Philosophy centring around facticity (and its hermeneutics) must, as long as it is to remain philosophy, prohibit itself to detach itself from and leave behind the dimensions of what shows itself in intuition. In this respect Heidegger remained for ever committed to Husserl's "principle of all principles" – more specifically, to the prohibitive character inherent in it: everything "offered to us in 'intuition' is to be accepted..., *but... only within the limits in which it is presented there*". The term 'description' has in phenomenology, Heidegger argues in *Being and Time*, "a sense of a prohibition – the avoidance of characterizing anything without... demonstration."¹ In full accordance with this principle he claims further in the work that his "analysis of death remains purely 'this-worldly'", and that it decides, accordingly, nothing (either positive or negative) about the 'other-worldly'. Moreover, it remains even undecided whether any question concerning what comes after death can, as a "theoretical" (that is, as a phenomenologically meaningful philosophical) question, ever be formulated at all.²

¹ SZ 35 ("Fernhaltung alles nicht ausweisenden Bestimmens") / BT 59.

² SZ 248 / BT 292.

It is worth quoting Heidegger in more detail: "...our analysis of death remains purely 'this-worldly' in so far as it interprets that phenomenon merely in the way in which it *enters into* any particular Dasein as a possibility of its being."¹ ("Being" should be read here, in terms of his conceptuality of the early twenties, as "factual Being", "facticity.") Now we should realize that his approach to religion in the early twenties is quite analogous; his concern is with (the phenomenological description of) how faith is factually being lived, with one's becoming (having become) and remaining (becoming again and again) a believer; in short, how one in fact lives one's faith (whereby faith is a possibility of one's factual being). The way one does coincide with the way one lives. Living the faith is in no ways separable from living life.

By acknowledging this we are brought back to the first point, namely, that religion is, first and foremost, a matter of praxis, living enactment, rather than theory or doctrine. Indeed faith as practical enactment remains forever the fundament of theology² (more on this later).

But to justify the claim that religion is primarily religious life is not to justify the claim that it is a paradigm of life. So it is still not clear why, in precisely what sense, religious life is a paradigm of life – why, in other words, religious life (characteristic of, and as experienced in, primal Christianity) provides us with the key – or, more terminologically put, with a phenomenological access – to factual life, or factual life experience; why, as Heidegger states, Christian religiosity not only lies (is rooted or grounded or to be found) in factual life experience, but is declared to coincide with it. For Heidegger's more radical claim comes down to this: Christian religiosity *is* factual life experience.³

The recognition that religion is primarily praxis, life, is clearly not sufficient to make the case plausible, for there may obviously be sorts of practices other than the religious. An explicit answer or consideration is, as far as I can see, nowhere provided by Heidegger, although this is,

¹ SZ 248 / BT 292. Also something such as a "'metaphysics of death' lies outside the domain of an existential analysis of death." (Ibid.)

² See, e.g., GA60, 95, 145, 310; GA9, 55, 59, 61; SZ 10.

³ See GA 60, 82: "Urchristliche Religiosität ist in der faktischen Lebenserfahrung. Nachsatz: Sie ist eigentlich solche selbst." The same point is made in an even more accentuated manner, *ibid.*, 131: "... *christliche Religiosität ist in der faktischen Lebenserfahrung, ist sie eigentlich selbst.*" (Italics in original)

admittedly, one of the most central theses of the whole *Phenomenology of Religion* course. In view of his elucidations of Paul's letters, as well as his previous fusion of phenomenology and life-philosophy, I propose to suggest the following explanation.

In transforming phenomenology by shifting its focus from transcendental consciousness to life Heidegger repeatedly confronts the problem of appropriate access to the new subject matter. Life is however a phenomenon which is not at all easy to have access to. Precisely in virtue of its all-embracing character, it seems to exclude all appropriate access to it – such that will not reduce it to a regional object. This much is clearly seen by Heidegger. Indeed, one way to understand his repeated claim that life is characterized by self-sufficiency¹ is that it does do without philosophy. Heidegger even remarks that life is self-sufficient for itself to the extent to which it is incapable of even seeing that very self-sufficiency.² After this preliminary remark we should call to mind some of the basic features by which Heidegger characterizes Christian life experience, first of all, the character of having-become.

What is characteristic of Christian life is indeed its having-become one.³ Christian life experience is such that it owes its being to its having become, i.e., to its having superseded its previous (sinful, atheistic)⁴ state and been born to new life. The (so to speak) transcendental past of always already having become, in other words, the rebirth,⁵ a complete shift in one's being,⁶ is entirely constitutive for Christian experience of life. It is a shift in being which, at the very moment of becoming aware of itself, gains awareness of itself in terms of a being that has become what it actually is. It is solely because it has become what it is that it is what it is – and it does also have a specific awareness of it. Indeed, Christian experience of life is not only characterized by the fact that it has become what it is, but also, and with equal primordially, by the fact that the event of having become is

¹ See GA58, 29, 30f., 35, 41, 63.

² GA58, 41. Ibid 61 Heidegger makes the point that Christianity is a historical paradigm for centring life for the first time around the self-world. This accent on individuality, i.e., the individually centred character of life, will lead up to Dasein's *Jemeinigkeit* in *Being and Time*, while the term *Selbstwelt* disappears.

³ See GA60, 93ff.

⁴ See GA9, 53 ("Gottvergessenheit").

⁵ See GA9, 53 (Glaube = Wiedergeburt"). See also *ibid.*, 63

⁶ GA60, 95: "*absolute Umwendung*," "*Hinwendung zu Gott und eine Wegwendung von den Götzenbildern*."

accompanied by some kind of a consciousness of having become, no less than of the fact that this having-become has not been initiated and performed by itself.¹ By all means, its having-become belongs in an indispensable and irrevocable way to its present being.²

Now it is my claim that it is because it is not possible to be a Christian without having this specific kind of “knowledge” (indeed, a hermeneutic pre-understanding) to be one – namely, of having become or been reborn by divine grace to be one, of standing presently before God and reaching eschatologically forward toward the imminent future, running ahead against it – that Christian life experience may reasonably be claimed to experience life in its facticity, to *be* factual life experience. Christian religiosity, or Christian life experience, in terms of an experience of having become, opens up (a perspective or *the* perspective upon) factual life for the first time, therefore it *is* factual life experience. Factual life gets thereby disclosed and becomes accessible for the first time as such – that is, as factual life, a specifically and definitely this-worldly life. It is due to this having become (and, inseparably from it, the awareness which accompanies it) that factual life is opened up. Indeed, Christian life experience does experience the whole of life – past, present and future –, and thus lives temporality. It is not only in time but it *is* time.³ It focuses on and centres around its having become.⁴ The state it has overcome remains, although fundamentally changed, forever included in it.⁵ Those who find themselves in a pre-Christian state are not “awake”, have no awareness of themselves, do not possess life experience because they simply do not experience life in its factual

¹ See GA60, 121f.

² See esp. GA 60, 94: “Das Wissen über das eigene Gewordensein stellt der Explikation eine ganz besondere Aufgabe. Hieraus wird sich der Sinn einer Faktizität bestimmen, die von einem bestimmten Wissen begleitet ist. Wir reißen die Faktizität und das Wissen auseinander, aber sie ist ganz ursprünglich miterfahren.... Das Gewordensein ist nun nicht ein beliebiges Vorkommnis im Leben, sondern es wird ständig miterfahren und zwar so, daß ihr jetziges Sein Gewordensein ist. Ihr Gewordensein ist ihr jetziges Sein.” See also *ibid.*, 145: “... Faktizität, zu der ja das ‘Wissen’ gehört.” Further *ibid.*, 93: “... Wissen von ihrem Gewordensein ...” 103, 123, etc.

³ See GA60, 80, 82, 104, 116.

⁴ See GA60, 120: “Das christliche Leben ist nicht geradelinig, sondern ist gebrochen: Alle umweltlichen Bezüge müssen hindurchgehen durch den Vollzugszusammenhang des Gewordenseins ...”

⁵ See GA9, 63: “... in der gläubigen Existenz das überwundene vorchristliche Dasein existenzial-ontologisch mitbeschlossen bleibt.”

totality. Only the *rebirth*, as it were, opens up access to the first birth. The case is similar to what it will be with respect to the authentic-inauthentic distinction in *Being and Time* (which may be seen to be a specific subsequent elaboration on this state of affairs): inauthentic being always already precedes authentic being, which in its turn erects itself upon, and has as its fundament, the inauthentic. It is only after having performed the passage from the inauthentic to the authentic that inauthentic being as such – and together with it, the very distinction itself – becomes first disclosed and accessible. For to be inauthentic means having no awareness of being inauthentic (just like the self-sufficiency of life works against its own becoming aware of it). And *vice versa*: to be authentic means gaining awareness of, and assuming consciously, one's inauthenticity as a past that has always already preceded it, and which therefore – in its specific quality as a past always already surpassed and overcome – belongs intrinsically and inextricably for ever to authenticity.

Facticity, Historicity, Christianity

A point that is worth special attention in this context is Heidegger's repeated claim that factual life or life experience is intrinsically historical. As has been noted, one of the contemporary tendencies with which Heidegger engaged in in-depth confrontation from the very beginning was historicism. The idea that life and history belong intimately together – that life should primarily be seen as historical life – was central to Dilthey and life-philosophy in general. Heidegger appreciated Dilthey's attempt to approach historical life very much indeed,¹ but criticised him for reasons analogous to those he formulated about his approach to life – that is, the inadequate conceptuality rooted in a one-sidedly theoretical comportment. Although Dilthey did tend to grasp historical life, his endeavor came under the influence of neo-Kantianism and the *erkenntnistheoretisch* atmosphere of the age, so that he ultimately misunderstood his own undertaking: the attempt at a new and fresh access to historical life was reduced to, and replaced by, the attempt to attain possibly objective historical knowledge, and thus to elevate history to the rank of science.² History – or rather, the historical world – became for Dilthey an object of science, something that in its embarrassing richness of types and figures one takes pleasure in contemplating. What mattered, was no more historical being, but

¹ See the references in note 27 above.

² See, e.g., GA17, 301 (Dilthey fell victim to the traditional question, how is history of science as science possible). See also *ibid.*, 302.

historical knowledge, together with its claim to objective validity, whereby the subject of that knowledge was a de-situated timeless observer rather than historically rooted and existentially involved finite existence. In summary, Heidegger works out his all important concept of “das Historische” in his early lecture courses in sheer opposition to historicism, the main critical suggestion being that historicism strives for an “objective” knowledge of history (an impossible aim), rather than for an authentic historical “being” of humans – and that the first not so much promotes the second but instead suppresses it.¹

Against the background of this criticism Heidegger endeavours to reappropriate the ontological dimension of historicism and to gain access to history in terms of historical being. Thereby he does not fail to acknowledge his indebtedness to Dilthey and to claim, eventually, that his conception of history grew out of an appropriation of Dilthey’s work.² In his postwar lecture courses he notes frequently that by stressing the importance of history, he has history primarily not as a matter of scholarship in mind. To put it bluntly: our knowing relation to history is only a derivative one, the primary relation is one of being – we *are* history. The way we live history, or are history, is dependent upon how we live temporality. History is primarily historicity, that is, *Geschehen*, of a specific being called Dasein – it is the movement of its *erstrecktes Sicherstrecken*, its stretching along between birth and death.³ The way history becomes object for scientific investigation is decided from time to time by the primordial historicity of Dasein. This position is clearly anticipated in the early lecture courses. History, Heidegger says for example in 1919/20, is not critique of the sources, but rather, living along with life (*mitlebendes Leben*), life’s familiarity with itself,⁴ or – as he puts it in the *Phenomenology of Religion* course in 1920/21 – “immediate

¹ The term “das Historische” will be replaced in *Being and Time* by “das Geschichtliche”, or “Geschichtlichkeit”. For later, see the distinction between “geschichtliche und historische Wahrheit” in GA39, 144ff, viz., that between “historische Betrachtung” and “geschichtliche Besinnung” in GA45, 34ff., 49ff., 88ff. Further see also GA45, 11ff., 40, 201; GA 65, 32f., 151f. 153 (“Die Historie [...] ist ein ständiges Ausweichen vor der Geschichte”), 359, 421f., 493f.

² See SZ 397.

³ See SZ 19f., 375, 374f. / BT 40f., 427, 425f. “[T]he *locus* of the problem of history . . . is not to be sought in historiology as the science of history” (SZ 375 / BT 427).

⁴ GA58, 159f.

liveliness” (*unmittelbare Lebendigkeit*).¹ Also, he keeps warning against the widespread habit of having access to the phenomenon of history as it is delivered us over by historical science.² But, what is particularly important for us, he tends to identify the factual with the historical. The historical, he says, is inherent in, and intrinsic to, the meaning of the factual.³ The sense of the factual points to, and leads up to, the historical.

Since, as has been seen, religious life offers a paradigm of facticity, it is no wonder that the historical is thus ultimately brought back to religious life experience as well. “The entire task of a phenomenology of religion ... is permeated by the problem of the historical,” Heidegger claims explicitly.⁴ To understand this point, we should bear in mind that it is not because Dasein is historical that it is temporal, but the other way round. Dasein’s temporality is the fundament of its historicity.⁵ Although formulated in explicit terms in *Being and Time*, this thesis is however present at the religion courses.⁶ The fact that, by virtue of its having become, Christian life experience becomes uniquely temporal, that is, it lives time, it *is* time, accounts for, and is the fundament of, its entering into, and partaking most intimately of, the innermost event that constitutes Christianity.

Heidegger’s gradual disengaging and distancing himself from neo-Scholastic thinking during the war and his concurrent turn to the Protestant tradition had obviously, to a large extent, predisposed him favorably toward the theme of history in terms of a domain which – over against its dismissal by neo-Scholasticism – was very much pertinent to religion and religiosity. In fact, as he put it in his letter to Engelbert Krebs written on January 9, 1919, it was “epistemological insights, extending as far as the theory of historical knowledge,” that “have made

¹ GA60, 33.

² See, e.g., GA60, 32, 47, 51f.

³ GA61, 76 (“Die Faktizität des Lebens . . . ist in sich selbst historisch . . .” “... das Historische im Sinn der Faktizität liegt”), 159 (“Faktizität: das Geschichtliche, das Historische”).

⁴ GA60, 34. See *ibid.*, 323.

⁵ See SZ 376.

⁶ See GA60, 65: “Was ist in der faktischen Lebenserfahrung ursprünglich die Zeitlichkeit?” [...] unser Weg geht vom faktischen Leben aus, von dem aus der Sinn von Zeit gewonnen wird. Damit ist das Problem des Historischen gekennzeichnet.” See also *ibid.*, 80: “Die faktische Lebenserfahrung ist historisch. Die christliche Religiosität lebt die Zeitlichkeit als solche.”

the *system* of Catholicism problematic and unacceptable” to him.¹ Thereby the *system* he had in mind was most plausibly the official doctrine of neo-Thomistic Scholasticism, exempt and immune from all historicity. This is confirmed by the fact that, much in this vein, the *system* is referred to in a highly negative tone in the lecture course on the *Phenomenology of Religion*, namely in terms of a kind of “pseudo-philosophy,” whereby Heidegger mentions parenthetically “Catholicism” as an example; what is characteristic of the *system* is that access to its living sense must be attained by working one’s way through a complicated, anorganic, wholly unclear and dogmatic complex of theses and proofs, sanctioned by policy constraint of the church and oppressing the subject.² The “theory of historical knowledge,” on the other hand, obviously points to Dilthey’s efforts to elaborate what he called a critique

¹ “... but not Christianity and metaphysics (the latter, to be sure, in a new sense),” he finishes his sentence, and this complement is surely not insignificant, for it shows Heidegger’s continuing to be in the proximity, although “in a new sense”, to Christianity and metaphysics. The letter was first published by Bernhard Casper, “Martin Heidegger und die Theologische Fakultät Freiburg 1909-1923”, in *Kirche am Oberrhein. Festschrift für Wolfgang Müller*, eds. R. Bäumer, K. Suso Frank, Hugo Ott, *Freiburger Diözesan Archiv* 100 (1980), 541; see now *Heidegger-Jahrbuch*, vol. 1: *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*, eds. Alfred Denker, Hans-Helmuth Gander, Holger Zaborowski (Freiburg/München: Alber, 2004), 67f. I have adopted John D. Caputo’s translation in his *Heidegger and Aquinas*, 56f. To say that the “system of Catholicism” has become “problematic and unacceptable” is to say that the theological-philosophical foundation which underlies faith – the fundament, the groundwork, upon which faith rests – has become obsolete and hollow, requiring, as it does, being renewed and refreshed. To fulfil this task is in no way contrary to Christian faith. For more detailed interpretation of this letter, see my paper “Heidegger’s Understanding of the Atheism of Philosophy: Philosophy, Theology, and Religion in his Early Lecture Courses up to *Being and Time*”, *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* LXIX, 2 (Spring 1995): 189–228.

² GA60, 313: “... liegt es a priori in der *Struktur des Systems*, das selbst nicht einer *organischen* Kulturtat entwachsen ist, daß der zu erlebende Wertgehalt der Religion als solcher, ihre inhaltliche Sinnsphäre erst durch ein verwickeltes unorganisches, theoretisch *völlig ungeklärtes*, dogmatisches Gehege von Sätzen und Beweisgängen hindurch muß, um schließlich als kirchenrechtliche Satzung mit Polizeigewalt das Subjekt zu überwältigen und dunkel zu belasten und zu erdrücken.”

of historical reason.¹ In precisely what sense (or the extent to which) the “theory of historical knowledge” – and the orientation towards the historical in general –, though in sharp contrast to ahistorical Scholasticism, was nevertheless able to preserve and even embrace and reinforce Heidegger’s religious impulse is shown by the following notes from Dilthey’s diary: “it is my vocation to grasp the inner essence of *religious life in history*,” “Christianity is not a system, but a life-view.”² And in Schleiermacher, to whom Dilthey dedicated no small portion of his life work, and who attracted also Heidegger’s attention during the war,³ we can read the following remark: “History, understood in the most appropriate sense, is the highest object of religion; it is with history that religion begins and it ends up with it as well.”⁴

¹ See Wilhelm Dilthey, *Der Ausbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften, Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. VII, ed. Bernhard Groethuysen, 7th ed. (Stuttgart–Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979) 191ff.

² *Der junge Dilthey. Ein Lebensbild in Briefen und Tagebüchern 1852–1870*, ed. Clara Misch (Leipzig–Berlin: Teubner, 1933), 140: “... mein Beruf ist, das Innerste des *religiösen Lebens in der Historie* zu erfassen ...” (italics in original); 144: “... das Christentum kein System, sondern eine Lebensanschauung ist.” See the same claim in Dilthey’s main work: Wilhelm Dilthey, *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften. Versuch einer Grundlegung für das Studium der Gesellschaft und der Geschichte. Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, ed. Bernhard Groethuysen, 9th ed. (Stuttgart - Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 138f, 253f. (“das religiöse Leben ... Untergrund des geschichtlichen Lebens ...”; “... die Philosophie des Christentums ... trug eine machvolle geschichtliche Realität in sich ...”) For the term *Faktizität* in Dilthey, see *ibid.*, 141. – The term *Lebensanschauung* (life-view) in the above quotation is clearly of Schleiermacherian origin.

³ In early August of 1917 Heidegger gave privately an impressive talk on Schleiermacher’s *Reden über die Religion*. He stressed especially Schleiermacher’s rejection of the philosophical theology from Aristotle to Hegel. On this point see Otto Pöggeler, *Neue Wege mit Heidegger* (Freiburg/ München: Alber, 1992), 21f.

⁴ Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*, ed. Rudolf Otto, 4th revised ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1920), 63. For Schleiermacher’s rejection of the philosophical theology, see *ibid.*, 26ff., 31, 47, 73, 76, 79, 112, etc. In one important document of Schelling, the written draft related to his lecture course of 1831/32 in Munich, we can read that “the essence of Christianity is the historical [das Geschichtliche]”, and that it is not correct always to speak about “Christ’s doctrine” [Lehre], rather the other way round: “this doctrine is Christ himself”. (Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Urfassung der Philosophie der Offenbarung*, ed. W. E. Ehrhardt [Hamburg: Meiner, 1992], Teilband 1, 17).

It is certainly no mere incident, but plausibly a sign of approval, that Heidegger literally excerpted this passage in his notes on Schleiermacher.¹ And somewhat later he noted: “The historical is one of the most significant founding elements in religious experience.”² If we add to these remarks Heidegger’s central claim concerning the mutual identification of historicity and facticity – one of the most characteristic formulations is this: “[h]istory applies to/affects us, and we are history itself”³ – then we arrive ultimately at a threefold identification. From this perspective, facticity, history, and religion – in other words, to be factual, to be historical, and to be religious – become mutually dependent upon, and grow intimately fused with, each other. Thereby the historical, as it were, unites in itself the religious and the *Lebensphilosophische* – a tribute paid to the memory of Dilthey.

Conclusion: Philosophy, Facticity of Hermeneutics, Religion, Faith, Theology

Shortly after Heidegger had accepted the call to go to Marburg, Gadamer recalls a remark Heidegger made during an evening discussion: “in order to come back to itself, it is the true task of theology to look for the word capable of calling one to faith and of preserving one in it.” This formulation sounded, for Gadamer, like a real assignment for theology. Gadamer thinks that the real questions that were stirring in Heidegger from the very beginning were theological questions.⁴

The analogous view is expressed by Gadamer’s choice of the very title of his accompanying essay to the publication of Heidegger’s so called Natorp Report (or Aristotle Introduction), discovered at the end of the 1980s, “Heidegger’s Early ‘Theological’ Writing.” This title, together

¹ See GA60, 322. The only change is that Heidegger italicizes “history” and this, of course, gives to the identification of history and religion more prominence. It will be of use to quote the full sentence of Schleiermacher: “Geschichte im eigentlichsten Sinn ist der höchste Gegenstand der Religion, mit ihr hebt sie an und endigt mit ihr – denn Weissagung ist in ihren Augen auch Geschichte und beides gar nicht voneinander zu unterscheiden – und alle wahre Geschichte hat überall zuerst einen religiösen Zweck gehabt und ist von religiösen Ideen aus gegangen.” (*Über die Religion*, 63.)

² GA60, 323.

³ GA60, 173: “Die Geschichte trifft uns, und wir sind sie selbst ...”

⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Die Marburger Theologie”, in Gadamer, *Neuere Philosophie. I. Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger* (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 3, [Tübingen: Mohr, 1987]), 197, 199; see also *Philosophische Lehrjahre* (Frankfurt/Main: Klostermann, 1977), 37.

with his explanatory remark that it (no less than Hermann Nohl's title for what he called *Hegel's Early Theological Writings*) is both appropriate and inappropriate,¹ might well characterize, in addition to this particular manuscript, no small portion of the young Heidegger's work. As a matter of fact, the understanding of philosophy Heidegger develops right after the war is interwoven with theological motives, while (parallel with it) he embarks on an overall re-examination of theology too, including its task, function, and relation to religion. The self-interpretation and self-identification as a philosopher, which he comes to adopt, is conditional upon an understanding of philosophy which is permeated by theological motives, or, may even be said to emerge owing to the radicalization of theological or religious motives. The other side of this process is that Heidegger puts into question the traditional self-understanding of theology too, inclusive of its relation to philosophy. The extent to which Heidegger views philosophy and theology in proximity of, and as mutually permeating, one another is characteristically shown by his urge, in his course on the *Phenomenology of Religion*, to submit both of them to his central operation of destruction; in connection with the interpretation of Paul's letters he speaks about elaborating the standards for "the *destruction* of Christian theology and Western philosophy."²

In his above cited letter to Karl Löwith on August 19, 1921, Heidegger claimed to be, rather than a philosopher, a "Christian theologian". It is precisely Gadamer's story that may provide us with a key to understand the peculiar italicization. In fact, it should be taken to mean someone searching for the proper *logos*, that is, word, of the Christian message. I think that Gadamer's recollection concerning Heidegger's understanding of the "task of theology" in terms of "looking for the word capable of calling one to faith and of preserving one in it" is highly creditable and is, indeed, a fairly precise formulation. As a final consideration I propose to show this by a short interpretive reconstruction of how Heidegger came to view the relation of religion, faith, and theology and of how these are related to philosophy and hermeneutics.

¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Heideggers 'theologische' Jugendschrift", in Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Ausarbeitung für die Marburger und die Göttinger Philosophische Fakultät (1922)*, ed. Günter Neumann (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002), 76.

² GA60, 135: "... *Destruktion* der christlichen Theologie und der abendländischen Philosophie."

Against the background of his distancing himself from neo-Scholasticism and of his assimilation of decisive motives of life-philosophy and historicism, inclusive of his overall attack against the theoretical,¹ Heidegger comes to view theology no more in terms of an objective theoretical science destined to provide a conceptual elaboration for religion by occasionally borrowing its conceptuality from philosophy. Theology is not a scientifically neutral and ahistorical theory of Christianity; what has been developed and come to be known as theology during the centuries is a reified mixture of dead formulae of the most heterogeneous origin, alienated from what it once belonged to and incapable of containing in itself and conveying living religiosity. The comportment it originates from is theoretical, rather than religious. Theoretical comportment, in its turn, goes back to the Greeks. Primal Christianity was thus fused with and indeed distorted by the conceptuality of Greek philosophy,² and that is how what we know in terms of theology today had come into being. Thereby Heidegger seems to subscribe to and join in with the then widespread thesis concerning the fateful hellenization of Christianity, suggested, e.g., by Adolf von Harnack and maintained decisively by Franz Overbeck.³ What is needed

¹ See GA 56/57, 59 and note 2 (32) above.

² See GA59, 91.

³ See Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3 vols, 4th ed. 1909/10 (Reprogh. Nachdruck. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), vol 1, 20: "Das Dogma ist in seiner Conception und in seinem Ausbau ein Werk des griechischen Geistes auf dem Boden des Evangeliums." Heidegger refers to Harnack in GA60, 72, claiming it is precisely the seemingly secondary problem of "expression," of "religious explication," to be of decisive importance, for the "explication" goes hand in hand with the religious experience. This is much in line with Gadamer's interpretation that theology has, for Heidegger, primarily to do with finding the adequate "word", i.e., conceptuality, to express faith. Heidegger's own subsequent formulation of what dogma is shows Harnack's obvious influence. See GA60, 112: "Das Dogma als abgelöster Lehrgehalt in objektiv-erkenntnismäßiger Abhebung kann niemals leitend für die christliche Religiosität gewesen sein, sondern umgekehrt, die Genesis des Dogmas ist nur verständlich aus dem Vollzug der christlichen Lebenserfahrung." See also Dilthey, *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften*, 258 ("So war die Entwicklung dieses Gehaltes im Dogma zugleich seine Veräußerlichung"), 274 ("...hat sich die Entwicklung der Formeln, welche die religiöse Erfahrung in einer Verknüpfung von Vorstellungen abgrenzen und gegen andere Formeln innerhalb derselben Religion wie gegen andere Religionen rechtfertigen sollten, nicht folgerecht aus der im Christentum gegebenen Selbstgewißheit innerer Erfahrung vollzogen."). The thesis of the unhappy connection of Christianity

is a theology liberated from the conceptual schemes of Greek philosophy.¹ Therefore, Heidegger urges in his course on the *Phenomenology of Religion* “to sharply distinguish the problem of theology from that of religion.”² What it comes down to is – much along the lines of Dilthey’s linking of *Erleben* and *Ausdruck* – to find a proper *logos*, a conceptuality adequate to, and conforming to, the “object,” that is, genuine religious experience and faith as a living enactment.

We find an important follow-up observation in *Being and Time*. Theology, Heidegger claims, “is slowly beginning to understand once more Luther’s insight, that the ‘foundation’ on which its system of dogma rests has not arisen from an inquiry in which faith is primary, and that conceptually this ‘foundation’ not only is inadequate for the problematic of theology, but conceals and distorts it.” (SZ 10/ BT 30; see GA20, 6/4.) In his lecture “Phenomenology and Theology”, given in the same year of the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger interprets theology, much in the same vein, as the “science of faith”,³ where faith is conceived of in terms of a specific way of being of Dasein (GA9, 52) encompassing, as it were, the whole domain, or horizon, within which alone, the specific “objects” of faith, for example, God, can appear. Faith is thus prior to God, and it would be a serious mistake or a vulgarization to define theology, naively, as the “science of God”, or the “speculative knowledge of God” (GA9, 59) – wherein God would be an object of the respective science in the same way as the animals are the objects of zoology (ibid.). Theology originates from faith (GA9, 55), has its roots in faith, and, in general, makes sense only for faith (GA9, 61),

with Greek philosophy was far from being unknown to the previous generation of liberal theology, e.g., to Ritschl; on this point, see Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Problemgeschichte der neueren evangelischen Theologie in Deutschland. Von Schleiermacher bis zu Barth und Tillich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 123. As to Overbeck, Heidegger refers to him in the Preface to his *Phenomenology and Theology*.

¹ See GA59, 91.

² GA60, 310: “Scharf zu trennen: das Problem der Theologie und das der Religiosität.” And he adds significantly: “Die Theologie hat bis jetzt keine originäre theoretische Grundhaltung der Ursprünglichkeit des Gegenstandes entsprechend gefunden.”

³ GA 9, 55. The following numbers in parentheses in the body of the text refer to this edition (GA9, 45–77). For a detailed reconstruction of this lecture, see Joseph J. Kockelmans, “Heidegger on Theology”, in *Thinking About Being: Aspects of Heidegger’s Thought*, eds. R. W. Shahan and J.N. Mohanty (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 85–108.

i.e., the believer. In this sense, faith anticipates and founds theology (GA9, 60f.). The sufficient motives of theology, as well as its justification, may lie only in faith itself (GA9, 54, 55), and they lie in faith's attempt at a conceptual interpretation of itself ("begriffliche Auslegung" [GA9, 54], "begriffliche Selbstinterpretation der gläubigen Existenz" [GA9, 56]). The believing comportment (*Gläubigkeit*) can never originate from theology, but only through faith itself (GA9, 56). Now, the task of theology is to find a conceptuality adequate to faith (GA9, 60), the believing comportment and existence, and to contribute to developing and strengthening this attitude (GA9, 55, 61) – a formulation which confirms and justifies to a great extent Gadamer's interpretive recollection of Heidegger's contribution to the discussion on theology in the post-war years.¹

The relation between faith and theology, within the encompassing phenomenon of religion, bears conspicuous similarities to, and may be seen as a development or a radicalization of, Dilthey's linking *Erlebnis* with *Ausdruck*² or with Heidegger's subsequent characterization of the relation between understanding and interpretation in *Being and Time* (§32). This may be summed up as follows: only what is understood can be interpreted; understanding constitutes the fundament and the starting point of every interpretation. In this sense, faith is the fundament of theology, and the latter is but a conceptual articulation of the former, erecting itself upon and remaining forever grounded in it. Theological knowledge must arise from faith and return to it.

The way theology relates itself to faith exhibits structural analogies to the way philosophy relates itself to facticity. Both theology and philosophy offer a conceptual elaboration of something previously enacted or lived (a sort of having-been), and, in doing so, are at the same time meant to refer back to and reinforce what they grow out of – faith or factual life. Given this strict correlation, it is no wonder that we find in Heidegger's texts similarities between his characterization of theology and philosophy. The well-known definition of philosophy in *Being and*

¹ See also Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert, *Das Verhältnis von Philosophie und Theologie im Denken Martin Heideggers* (Freiburg/München: Alber, 1974), 36: "... religion requires a way of treatment adequate to its logos."

² See, e.g., Dilthey, *Der Ausbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*, 132, 206. Dilthey employs here even the characteristic expression *Erlebnisausdruck*. His addition of *Verstehen* to this structure is for us here irrelevant.

Time goes like this: “Philosophie ist universale phänomenologische Ontologie, ausgehend von der Hermeneutik des Daseins, die ... das Ende des Leitfadens dort festgemacht hat, woraus es entspringt und wohin es zurückschlägt” (SZ 38); while *Phenomenology and Theology* characterizes theology as follows: “Alle theologische Erkenntnis ist ... auf den Glauben selbst gegründet, sie entspringt aus ihm und springt in ihn zurück” (GA9, 61). “... woraus es entspringt und wohin es zurückschlägt” and “... entspringt aus ihm und springt in ihn zurück” show obvious parallels both conceptually and with regard to the matter itself. Both are Dasein’s ways of being, and both move in a hermeneutic circle. They are a re-enacting accompaniment of what they grow out of - factual life or rebirth by faith -, helping to interpretively illuminate, that is, appropriate and re-appropriate, that from which they originate. And the bond that links philosophy’s and theology’s self-interpretation together is a hermeneutical one: an always already having understood of what one has become as a starting point for a subsequent interpretation.¹

It may be of interest to note that in the *Phenomenology of Religion* course we find an important anticipation of this definition: “Bisher waren die Philosophen bemüht, gerade die faktische Lebenserfahrung als selbstverständliche Nebensächlichkeit abzutun, obwohl doch aus ihr gerade das Philosophieren *entspringt*, und in einer... Umkehr wieder in sie *zurückspringt*”.² This is an important early anticipation of what Heidegger will come to develop in 1927, which I take to be a further illustration of my thesis that Heidegger’s understanding of philosophy is permeated by, and emerges as a radicalization of, theological motives (whereby theology becomes re-interpreted too). Philosophy’s self-interpretation that Heidegger provides may be regarded as relying for its emergence on the self-interpretation of theological comportment as a model. Heidegger, as it were, transposes the self-interpretation of the theological comportment onto the level of philosophy in a specifically modified and formalized form.³

¹ See GA60, 336: “Die Analyse, d.h. die Hermeneutik, arbeitet im historischen Ich.” “... in allem ist die spezifische Sinnbestimmtheit herauszuhören.”

² GA60, 15 (italics added); see *ibid.*, 8, 124.

³ Revelation is, Heidegger says, not just a matter of delivering or collecting positive knowledge about real occurrences, past or future, but it is a matter of participation, that is, taking part, in the content of what the revelation is about. In this participation, that is, faith, Dasein gets placed in front of God, and his existence, affected by the revelation, becomes aware of itself, reveals itself to itself, in a state of forgottenness of God (“Gottvergessenheit” [GA 9: 53]). In precisely the same manner Dasein, effecting the passage from the inauthentic to the authentic, gains awareness of itself for the first time and it does so in terms of existing always already in an inauthentic way.